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**LOVE ME LONG TIME:
SAFETY AND RISK IN
HETEROCOUPLEDOM AT ADOLESCENCE.**

A thesis

**submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology**

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by

LISA MAREE PARKER

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that heterocoupledness at adolescence discursively constitutes Girlfriends and Boyfriends as gendered subjects of safety and risk. The gendering of safety and risk operates to position Girlfriends as risk navigators who make pre-emptive and response-able moves. Safety and risk are regarded as disciplinary techniques that regulate Girlfriends' performances in relation to defending or maintaining safety and managing risk. It is argued that this positioning as risk navigators only makes 'sense' when the subject of Girlfriend is figured as already unsafe and yet responsible for risk. Boyfriends are argued to be positioned as already safe and capable risk takers within heterocoupledness and this configuration means that young men's engagements with safety and risk remain normalised and unproblematic.

Interviews with young women and focus groups with young women and men were conducted in the mid 1990's. I then read these texts from a feminist discursive position. This discursive approach to feminist psychology is described as it shifted politically and across disciplinary boundaries. Drawing from feminist readings of Foucauldian understandings of power and heterosexuality, I have examined the ways in which hegemonic discourses of heterocoupledness constitute Girlfriends as subjects who are expected to take responsibility for managing and navigating safety and risk. Throughout I 'make strange' the way risk warnings convey a taken-for-granted sensibility that young women should take precautions against harm, abuse and violence, and defend against their safety. The constitution of Girlfriend as already unsafe and Boyfriend as already safe is problematised.

The thesis is structured around a reading of the constitution of gendered heterocoupledness, romance, risk and adolescence, and problematises how heterocoupledness is entered into, the labours of love, and the young women's responses to harm, abuse, and violence from Boyfriends. Among the many discourses discussed, a discourse of feminine sexuality as threatened and threatening is argued to position young women as already unsafe. A girl-power femininity is argued to have been recuperated to incite young women to become subject to the labours of navigating for safety. I also pay attention to the many subversions of the discourses of gender that young people make in their everyday heterocoupledness and how masculinity and femininity are remixed in a post-modern, globalised capitalist Western context where both recuperation and resistance are at work. The overall focus remains on the disciplinary workings and implications for Girlfriends of navigating a double danger where safety (as managing risk) depends on the re-invention and reification of the already unsafe subject – Girlfriend.

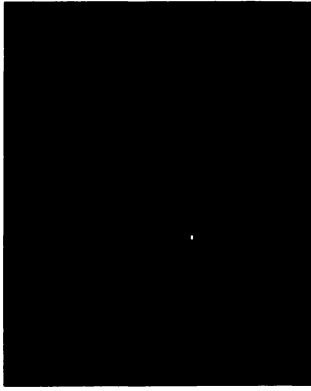
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At the still point, of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;

Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,

But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,

Where past and future are gathered.

Neither movement from nor towards,

Except for the point, the still point,

There would be no dance,

and

there is only the dance.

T. S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*.

INTRODUCTION:

Safety and Risk in Heterocoupledness at Adolescence.

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask: and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle (Heller, 1961, p.63).

**SPEAK UP TO
SLOW HIM DOWN.**

PASSENGERPOWER.ORG.NZ

The passenger power campaign was launched by RoadSafe Auckland in December, 2001. A Roadsafe consultant psychologist interviewed for a Radio New Zealand News story (21/12/01) said that the campaign aims to 'empower female passengers' to 'speak up to slow him down'. The passengerpower website states: "Over 65% of speed related crashes involve males. We're not saying that females don't have a speeding problem, but males are much more likely to speed and crash, killing or injuring innocent people."

Heterocoupledness at adolescence is explored in this thesis as being regulated through a gendering of subjects as safe and risky, and in relation to the

cultural warning signs that target feminine and masculine subjects differentially. ⁱ I argue throughout that safety and risk are culturally mobilised warning signs that attempt to direct the way young women might perform Girlfriend and young men might perform Boyfriend. Like the clause Catch-22 and the danger signs that litter contemporary Western urban landscapes, consumables and pursuits, techniques of safety and risk regulate through cultural norms about what constitutes reasonable/unreasonable, good/bad, appropriate/inappropriate, sane/insane practises within heterocoupledness relations. These cultural givens are highly mutable in the way they are practised, lived, and embodied, yet they are also bound within a late capitalist Western context that valorises risky individuality just as certain individuals are deemed dangerous or 'at-risk'. The recent 'passenger power' campaign seems to exemplify how the risky speeding male driver is assumed as a given, whilst women are supposedly empowered to 'speak up' in order to redeem men and save society from their partners' risky behaviour. In this campaign women have been enlisted in the service of the State to discipline men for the public good. It is just this kind of positioning of women in relation to their own and men's safety and risk within heterocoupledness that this thesis seeks to explore and challenge. ⁱ I contend that despite the various postmodern and feminist critiques of the constitution of women as duty bound to care, women are still positioned as romantically and sexually risky and at-risk, as hetero-labourers and as pro-active risk navigators. A way that this Catch-22 can be challenged is by refusing the authority of the gendered modernist subject and exposing the fictional limits set by this clause in contemporary gender power relations.

The clause of Catch-22 can be rephrased to introduce the argument that is explored in this thesis. ⁱ I argue that a variety of discourses position Girlfriends in heterocoupledness as both at-risk and responsible for managing their own safety. In part, Girlfriends' responsibility for managing safety and risk is constituted through the assumptions that firstly, young women are already violable, and secondly, that young women possess an individualised capacity for defending their safety through a girl-power. This girl-power is at once resistant of sexism and yet, as an individualised capacity, loads young women with the responsibility for defending their safety by navigating risk, as if risk as danger was not manufactured by wider structures of power that locate men as already

¹ When referring to myself I do not capitalise. ⁱ I believe that refraining from capitalising my name or any referrals to myself is most consistent with my attempts to disrupt a humanistic centralisation of the human subject, including any anthropomorphism or eurocentricism.

violating. The cultural context of western individualism reiterates Heller's Catch-22 where a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that are real and immediate is constituted as the process of a rational mind. Yet, 'women' are constituted as already vulnerable and at-risk, and in many ways, as fearful subjects even when these dangers are not 'real' and 'immediate'. The girl-power responsibility presumes that all women have to do to remain safe is to speak up for themselves and yet this also presumes that risk as danger is an inevitable part of doing Girlfriend. The presumption is that as soon as young women defend their safety or navigate risk, they will not be in danger and can continue to have heterocoupled relations that are themselves presumed to be already safe for young women. Catch-22 can be rephrased as such: Women would be weak, foolish, or irresponsible by risking missions into dangerous hetero-relations but lacking in girl-power femininity if they do not take these apparently inevitable risks by entering heterocoupledness; if they are to remain feminine, women are constituted as invariably heterosexual and relationship focused. If they fly into heterocoupledness that becomes explicitly and culturally constructed as violent they are urged to leave heterocoupledness; but if they do not want to continue to work within normalised constitutions of heterocoupledness, where safety is presumed to be guaranteed by a relationship with a man, they are positioned as unfeminine and have to keep trying. I was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle for the complexity of these contradictions that are part of doing Girlfriend and Boyfriend in heterocoupledness at adolescence.

Throughout this thesis I develop the argument that women are re-constituted as vulnerable and already unsafe subjects when various risk warnings and responsibilities are discursively framed as feminine duties of caring. Fears of violence may be 'realistic', but these fears do not exist outside of the various discourses that are constituted within Western cultures. Like risk, fear is also a political device through which certain individuals and groups are targeted as at-risk and warned to take precautions. As a disciplinary mechanism fear need not operate through direct threat. Fear of violence from men is still something that many women, while not necessarily living their lives on ready alert, are often primed to be wary of. Of particular interest is the portrayal of violence as primarily public offences that are committed by unknown or strange men. Being out and alone in public is treated as one of the many high-risk activities that women should be cautious about engaging in, and in turn, the supposed privacy of heterocoupledness is assumed to be safe. Regardless of the annual domestic

violence publicity campaigns, the entertainment and news media continues to focus on portraying women as victims of violence at the hands of unknown men who victimise in public settings. Even if the media depicts a relationship between the male offender and the female victim, the male is most likely to be portrayed as a 'strange' character with latent psychopathic or homicidal tendencies. As the typical television perpetrator tracks his fearful female victim through underground car parks or forested walkways, the following message is reiterated: public spaces and not knowing or managing men well enough are risky to women.

These portrayals of apparent 'fact' beg the question: what do the New Zealand statistical surveys tell us about men's violence against women in public and private spaces? The *New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 1996* (Young, Morris, Cameron & Haslett, 1997)² indicated that it was mainly men aged 15-24 who reported being violently victimised in pubs or clubs, and the workplace. Conversely, women were most likely to be victimised in the home, rather than public spaces. While gender differences in victimisation were not shown to be statistically different, it was concluded that men and women would experience different kinds of violence.

In contrast to these patterns of victimisation, fear of public violence is more likely to be reported by women. Overall, participants in the national survey reported being just as worried about crime as they were about illness or road accidents. Nevertheless, women were more likely to report being 'very worried' about all crimes, particularly violent offences (Young, Morris, Cameron, Haslett, 1997, p.117). In addition to their participation in the National survey of crime victimisation, 500 women were interviewed about their experiences of partner violence (Morris, 1997). When asked about their fears of walking alone at night, 50% of women reported feeling 'a bit or very unsafe', compared to 13% of men³.

² The New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 1996 is used because it was conducted at the same time that the data for the thesis was collected - 1995/96. The survey involved 5000 households, randomly selected, with a response rate of 57%. The survey asked respondents about their experiences and responses to criminal victimization. From the results it was estimated that in 1995, 2 million offences against individuals over aged 15 occurred. Less than 13% of these offences were reported to Police.

³ The authors of the *New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 1996* noted that some early literature indicated that there was an inverse relationship between risk of victimization and fear of crime. For instance it noted that while women were more likely to be fearful of violence, they were least likely to become victims (refer to Robinson, J; Young, W. & Haslett, S. (1989) *Surveying Crime* Wellington: Study Series 5, Institute of Criminology). However the authors warn against interpreting these figures literally because of the lack of background information on actual victimization, the lack of replication of these findings and that fear may be based on feelings of greater vulnerability due to disproportionately severe impacts. The authors hypothesize that perhaps women feel more vulnerable because they feel less able than men to defend themselves against assault.

More women (27.5%) than men (13.1%) in the national survey of crime stated that they were very worried about being assaulted by strangers. According to these studies, the public and unknown men are feared more than the men who are known to women in the private realms of domesticity and heterosexual coupledness, yet these are the very men who are more likely to be violent towards women. In contrast, men were less fearful of unknown men in public spaces, but it is just these men who are most likely to be violent to them.

The authors of the New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 1996 (Young, Morris, Cameron, & Haslett, 1997), reported that known men were three times more likely to commit minor and serious assaults and threats than casual acquaintances. While men and women were just as likely to indicate being the victim of assault, men were more likely to be assaulted by strangers and women by those they knew well. Furthermore, partner violence was most reported by younger age groups, with 17.9% of the 15-24yr olds saying they had experienced one or more types of violence from their partners. Overall, the prevalence of partner abuse reported by women, across all age and ethnicity groups, was two to three times higher than that reported by men. Why, then, is a fear of the public and unknown men continually transferred onto women when it is the private and known men who are most treacherous? Why is it women, not men, who are warned of the dangers of inhabiting pubs, clubs, and workplaces with unknown men? Furthermore, even if women were to become wary of the 'men they know and love' as well as of the public stranger, how do these navigations of risk depend on the constitution of the category 'women' as already vulnerable and unsafe in the first place, and further, how do these risk warnings discipline women's movements in relation to a responsibility for protecting one's safety? Where are the challenges to the constitution of men as Boyfriends as already safe and as capable of protecting themselves, women partners and daughters, when these apparently safe men also victimise and are victimised by men in traditionally masculine public spaces?

The discursive formulation of men who commit violence against women in both public and private is that they are different from 'normal' men which in New Zealand often means that Māori men are scapegoated with unsubstantiated claims of inherent or cultural propensity to violence. Apparently 'normal' men (implicitly Pakeha and heterosexual) remain excluded from scrutiny because these 'men', as a collective, have been constituted throughout history as already safe. Accordingly, these 'normal' men are protected from scrutiny because they are constituted as polar opposites to the 'deviant'; as neither the strangers nor the

strange ones who batter the women they might couple, live with, and claim to love.

i think that male violence, both public and private, continues to be minimised by focusing on violent men as beyond the scope of 'normal' masculinity. Scrutiny of 'normal men' is muted almost into silence through the preoccupation with apparently deviant and abhorrent men. When violent offenders are recognised as male it is often only Māori, as a homogenous whole, that tend to be targeted by media as 'abnormal'. In a refreshing exception, Paul Little (1999) recently parodied the media preoccupation with Māori violence and the avoidance of naming Pakeha violence, the latter accounting for 44% of the Police apprehensions for assault in 1995. Overall, the characterisations of the violent male partner are often pathologised as separate from what is constituted as the 'normal' (which in psychology is implicitly Pakeha defined) population of heterosexual partners, husbands, and boyfriends.

For instance, Moffitt and Caspi (1999) reported on partner violence among young people in the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study. Partner violence in this study was measured using the much-criticised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) in its sample of predominantly Pakeha people aged 21. Accordingly, 37% of women and 22% of men reported perpetrating partner violence, and 27% of women and 34% of men reported being victims. The authors noted that partner violence among young people was mutual (read: gender neutral) yet this conclusion is tenuous taken that the study did not include any questions about the context of the abuse nor whether the violence was used in self-defence (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). It was noted that women were more likely to suffer injury than men, but this was paid less than cursory attention to. Instead, the authors proposed that while male perpetrators were likely to be 'deviant', female perpetrators could be just any 'angry young woman' (p 10). Further, it was claimed that male abusers were more likely to suffer from social consequences, like arrest, caused by the greater likelihood that females would suffer injury. The authors' explanation is telling.

However, women know that they are unlikely to injure their partner, he is unlikely to call for help and the police are unlikely to intervene. Thus, there is little to deter an angry young women from hitting her partner. As such, women of all sorts may be apt to hit their partners, not just women whose judgement is clouded by stress, mental illness, or intoxication. Further research should be conducted to confirm this possible explanation (p.10).

In apparent ignorance of the feminist literature that charts the social regulation and punishment of women who both express anger and violence throughout Western history, this study reasserts the binary of men as rational, already safe, and responsible to social institutions of control, and women are positioned as irrational, risky to men, and exempt from social controls. The men who committed violence were represented as unusual in having a disrupted rationality (due to drugs, stress, or mental instability), while it was implied that 'all sorts' of women were prone to committing supposedly irrational acts of violence when angry. All women were located as irrational when they used violence but only men with a history of being categorised as 'deviant' were made problematic.

The former example of the treatment of violence against women in heterocoupledness, along with the way fear is mobilised and used to restrict and blame women, lead me to question how certain subjects are positioned as safe and unsafe, risky and at-risk, according to the kind of gendered discourses that are called on to explain violence. For instance, these discourses of violence tend to repeat the assumption that unknown and/or deviant adult men are most likely to be risky to women, adolescent men are simultaneously located as already safe (capable of coping with risk) and yet potentially risky to young women. One of the few times when the safety of 'normalised' masculinity is questioned is when men are constituted as adolescent. Fairy tales, parents, and the popular media often address young women with warning tales about the dangers of young men as their apparently 'natural' sexual drive emerges (Hollway, 1984). Perhaps young male suitors represent the very men that young women's fathers 'used to be', namely, dangerous because they are apparently 'only after one thing'? Nevertheless, while young men are represented as experimental risk takers who are sexually driven, most warnings are targeted at young women. What concerns me is not who is at-risk and risky, safe and unsafe, but how safety and risk are deployed in the discursive regulation of young women and men. If safety and risk are constituted as largely women's concern, problem, and responsibility, then women will continually be judged and will judge themselves in relation to a series of individualised codes that can result in the appearance of being caught in the snare of an unchallengeable Catch-22.

In this thesis I interrogate how safety and risk in heterocoupledness at adolescence is put to work in gendered ways. The dichotomous constructs of men and women are examined as working constitutions within the political (con)structions of everyday life. While a postmodern multiplication of the forms of

femininity and masculinity has been affected since the second-wave of feminist activism and the rise of global consumer capitalism, these multiplications have often involved the remixing of an appearance of radical change in gendered and heterosexual relations. I do not attempt to explore how heterocoupledness has changed across time and contexts, rather, I am interested in how an implicit notion of 'change' has entered into heterocoupledness and contemporary performances of gender. Undoubtedly, discourses of gender have changed in relation to the social, political, and cultural contexts of Aotearoa/New Zealand, but as I argue in chapter two, (Literature Readings: Representations of Pakeha heterocoupledness, adolescence, romance and risk), these discourses have tended to sustain a heteropolarity. Within writings on the history of Pakeha gender relations, the archetypes of staunch masculinity and supportive femininity have helped to sustain a heteropolarity, that is, the hegemonic constitution of gender as opposite and yet complementary. This heteropolarity also finds expression in contemporary discourses on risk and adolescence. As a group, adolescents are often discursively constructed as 'at-risk' and, in chapter two, I also argue that a heteropolarity constitutes young women as most 'at-risk' in relation to sexuality and romance.

Change is a central theme in chapter three, 'Shifting Method: Another feminist transgression in psychology'. In this chapter I give an account of how a feminist discursive methodology in psychology developed. I use a descriptive and narrative approach to discuss the political and methodological shifts that occurred in the process of interrogating safety and risk in heterocoupledness at adolescence. Indeed, these shifts and changes in methodology allowed for the development of the thesis topic's focus, namely, safety and risk. At first I was interested in dating violence in adolescent intimate relations, and whilst dating violence is still very much a part of this thesis, a crucial refocusing has taken place. After conducting a survey into dating violence, I was dissatisfied with the decontextualised results. I then shifted to explore the normalised gender relations that are promoted and practised at adolescence. When I spoke with the young women interviewees, our conversations revolved around their everyday relations with Boyfriends. Some of these young women spoke about incidents of sexual coercion, being shaken, yelled at and threatened by Boyfriends, but they also spoke about the many ways that they would attempt to contain, resist, avoid, minimise and understand their Boyfriends' behaviour. The young women spoke about their safety as something that they would protect. They also spoke about themselves as staunch, girl-power women who would not put up with stereotypical gender relations and abuse from men and Boyfriends. In many ways the young women and men assumed that

gender relations had changed over time and that women's equality with men was assured. The modernist assumption about gender-power seemed to be that change was necessarily linear, progressive, and complete in its effects across time, and yet gender equality and safety were also spoken of as if these changes had to be defended in multiple ways and largely by young women. It was this dynamic of positioning themselves as both granted and defending their safety and risk that seemed to infiltrate what was accounted for as 'normal' Girlfriend and Boyfriend relations. It was also a dynamic of change that offered the possibility of challenging gender polarity just as these given ways of doing Girlfriend could recuperate⁴ gender relations along what i came to call a remixed heteropolarity. By focusing on how the techniques of safety and risk are deployed in heterocoupledness, i shifted from a modernist approach to describing the young people's experiences of heterocoupledness to a discursive approach. i became interested in how heterocoupledness at adolescence is discursively regulated and how the cultural mobilisation of safety and risk regulates through gender-power relations. By approaching the topic in this way i was able to critique and read the collected texts from young people as discursive constitutions, that is, as partial, mutating, and unstable mobilisations of meaning/practice that position subjects in relation to safety and risk.

The discourses that are referred to throughout this thesis emerged from the readings of the texts in conjunction with discourses that have been proposed by other researchers. i argue that several competing discourses inform heterocoupledness:

⌘ a discourse of heterosexual invariability,

⌘ a have/hold romantic discourse,

(adapted from Hollway, 1984; Wight, cited in Ingham & Kirkland, 1997)

⌘ a predatory male sex drive discourse, (ibid)

⌘ a discourse of female sexuality as threatening and threatened

(adapted from Fine, 1992, Gavey, 1990, Lees, 1997).

⁴i use the term 'recuperate' as it appears to have been understood by the Situationists of the 1960's and early 70's, as they sought to disrupt the urban landscapes of consumerism. A more recent example of recuperation is where the media and advertisers have appropriated and sold alternative and potentially challenging voices back to consumers as life style choices (see Klein, 2001). Gardiner (2000) describes recuperation as 'the absorption of dissent and oppositional culture and their transformation into commodities. Through critique, the original intent of even the most radical critique is deflected and rendered harmless, translated into just another lifestyle choice' (p.114).

A discourse of heterosexual invariability is proposed in chapter four (*Mr. Exception & Ms. Right are Going Out: A gendered marriage between romance and risk*). In this chapter the gendering of romance and risk is examined in the texts where young people have discussed cross-gender friendships, how they enter into heterocoupledness, and the kinds of ideals and expectations of heterocoupledness. A discourse of heterosexual invariability is argued to insinuate itself in cross-gender friendships as an assumed undercurrent that mediates how young men and women can relate as friends. A have/hold romantic discourse is introduced in this chapter and it is argued that young women are constituted as subjects that aim to secure and maintain romantic relationships with young men. Young women were not entirely enamoured with the romantic ideals and expectations that constitute them as subjects within this discourse. Like Wight, some of the young men identified themselves as subjects of romantic ideals and expectations and young women as objects. A have/hold romantic discourse is argued to position both men and women as subjects. A predatory male sex drive discourse is also presented in this chapter where it is argued that both young men and women positioned 'men' and 'Boyfriends' within this discourse. Hollway (1984) has argued that the taken for granted assumptions that the male sex drive is unstoppable and biologically based serves to position men as subjects who require unhindered and unquestioned sexual access to women. Wight has added that:

heterosexual intercourse is fundamental in asserting one's masculinity, and physical sexual pleasure is of less importance than the opinions of one's peers... the challenge is to seduce a woman (cited in Ingham & Kirkland, 1997, p.153).

Finally, a discourse of female sexuality as threatening and threatened is introduced in this chapter. I contend that whilst female sexuality is variously constituted as threatening, either to the young women themselves, to men's supposedly rational but biologically driven sexual control, or to social standards and coffers, female sexuality is also constituted as threatened. As threatened, female heterosexuality is associated with violence and victimisation. Fine (1992) argues that sexuality education in the United States in the 1980's promoted the notion that female sexuality is threatened by sexual activity and that by focussing on the risks of sexual activity and stressing abstinence, female vulnerability is stressed and desire remains marginalized. The status of married, heterosexual arrangements remains normalised and the implications of reducing female sexual subjectivity to threats from predatory males, sexual disease, pregnancy, queer

sexualities et al, ensures that female sexual desire remains absent and contained by negative and fear-based discourses. Fine comments that young women are therefore:

Educated primarily as the potential victim of male sexuality, she represents no subject in her own right. Young women continue to be taught to fear and defend against desire, and in this context there is little possibility of their developing a critique of gender or sexual arrangements (1992, p.32).

The discourse of sexuality as threatening and threatened also draws from Nicola Gavey's research. Gavey (1990) has argued that instances of sexual coercion of women are, in part, facilitated by a missing discourse of female desire and the normalisation of a heterosexual narrative where sexual contact past a 'point-of-no-return' ties women's consent to a careful management of their sexual desire. The absence of an active desiring female allows the:

unwitting perpetuation of a form of (compulsory) heterosexuality in which women's agency and resistance exist only to the degree which we can *limit* and *control* "male sexual access" (p.176).

Gavey and Fine are careful to argue that these discourses are not complete in their operation and nor are they dependent on a dominating form of power. Instead each stresses the importance of the political structuring of heterosexual relations as normalised meaning/practices. These discourses may discipline and regulate sexuality in taken for granted or unmarked ways so that questioning their legitimacy and subverting these constitutions of women and men's sexuality can appear absurd. Nevertheless, each contends that women are not victims of false consciousness or dupes of a compulsory heterosexuality. Rather, because these discursive fields are socially constituted and because subjects are never positioned completely as victims, that contestation is not only possible but is in action as women resist and redefine the boundaries of their sexual subjectivity. Fine and Gavey's work concerned hetero-sexuality per se and in this thesis i am most interested in hetero-coupledness as the context in which sexuality might be performed.

Lees (1997) has argued that a technology of reputation disciplines young women's subjectivity and sexuality. The double standard of slut/virgin, she argues, is still one around which young women negotiate. She notes that a young women's reputation is still largely judged in relation to sexuality even when the behaviour has little to do with sexuality. The idea of a technology of reputation in

heterocoupledness is also recruited in this thesis to make sense of how young women and men evaluate and perform their Girlfriend-Boyfriend relationships.

Each of these discourses was also found echoing within the texts from the young women and men. As 'theories in action' (Smith, 1992) discourses mediate terms around which heterocoupledness may be performed. Safety and risk are regarded as techniques that contain the boundaries within which heterocoupledness may be performed. If the terms of heterocoupledness are set in relation to normalised assumptions about what is safe and risky, and, who is responsible for managing safety and risk, then the 'limit and control' of heterocoupledness will be set in relation to these narrow unmarked terms. If risk is more often located as a female concern and duty within heterocoupledness, then female desire remains tied to the management of risk, threat, danger, reputation, and safety in heterocoupledness. If safety is more often located as a feminine concern then a missing discourse of masculine heterocoupledness responsibility is manufactured and perpetuated. If female safety is continually constituted in relation to risk and danger then, like desire, it will remain marginalized within discourses of heterosexuality. Moreover, attention to these normalised discourses as inventions is sidelined in favour of individualised readings of heterocoupledness where blame and responsibility are severed from wider social and political constitutions of power.

These discourses of heterocoupledness are also discussed in relation to various discourses of adolescence. Together, these discourses of heterocoupledness contradict and cohere with discourses of adolescent development that (among other things) emphasise experience and experimentation and with the constitution of adolescents as risky and at-risk (Wyn & White, 1997). As indicated previously, these discourses of adolescence are implicated in the constitution of certain subjects as more or less risky and at risk. In this thesis i pay most attention to the way young women are positioned as risky/at-risk subjects and how the discourses of adolescence further complicate young women's positions within heterocoupledness. Throughout the thesis other discourses are drawn on to illuminate the wider social context in which the process of positioning oneself as Boyfriend and Girlfriend takes place, and in order to theorise the possible implications of these positions. These discourses are also discussed in chapters five and six where i continue to examine the discoursing of gender-power relations in heterocoupledness.

Implicit to the analysis of the interviews and focus groups in chapters four, five and six, is the idea that 'change' has been put to work in ways that are both

reminiscent of and subversive of heteropolarity in heterocoupledness. In the context of gender relations in the 1990's (when this research was conducted), it appeared to me that 'change' was constituted as an extension of the 'natural state of life' so that 'change' in gendered performances, particularly those conducted by young women, was constituted as the necessary quality of successfully adaptive and flexible Girlfriends who are now, supposedly, 'free to choose' Western subjects. In chapter five, (*Love me Long Time: Navigating the labours of love in heterocoupledness*), i ask how a post-Fordist discourse has infiltrated the constitution of femininity and the kind of labouring for love that occurs in heterocoupledness. i argue that otherwise subversive performances, like refusing the institution of marriage, engaging in heterosex as pleasure rather than reproductive, not viewing work as a short journey between childhood and motherhood, are often reframed as variations on a theme which remains centred on the relatively unquestioned centrality of gender as a major structure of identity. While i am mindful that escaping these constitutions, or at least escaping the consequences of these constitutions of gender, can perhaps never be complete when the wider power relations continue to rely on the hierarchic institutionalisation of power and wealth, they can and, indeed, must be continuously contested. Without such challenges, women will continue to be asked to reform their gendered performances in a way that is continually referenced to the strictures of gender binaries where hegemonic masculinity (as safe but risk-taking) is privileged over femininity (as unsafe and at-risk). In chapter seven (*Hit me and that's it: Girlfriends navigating harm*) i consider how young women negotiate and navigate harm, abuse, and violence in heterocoupledness and the implications of constituting safety in relation to risk warnings.

Safety is the unmarked applause that is given to individuals who rationally display 'good risk management' skills, who calculate the odds, who do not take 'unnecessary risks', yet boldly 'feel the fear and do it anyway' or who 'just do it'. Safety often implies some kind of engagement with risk which itself may be construed positively, as it is when business entrepreneurs take on the market and win or when extreme sportspeople engage with the dangers of the 'natural' environment, or negatively, as when young people explore sexualities and risk health and/or reputation, or when young women flirt and risk the consequence of men's 'unwanted attention'. Safety and risk then are read in this thesis as cultural signs that are often mobilised together; each refers to the other even though one term may be privileged over the other in different contexts and in relation to the

subjects that are being addressed. In many cases i argue that safety is constituted through what it is not. In other words, safety is not being in danger, not being at-risk, not being beaten up, not being sexually coerced, not being. Safety then remains the underprivileged term in this intermarriage between safety and risk. Risk, as it is theorised in this thesis, defines and confines safety to that which it is not, and is often synonymous with danger – both of which, when referring to the context of heterocoupledness at adolescence, are highly fictionalised yet mobilised in ways that implicitly discipline the gendered subjects of Girlfriend and Boyfriend in unequivocal ways. Mary Douglas (1992) contends:

the very word 'risk' could well be dropped from politics. 'Danger' would do the work just as well. When 'risk' enters as a concept into political debate, it becomes a menacing thing, like a flood, an earthquake, or a thrown brick. But it is not a thing, it is a way of thinking, and a highly artificial contrivance at that (p.46).

i do not adopt Douglas' approach to exploring risk in this thesis, but i do take the point seriously that safety and risk are constructs that do regulatory work when they are utilised to evaluate, judge and practise heterocoupledness at adolescence. Like Catch-22 and the everyday danger signs, the techniques of safety and risk are cultural inventions that give the appearance of pervasiveness and, when individuals make 'choices' about safety and risk, the reference points often lead directly back to the terms on offer by a clause Catch-22 and the various warning signs that are target young women. The uneven distribution of risks (threats against individuals and as represented by individual subjects) in what Beck (1992) describes as the modern 'risk society', are gendered. Heterocoupledness has often been represented as a safe haven from the cruel public world of work and politics and, in this masculine privileged cultural binary of the private/public realm, the feminine has been represented as the antidote, the 'angel in the house' who provides succour, moral redemption and respite in exchange for protection under the rule of her husband. Women have also been represented as cruel sirens who manipulate men's highly volatile sexuality and threaten the sanctity of the near-mythical nuclear family unit or Western society's moral currency. It is often under these auspices that various moral panics have erupted about women's sexuality, women's mothering, women's vulnerability, women's morals, women's roles, and, more latterly, women's life/workstyle balance. At the centre of what i perceive to be a continuous moral focus on the category women lies the unquestioned status of 'women'. It is a category of affiliation that many feminists have used to great political advantage – women have been represented in parliament, in curriculum,

in healthcare, in welfare provision, in the judiciary, in academic texts, literature, the arts, music, stardom, business and various 'professions'. This representation of women within various social spheres that were formerly regarded as the milieu of men also needs to be challenged because women's representation is used to conceal the continuation of structures and operations of power that continue to be premised on modernistic notions about gender and the category 'women'. What, rather than who, is being represented also needs to be questioned? Has women's representation within hierarchies of power disrupted the very structures that apportion wealth and poverty, health and prestige, safety and fear? Has the definitive notion of 'women' merely morphed into seemingly more diverse and flexible renditions of 'women' thereby conserving the core foundations of the category? More to the point, how has safety and risk been represented as the primary concern and responsibility of women? What are the implications for 'women' when the category is continually associated with violability, risk, and fear? How does the violation of 'women' depend on the success of representing women as responsible for managing safety and risk? What does safety look like without the reference point of risk? How do young men, as already safe but potentially unsafe, take responsibility for managing safety and risk in heterocoupledness? What kind of manufactured and marketed lifestyle management skills have women and men been entreated to learn in order to be called 'good' Girlfriends and Boyfriends? These are just some of the questions that this thesis considers and continuously attempts to contest.

LITERATURE CONTEXT:

Representations of Pakeha Heterocoupledness, Adolescence, Romance and Risk.

These pre-existing forms of continuity, all these syntheses that are accepted without question, must remain in suspense. They must not be rejected definitively of course, but the tranquillity with which they are accepted must be disturbed; we must show that they do not come about of themselves, but are always the result of a construction the rules which must be known, and the justifications of which must be scrutinized: we must define in what conditions and in view of which analyses certain of them are legitimate; and we must indicate which of them can never be accepted in any circumstances. (Foucault, 1972, p.25-26, emphasis added).

The purpose of this chapter is to read (rather than review) the literature on heterocoupledness, adolescence, romance, and risk, as gendered stories. The literature in this chapter is not reviewed and it is not reproduced as a contribution to the linear accumulation of knowledge in the social sciences: These rules must be suspended, disturbed and instead their rules of construction scrutinized (Foucault, 1972). Typically, literature reviews in psychology are presented as information from past research that contributes to the present knowledge about a topic, like heterocoupledness, adolescence, and risk. I do not offer my readings of the research and literature as objectively true information that contributes to the progressive accumulation of knowledge about a topic. Research does not necessarily build upon itself in a cumulative fashion, rather, research literature

constitutes and re-constitutes the topic in many, compatible and contradictory, but usually, disputable ways.

Instead, i read the literature provided in this chapter from a point of view that i attempt to make explicit. Firstly, i offer a series of interpretative readings of literature based on the assumption that while literature may record 'a truth', this truth is situated within an historical and political context that both produces and privileges some readings over others. i offer a partial reading of the historical literature on gender and heterocoupledness in Aotearoa as an account of what has been written in the last twenty years about the past, as opposed to the truth about what happened in the past. In this sense, my view of history is as a contemporarily constituted series of narratives that project a view of the past. Secondly, it is an account that decentres the assumption that heterocoupledness at adolescence and the polarised forms of masculinity and femininity are inevitably naturalised and/or socialised signs of 'growing up'. Finally, while i have a postmodern tendency to be sceptical of truth claims made within psychology, i also acknowledge that the previous research in psychology has been useful. Psychology and feminist researchers have generated some extremely important work that has quantitatively and qualitatively highlighted and, challenged gender norms in ways that have unsettled many androcentric assumptions about 'woman's place in man's life cycle' (Gilligan, 1993, p.5). Nevertheless, much of this literature is premised on a positivist assumption that knowledge accumulates and progresses understandings of truth. Much of the qualitative and quantitative literature in the social sciences is either based on an empiricist rationale that presumes that its research practises can, at some level, describe The Truth with a morally and politically neutral lens, or, at the very least, that researchers' descriptions of 'other' populations (like women, indigenous peoples) supplement the male/white mainstream by providing a 'diversity' of voices. However, as long as mainstream psychology (and i include some feminist accounts) continue to be founded on a search for the Truth, (even if this involves supplementing research with new and previously marginalized voices), these approaches often presume that these research findings can be neutral depictions of individuals rather than morally and politically invented truths themselves. In this way, even 'corrective' feminist scholarship, (which has attempted to supplement androcentric psychology with women's experiences), has remained harnessed to a positivist approach that seeks to describe the truth within categories like 'women' and 'men'.

On the one hand, 'corrective' feminist psychological research challenges the mainstream on its own terms and raises the possibility, by doing 'better

science, of beating the boys at their own game. On the other hand, this tradition does not 'challenge the game itself' (Wilkinson, 1997, p.256) because it often fails to acknowledge that research findings are also part of various industries of truth re/production. It seems to me that the unenviable position for many political and feminist psychologists is to produce research that can challenge mainstream psychology not just on its own terms but also in relation to its own political terms whilst remaining acutely alert to the fact that any knowledge can become co-opted to suit the continued interests of mainstream/malestream psychology.

Even when psychological research appears simply to be presenting people's experiences or even deconstructing these 'truths', it is rarely as simple as this. Psychology does not stand outside of its subjects/objects of inquiry making notes about what is happening, why and whose interests are being served, it is active in producing accounts that can legitimate certain ways of being individuals (like an adolescent) and how these individuals relate (say, through heterocoupledness) and what tendencies individuals may have (like exhibiting at-risk behaviour). I argue that certain ways of doing Girlfriend and Boyfriend have been normalised and privileged through psychological research but in the process of contesting how these Girlfriend and Boyfriend relations have been constituted, I simultaneously argue that Girlfriend and Boyfriend relations can be done in ways that are dangerous and subversive to the 'game' itself.

Before this argument can proceed, I need to pay some attention to how academic psychologists and social researchers have constituted the terms through which heterocoupledness, adolescence, romance, risk, and gender have been discussed. To do this I have drawn from literature from within and outside of psychology, simply because knowledge does not exist in a social or academic vacuum. While academia is arbitrarily divided into disciplines, I do not believe that paying attention to only one strand of literature (like psychology) is consistent with an analysis that explores the shifting and various intersections of meaning that constitute heterocoupledness at adolescence in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The readings of the literature are selective and do not attempt to provide an overview of the vast range of literatures that intersect with the thesis topic, but they are not limited to the discipline of psychology. The selection of literatures is based on examining how academia has constituted the terms through which gender, adolescence, romance and risk have been quantitatively and qualitatively researched.

The following chapter is organised in three sections. Firstly, I read some of the literature on the history of gender in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I argue that

this 'history' has been academically constituted around the notion that gender in the colony was organised around a distinct heteropolarity and these analyses help sustain the view that staunch masculinity and supportive femininity are archetypal of Pakeha performances of gender. The second section is a reading of adolescence and risk in New Zealand/Aotearoa. I argue that adolescence has been constituted as a risky stage of development and this risk has been gendered. The third section reads some of the literature on romance and risk, and examines the deployment of heterocoupled love as socially idealised relations that are consolidated and regulated by practices that are deemed non-normative and therefore 'risky', especially to adolescent females.

Throughout I scrutinise how particular meanings about gender and risk have been associated with Pakeha heterocoupledness. I argue that Pakeha femininity at adolescence has been constituted around relationships and the risks of being female, and that Pakeha masculinity has been constituted around notions of independence and the appearance of inviolability. Together these terms through which gender, risk, romance, and heterocoupledness at adolescence have been constituted have often operated to reify hierarchical and dichotomous gender power relations. Just as the categories 'women' and 'men' have been conceived as objects that carry certain natural, social, or even cosmically ordained traits, the subcategories of heterosexual Girlfriend and Boyfriend have been reified as natural and normal power relations, where young women begin to nurture and labour for love-based relationships and young men begin to discover and exercise their supposedly 'instinctual' sex drives. Further, these reified gender power relations impose an order of explanation upon the way Girlfriends and Boyfriends are both researched and performed so that the contradictions, mutability, and arbitrariness of these relations is often obscured. The literature is replete with examples of attempts to explain why young men and women make the choices they do and, moreover, how young men and women can be controlled in their apparently natural development towards heterosexual adulthood. The following is an attempt to disturb these assumptions about why and how young men and women practise safety and risk in heterocoupledness at adolescence. To begin this project, I address the literature that has been concerned with gender in colonial Aotearoa/New Zealand.

EUROPEAN GENDER IN COLONIAL AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Much of the historical writing on the colonial history of Aotearoa/New Zealand, uses archetypes of gender power relations that, in turn, inform the ways that contemporary heterocoupledness is thought about and practised. Historically there are a few general 'truths' that might be agreed. Māori and New Zealand/Aotearoa were colonised by Great Britain and settled by mainly English people in the 19th century. However, these truths have also been embroidered with various stories about the European immigrant populations gendered and age characteristics. Tales of staunch, independent masculinity have been told based on the notion that the 'unsettled' landscape of New Zealand/Aotearoa demanded these qualities from men. Women immigrants have often been characterised in direct contrast to this view of toughness and although feminist scholars like Raewyn Dalziel (1977) have portrayed women as independent, largely this independence has been conceived in relation to men.

Many historical analyses of gender have focussed on the sex ratio imbalance between males and females in the colony and have extrapolated that gender relations were distinctly polarised between singular forms of masculinity and femininity. Charlotte Macdonald (1999) argues that historians have tended to depict the numerical dominance of males in colonial Aotearoa/New Zealand as having a 'fatal impact' on gender relations. She argues that this sex-ratio imbalance was common to many frontiers and was neither unique to New Zealand/Aotearoa nor as pronounced as it was in other colonies like Australia, but historians have tended to focus on the sex ratio imbalance as creating a masculinist basis of colonial culture. Macdonald has summarised the two views on the impact of a masculinist culture on New Zealand women as follows:

The unlikely conjunction of an apparent sympathy towards women's political emancipation within a masculinist society has long been a historical puzzle. One set of answers stresses the innovative and improvising character of these

'new' societies. The disparity between numbers of men and women resulted in more permeable gender boundaries. A diametrically opposed argument stresses the intensification of gender distinctions and the enhanced value of the feminine in a situation where gender divisions were made more conspicuous by the relative scarcity of women (1999, p.32).

Although a sex-ratio disparity was a feature of early colonial societies (like Aotearoa/New Zealand), Macdonald suggests that the meanings, (like the views quoted above), attached to the sex-ratio disparity need to be scrutinised. In particular she questions the assumption made by many historians that populations based on a numerical gender imbalance were abnormal and those that were numerically balanced were therefore 'normal'. When historians focus on the numerical dominance of males they also represent power as if it operated purely from a numerical basis. A further consequence of this historical theorising about the 'fatal impact' on colonial gender power relations is that it promotes singular representations of both femininity and masculinity. In the next two subsections i will examine these 'singular' constitutions of the 'good keen man' and the 'good clean woman' in writings on the history of Pakeha gender relations.

Claiming the Good Keen Man: Pakeha Masculinity

According to Phillips' (1987) research the largest group of emigrants from Victorian Britain in the 1800's were young and predominantly male. In 1864, 44.5% of Pakeha settlers were aged between 21 and 40, with over half of this group being male (Phillips, 1987). Whether these 21-40 year olds would have defined themselves as 'young' or whether the social context of the time defined them as such is questionable. Nevertheless, once settled, many of these migrants continued or began to have children, so that some settlements had populations where at least half were under 12 years of age and up to two thirds were under 21 years (Olssen, 1999). Olssen comments that researchers have only recently started to focus on relations between European immigrants and Māori. In general, historical accounts of the sex-ratio disparity have been based on European figures that exclude Māori-Pakeha intimate relationships (Olssen, 1999). This conspicuous absence in historical research communicates the racist assumption that the colony's European sex-ratio imbalance was of primary importance. As a consequence of the elevation of the European sex-ratio imbalance, European-Māori intimate relationships have therefore been positioned as a vehicle for ethnic assimilation and as an implicit impediment to the establishment of an exclusively white, European population.

The elevation of the European sex-ratio imbalance is often reiterated through researchers' quotations from early census data. According to the first census of the colony in 1851, the ratio between male and female Europeans significantly favoured males (Phillips, 1987). The lowest ratio was recorded in 1861 when out of a European population of 99021, there were approximately six females to every ten males. The cities tended to have a more equal gender ratio, but the rural environs of bushy back blocks, sheep stations, and mining centres were predominately inhabited by young males. According to Phillips, this created a particularly youthful masculinist culture.

Until the 1890's the effect of this age distribution was to accentuate even further the values and institutions of young adults, especially young men. Youth males were proportionately more significant in the society. They demanded more of society's time and resources in the satisfaction of their needs. Pubs and lodging houses would come before old people's homes or kindergartens (p.11).

Phillips represents the numerical dominance of the young European male in colonial New Zealand/Aotearoa as a significant force in the shaping of early colonial and later mythologized versions of Pakeha masculinity. The version of European masculinity in the early to mid 1800's that Phillips sketches is of a solitary frontier male who lived a peripatetic existence, worked as a 'jack of all trades' (including mining, whaling, deforestation, milling, fencing, building) and had a strong loyalty to the bonds of male 'mateship'. As Phillips points out, these ideals of 'mateship' and labouring to colonise the land, also fed into the rationale that colonialism would help to reaffirm a staunch masculinity through demonstrations of physicality.

As evidence for his argument, Phillips recalls Charles Hursthouse's published volumes of advice to emigrants in 1857. Hursthouse warned that the rise of industrialisation in Britain would increase the possibilities of urban and sedentary work that both men and women could equally carry out. Hursthouse entreated men to return to their competition with nature and cast off any resemblance to women that industrialised work might bring. Phillips quotes from Hursthouse who stated that emigration;

... is a career which calls up pluck, bottom, energy, enterprise, all the masculine virtues. The feeble-minded, the emasculate, the fastidious, the timid, do not emigrate; they bow their necks to the yoke, ply the distaff, and spin wealth for the great at home. It is the strong and the bold who go forth to subdue the wilderness and conquer new lands (1987, p.5).

Accordingly working class male colonists were entreated to endure the gruelling and physically demanding tests of 'pluck, bottom, energy, enterprise' involved with emigrating to a new British colony. Hursthouse was selling emigration as a way for working class men to claim a status that the increasingly urban and industrialised context of Britain had already reserved for the privileged classes and bourgeois. As these immigrant men began 'subduing the wilderness

and conquer[ing] new lands', an image of a particularly hardened masculinity became valorised. Rather than citing examples of the kind of masculinity that was promoted to immigrant men, however, a generation of historians have instead explained this staunchness as due to the 'harsh' (that is, uncolonised) physical environment of Aotearoa (Macdonald, 1999). Yet to represent this hardened masculinity as being formed in response to the physical environment of New Zealand is also to assume that it operated without reference to the process of Western imperialism and industrialisation. Connell (1995) goes even further and argues that masculinity developed, not in response to the environment nor as part of the activities of colonialism, but that a conquering masculinity was integral to the very processes of Western imperial expansion.

Either way the image of the hardened frontier man has become a cultural archetype of 'real' masculinity in Aotearoa. As a cultural archetype, hardened masculinity soon bore little relation to the material conditions of most immigrant men who towards the 1880's became less involved with activities that involved 'subduing the wilderness'. Macdonald (1999) has argued that this notion of hardened masculinity became less commonly experienced by men after the 1880's (when participation in whaling, mining and deforestation waned) and has instead resided in the mythology that surrounds a culture of European/Pakeha masculinity. For instance, Macdonald mentions such mythic depictions as Mulgan's, 'Man Alone' (1949) in the 1930's where solitary independence is glorified; Barry Crump's 1960 book, 'A Good, Keen Man', and the contemporary beer commercials like Speight's 'Southern Man' that emphasise that 'real men' value rural life with mates, dogs, and beer, over women and urban life.

The conquering body of the hardened frontiersmen is not the only symbol of European masculinity to have been important in Aotearoa/New Zealand, nevertheless, it has remained a recurrent theme in the creation of our history. As Macdonald (1999) notes, these images of pioneering masculinity were not the only expressions of masculinity and, as increasingly fewer men were involved with the activities of colonisation, the reality soon became legend. As Macdonald also points out, while Phillips' analysis of masculinity in Aotearoa/New Zealand was important, other researchers have noted that similar patterns of masculinity were recruited in other colonial settlements and are perhaps not necessarily peculiar to Aotearoa/New Zealand masculinities. What is of particular interest, is how the state used various versions of masculinity to promote its interests. When colonising New Zealand was of major importance, an archetype of the hardened

rural worker was promoted. When the colony was expected to economically enrich Britain through agriculture production, the governance of New Zealand became more of an issue and a moral panic over men who failed to settle down into stable modes of economic production, like farming and reproduction in married family units, was mobilised. These moral panics focussed on men's violence, excessive drinking and use of prostitutes (Phillips, 1987). As I shall discuss later, 'good' (European) women were to become crucial in the political attempts to settle these apparently hardened young men. Once settled into productive (economic) citizens however Phillips provides examples of how politicians and the media utilised the archetype of the hardened but settled man in order to enlist European men to fight in World War I in what was cast as a patriotic defence of the Empire. At the same time, Māori men were encouraged to enlist in separate battalions as a way of expressing their masculinity as 'warriors' (Connell, 1995). To this date, New Zealand/Aotearoa has used the idea of the conquering male body to justify (for the protection of home, country, democracy, Mother England...) sending more young men per head of population to foreign wars than any other country in the world (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1990).

The archetype of the hardened colonial male can also find resonance in the early promotion of, and the later moral panics about, alcohol consumption in New Zealand/Aotearoa. Alcohol has a long history of being associated with masculinity in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Phillips depicts alcohol consumption as a test of manhood. The 'beer barons' soon established various public bars and drinking houses in the colony and men were known to partake in drinking binges on their few days off from work. In the early to mid 1880's public bars were an integral part of most early settlements, and from all accounts, many men spent their money within drinking establishments. Drinking on days off was a popular activity but it was to become a focus for moral concern that linked the drunkenness of men to violence and the use of prostitutes. In the late 1800's males were encouraged by the temperance movement and government reformers keen on establishing a more economically stable and governable labour pool to conquer their over indulgence in alcohol through 'self control'. Phillips (1987) notes that the temperance movement participated in the promotion of 'real men' who wield their inner strength by refusing the temptation of alcohol binges. Again, some historians have linked concerns with the moral decay of young male colonialists and their drinking behaviours with the sex-ratio disparity without paying much attention to the way the economy of early Aotearoa/New Zealand (including the alcohol industry) was being set up in line with the capitalism of

Western Europe. Dalziel (1977) has argued that the population disparity between male and female colonialists created the 'special circumstances' for gaining women's suffrage in 1893 but this was a 'conservative victory' in that it signalled a 'triumph of domesticity and a reward for dutiful womanhood'. I agree with Dalziel that by encouraging alcohol temperance, the suffrage movement also supported the colonial governments' moves to settle men into a particular economic and social system, it just so happened that women's moral guardianship and labour also allied with these purposes quite well. Nevertheless, I would stop short at attributing these 'special circumstances' wholly to the sex-ratio imbalance.

Contradictorily, while alcohol temperance stressed the importance of male self-control it did not promote this message when it came to resisting the apparent temptations of women. Pakeha men were depicted as particularly weak willed when it came to women, and especially when drunk. For instance, in order to reduce men's drinking, dancing girls were prohibited from public bars in 1860's Otago (Olssen, 1999). Later, in 1893, barmaids were made illegal in an attempt to make pubs less alluring and conducive to the male rituals of getting drunk (Phillips, 1987). During the Great War, New Zealand soldiers were not administered with prophylactics, although the Prime Minister of the day thought it unrealistic to expect chastity from soldiers and he instead declared that 'the most objectionable types of women should be cleared from the streets' (Phillips, 1987, p. 188). In Aotearoa/New Zealand the British Contagious Diseases Act applied; prostitutes could be medically inspected and detained if they were suspected of having venereal disease (Phillips, 1987, p.70). Rather than directly challenge male drinking and sexual practices (the proclaimed justification for these 'reforms') females, particularly prostitutes, were instead targeted for regulation and restriction.

There is a stark contradiction between the image of the staunch frontiersmen who colonised New Zealand in harsh conditions and in denial of their own physical pain, and the image of men with 'conquering' bodies being lead astray by women and alcohol. While immigrant men were portrayed as reclaiming masculinity by conquering the new land of Aotearoa, they were also regarded as in need of the ameliorating moral influence of good, clean, (European/Pakeha), women.

Importing the Good C(l)ean Woman: Pakeha Femininity

Concern about the sex-ratio disparity also informed the rationale for encouraging women to immigrate to the new colony of New Zealand. In the 1840's, there were far more women than men in Great Britain and Ireland, whilst the colonies were experiencing a reverse sex-ratio disparity (Macdonald, 1990, p.7). There was a concern about replenishing colonial populations with British 'blood', along with dismay at the unruly behaviours of colonial men. Charlotte Macdonald (1990), in her book *'A Woman of Good Character'* quotes from a commentator of the time who recorded that:

[s]uch an inflow [of women] to the colonies...would be like the transfusion of blood from one dying of congestion, to one languishing for the vital fluid (p.8).

The vast majority of women who immigrated were young and because of the sex-ratio disparity, historian James Bellich described New Zealand as a 'bride's paradise' (cited in Macdonald, 1999, p.18). New Zealand historians have argued that immigrant women's opportunities were enhanced by the sex-ratio imbalance. Further, it has been argued, for example, that women were able to use their 'scarcity' as leverage for political, economic, and social status, although Macdonald goes on to ask quite pointedly: 'Are existing arguments about the impact of the sex ratio sufficiently robust to support the edifices built on them?' (p.22). Similarly, the notion that women won political opportunities (like enfranchisement) by capitalising on depictions of their natural moral and domestic superiority may only represent a hegemonic set of capitalist inspired, middle and upper class-based ideals, rather than capturing anything of the context specific social practices of the day. One of the class-based ideals that increasingly gained social credibility in the middle to late 1800's both here and in Western Europe was the promotion of the nuclear family.

As part of the general moves to enhance colonial governance within New Zealand, women were expected to help settle (marry) itinerant men who were becoming the target of social policy reforms that aimed to turn 'tramps into taxpayers' by advancing the idealised institution of the nuclear family (Olssen, 1999, p.48). Increasingly the European family was being reconstituted as nuclear (as opposed to extended family forms where the boundaries between living and working were often blurred) and marriage was becoming formalised through church and state institutionalisation (Olssen, 1999). In 1829, Wakefield wrote that he considered the ideal colonists should be young, married and without children. Later Wakefield:

concluded that a great excess of single young men made frontier societies pathological. He now recognised that the division of labour between married men and their wives enhanced the efficacy and value of men's work and he predicted that the success of his scientific scheme would make 'The colony...an immense nursery' (Olssen, 1999,p.40).

The family would not only be entered into through state and church sanctioned marriages but also through a gendered division of labour that placed women within the private where the reproduction of new colonists would take place. The moral structure of the family and, therefore, society was being associated with women and femininity and for this reason only certain women were regarded as having suitable character for what amounted to nation building. As a response to the sex-ratio imbalance (both here and inversely experienced in Great Britain) women were recruited as immigrants to the colonies but only certain women were encouraged to make the voyage. The passages offered to women at the time reflect the colonial companies criterion:

eligible SINGLE FEMALES above Twelve and not exceeding Thirty-Five Years of Age; who must be sober, industrious and of good moral character (Macdonald, 1990, p.1).

The preferred young women were of breeding age with moral characters that befitted the ideals of the day: sober, hard working and 'of good moral character'. Community organisations in Britain were also concerned with the moral character and welfare of young women emigrating. Of the organisations concerned with the welfare of young women emigrating, the British Ladies Female Emigrant Society (BLFES) established in 1849 is of most interest. According to Macdonald (1990) this organisation provided resources, including 'matrons to

supervise groups of young women on immigrant ships' because, according to the BLFES, travelling alone meant being 'without their natural protectors' (p.8). Although they may leave the shores of Great Britain with 'good moral characters', when alone and without the protection of husbands, young women were regarded as particularly vulnerable to corruption despite simultaneously being recruited on the basis of their ability to breed and work hard. No doubt women on board these early settler ships were often subject to abuse from men on board 'who frequently acted in a predatory manner towards girls and young women on the ships' (1990, p.14). However, abuse against young women also acted to compound the presumption that single, young women were particularly vulnerable, just as it does today. Not surprisingly the response to women's unsafety was to further regulate their conditions as a way to protect them.

These concerns for women's safety were echoed in the colonial government's policy that ships be segregated into single female, single male and married couples' compartments. Like Noah's Ark, the colonial settlers who arrived in Aotearoa were divided by marital status, but still, according to the notion of two by two, go the 'sexes'. The assumption of the time was that the placement of single men and women together could only lead to 'one thing'. Contradictorily, single migrant women, whilst being apparently protected by separation, were also expected by the colonial government to be able to manage the duties of hard labour in a new frontier. Women's vulnerable characters were assumed, at the same time that women's hard labour and sexual services as wives was expected. While on the ships single women were in need of protection from single and predatory young men, yet, at the same time, they were expected to marry single and out-of-control young men in the colonies. Once ashore immigrant women were assumed to be all ready unsafe and yet strong enough to confront the vicissitudes of domestic labour and to eventually marry the hardened men of the colony.

Although women were expected to be of good moral character, the single women who came to Aotearoa/New Zealand were also regarded as morally suspect for travelling alone (Macdonald, 1990). Those that sponsored single women's passages scrutinised them to ensure their good moral character.

Overall there was an:

expectation that single women (and women in general) would act as the moral currency for the new colonial societies (Macdonald, 1990, p.17).

The good character of colonial women was expected to show itself in the practice of domestic paid work and in marriage to colonial men. Overall, a discourse of women as good moral characters situated women as moral redemptionists in the new colony.

In the late 1800's in Aotearoa/New Zealand a discourse of the domestic and redemptive duties of women was dominant, just as it was in Britain at the time. European women were constructed *in relation* to men and as natural born nurturers of children, the nation, and the European 'race'. In moves to redeem men from the uneven sex-ratio that was claimed as the cause of frontiersmen visiting prostitutes and drinking excessively, the temperance and women's suffrage movements joined forces. From the middle to late 1800's the suffrage movement began to swell. The support for enfranchisement by the government of the day, however, was not solely concerned with the issues of gender equality. The vote for women was assumed to translate into two votes for every white, married man (Phillips, 1987).

The right of women to vote was granted in 1893, when Aotearoa/New Zealand became the first nation state to provide national enfranchisement. However, the vote of married women was assumed (by male politicians) to be merely mirroring their husbands' political voices (Phillips, 1987). The assumption prevailed despite feminist commentators of the day demanding that women's concerns be represented within the government of the day (see Macdonald, 1993). Just as the discoursing of women as natural born carers was used to enlist women in the provision of domestic and moral work for their frontier husbands, women's vote was undercut by the assumption that their vote would enlist more male (particularly, married, settled and taxpaying) voices in the representative democracy of New Zealand/Aotearoa.

These reformulations of femininity and masculinity were not necessarily unique to the colonisation of Aotearoa. Macdonald (1999) comments that: youth and age, male and female were (and are) associated with the young colony and the old country – the language of the two places is contoured by age and gender (p.20).

The young male colonialists were seen as being in conflict with the land and Māori; they were also depicted as being led astray by alcohol and 'objectionable' women but redeemable by European women of good moral characters. The youth of the men was not constituted as the cause of male temptation, rather it was the lack of the supposedly mediating influence of women and the abundance

of drink. Formal education for adolescents was not a mainstream experience at a time when young people were more likely to be in working with and/or for their families. Although youth was a recognised group of people, they were largely not situated as the cause of colonial 'problems'. Instead the paramount construct around which migrant populations were characterised was through the sex-ratio disparity and its intersection with the division of labour and morality. For the young male colonialists, the labours against the land were resulting in rapid deforestation for pasture and mining, but the contest with their male selves, according to the temperance movement among others, was being lost (Phillips, 1987). Self-control became the mark of a 'real man' and the labour of 'good' European women was recruited for the moral sustenance and redemption of Pakeha men as well as the reproduction of colonial peoples.

GENDERED ARCHETYPES OF MARRIAGE AND HETEROCOUPLEDOM

As shiploads of young women arrived in Aotearoa, tales of young bachelors waiting in docks hoping to catch a glimpse of their future sweetheart have made their way into romantic mythology (Macdonald, 1990). Whether myth or reality a heterosexual imperative underwrote the colonial push to import women to marry colonial men. The view of New Zealand as a 'bride's paradise' has most recently been disputed by Macdonald (1999) who argues that young women did not necessarily travel to New Zealand/Aotearoa solely for marriage but also to experience independence and adventure. She argues that marriage did not occur at an especially young age. Rather, marriage in young adulthood, for both men and women, was not unusual in either Britain or New Zealand/Aotearoa. Young women tended to marry at a slightly younger age (23) in New Zealand/Aotearoa, than in Britain (25), and tended to marry men up to four years older (rather than two years older as in Britain). Children were often born within one year of marriage in New Zealand/Aotearoa of 1800's (and this, too, was not dissimilar to British patterns). Nevertheless, the reproduction of European peoples within marriage and the family remained important in colonial New Zealand.

The institutionalisation of marriage went hand in hand with the promotion of patriarchal authority, 'a view strengthened by the Evangelical view of the family as a microcosm of the true church' (Olssen, 1999, p.40). Entry into this officially sanctioned form of the family was through marriage and this entry was initially differentiated by age and gender. Until 1933 the Marriage Act set the minimum age of consent and marriage for women at 12 and 14 for men. Since 1933, the age of consent and legal marriage was amended to 16 years for both men and women with a requirement for parental/guardian consent until 18 years. Marriage, as a legal and Christian church sanctioned institution, has operated to confer differential roles and rights on husbands and wives – which have typically

revolved around husbands' authority and wives' subservience. The demographic collection of information about the populations of New Zealanders also served to differentially locate men and women as protectors and reproducers respectively. In 1916, the Census and Statistics Amendment Act differentially defined men and women. Within the tables of households and families, men were defined according to military age, and women according to reproductive age. Until 1976 women were classified into ante-reproductive, reproductive and post-reproductive age categories (Forbes, 1995).

In the mid to late 1800's marriage operated not only as an official recognition of gendered heterocoupledness (as reproductive and protective) but also as an institution that delineated access to what have been conceived of as 'rights', like property ownership and voting. The rationale for marriage was, especially among the middle or what Wakefield termed the 'uneasy' classes (to indicate the middle class economic 'distress' in agriculture, manufacturing and commerce) in early Aotearoa was based on economic pragmatism rather than romantic ideology. Many families reportedly arranged marriages that would continue their family fortunes or maintain class status (Olssen, 1999). The church had long since advocated that consent should form the basis of marriage and in this way, Olssen claims that it was also expected that a certain amount of mutual affection should exist between prospective wives and husbands (Olssen, 1999). Just how 'consent' was constituted (by the church, the couple, the parents, the fathers, the class, the community...) and how the church's requirement for consent regulated for the appearance of affection but preserved the economic and class based imperatives may also have connections with contemporary notions of how 'choice' and 'love' can disguise the social and economic imperatives to be heterosexually coupled.

Legally sanctioned marriage was intertwined with the privileging of private property as a source of economic, class and political powers. Voting rights were granted according to property ownership and taxation. Women, for most of the 1800's, were not granted property rights. Due to the highly itinerant work patterns of colonial men, there were an increasing number of women abandoned without property or means of economic support. Public concern for these 'abandoned' women led to the enactment of the Married Women's Property Act in 1884 that granted married women property rights upon divorce, abandonment or widowhood (Macdonald, 1990). As an institution, marriage continued to be legally reinforced as the embodiment of male rights over the female body. This embodiment was illustrated by the perseverance of the law that allowed rape

within marriage until 1984, due to the presumption that husbands had conjugal 'rights'. These patriarchal notions of heterocoupledness were summarised by Sir William Blackstone's (1765-69) representation of marriage in English law:

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated or consolidated into that of her husband, under whose wing, protection or cover, she performs everything (Family Violence Prevention Co-ordinating Committee, 1991, p.128).

Heterocoupledness through marriage was associated with the suspension of women's rights in the service of men and the reproduction of humanity in exchange for apparent provision and protection under the husband's authority. In the 1800's in Europe, just as political movements for democratic rights, citizenship and women's suffrage were occurring, the scientific story about sexual difference changed from the, no less belittling, notion of sexual sameness where women were but men turned inside out, to one where women's biological difference from men was asserted and increasingly tied to the private roles of nurturance, domesticity and sexual danger (Nicholson, 1998; Segal, 1994).

In these Victorian discourses of the female body, women were always at the mercy of their wombs and their debilitating menstrual flow. Knowledge of women's spontaneous ovulation, and conception without orgasm, were used to construct women's nature as reproductive and nurturing, not sexual and passionate. Women were never free from the pressures of their sex, always in danger of provoking male sexual arousal, although essentially self-sacrificing and passive. They were *the* sex, and yet in most Victorian thinking, curiously, themselves asexual (Segal, 1994, p.75).

The Western state, law, and church has promoted marriage and the myth of the nuclear family as a social institution that could serve the economic, moral, and social conditions of a nation. State and church sanctioned marriage was not necessarily regarded as the only form of heterocoupledness in colonial New Zealand/Aotearoa. For example, Olssen (1999) cites Riddell's 1996 thesis that investigated non-conjugal unions between settler men and Māori women in the early 1800's. During the same period in Scotland, Olssen claims that a working class resistance to state mandated marriages by recognised churches was occurring. Many settlers apparently expected that the colony would provide the space to create or continue their own community practices including coupling beyond institutionalised marriage. Perhaps there were resistances to church and

state sanctioned marriages just as there was in Scotland at the time but these narratives of alternatively constituted and regulated heterocoupledness have yet to find their way into contemporary writings on the history of heterocoupledness in Aotearoa. It is likely, however, that whether heterocoupledness was or was not church/state mandated, it would have been informed by the Victorian discourses about sexual difference that helped to position women as the naturally asexual carers of children and home.

The presumption of heteropolarity or oppositional gender difference between men and women has been put to work for political purposes. In between the Great War and World War II, eugenic concerns for the reproduction and social evolution of the 'white' races used these discourses of sexual difference to promote marriage (as heterocoupledness) for the purposes of maintaining the 'blood' of the nation. Heterocoupledness, as institutionalised through marriage, was again seen as serving biological purposes of reproduction where women's moral labour could also serve 'social' interests.

As a result of industrialisation, the nineteenth and twentieth century saw an emphasis on privileging of men's responsibilities as 'providers' of a 'family wage' through paid work in the public sphere. As 'breadwinners', men were instituted as the heads of the household, the kings in their domestic castles, and women's work outside of the home was increasingly seen as threatening to these positions of authority. In contrast, women's responsibilities as mothers in the private sphere of marriage has continued to be the basis around which much of women's education and future careers have been structured. For instance, the concern for rising infant mortality rates during the Depression years was in part attributed to the unscientific practices of mothering. Truby-King, through the Plunket Society, advocated regimes that would make mothering a more 'rational' and scientific practice (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1997). Apparently, women's emotional capacities for caring also needed to be regimented according to the tenets of science which was itself based on masculinist notions of rationality. Fathers and husbands were regarded as irrelevant to the daily practices of child rearing. In a time of high unemployment when men could have (and perhaps did) become more involved, women were again targeted as primarily responsible for caring.

Similarly, in the post World War II period, women were encouraged to return to the home after occupying positions of work outside of the home, whilst the returning servicemen would be rehabilitated into society. Women did not necessarily return easily to domestic privacy, but the government sponsored 'rehabilitation schemes offered educational and work preferences to men that

were not available to women' (May, 1992, p.50). The differential status between men and women was reconsolidated in the 1950's. At this time John Bowlby's notion of 'maternal deprivation' garnered popular support for the idea that women, as mothers, were solely responsible for the physical survival and mental health of children (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978). As well as being responsible for children, women were also expected to participate in the rehabilitation of the returning soldiers (May, 1992). May quotes a Dr. Walter Reeve who advised women on how to care for the returned servicemen:

Remember that for years your men have lived too close to many people, and that their companionship has been entirely male. They find it difficult at first to adjust themselves to the opposite sex and have their freedom curtailed... don't try to hold your men too close - let them savour their freedom (May, 1992, p. 50).

Dr. Reeve's advice was for women to let the return servicemen 'savour their freedom' and this not only inscribed married life and women's company as particularly stifling, it also positioned women's unfreedom as a given condition of domesticity. Despite this assumption many New Zealand women resisted efforts to return them to private domesticity and argued that they had very little role in public decision-making as their voices were often neglected (May, 1992). The international context of the post World War II period saw a rise in discourses of human rights and these included the 'right' of women to equal opportunities with men. In 1949 in France, Simone de Beauvoir published 'The second sex' in which she argued that 'one is not born but rather one becomes woman'. In this text she argues that women, as a category, have been conveniently defined as other in comparison to the central, unquestioned and definitive norm of men. Concomitantly, the 1950's post World War II saw an explosion of discourses that promoted Western, representative, democracy in the style of acquisitiveness through capitalistic wealth production and technological progress. Within this context the 'housewife' was barraged with mass-marketed, 'labour saving' devices that were advertised as serving to improve her efficiency as a happy little housewife and mother. At the same time any woman who was unhappy with her suburban 'bliss' could call on the pharmaceutical industry to remedy 'her' problems with a halcyon-induced dose of passivity. In the US, Betty Friedan (1963) spoke about the so-called suburban neuroses of women as the 'problem with no name':

Women, insisted Friedan, were informed from the cradle by a multiplicity of sources that happiness lay in homemaking, in love, marriage, children and

self-denial. Yet as she observed and as numerous women stated, even though these prescriptions may have been diligently adhered to by a majority of women, many of them did not *feel* happy with their way of life. And in the absence of any public and legitimated knowledge about the widespread phenomena of female disillusionment, even despair, women in their isolation resorted to blaming themselves for their own inadequacies (Spender, 1983, p.367).

The second wave feminist movements began to emerge from the mid 1960's onwards and began to challenge the gendering of women as less than men. The material and psychological labour that women put into propping up men within interpersonal relations and in wider interactions with social and economic systems of patriarchy came under attack as many different feminists began to identify and challenge these forms of exploitation. Yet these movements, particularly the rather incremental reformism of the liberal feminism, were often dominated by white, often heterosexual, middle class feminist concerns. Many of these feminisms, whether they defined themselves as liberal, cultural, radical, socialist, lesbian or not, often and quite troublingly, claimed to be speaking for women as a group. Black feminists like Angela Davis and Audre Lorde argued that while sexism is unacceptable, it does not exist apart from racism. Rather than challenging sexism with, what Spender (1983) describes as, an attitude of 'indifference' to men, these feminists stressed the tensions and commonalities between systems of oppression:

As a people we must certainly work together to end our common oppression... Black male consciousness must be raised so that he realises that sexism and woman-hating are critically dysfunctional to his liberation as a Black man because they arise out of the same constellation that engenders racism and homophobia, a constellation of intolerance of difference. (Lorde, 1983, cited in Segal, 1994, p.60).

Amidst these feminisms, women's relationships with men, particularly their heterosexual coupledness, came under increasing scrutiny. The second wave feminist movements were diverse not only in their conception of why women were oppressed but also in their arguments about how these systems of patriarchy were conducted in the everyday lives of women. Among the many provocative arguments levied by feminists, heterosexuality became problematised both as an institution of patriarchy and as an everyday, lived experience of unequal power relations with men. An important part of this early feminist theorising were the connections between women's consciousness, experiences, and the wider public

structuring of these relations. In this way women's experiences of their bodies and sexualities were linked with the political structuring of choices – hence, Adrienne Rich's term, compulsory heterosexuality. Heterosexuality was regarded as not only compulsory but as serving to induct women into giving voluntary support for men. These arguments were not new. Accordingly, Spender (1983) calls on the writings of John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor, Florence Nightingale and Virginia Wolf, who all recognised that:

...it was not sufficient for women to be slaves but that they must be willing slaves, the implication being that men do not feel good when obliged to be seen to use force to make women serve them; better by far to have it believed that women choose to cater to men's needs and that men themselves are not responsible for the resultant gross inequalities. Under the circumstances the argument that women have only themselves – or their nature – to blame, becomes almost credible (p.372).

Heterosexuality was regarded by many feminists as intricately connected to the subordination of women and the support of patriarchy yet as Carol Smart (1996a) points out, this approach to heterosexuality has meant that it has become increasingly difficult for straight feminists to speak about their pleasures and desires in heterosexuality without feeling guilty. As availability of the contraceptive pill increased in the late 1960's, some women began to practise a sexuality that could be separated from the possibility of motherhood, and moreover, the material and status protection that marriage offered (Segal, 1994). However, the chance for women to explore their sexuality was part of a discourse of sexual revolution but, as Segal points out, was often depicted as the mirror image of the 'roaming, casual and carefree boy, the vagabond apparently even more determined than herself to avoid the ties that bind' (p.11). She also recalls Elizabeth Wilson's comments that for most women (hetero)sexuality was still largely tied to the context of marriage.

i want to pause at this point as a way of disrupting the linear form that this text is taking. As i have stated previously, history and knowledge are not cumulative yet, as my rendition of the historical representation of gender and heterocoupledness in Aotearoa/New Zealand continues, it is beginning to mimic the very form that i am trying to resist. Indeed i have assumed that in order for the present day conditions to be understood i need to sew a thread from the past to the present in order to illuminate these connections. The thread however is not

continuous; it has ruptures and it does not lead to a 'now' without the present already being part of its making. History is with us now as a series of constructions and often these constructions have not only excluded women's voices from History, they have also cast women in suitably androcentric and 'othered' lights (Spender, 1982).

Nevertheless, this section about gender and heterocoupledness demonstrates that different stories over time have been attached to conditions that have, to a more or less extent, been regarded as stable qualities of the human individual and these stories have been gendered in ways that privilege men and deny women access to define their own 'freedom'. Although i disagree with any categorisations made about groups, like men and women, these categorisations have operated to effectively reify the very myths about men's superiority and women's inferiority, men's rationality and women's irrationality. i agree with Dale Spender (1983) that a history of feminist resistance and thinking has been silenced or at least filtered through agencies of knowledge (like the psychological) so that men's stories have more often come to dominate and organise a Western social order. i also agree with Spender that when women's stories are denied, when women's history of resistance and argument are written out of history, that it is women who often set out to re-invent our resistance again, and again, and again...never realising that other women over time have named the 'problem with no name' in many different ways.

But i also believe that by speaking of women as a group, as a diverse but nevertheless homogenous category, is to mimic the very epistemological and ontological system of generalised denigration that has operated to expel, exterminate and subjugate women of various classes, ethnicities, ages and abilities. i believe this has, in part, facilitated the recuperation of 'women' as a group into power relations that change the style and appearance of the narratives about women's nature, nurture, cultures, voices or whatever in order to support the substance of privileging of 'men' over 'women'.

The gendering of women has had various stories attached to it, yet femininity has been recuperated into the very system of gender power relations that i would like to resist – namely, the categorisation, hierarchization and privileging of One over the Other. These categorisations allow the binary codes of men over women, white over black, rich over poor to retain some measure of credibility. To call on these binaries in defence of the othered is also to be contained by the limits already set by the binary. i will therefore continue with the following question underpinning my inquiry: am i critiquing gender power

relations in a way that supports the recuperation of the substance of gender power relations based on the dichotomous categorisation and therefore the reification of 'women' and 'men'?

As a child i cannot remember the (hetero) sexual revolution, but I do remember reading the yellow sign on the classroom blackboard that stated 'Girls Can Do Anything'. i also remember wondering what i was not allowed to do before the invention of those little yellow mantras. While challenging gender roles and equality of opportunity were central to the popularised liberal feminist movement, the radical-separatist movements also challenged what it meant to 'be a woman' (Macdonald, 1993). Discussions and demonstrations against rape, domestic violence, sexism, and the unequal pay gap between men and women became issues of public concern and debate. It was largely women activists and writers who took responsibility for raising questions about the gendering of the ethics of care and fairness within the private as well as public contexts.

The 1980's was characterised by what Faludi (1991) called a 'backlash' against feminism along with a rise in free market and new-right capitalist economics that helped to further position the apparently 'free individual' as most responsible for themselves. The common sense of the time was that women had now reaped the benefits of feminism, had 'equal' opportunity, and, therefore, could only blame themselves if they failed to take up these apparently 'equal' opportunities. In the pop culture of the eighties however, women were again represented according to the bifurcated virgin/whore subject, despite Madonna's performances that subverted the sexual double standard that good girls don't, and bad girls do. Women as a group were also divided into Career and Family women. Susan Faludi (1991) illustrated that the cultural and media representations of women in the West were constructed around the notion that 'Career Women' (a new breed?) would find limited emotional success when separated from home and hearth. Tales of successful career women returning to the home abounded in the media and reiterated an old message: the public realm was indeed 'no place for a woman'. As globalisation continued to colonise through the media, the market and the values of Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 1980's, i am in no doubt that these American tales found resonance with many New Zealand women and men. While more and more women have inhabited the public sphere, the responsibility for caring for the private realm has also remained with women. The public/private has remained split according to gender norms that position women as nurturers, and place heterosexuality and heterocoupledness as central to both women's concerns and ambitions.

In the nineties concerns have been raised about the absence of men from active childcare, and these concerns are often voiced in relation to more women participating in the public workforce and mothering without the assistance of men. Again, the idea that too much 'feminine' influence is corrosive to manhood is revived from the colonial rhetoric of reclaiming masculinity through conflict with nature, but this time the focus is on young men's development. According to some commentators, boys are disadvantaged by excessive feminine influence. For instance, Australian author, Stephen Biddulph, (1995) attributes the apparently new phenomena of the feminine school environment to boys' problems with academic achievement and social adjustment. All of this concern is raised just when young women are beginning to do well in a range of academic subjects. Again, the gaze is turned to inspect femininity rather than the masculinity that is supposedly not achieving.

When looking back on the history of gender and heterocoupledness as it has been portrayed in Aotearoa/New Zealand, men's roles have tended to be limited to protective and providing duties rather than being directly responsible for the upbringing of children. Whether fighting in wars or breaking in the land, whether working for a wage or making public policy, men's responsibilities for caring have been limited yet forcefully applied to women. Contemporary narratives of gender have positioned women's presence (and therefore men's absence) from childcare (but strangely not housework) as a new social problem. Yet, for most of the twentieth century, men's presence in childcare has been largely as either the expert advisor, like Truby-King or Bowlby, or as the distanced father figure whose caring might, at best, be expressed in the form of the 'fun dad' (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1997). Overall, the constitution of the 'feminine' as responsible and even to blame for caring has remained largely believable. Whether morally redeeming the drunken frontier male, rehabilitating the returning soldier, mothering the nation's children, managing the domestic sphere, claiming sexual and social 'freedom', questioning social norms about women and men, or in attempting the current vogue for work/home life 'balance', women have been represented and reconstituted as duty bound to care.

In summary, European/Pakeha masculinity has been represented and mythologized as the repudiation of the 'feminine' and the recapturing of the 'real man' who acts in conflict with the forces of nature as a staunch and solitary figure. Conquering the land, Māori and the male body, has been conjoined with the importation of women in order to inspire male morality, provide domestic care and reproduce the European 'race'. European/Pakeha feminine character has

been represented as duty bound to care, mostly for other's well being but also to guard against moral corruption and unsafety. Single, European women of 'good moral characters' boarded ships for New Zealand amidst warnings of their vulnerability from the predation of emigrant men, but once ashore, these same vulnerable women entered a 'bride's paradise' where they were married off to those single young males who were running amok. According to Macdonald (1999) for many historians, the masculinist culture and even the enfranchisement of women in early Aotearoa/New Zealand can be explained by the sex-ratio disparity, and Macdonald argues that this edifice needs to be questioned.

Many of these historical representations have attempted to explain the gendering of Aotearoa without reference to the economic, political, and cultural climate of the times both here and in Western Europe. Moreover, it would seem that whilst trying to describe and explain the gendering of men and women in Aotearoa, a heteropolarity has been assumed. In documenting the history of gender and heterocoupledness, contemporary historians have utilised the available information (archives from literate commentators and diarists of the times) in ways that are themselves still being re-written and contended. In many ways these histories lend support to the view that gender has been constituted across time in ways that change to suite the political and economic interests of the ruling and often masculine elite (Segal, 1994). Overall, this history has been academically constituted around the notion that gender in the colony was organised around a distinct heteropolarity and whilst highlighting the way gender has been used for political and economic purposes, these analyses help sustain the view that staunch masculinity and supportive femininity are not just archetypical but primary to Pakeha performances of gender. Other factors, like youth, might have informed the gendered practices of the day and although Phillips notes the youth of immigrants, it appears to have received little research attention. In the next section, I turn to examine contemporary discussions of adolescence that, in a similarly heteropolarising vein, have utilised gender polarity to attach femininity to risk as danger and masculinity to risk as challenge.

ADOLESCENCE AND RISK

There's no reasoning with lust

...Mother and daughter... took to an adopted daughter with a vacuum cleaner pipe over her affair with a married man who'd left his wife and already had a pregnant girlfriend.

Warned to stay away from this charmer, she'd still gone to his house one night. When the pregnant girl reported this to [the young woman's mother and sister], they went to his place, assaulted the young woman, took her away forcibly, and slapped her with a jandal. And when they got her home they laid into her with the vacuum cleaner hose, cutting her hair off for good measure.

...'Oh how ghastly!' you can hear a chorus of gentle types warble. No one can

reason with the tender-hearted, any more than they can with a lust-crazed girl bent on making a fool of herself. To their minds it's better by far to watch such a girl become pregnant, like that girlfriend; to see her on to welfare automatically; to have her sink into poverty and oblivion; to watch her child grow up with all the disadvantages that entails. And why? Because of Her Freedom to Choose.

...The [mother and sister] are a reminder of another time, and of other cultures, where shame is still a potent force. And they're a reminder of what family used to mean before welfare became

the preferred option.

...Women brought shame on families, as well as themselves, by chasing ratbags, and so girls' freedom was restricted. Girls who slept around with married men were ostracised because they threatened families and therefore society itself.

We know better. We also have the second highest infant mortality rate in the developed world, we heard this week, along with one of the highest rates of teenage motherhood...

What to do about this social disaster?...

(McLeod, 2000, Sunday Star-Times, p.D5).

Rosemary McLeod's views may be peculiar to her, and, if these rather draconian views were limited to one newspaper columnist, i would remain simply dismissive. My research into the connections between risk and adolescence, particularly in relation to young women's sexuality, leads me to be not so optimistic (nor charitable). Indeed the connections between discourses of

adolescence within and without academia are also linked to the social, political and economic conditions and values of the historical period. As regards adolescence, Enright, Levy, Harris and Lapsley (1987) studied the portrayal of teenagers within two long published American journals and argued that as the economic conditions change, so too do the discourses through which adolescents are discussed. Specifically, they argue that during periods of economic depression (the 1890s and the 1930s) academic psychologists framed adolescents as less capable (because of immaturity or psychological instability) of participating in labour markets and therefore in need of longer periods of schooling. In times of War, when labour needs were greater, the narrative changed to emphasise how adolescents were more adult-like in both maturity and intelligence, and therefore more capable of participating in the labour market and the military. Many of the analyses during times of economic depression utilised a storm and stress model of adolescence to justify the containment of adolescents within social institutions. The use of the storm and stress model has also continued to underpin much contemporary theorising about youth. Even if a deficit model is not employed to refer to all adolescents, it is still used to designate certain groups of young people as 'at risk' and as intrinsically prone to certain risky behaviour.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs (2001) in New Zealand defines youth development as 'the process of young people growing up and developing the skills and attitudes they need to take part positively in society, now and in the future' (Fact Sheet Seven). The Ministry goes on to explain that this preparation for adulthood is based on a 'positive' rather than a 'deficit-model' approach because it encourages youth to 'participate in shaping their own lives'. The approach is informed by a transitional model of youth, where youth are depicted 'positively' when they are seen to be preparing to become adults with 'valued skills', who are 'connected to others and society' (through social institutions like schools/work, communities, and families), 'believe they control their fate' and 'have a stable identity'. A very linear model of youth is proposed, where positive development largely requires the adolescent to acquire the personal qualities (autonomy and responsibility) that are valued within Western, middle class, white adult cultures and have been traditionally treated as masculine traits by psychologists like Erikson (1968). On the reverse side of this fact sheet, the Ministry redefines at-risk youth as 'high need'. These young people are apparently 'high need' because they have become disconnected from 'adult controlled' environments of 'family, school/work, community' and instead remain connected to their 'peer group'. Overall, the Ministry, despite their claims to the

contrary, still utilises a storm and stress model as well as a transitional model that presumes that adolescence is about preparing for adulthood and that a failure to adopt adult values and attitudes (but not necessarily practices reserved for those with adult status) will lead to a ruined or 'hindered' future. Furthermore, while change across cultures and time is acknowledged by the Ministry, the recognition that they too are participating in the social construction of adolescence is absent. In this way their claims for producing a 'positive' model of youth development that is based on changing 'social environments' is merely rhetorical.

Karin Martin (1996) argues that the 'social construction of adolescence is based around the tightening and naturalisation of gender norms and heterosexuality' (p.12). Psychological textbooks and common sense assumptions tend to locate puberty as the hormonal stimulus for the 'natural' emergence of masculinity, femininity, and heterosexuality. This tightening of masculinity and femininity as oppositional finds its most normalised expression within heterosexuality (as an apparently natural 'rite of passage'). Further, the conflation of sexuality with gender (the presumption that sexuality emerges from the embodiment of gender) narrows the ways that heterocoupledness might be practised.

Gendered heterosexual experience and experimentation with identity, and abstract and creative thinking have been constituted as the linchpin of the adolescent (read: male) developmental experience (Erikson, 1968; Piaget, 1954). Harking back to Hall's (1904) 'storm and stress' model, adolescent experiences and experimentation have been aligned with the practice of 'risk-taking' at adolescence. Rosenthal (1992) summarises mainstream developmental psychology's description of adolescent (hetero)sexuality as being due

...to biology, specifically the onset of puberty, and to the adolescent's increasingly autonomous sense of self which leads him or her to experiment, to take risks and test boundaries (p.131).

The notion that adolescence involves experimentation by 'tak[ing] risks and test[ing] boundaries' is still conceived by many developmental psychologists as potentially negative or endangering activities that reassert a storm and stress model of adolescence (see Ayman-Nolley, & Taira, 2000). The contradiction is that adolescents are constituted as engaging with risk as part of a natural phase of development towards maturity, at the same time that these apparently natural

experiments with risk are conceived as potentially damaging to the achievement of maturity and responsibility (conventionalised as 'adult status'). As Barbara Hudson (1984) has argued:

...the problem of adolescence for teenagers is that they must demonstrate maturity and responsibility if they are to move out of this stigmatised status, and yet because adolescence is conceived as a time of irresponsibility and immaturity, they are given few opportunities to demonstrate these qualities which are essential for their admission as adults (p.37).

Engagement with risk is at once normalised and pathologised so that young people who do test the boundaries of adult responsibility and independence (like refusing to stay at school, get a job, or to sever connections with the 'wrong crowd' of peers), are more liable to be regarded as either going through a rebellious or a psychologically troubled stage. On this basis, lay and academic adult communities often claim that adolescents must be protected from themselves 'for their own good', and, as such, much of the research into risk-taking has worked to reassert power/control over the practices of adolescence. Interestingly the protection of at-risk groups is managed by those regarded as having more responsibility, knowledge, experience or expertise (like adults, teachers, parents, psychologists and counsellors) even though young people in survey after survey continually reassert that they find their friends more meaningful as companions and sources of support. (Interestingly, young people also report that their friends often share similar values to their parents (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1984)). The assumption that adolescents need protection from themselves (according to adult concerns) promotes an individualistic view of youth and sidelines a consideration of the wider power relations in which youth are situated according to class, ethnicity, and gender. In the end, the only thing 'protected' is the archetype of the searching but confused, experimental, but risk-taking youth among whom some are targeted as being more at-risk than others.

Therefore, the focus of protecting at-risk adolescents is on those who are constituted as more vulnerable. For example, Ayman-Nolley & Taira's (2000) study of six US based developmental journals between 1985 and 1995 found that 53% of the 2084 surveyed articles had an 'adolescent turmoil bias' (or a 'storm and stress' focus). Of these, risk taking and psychological abnormality accounted for a third of all topics studied. For single ethnic studies (41%), American White adolescents were most often studied in relation to the family, whilst studies of

American Blacks and Hispanics were predominantly focussed on risk-taking behaviours. White youth were represented as being less at-risk (read: less vulnerable and risky) than Black or Hispanic youth.

Similarly, young women who experiment with sex and love are caught between the discourses of adolescence and femininity so that while adolescence is about 'shifting allegiances... femininity involves the skill to make lasting relationships, with the ability to care very deeply for very few people' (Hudson, 1984, p.47). According to Hudson young women have to circumnavigate these competing assumptions by being careful not to get involved in relationships with boyfriends that are too serious, but also temper their sexual experimentation and avoid being regarded as promiscuous (by adults) or 'slag' (by peers). Male heterosexual experimentation at adolescence is rarely scrutinised in terms of risk to themselves or others, but is more likely tolerated as the natural deployment and enhancement of masculinity. Overall, women's adolescent experimentation with heterocoupledness is gendered in ways that marry sexuality to risk management; avoid a 'damaged' sexual reputation (see Lees, 1997); protect against the possibility of physical aggression by minimising, or at least, being wary of interactions with young men (White & Bondurant, 1996, p.202); control female adolescent sexuality in order to ensure a safe passage from girlhood to womanhood.

Nevertheless, whether girls who 'consent' are said to lose their chastity and be 'ruined' for all but suicide or prostitution, or whether – less colorfully – they are described as risking pregnancy and 'severe problems which may impede their opportunities to lead fulfilling adult lives,' their futures as adults have a far higher probability than those of their male counterparts of being portrayed as determined by their sexual behavior as adolescents (Nathanson, 1991, pp.208)

ROMANCE AND RISK

We now have centuries of accumulated stories, accounts, illustrations, and poems, each feeding off what has preceded, each adding its own lamination of understanding. ... Love, then, is constituent of a hyperreality. There are no means by which we can press past the enormous layers of sedimented understandings to confront the phenomenon face to face. There are no means by which 'it' can be recognized except through the standards furnished by the domain of hyperreality. There are no means by which 'it' could be characterized or expressed except in the terms offered by the present cultural constructs (Gergen, 1991, p. 122).

The 'reality' of the cultural constructs of love appears to be unspeakable beyond the 'terms' already on offer. Yet the experience of love remains highly believable and do-able for many. Romance, like love, is a slippery term that i cannot pin down in a definition. In this sense, the hyperreality of love calls on other cultural constructs like romance, (hetero) sexuality and coupledness in constituting itself. Romance has a different history of meanings from, say, desire or sexuality but they are all meanings that inform heterocoupledness. Romance then, cannot be conflated with sexuality, coupledness love, and desire. However, for pragmatic reasons, i use the term 'romance' to indicate the matrix of practices and ideas that inform Western heterocoupledness (like sexuality, gender, coupledness love, and desire). Like Pearce and Stacey (1995) i regard romance as a series of mutating scripts – as a virus that breaches boundaries, reforms itself as it passes on through contact and connection. They argue that while romance has no single underpinning narrative, romance continues to provide the 'good' reason for the Western institutions of the nuclear family, headed by the heterosexual couple who may have begun their courtship at adolescence.

In describing the typical romantic trajectory, Pearce and Stacey (1995) use the metaphors of 'encounter, transformation, negotiation and refusal' (p.38). The trajectory involves encounters between lovers who are transformed by loving and being loved, who also have to negotiate within power relations as love 'begins to end' and/or opens into new pleasures until the lover or the format of the relationship is re-fused (that is, it either ends or becomes formalised) (p.38). There are multiple romantic possibilities that young people and adults may both adhere to and reject within this trajectory of romance. Many may reject the traditional romantic trajectory that is invariably centred on a heterosexual male character that is hero, suitor and the worshipped of his maiden bride, mainly because it is seen as 'old fashioned' rather than because of its heterosexist, androcentric and Western coveting of what counts as the romantic ideal. At the same time, adults and young people may be struggling with these romantic possibilities in ways mediated by age, gender, class and ethnicity that are interlinked to the political power of being heard and believed. For instance, while adults are often involved in voicing concerns about the safety of young people's sexuality, young people's performed challenges (like young women who regard sexuality as recreation and mock the idea of love, marriage and life long partnership) are often dismissed as the dangerous ramblings of inexperienced and immature youth (Nathanson, 1991).

Along with the range of ways that romance may be constituted and practised, various conventional meanings of romance are also in circulation. Romantic fiction has often recruited notions of female servitude and suffering in the name of love. Candida Baker (1995) argues that the history of romance in Western novels is premised on the theme of women searching for the right prince. In the process, Baker notes that many of these heroines discover that romance is but an illusion with dangerous consequences where 'women come off worst' (p.3). In addition, many feminists have charged that heterosexuality has been used as a vehicle for the subordination of women (Adrienne Rich, (1960); Germaine Greer, (1970); Kate Millet, (1970); Andrea Dworkin, (1987)). Yet heterosexual love and romance remains a pervasive, albeit diverse experience, so that while:

[w]e may (as individuals, as communities, as nations) no longer believe in love...we still fall for it (Pearce & Stacey, 1995, p.12).

For some heterosexual feminists, love and romance are mutating scripts that are played out in various ways and in various relations of power that do not inevitably lead to the subordination of women to men (Smart, 1996b; Segal, 1994).

For myself, if love and romance were only conducted within static, hierarchical and oppositional gender relations, then all heterorelations would constitute all women as victims and all men as abusers. Those who refuse these binarised categorisations of their subjectivity are not necessarily suffering from false consciousness, hegemonic complicity or psychological denial. To claim that all heterosexual women are being hegemonically duped into 'sleeping with the enemy' is not only patronising but casts all women as the powerless victims of a gendered world. In contrast, some hetero-feminists claim to have struggled and performed beyond these notions, despite the cool reception that these claims have often met (see Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1993). I am not attached to the view that whatever I do as a heterosexual woman, I will be the object of abuse or at least vulnerability, within my hetero-relationships. My experiences have shown that while abuse can be part of heterocoupledness, they have also shown me that intimate relations can move beyond a straight-jacketed fixation on gender binaries. Quite simply, just as feminists have highlighted the power abuses that heterosexuality can make possible, we also need to be careful not to create totalising discourses that obscure the practices of pleasure and desire that, when left absent, can also lend support to the institutionalisation of heterosexuality as invariably oppressive and dangerous for women.

Romance, in its slippery way, is neither fundamentally good nor bad – it entices and repels, ensnares and inspires Western peoples in many different ways. The contradiction is that, while cultural promotions of romance are often plainly sexist, they may not necessarily be read as such. For instance, Jane Radway (1984) argues that although romantic fiction may utilise traditional constructs of femininity, women can also read these novels as an escape from what is considered 'real' life or as a way to entertain other romantic possibilities where the heroine is the subject and author of her own experiences of love. In a similar way, the romantic fantasies of young women may offer a safe way to enjoy the idea of being in-love, and of expressing sexuality and desire. In 'Ophelia Speaks' (1996) Sara Shandler, a woman of 16 who collected stories from young women in response to the popular book 'Reviving Ophelia' (Pipher, 1996) wrote about the transition from romantic fantasy to lived reality saying that:

In these butterfly-tummy times, we surrender more to our own emotions than to the actuality of another person. We revel safely in our own love of love without the dangers of anything too real, too scary. Fantasies can be perfect. Reality is often unbearable. Crushes are fun. They allow us a momentary escape – like reading a page-turning book or crying during a movie. We are not giggling girls without grounding, but sometimes we do need a break from our often harsh reality. Sometimes nervous queasiness and sweaty palms can be our escape (1996, p.176).

For Shandler, young women's fantasies of going out appear to be safer and more fun than the reality of 'flesh and blood boyfriends' (p.175). Fantasies, in this case, allow the performance of romance without having to interact with a reality that these young women expected would be disappointing and potentially dangerous. So while romance may be an escape from the sexism, when practised, heterosexuality is still a territory where danger is expected. Indeed, it would seem that a 'missing discourse of female desire' (Fine, 1992) is not only characteristic of some feminist theorising, sex educational programmes, and mainstream literature on sexuality and women, but is also iterated in many New Zealand students' concerns about young women. Payne (1997) concluded from sample of 850 New Zealand adults aged between 20 and 60 years of age that a discourse of protecting daughters informed the kind of experiences that adults advocated for young women. Largely, a discourse of protection was used to justify the restriction of young women's sexual freedom and their movements (in the public realm) in order to prevent male harm. It was largely assumed that young men's physicality would enable them to 'handle themselves' and therefore protect themselves from any attacks. Tellingly absent was any mention that young men may also be the perpetrators of male violence that these same people also assumed when they advocated parental restriction as protection for young women.

As female sexuality is often coded as endangering practices, feminist researchers have asked whether claims of romantic love provide a socially legitimate and safe cover for young women to express their (hetero)sexual desire (McRobbie, 1991; Walkerdine, 1984; Lees, 1993)? As yet i have found little research or stories where young men describe their romantic relationship fantasies as safer than 'reality'. It would that appear that romance offers a range of possible 'readings', including the continued entanglement with narratives that emphasise romance and relationships as a natural extension of feminine interdependency and nurturance. i think this emphasis on romance as a feminine

experience is a sexist reductionism that acts as a polite cover for directly addressing female sexuality beyond discourses of danger and protection.

Another way that the context of romance at adolescence is framed is by the underpinning assumption that adolescent development and the romantic trajectory involves progress from a less than to a final stage – from fantasy to reality, from a ‘series of casual contacts [in adolescence] to the final phase of intimacy [in adulthood]’ (Brackenridge, 1999, p.15). Erikson (1968) may have developed a life stage development model that ends at death, but the idea that development moves from stage to stage continues to locate adolescence as the main life phase where identity achievement and intimacy first emerge. According to the Eriksonian model, identity achievement normally occurs before the development of intimate relationships. However, he made an exception for young women, claiming that they must achieve intimacy before achieving identity. When teenage and adult women’s magazines focus on advising women about relationships they perpetuate this tradition of tying women’s identity to their ‘success’ in intimate relationships (Peirce, 1997; Ussher, 1997).

Current representations of adolescence employ a stage model of development where young people’s romantic interactions move from the childish to the adult, from infatuation to true love (read: adult, long term, married/cohabiting and heterosexual). Again, the female is more often associated with romance and relationships, while the male is associated with sexual experimentation. A kind of transition from fantasy to reality, from immaturity to maturity, heralds young people into romantic liaisons called ‘going out’.

In-between the context of childhood fantasy and adult reality lays the adolescent romance; the experience often called ‘puppy love’ is portrayed as both innocent and profoundly touching. Several of the young women in the interviews⁵ commented on this transition from childish/casual to adolescent/serious heterocoupledness. Anna, a seventeen-year-old Pakeha woman, noted that she had had several ‘little boyfriends’ throughout childhood, but most of her relationships began when she was in middle adolescence. Zara, a thirteen-year-

⁵ Chapters four through six present a more detailed discussion of these interviews with young women. The comments from the interviews with young women are presented in the above to introduce how ‘serious’ heterocoupledness romance was constituted by some of the young women.

old Māori woman, told me that she had had five boyfriends in her life, but could only tell her Mum about her adolescent boyfriend. When I heard about these childhood romances my first response was to regard them as trivial and perhaps even as unimportant experiences. Yet these childhood romances alerted me to the fact that romance is regarded with increasing seriousness as young people move away from Western notions of childhood innocence (Burman, 1994b) and into adolescence. Some of the young people told me that they had had several boyfriends or girlfriends as children but that their 'real' (or socially legitimated) experiences did not start until adolescence. Even over a hundred years since Freud began discussing childhood sexuality, Western society still seems reluctant to entertain the idea that sexuality, in different forms and contexts, can be part of the lifespan experience prior to adolescence. Angie, Charisse and Anna (Pakeha 15 - 17 year olds) spoke about their younger adolescent romances as being 'childish' and 'silly' while their older relationships were more 'serious'. Angie summarised the general description of what counted as 'serious' coupledness by saying that it was about:

...the idea of love and everything. All the others [Boyfriends] you were like going out with them, but yeah I think I fell in love at fifteen and a half.

Similarly, Zara and Astrid, who were thirteen and the only female Māori participants, spoke of their relationships as more casual but also limited by the social contexts of school, movies and sporting venues. Within these environments, young men and women meet in friendship groups. For Zara and Astrid the context of their thirteen-year-old relationships with men did not involve much socialising beyond the observation of their friends and adults. They spoke about going out with boyfriends in the company of their respective friendship groups. According to Zara, her relationships were not serious:

...cause like they're [boyfriends] usually shy and they walk with their friends and that and they don't come over.

These relationships were still important to Zara and Astrid, although it was expected that the serious regard for these relationships (by themselves and others) would grow along with their age.

Largely adolescent romance is constructed in Western cultures as a biological work in progress, as part of a maturational staircase towards adulthood. The closer young people's bodies are to the adult form the more likely

their experiences of romance and heterocoupledness are scrutinised according to the status quo that attempts to transfer adult norms on to adolescents. An implication of this reconstitution of adolescence as a phase that serves a stage of development that is beyond itself (namely adulthood) will invariably mean that any consideration of adolescent romance is implicitly bordered by adult concerns for how youth should experience sexuality and coupledness. For example, Parenting with Confidence (a group that arose from the Youth For Christ organisation) has produced a booklet, called 'Sex with Attitude' (Cowan, Grant, & Heilmann, 1996). This booklet has been revised since 1996 and is available in many New Zealand/Aotearoa high schools. 'Sex with Attitude' promotes the idea that young people should wait until they are older and married within heterosexual unions before they can fully enjoy sex and intimacy 'in complete safety' (p.2). Going out in is condoned but overall, the authors advise teenagers that:

...the best sex is in a loving relationship which includes trust, commitment and intimacy. That's a nice dream but that might be five, ten or twenty years away (1996, p.2).

Apparently adulthood is the only 'safe' place where sexuality and intimate relationships can be experienced. They also claim that having too many intimate relationships in adolescence will create some sort of bonding fatigue and will interfere with their ability to make lasting attachments in adulthood.

But every time you have sex, you are bonding with someone. Bond with too many people and you become like a band-aid that's been stuck and unstuck so many times, it can't stick any more. Making a long term commitment to someone may then become very difficult. Remember your sexuality is very important. It should be valued (p.7).

How ludicrous! Learning to care about people involves caring about people in a variety of relationship contexts including sexual relationships that, like our friendships, may range from the casual to the serious. Nevertheless, many would still like to prevent teenagers (and most people for that matter) from experimenting sexually, including the National party's former Minister of Youth Affairs, Tony Ryall, who stated that the government 'wanted young people to delay sexual activity, *until they understand and are ready to deal with the consequences*' (1999, p.1, my emphasis). I wonder if Mr. Ryall could claim to 'understand' his sexuality and the consequences of his sexual mores for youth and others?

Overall, romantic love is the assumed vehicle for transporting men and women into heterocoupledness. At the end of the typical love story, romance eventually gives way to a 'happy ever after' ending. Romance is represented as a surreal escape into the unknown realm of possibilities where love and lust combine to present a mix of idealistic possibilities. These possibilities are, however, constrained by notions of what is the 'best' process and outcome of romance, namely, married (long-term) heterocoupledness that is patterned by a more or less oppositional gender split. Within romantic fiction, it is usually the characters that do not roam too far from the gendered places of the strong, protective male, and the passive, vulnerable female that are delivered into the apparent 'safety' of heterocoupledness. Given the complexity of romantic narratives (and to background the way these themes are worked into young people's accounts of heterocoupledness in Aotearoa/New Zealand) it is worth exploring some of the underlying themes associated with Western romance.

THEME 1: ROMANTIC LOVE IS ASSUMED TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL FULFILMENT WITHIN INDIVIDUALISTIC SETTINGS.

Romantic love in Western contexts is often practised as if the couple were an individual unit separate from wider social relations. The couple appears as a privatised arrangement that provides shelter, emotional sustenance and fulfilment. Erich Fromm (1961) called the relationship where two individuals are collapsed into one to form an alliance against the alienation of existence in Western capitalist states, an 'ego-a-deux' (p.88). Fromm also noted that the heterocouple as ego-a-deux promotes an exclusivity that both privatises and isolates the couple from other meaningful social relations. Fromm thought this was a potentially destructive way to conduct relations, yet it would seem that contemporary structural relations promote the ego-a-deux as an ideal form of coupledness. Today, calling one's partner 'the other half', is usually refuted on the basis that individuality is something that each person brings to a relationship. Similarly, the privatisation of heterocoupledness means that couples judge their relations as separate from wider power relations. While many would not expect a friend to cater for all their emotional, physical, and sexual desires, partners are somehow expected to provide for the majority of these desires. Nevertheless, romance, and in particular, married heterocoupledness, seems to support men's mental health whilst women's mental health seems to be undermined by married life. Single

men and married women most report suffering from affective disorders, like depression. At the same time lovers are also idealised for their unique characteristics, their self-expression and their ability to share their real selves (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985, cited in Dion & Dion, 1998, p.523-524). Intimate relationships are supposed to provide a sense of emotional and personal fulfilment beyond that which occurs in other relations. As Dion and Dion (1998) argue, women most often provide for this psychological intimacy, whilst also expecting that coupledness will be personally fulfilling. On the other hand, the 'self-contained individualism' that men may adopt places the caring of oneself as separate from others, with the effect that women in long-term relationships often report feeling emotionally unsupported and isolated (Hite, 1988). Interestingly, Dion and Dion argue that these ideals of self-fulfilment through romantic love are undermined by contemporary Western individualism. For example, late Western capitalist individualism requires workers who are mobile and flexible units capable of relocation and re-training according to the demands of the labour market and independent of their commitments to social relationships including friends and lovers. These labour relations command an individualism that invariably clashes with the assumption that heterocoupledness involves a shared commitment to provide emotional fulfilment and shelter from the outside world of work (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995).

THEME 2: ROMANTIC LOVE IS LINKED TO CONSUMERIST ECONOMIC RELATIONS.

Traditionally, romance was largely a matter of pragmatic considerations. In the West, the two most common ways of economical survival for women were through marriage or in service to the church. Under the marriage laws women were considered the property of their husbands and the rape of a wife was regarded as a property offence against husbands. Meanwhile, romance for men was both a challenge and a trap set to ensnare the autonomous, self-providing man in heterocoupledness. A wife could bolster a husband's social status and improve his career opportunities as she toiled in the home 'minding children and managing men' (May, 1992). These traditional notions of romance may have changed but the over-riding sense i get is that these themes have been recycled, particularly in the area of capitalist consumerism. Building on the individualistic

model of heterocoupledness, romantic love reduces emotional bonding to a series of interpersonal transactions. i give, you owe; i need, you have; i hold, you have. Homo-economicus has become hetero-economicus. Today, a 'couple' will often rely on two incomes in order to afford the constructed requirements of 'family life' like house (mortgages, power, phone, rates), children, pets, and cars. At the same time, hetero-economicus relies on a gendered and inequitable division of labour. Even as more women participate in paid employment, it has also been estimated that they perform at least two thirds of the labour required to keep the household running (Waring, 1988). Contemporaneously, Western women may not engage in romance for the explicit reason of economic survival, and Western men may not necessarily regard romance as an opportunity to display their economic ability to 'provide' (i remain reserved on the latter). Nevertheless, heterocoupled romance is often constructed as an interpersonal exchange and an economic trap. Indeed in this form, it is an economic trap that requires increasingly more and more and more. Businesses use romance to peddle commodities that, in turn, constitute a desire for products that prescribe various pathways into coupled life.

Beauty potions and fitness regimes are advertised to women with claims that they increase attractiveness. Clothing lines are marketed in ways that indicate a compatibility between certain couples-styles (like the sporty skater/surfer, the business or professional type, or the urban streetwise coffee house dweller). Advertisers map out the spaces where potentially intimate relations might be found, like clubs, pubs, streets, and supermarkets. Advertisers realise that just as sex sells, romance is also a nice little earner. At adolescence, the economics of consumption regulates going out albeit at the level of attempting to financially afford the romantic (and often excessive) accoutrements of coupledness that only few adults can actually afford or enjoy. Overall, romantic attractions both participate in and mimic an economic model of consumption where a desire for more (commitment, security, passion, self-disclosure and more) is generated by a constructed absence of these things, where the parties exchange of qualities (usually gendered qualities) are assumed to create fair (compatible) transactions.

THEME 3: ROMANTIC LOVE PROMOTES OPPOSITIONAL GENDER RELATIONS.

The feminine has historically been constituted as 'vulnerable' and the masculine as 'protective', and within romantic fiction it is often the female characters who are treated as 'at risk', while the male characters are represented as 'risky'. To be risky is to challenge, to threaten or to struggle against conventions; meanwhile, to be at-risk is to be vulnerable, liable to be harmed, or threatened by the dangers associated with romantic rituals like attraction, lust, and sexuality. While the male romantic protagonist is applauded for his various romantic risks (admittedly only within the limited ambit of heterosexuality), the female protagonist's task is to minimise the potential dangers that she faces in pursuing love, romance and sexuality. Responses to romance are also gendered. The typical romantic narrative presents the female as a potential 'victim' who defeats danger, cruelty and violence through displays of selflessness (Walkerdine, 1984, p.173). At the same time, the masculine characters tend to engage with and respond to risk as agents of passionate exploration, self-interest, and/or destruction.

Similarly, romance is linked to an active/passive dichotomisation of heterosexuality that perpetuates a sexual double standard. The double standards applied to feminine sexuality enforce a split between the 'good' and the 'bad' woman, the 'wife' and the 'whore', the girlfriend and the slag. Positioning oneself between these dichotomies involves the careful management of the appearance of feminine passivity over activity. Meanwhile the sexual activity of the male is regarded as imperative and irrelevant to general masculine reputation (Lees, 1997). Even in situations where male sexuality is forced on women (as in rape) the masculine sexual pursuit is rarely scrutinised as problematic. More often, the female victim's sexuality is represented as complicit in her own subordination. The contradiction is that while women are assumed to embody a receptive passivity, they are also assumed to actively invite invasion and subjugation. Hence the cautionary tales about the power of female sexuality to corrupt male rationality: in these tales, sirens seduce male sailors to their death and temptresses lead men astray.

THEME 4: ROMANTIC LOVE PROVOKES UNCONTROLLABLE, IRRATIONAL PASSION.

The irrationality of romance is used as a defence against murder and violence, or as an explanation of suicide or madness. Where there is attraction, it usually cannot be denied; it intervenes and takes over the lives of the protagonists. For the biological determinists, love is a form of 'madness' that is driven by hormones and neurotransmitters that mimic the effects of cocaine on brain activity. Love's effects are irrational and uncontrollable. In a similar vein, the madness of love can and is used to defend against '*le crimes passionale*' (Baker, 1995, p.4) where paradoxically, the apparently cool logic of the 'reasonable man' is portrayed as being pushed into his own irrational violence. In literature and in contemporary legal defences, irrationality is argued to both provoke and excuse violence. Passion can be part of the dynamics of intimate relationships but irrationality is often put to work for male interests. Irrationality, as the belittled partner in the mind-body split within Western logic, has been regarded as less than and implicitly threatening to male rationality. Irrationality has typically been associated with the feminine, so that claims of females provoking male irrationality are still regarded by some as 'sensible' explanations of male violence even when males demonstrate a highly rational and controlled use of violence. Lees (1997) in her study of murder trials in Britain notes the gendered use of the provocation defence works better for men than women. Consequently, men who kill their partners for infidelity are more likely to be treated with sympathy and as being temporarily provoked into irrationality. Conversely, women who kill their partners, (where infidelity occurs, but more often in conjunction with systematic use of physical, mental, and sexual violence), are most likely to have their sexual reputations scrutinised and are less likely to receive lenient sentencing by the judiciary. Accordingly, romance is assumed to exist as a part of the feminine propensity to emotionality and hence irrationality, and 'since a woman is never regarded as really reasonable, it is not possible for her to lose her reason' (Lees, 1997, p.145). At the same time, romance for men is regarded as an adjunct to personal status and property so that even the rather minor accusation that a wife or partner has been 'unfaithful' is regarded as sufficient to provoke a reasonable man to 'lose control' and use anger and violence. In this context, romance often works to excuse men and condemn women.

These romantic themes are simplified and do not capture the complex gender slippages that have occurred over the last few decades such as the second-wave feminist challenges to the linkages between femininity, passivity, and the domestic sphere. Heterocoupledness has also shifted from traditional marital unions to include an increase in recognition of de-facto straight relationships while many lesbian, gay, and transgendered relationships have been recognised, partly through publicised arguments about their exclusion from legal and social institutions. Similarly, the literature of romance as deliverance into heterocoupledness has changed so that:

...at the exact moment the woman should melt, her heart unexpectedly hardens. Just as this place where give is required, some cold inner remove seems to overtake the female protagonist (Gornick, 1999, p.3).

These apparent changes to what might be called a traditional romantic narrative were commented on by one of the interview participants in this research. After describing the traditional romantic narrative of Mills and Boons novels, Anna, a 17 year old Pakeha woman, discussed the 'modern exception':

Anna: Except the modern ones who are coming out a little better now. Like 'she slapped him across the face'. 'But he caught her hand' that sort of thing. Boy I think that's what we kind of think you know. I don't know it's really horrible to think about it. And when you really do think you are the weaker sex (even though we try and act like we're not and we always protest with feminist remark and things), but when it comes down to it, in relationships we are.

Anna points out the 'horrible' idea that romance typically constitutes women as the 'weaker sex' despite the superficial alterations within contemporary romantic literature. At the same time, Anna used sarcasm and laughter to deride the recuperation of romantic conventions within contemporary heterocoupledness at adolescence. She noted that, while the heroine slaps her suitor in an apparent gesture of equality, the heroine is still 'caught' out by the new age hero. Anna's analysis of romance was at once a commentary on the superficiality of the changes to romantic themes and a performed mockery of this apparent remixing.

From gendered archetypes and the heteropolarising tendency of many historical and private/public representations of heterocoupledness at adolescence – it would appear that the context is prefigured to both reiterate traditional gender

power relations but to actively conceal these refigurations as actually sexist. While romance is both regarded as safe and potentially pleasureable, there is still little research or commentary that actively challenges the continued discursive associations between heterocoupledness, adolescence, romance, risk and being female. Many of these discursive fields are constituted through notions about normality and nature and there are few legitimated discourses available for young men and women to represent themselves as anything more than exceptions to the norm. In the next chapter, i will therefore outline the development of the methodology that was used to collect and make sense of young women and men's representations of heterocoupledness and risk.

SHIFTING METHODOLOGY:

Another Feminist Transgression in Psychology

☞ *...when you talk with me about my research, do not ask me what I found; I found nothing. Ask me what I invented, what I made up from and out of my data (Sandelowski, 1994, p.61)*

☞ *All meaning is indexical, which means that it will change as the occasion changes and as it is used in different ways. An explanation changes as the occasion changes, and so the best alternative to suppressing this change is to theorize it (Parker, 1994, p.10).*

☞ *I want to suggest that our choice is not confined to the polarization between relativism and realism. I believe it is possible to fashion a type of 'passionately interested inquiry' which would represent a principled foundation for discourse analysis (Gill, 1995, p.175).*

What follows is an account of how a feminist discursive methodology in psychology developed. The methodological approach shifted and changed in relation to political concerns that became apparent as i theorised/practised this research. These shifts were due, in part, to my personal/political scepticism of modernism, humanism, and positivism, and, were partly influenced by the perhaps fashionable postmodern 'turn to the text' in the theory/practice of critical psychological research (Burman & Parker, 1993a; Nikander, 1995; Spears, 1997). This scepticism did not just happen; it did not emerge from within me or solely as a consequence of academic engagement. The scepticism that i have employed was made available to me through feminist critiques of 'man-made language' (Spender, 1980), violence against women (Brownmiller, 1975; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Kelly, 1988; Pence & Paymar, 1987), sexual politics, radical feminist revolutionary writings (Daly, 1979; Millet, 1970; Mitchell, 1971) and

critical readings of how gender has been used to justify the oppression, othering and pacification of women (de Beauvoir, 1949; Gilligan, 1982; Greer, 1970). As an undergraduate student, the academic space to engage with these feminist thinkers/activists was made available by two feminist psychologists, Jane Ritchie and Hillary Lapsley. This scepticism was also made possible through community psychology courses where critiques of positivism were legitimated by lecturers as 'valid' classroom questions.

There was, however, minimal space for engaging in a 'guerrilla rhetoric ...against the violence of the rhetoric of the establishment' (Wilden, 1980, p.?). Despite, but perhaps because of, the hegemony of positivistic and main/malestream approaches to method in psychology, a scepticism was mobilised and this in turn, prompted several shifts in the methodological approaches that were employed in this thesis. Methodology is referred to as the inextricable mix between theory and practice that informs the way a research project is conducted, analysed and authored. As feminist scholars have argued, this approach to methodology is less about what kind of methods *should* be employed but more about scrutinising how knowledge is (re)produced (Stanley & Wise, 1990). The feminist discursive psychology approach developed in this thesis because of the shifts and changes that the various debates about knowledge and power aroused.

The scepticism that was deployed in the management and review of the methodology was partial and it was continually interrupted by the conventions of positivism in psychology. As such, the scepticism was interrupted at several points. At first, i was eager to replace my dissatisfaction with positivistic psychology with something more faithful to women's voices, then i was doubtful that such a replacement could happen without it too becoming yet another essentialist categorisation of 'women'; i was also optimistic that a turn to the text might challenge dominant meanings in psychology, then i was, simultaneously, sceptical about the implications of embracing a postmodern endless play of meaning at the expense of 'material realities' like violence. i was also concerned about the enterprise of psychology and if in my attempts to rescue a place in psychology as a feminist, i would end up reproducing a discursive face that was more palatable for mainstream psychology and supported the industrial purveyance of a psy-complex (Rose, 1985, 1989). Rose's contention is that the psy-complex involves the promotion of psychological truths that become part of an auditing and regulatory enterprise that can discursively constitute individuals and

explicate ways of living out psychological truths. Parker (1997) describes the psychocomplex as:

the network of theories and practices that comprise academic, professional and popular psychology, and it covers the different ways in which people in modern Western culture are categorized, observed and regulated by psychology, as well as the ways in which people live out psychological models in their own talk and experience (p.3).

Gradually, i became detached from the disciplinary workings of psychology, including its values of objectivity, generalizability and political neutrality. Feminism stirred many of these critiques of mainstream methodology (Mies, 1983; Stanley & Wise, 1990). Despite regarding the main/malestream psychological method of research in psychology as suspect, i initially based my critiques on similar positivistic foundations. Namely, i believed that science mainly uses quantitative methods, that these methods generated findings that were based on male only samples, these findings were then generalised to whole populations, and that, therefore, this research was androcentric. The androcentric bias of psychology either had to be reformed (by doing better science) or added to by presenting women's voices as a challenge to the representation of reality in male terms only. As a graduate student of psychology, it seemed that psychology could be reformed by a feminist addition to its knowledge base and advancing the position of women in society by including women's data (voice and numbers) in psychological research. Critiquing psychology on its own terms and in a disciplinary vacuum meant that the recuperative weight of psychology's taken for granted, like the assumption that psychology contributes to the progressive accumulation of knowledge that can advance humanity (Burman, 1996), contrived to ensure that my practises at once felt challenging but were, in fact, reproducing that which i sought to undermine. In sum, the theory/practice of engaging in this research meant that i became increasingly unattached from the imperialist advancement of universals that are often promoted through and within the discipline of psychology and, at times, within some feminist analyses.

At first, detachment was difficult to enact because of my commitment to a feminism that was grounded on some humanist values, like the idea of progressive change. Concerns about the consequences of abandoning a search for Truth loomed large. How could i oppose gendered regimes and the oppression of women by abandoning Truth? Surely, this abandonment would

undermine my 'voice' and any authoritative basis for making political claims about how women are oppressed?

What enabled this detachment arose from multiple sites and involved questioning the kind of questions that i had assumed as given. For example, the concerns with 'material reality' became questions about how i was separating the physical from its construction. i then assumed that events and experiences are also constituted and bound up with conventions about how it can be spoken, explained, defended, reacted to, and represented. My initial questions (which are still entertained) assumed that a paradox must be explained and therefore i assumed that contradictions were not only to be described but also were to be resolved. Concerns about appealing to 'authority' were abandoned in favour of scrutinizing how authority is voiced and the subversive possibilities of messing with what is unmarked. Many contradictions and dilemmas continue to be encountered, like the paradoxical relation between agency and the structural workings of power (how can i resist that which insinuates itself in the 'choices' made and not made available?). What emerged was a theory/practice that was agentic in that it defies (or at least attempts to defy) the given relations of power that are part of the institutional structures and paradigms of psychology.

The texts read, the conversations with friends and detractors, the travel that i engaged in as part of this research all led me to theorize/practise a distrust of the Western regimes of knowing that revolve around the human 'I', progress, and truth. i was aroused by these experiences (and a small but growing community of people that 'got' what i was unsatisfied about) allowed me to engage in an abandonment of the authorised practice of psychology. Tentatively, i abandoned the wholesale commitment to search for the verification of truth using quantitative methods and the idea that qualitative research could unveil the definitive voices of experience. At first, i reattached myself to an alternative homeland of postmodernism, care of feminist readings of Foucault. Then a further struggle ensued as i engaged with the debates about postmodernism and the potential for relativism, the denial of materialism, the subject, reflexivity, agency, and the reduction to the 'text' (Burman & Parker, 1993b; Ibanez & Inigues, 1997; Kvale, 1992; Lather, 1992; .Wilkinson, 1997). These debates initially paralysed my theory/practice interrogation: on the one hand i did not want to be 'essentialist' by assuming certain foundational givens; on the other, i needed to provide a political stage for the theory/practice of the research. Underpinning this temporary paralysis was a search for a way to express myself

that did not include the terms that i then coded as monolithic foundations that house essentialism. As a consequence i assumed that in questioning such terms, i would have to completely cleanse my language of terms such as 'rationality', 'objectivity', 'truth', even 'women' and 'men'. Judith Butler (1998) provided some help in a lecture on Left conservatism:

To call into question the foundational status of such terms is *not* to claim that they are useless or that we ought not to speak that way, that terms like "objectivity," "rationality," "universality" are so contaminated that they ought not to be uttered any longer. A serious misunderstanding has taken place. Calling the foundational status of a term into question does not censor the use of the term. It seems to me that to call something into question, to call into question its foundational status, is the beginning of the *reinvigoration* of that term.

Foundational terms may be discursively contaminated but they can be subversively reconfigured. Indeed, they must be critically engaged with even at the level of questioning the foundational status of 'patriarchy'. i began to actively reserve the right to offer a partial, shifting and sceptical stance towards research methodology, whilst attempting to maintain a reflexive personal/political stance which included remaining accountable for my use of potentially imperialist terms. At times these enterprises clashed, especially when i wanted to assert the materiality of abuse and violence that the young women in this research discussed. i say clashed because at first i saw no way of utilising a postmodern scepticism without asserting a relativism. In the end, i decided that many of the problems in deciding what and how to approach this research were resolved by deciding that many of these so-called problems are necessary debates in feminism in order to resist the creeping assertion of hegemonic foundationalism within theory/practice. Keeping the spaces open to question and 'reinvigorate' the terms around which feminists might organise is important to the vitality of feminist politics. Stanley and Wise (1990) respond to Sandra Harding's question about debates with feminism, where:

She wonders whether the existence of such internal and relational tensions is actually the means of preventing epistemological (and thus political) hegemony within feminism; that is, a way of avoiding any one feminism setting itself up as a 'dominant discourse' (p.47).

Stanley and Wise responded with 'an unequivocal yes' and in what follows i will demonstrate how i have engaged with the numerous debates and concerns within feminist research.

As a reader, you can expect an account that attempts to lay out the methodology as simultaneously useful and problematic. As such, it may be difficult to see how i could arrive at any definitive conclusions, not only about 'what to do' but also 'why'. The purpose of this chapter is to display these dilemmas in methodology with a particular emphasis on the tensions between mainstream psychology and how i have practised/theorised feminist discursive research in this thesis. The paper is structured into two sections that discuss the design of the interviews and group focus sessions. Within each section the preliminary assumptions (and hopes) for the methodology are presented, followed by a brief description of the practises and concluded with a critical commentary on the theoretical, political, and ethical problems associated with the research approach. The debates that surrounded these methodological manoeuvres are discontinuously interwoven between reflexive narratives throughout.

There are other reasons why i wish to narrate the shifts in methodology. 'Real' psychology has been historically unmarked by its alignment with and privileging of the activity of data collection over theory building or what is often regarded as armchair speculation (Marecek, 1997). Accordingly, the dichotomising of theory and practice in psychology can mean that research practises are coded as 'work' that takes place apart from the practice of theory. As a result i began this research with the assumption that the struggles with methodology (some of which are indicated above) were problems to be overcome. For two years i struggled to fix upon a research theory and then a practice that would inform the research and allow me to produce a thesis in psychology. The assumption that a graduation from theory to practice would occur was finally debunked when i realised that theory involves practice, just as practice involves theory. i offer you my struggles in order that the process of doing research is not represented to other students in psychology as a simple, linear progression toward the light of knowledge. i intend to lay out a narrative of this feminist discursive research that was initiated by the use of a survey, and culminated in a thesis that is based on interviews and focus group sessions with young people. i believe that the practice of coming to 'do' feminist discursive research lies not necessarily in the choice of qualitative over quantitative methods per se, but in the informing theoretical (as practised) underpinnings of research (Oakley, 1997).

The feminism that i embrace urged me to reflect upon the taken for granted, the power relations, the political/personal contexts, and the material implications for the way the research account represents and argues for particular readings. Positioning myself, let alone feminist psychology, is an incomplete, localized and temporary act. Nevertheless, the commitment to challenge and transform existing gender power relations to stop the oppression of women is a strong and continuous thread throughout the diversity of feminist research (Weedon, 1987). Feminist psychology, despite a history of at least thirty years, is still a difficult place to speak from within mainstream psychology in the United States (Fine & Gordon, 1992; Marecek, 1997), in Britain (Wilkinson, 1997), in Australasia (Morgan, 1999) and, in my view, in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Feminist psychology has multiple approaches but they are often lived out practices that attempt to disrupt, challenge, subvert, and revolutionise. i am reluctant to provide a definition given that feminism is practised in many ways and it is often found circulating and informing debates and everyday practices of living. In my theoretical practice i implement a feminism that is avowedly personal and political; i resist and/or disturb hierarchies of power and work for mutual and voluntary co-operation; i try to make trouble with categories; i minimise harm in my everyday eating, growing, consumption practises, and, i resist being defined/constituted in relation to the hegemonic imposition of an inevitability that informs 'the way things really are'. These are the principles that underpin my everyday life as feminist (although they need not be categorised as exclusively 'feminist' ethics) that i play out in general and specific ways and they form the foundation upon which i work. As a sceptical postmodernist, perhaps i am not supposed to have 'foundations' but this depends on viewing foundations in modernist terms. Utilising political 'foundations' does not mean that these theory/practice principles are essentialised. Butler (1998) has argued that anti-foundationalism:

cannot be a foundation. This is an important point. If anti-foundationalism is what *secured* a politics, it would be taking the place of a foundation. If it is that which destroys a politics, it would still be in the place of that which ought to be a foundation. In other words, the whole debate concerning the politics of anti-foundationalism takes place within a foundationalist imaginary, which I think is the problem.

So whilst i am informed primarily by a feminist foundation in my political theorising/practices, this does not mean that the feminism deployed is settled,

confirmed and unquestionable. As far as the relation between feminism and psychology is concerned, i share Wilkinson's (1997, p.181) contention that:

feminist psychologists can 'give priority to setting our own agendas and developing our own work, with the primary objective of social change, rather than being primarily accountable to psychology'(Wilkinson, 1991, p.16). When feminist psychologists address feminist questions in feminist terms, we can begin to expose psychology's role in women's oppression; to challenge its – sometimes attractive – ideologies; and to undermine its structures.

The range of feminisms that i draw on include work from the first and second wave movements, as well as from contemporary approaches to feminism. Burman (1994a) describes feminist psychology as being organized around three main methodological approaches but these categories are not necessarily discrete divisions. The first could be called 'egalitarian feminist psychology' and seeks to redress the androcentric bias of psychology by including women as both subjects and objects of study. Information on women's experiences, attitudes and status are empirically researched, usually through quantitative methods. The claim is that this research corrects the psychological canon of knowledge by using more gender 'equal' methods. The project could also be described as liberal feminist (Weedon, 1987) and can be criticised because it fails to challenge the existing power relations that govern women's lives. 'Egalitarian feminist psychology' is often the 'easiest' to take up within the discipline of psychology because it fails to challenge the individualism, conservatism, and scientism of mainstream psychology (Fine & Gordon, 1992).

The second approach, which could be called 'women centred psychology' moved beyond this supplementary approach and has documented the 'unique' and different experiences of women in order to re-voice and challenge patriarchal norms and power, particularly the rational malestream voice with psychology. The cultural experiences of being 'women' are focused on and the research methodology has been mainly, but not exclusively, qualitative. Weedon (1987) includes radical feminism as women centred psychology, although many psychoanalytic feminists (like Nancy Chodorow, 1978) have also used this focus on women's difference in their work. Arguments about this feminist psychology's contributions revolve around the essentialization of gender difference, somewhat idealized notions of women, and its practise of speaking of 'women's experience' as if 'women' was a unitary category of affiliation.

Thirdly there has been a 'post modern/structural'⁶ 'social constructionist' or 'discursive' feminist psychology that seeks to unpick the various, changing, partial and competing versions of 'truth'. Like other areas of feminist psychology it is diverse and links in with aspects of the above approaches. The focus is on gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and age as multi-dimensional constructs that are taken up by people in specific historical, political and personal contexts in multiple and sometimes problematic and contradictory ways. These feminist psychologies tend to raise epistemological challenges to the scientism of psychology. Like women centred psychology and radical feminism, this approach seeks to disrupt existing power relations by questioning what comes to count as 'true' and by asking what ramifications these 'truths' may hold for the meanings inscribed by the category 'women'. This area of feminist psychology is fraught with debate about its usefulness to feminism because of its potential/possible relativism, adaptations of misogynistic theory, its inaccessibility, its lack of attention to the 'extradiscursive' (including the subjective experience) and, most importantly, its abnegation of feminist political goals, and a diminution of the material conditions of many women's lives (Brodrigg, 1992; Burman, 1990; Hollway, 1989; Wilkinson, 1997).

The former classifications (a purely heuristic device) of feminist psychologies exclude the overlapping and interlinked ways that feminists have practised. Socialist and Marxist feminists raise important questions about the structures of power exercised through political economies like capitalism; anarcho-feminists interrogate freedom, the nation state and its role in perpetuating hierarchies of power; indigenous and cultural feminists challenge the imperialist and Eurocentric mobilisation of ethnicity and race to oppress, marginalize, impoverish and discriminate the 'Other'; eco-feminists highlight the impacts of continued human (patriarchal, Western, anthropocentric) use,

⁶ Although post-structuralism and postmodernism have been taken up in quite different ways by feminists and others, in this thesis i refer to these strands as postmodern. The terms cannot be conflated, but, in contradiction, neither can they be categorized through definitions. Post-structuralism and postmodernism are quite similar, but as i understand it, post-structuralism is more overtly concerned with the political morphing of power and meaning structures, representations and practices. Postmodernism is a perhaps more diffuse term although it is often caricatured as a series of endless plays of meaning and readings where no grand truths can ever be stated or confirmed. i will call what i do postmodern but this does not necessarily mean that it could not also be called post-structural because post-structural theorists have been most influential in my work. Many theorists have been called postmodern, but they themselves have either refused to define themselves (as Foucault did) or have resisted defining postmodernism and have instead aligned their approach with a post-structuralism that interrogates the way 'power pervades the very conceptual apparatus that seeks to negotiate its terms, including the subject position of the critic... [and is] the very precondition of a politically engaged critique' (Butler, 1992, p.6-7).

exploitation, and damage to the environment and life-forms on the planet. All of the above and more have intertwined to constitute the plurality of feminism and each is shifting and changing in multiple ways.

The feminist research that i align myself with could be named as anarcho-discursive.

Feminism is centrally about discourse. That is, it is about creating new sets of meanings, new ways of thinking about, speaking about, and constructing women – new discourses on women. Feminism is also centrally about changing the conditions of women’s lives. These things are not divorced from each other. Quite the contrary. Meaning and practice are closely interwoven; the possibilities for practice are not only the result of material resources, but also a product of the ways in which we can think (Jones, 1991, p.86).

Like Jones, i believe it is important to interrogate the multiple meanings that are available especially the unmarked and given ‘regimes of truth’ (Foucault, 1977) that discipline what it is possible to do. Through discourses, these possibilities incoherently constitute subjectivity, gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, and (dis)ability. Discourses offer up various subject positions for being and making meaning that are imbued with power possibilities. The acts and experiences that are recounted by people in research are read as texts that can be interpreted according to these conceptions of discourse, subjectivity and power. The discursive feminist psychology that i perform is underpinned by four a priori understandings as adapted by Michelle Fine and Susan Merle Gordon (1992).

1. *Power asymmetries* structure gender relations.
2. Gender always braids with social class, race/ethnicity, age, disability (or not), and sexual orientation, as well as social context to produce *socially and historically constituted subjectivities*.
3. The *meanings* of a social experience *as expressed by women* must be unravelled if that experience is to be fully analyzed.
4. *Contextualized research* is necessary to unearth women’s psychologies as they reflect, reproduce, resist, and transform social contexts, hegemonic beliefs, and personal relationships. (p.3, 1992).

A final assumption that i include is that research should be *reflexive*. Wilkinson (1987) has argued that research needs to critically reflect on the impact that inquiry has on the theory/practice choices, the personal life of the researcher

and the discipline within which the research is practiced, in this case, psychology. These aspects of reflexivity are all connected by the idea of remaining accountable for the knowledge that is generated and the impact on the people/purpose that the research is intended to contribute to. Reflexivity does not imply that i can or will, necessarily confess all about what is informing the research and does not exclude the fact that i may use various assumptions that can make my arguments appear as more or less 'given'. Nevertheless, i will endeavour to present and interrogate my assumptions, to minimise the use of conferred hegemonies of 'truth' and instead constitute a 'pragmatic' and at times, 'extravagant' approach to this research (Squire, 1995). This stance will be explained and illuminated by the various methodological shifts that will be laid out in the following paper as demonstrative of the struggle to do feminist psychology. While i borrow from many feminisms, the present chapter is primarily about how i came to do a version of feminist discursive psychology. Before presenting the shifting methods, two final points need to be noted.

Firstly, the shifts from a quantitative to qualitative methodology occurred in relation to the theoretical and political issues that were raised by the act of designing and doing reflexive research. In the following account, these issues are teased out as assumptions that informed my theory/practice. Actually, the idea of collapsing the divisions between theory and practice took some time for me to navigate. Perhaps this says something about the difficulty of gaining access to alternative discourses within psychology? After all, as a feminist, many 'personal as political' accounts were already available to me as counter-discourses, but somehow mainstream psychology and the wider schooling from a Pakeha culture that places the 'individual' and what goes on 'within' as central served to veto any serious attempts to practise and theorize outside of these neo-liberal humanist discourses.

Secondly, it is also important to note that these shifts in practice are not 'techniques' that can be virtually reproduced in future research. To turn feminist discursive psychology into a new research dogma would be to render it uncritical and innocuous (see Nikander, 1995; Parker, 1997). The usefulness of feminist discursive psychology is its detachment from the idea that the use of a particular method can be used to measure, describe, or explain. i will discuss the methodological shifts in relation to the theory/practice of doing feminist discursive psychology.

INTERVIEWS & EXPERIENCE

The impetus for this research involved the design and administration of a questionnaire on violence in teenage relationships. After entering the data and perusing the percentages and chi square analysis, the silent gaps between the categories employed and the meanings unsaid was resounding. Ann Pugh (1990) had a similar response to a survey that she had conducted on young homeless people. Her comments resonate with my experience:

Unfortunately, i was less than happy with the process of producing the statistics. i knew what tricks i had had to perform to create them and then make them speak to me: all of which, i might add, are conventional and ethical procedures in research terms. Further, my misgivings were compounded by my failure to recognise any of the homeless young people that i knew in my statistics. What was this all about? i wondered, and consequently started the second study (105).

Like Pugh, i failed to recognise any of the people in the survey's categories and numbers. i was working in the school as a researcher for two years and had discussed issues of violence, power and control with young people in interviews and informal playground conversations. This dissatisfaction led me to conduct a second study that began with weekly interviews with five young women and was then extended to include focus groups with men and women. The interviews, at first, seemed like the best way to avoid producing context barren data because they would involve young women speaking of their experiences. i decided to use some of the items in the Teenage Relationship Questionnaire to ask young women about their experiences of harm, abuse and violence in order to more fully discuss the context of their experiences (Appendix i). i chose to focus on young women because, from all statistical and anecdotal accounts, women are most likely to be the target of Boyfriend violence, harassment and/or control (Gamache, 1991; Levy, 1991; Leibrich & Paulin; Pence & Paymar, 1987). By using semi-structured interviews with young women i hoped to ground my analysis on young women's experiences of violence, unsafety and risk. This decision was informed by a certain set of assumptions that raised theoretical concerns that caused me to pause, ponder and shift my approach to research in psychology. What follows is the rationale that i worked from when designing the interview schedules.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods must consider that 'data collection is effectively data construction' (Farran, 1990, p.91). Using the findings from a combination of feminist researches on young people and heterocoupled violence (Gamache, 1992; Lees, 1993; Levy, 1991) i began to construct interviews (the archetypal genre of qualitative research) around several basic methodological assumptions. These assumptions were as follows:

1. The interviews would enable in-depth exploration and description of a group of young women's **experiences** of being Girlfriends and confronting unsafe or violent Boyfriends. Young women's beliefs, thoughts and feelings about the topic would become the valued 'data'. The focus, then, was to fill in the details that the survey results did not provide. The interviews would compliment the survey findings by providing the themes of young women's experiences. The context of heterocoupledness and the navigation for safety would be explicated by these experiential themes that i would dig out of our interviews and link in with previous research in the area. As such, the 'hypothesis' was simply to explore in a less structured way what young women were experiencing in intimate relationships with Boyfriends in a New Zealand context. Generalizability was not an issue because the assumption was that the interviews would provide specific, descriptive examples of dating violence that would, more than likely, be shared by other teenage women.
2. i took seriously the idea that research is inhered with the values and subjectivity of the researcher and therefore took up the feminist call for **reflexivity**. Reflexivity involves the inclusion of the researcher's critical voice, in the final analysis, and in the process of 'doing' research (Steier, 1991; Wilkinson, 1987). Research practices are political acts of power. By confessing my values and taking steps to ameliorate the power i had as a researcher, i endeavoured to equalise research relations and to extract the 'truth' about young women's experiences. Interviewing was a path that feminist researchers had stridden before me and i felt confident that by producing a reflexive account, i could best defend the research findings from a theoretically visible platform. Reflexivity felt like a more honest kind of

research; without the guise of 'objectivity' i would have to be more accountable for the knowledge that i produced and to the research participants who worked with me on the project. Accountability was something that i would have to demonstrate both within my thesis and to the young people involved.

3. The survey had raised specific problems around the issue of my **power** as a researcher to inscribe teenage heterocoupledness without due consideration of how young people may locate their experiences as Māori, Pakeha, aged thirteen or eighteen, for example. The interviews would allow me to include young women of different ages, ethnicities and Boyfriend experiences in the research as active voices rather than as homogenized percentiles. By treating the interview as a conversation that serves particular interests (Burman, 1994a) and as an undetermined forum, the young women would be provided with the space to disagree, clarify and confound my assumptions. The use of feminist interview practice could provide safety for participants. For instance, by speaking about my opinions and experiences rather than taking an objective or distanced stance within the interviews, i refused 'expert' status. It should be noted, however, that when i was administering the survey i was often introduced as the 'Researcher from The University'. These ominous introductions by the young people's teachers meant that i was unfortunately imbued with almost unquestionable adult status despite my efforts to remain friendly and approachable. Despite these presentations and with the help of the school's guidance counsellor, five young women, aged from 13 to 18, decided to take part in the interviews with me. When designing the interviews i assumed that i would present as already powerful, but i hoped that over time i could mitigate this power disparity through the development of a research relationship based on a demonstrated regard for their views. In the case of research with two younger heterosexual Māori women i had to pay particular attention to the power disparities between us. i attempted to counter my adult, Pakeha power through the development of a collaborative interview relationship and an open schedule interview design. At this stage, my analysis of power was not Foucaultian and i assumed that power operated from the top down. The young women were to confound this assumption.

DESIGNING THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

In 1994, when i began preparing to conduct research into teenage heterosexual relationship violence i was awe struck by the amount of overseas (mainly quantitative) information and then dumbfounded by the contrasting dearth of knowledge within New Zealand. People i spoke to about the research were interested and even concerned that New Zealand teenagers could be experiencing harm within their love relationships. At the same time people assumed that since the incidence of teenage relationship violence has never been documented that it must be either a recent phenomena ('Isn't that a terrible sign of the times!') or that its seriousness was minimal ('It wouldn't be as terrible as adult domestic violence because they don't live together').

As a consequence, two streams of thought shaped the questions that underpinned the design of the interview schedule (Appendix ii). Firstly, in what ways does the historical and social context influence young women's heterocoupledness including the way safety, risk, and violence are constituted? Specifically, what courtship protocols, heterocoupledness and gender norms provide the possibilities for heterocoupledness at adolescence? How do young women come to make sense of their experiences when they are 'going out' with young men? Finally, how does this sense-making structure power relations in heterocoupledness?

Secondly, the interviews needed to focus on the participants' experiences as women, as Pákeha and Māori, as Girlfriends in heterocoupledness at adolescence. The initial focus of the survey was on teenage relationship violence, and the survey results indicated that some young people identified themselves as having experienced relationship violence, but without access to what was meant, interpretation of these numbers took place in a vacuum. Accordingly the understandings of violence in heterocoupledness at adolescence were up for negotiation and i needed to provide questions that allowed for the debate to begin.

Instead of focussing exclusively on violence in heterocoupledness, i began to question the normalised practices of heterocoupledness. To focus on questions about relationship violence could be to exclude the more 'fuzzy' (Levy, 1991)

forms of unsafety, risk, and violence that teenage women may grapple with when in intimate relationships. While administering the Teenager Relationship Survey i began recruiting by presenting the issue of dating violence as just one of the topics that could be discussed. When young women approached me about becoming involved, i stressed that i was interested in talking to them about what it was like to be a Girlfriend. i hoped to provide the space where violence could be discussed by asking young women how they initiate and conclude relationships, what they see as a serious and an ideal relationship, what their Girl-Boyfriend relationships have been like, and how they decide what is appropriate and what is not. In order that the 'fuzzy' issues that surround the constitution of harm and violence could be explored, i used items from the Teenage Relationship Questionnaire as a prompt in one of the interview sessions. By presenting the Teenage Relationship Questionnaire as the subject of an interview i could ask the young women to discuss their responses to the survey questions in more detail, as well as providing a device through which we could talk about relationship harm and violence.

Similarly, my feminist politics meant discussions about gender within heterocoupledness would feature prominently. After talking with Jill Haig from the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project and Trish Kirk of the Wellington Violence Education Group, i felt it was necessary to design the interview schedule broadly. Both Jill and Trish reinforced the idea that since the area was unresearched in New Zealand/Aotearoa, and that in order to shape an analysis that was sensitive to the particularities of being young, woman, and in heterocoupledness (that could include or exclude violent experiences), my questions would need to be more focused on everyday Girlfriend-Boyfriend relationships.

The literature that informed the interview questions came both from quantitative and qualitative research. Three main ideas emerged from the literature that i felt needed further exploration. Firstly, it has been claimed that the degree of exclusivity and seriousness of a relationship increases the likelihood that violence will occur (Gamache, 1991; LeJeune & Follette, 1994; Lloyd, 1991). Furthermore, violence had been shown to be tolerated if the intimate relationship was depicted as serious (Bethke & DeJoy, 1993). Secondly, young women may find it difficult to name violence and this difficulty may be exaggerated by the confusing and conflicting messages about heterocoupledness and gender that are infused with romanticism (Levy, 1991b). As a result only the most aberrant and socially unacceptable forms of violence, like rape by a stranger, punching, slapping, and strangling may be recognized as violent and therefore reported

(Kelly, 1988). Thirdly, whilst many young women were adamant that they would 'never' accept Boyfriend violence, many also believed that the violence can be excused by the Boyfriend's familial, alcohol, peer group, or anger management problems (Lees, 1993). Together these findings suggest that being in heterocoupledness often sanctions violence, that naming violence is a precarious and renegotiated activity, and that many 'excuses' for violence are available. I therefore decided to focus on seven themes; relationship development and experiences; ideals and expectations; gender assumptions; naming harm or violence; and the young people's experiences and responses to unacceptable and/or violent behaviours.

The interviews were loosely structured around these themes and I planned to ask them through the use of open-ended questions ('How did that influence you?') and expansions ('Could you tell me more about that?') of their experiences. I was also aware that such scripted responses were insufficient to the conversational tone of the discussions. I therefore chose to adopt a less distanced approach by occasionally, and where appropriate, interjecting with my experiences, responses, and statements about why I was asking certain questions. By adopting a conversational style of relating I hoped that I would present myself as a curious researcher who was also struggling to interrogate the normalised and contradictory themes of heterocoupledness. This reflexivity within the interviews guided my attention to the power dynamics in the researcher-researched relationship, but, in hindsight, as I mainly 'inquired' and the young women mainly 'responded', the power relations were still regulated according to my assumption that I could dismiss power from our interactions. Nonetheless, I tried to make space for the young women to intervene, disagree, and/or change answers. Monitoring power relations could not guarantee that the wider context of power relations, where age, university 'status', and ethnicity were not also present in our discussions. That said, the young women were clear about when they would talk, what they would and would not discuss, and would often interrupt to correct or disagree with me. I attempted to operate as if power was at least negotiable and made interjections that assumed that the young women had the power to disagree, refuse to answer, or change their accounts.

A strategy that I used to upset the power relations in the interviews was to negotiate who would participate in the interviews. The young women were recruited with friends when the survey was administered, through informal discussions during lunch breaks, and through the guidance counsellor. Together, the young women and I decided that the interviews could be conducted with the

young women as individuals and on other occasions with their girlfriends. In addition, i decided to conduct the weekly interviews over an eight-week period. As the research was about 'relationships' i felt that it was important to provide time for the researcher-researched relationship to be formed and reformed. As a researcher i expected that i would have to develop an ethos of trust and comfort in which we could discuss heterocoupledness. The questions that i planned to ask had to be specific to each researched-researcher relationship rather than a generic format that did not differentiate between each person's history and experiences; the weekly sessions allowed for this degree of specificity. By talking over a series of weeks i also hoped that we could revisit specific themes in order provide the space to re-evaluate, change stances, revisit issues, and also as a way of checking out my continuous readings of their accounts. Finally, i enrolled myself in an education course for adult women who had been victims of partner abuse as a way to continuously interrogate my own heterocoupledness norms and assumptions.

REFORMULATING THE INTERVIEW. THE AUTHOR(ITY) OF EXPERIENCE.

When i conducted the interviews i assumed that the young women would tell me about their experiences, and, in turn, that these experiences would act as a window into the young women's interior lives. i expected to delve into the young women's inner experiences; their beliefs and feelings, remembered and intended behaviours would be the subject of our discussions. Each young woman would talk about her unique experiences but since each young woman was interacting within a social context and experiencing similar things, i would draw together some common themes to demonstrate the shared reality of young women's experiences. A problem with basing research around this idea of experience was that it involved presuming that the voiced accounts enabled access to an inner psychic world of young women. The young women's accounts of harm, abuse, and violence from their Boyfriends could not be regarded as straightforward renditions of experience. There were several problems with this approach, not least of which is the way in which it relies on a humanistic and positivistic notion of the unitary subject.

Much of the feminist research on violence in teenage relationships assumes a model of a unitary humanistic subject whose experiences are uniquely yet generally feminine (for an example, see Levy, 1991). By focusing on the similarity of women's experiences i was using consistency as the measure of description. By not speaking of the contradictions and variability i was locating these things as irrelevant and marginal to women's experiences. By excusing variability and contradiction i was also closing off ways of critiquing the way discursive constitutions of the subject and experience are precarious and therefore challengeable.

By reading for similarity of experience i was treating experience as a direct reflection of inner psychic reality, coding the young women's voices in individualistic yet categorical and essentialist terms. Psychological accounts of women's experiences of violence have resulted in just these kinds of inner-reality explanations that code women as dysfunctional victims who suffer from masochism, co-dependence, or their capacity to 'love too much' (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). Further, by treating 'experience' as unproblematic and

unmediated, a distinction between the social and the individual would have been resurrected where the category 'woman' is assumed. In sum:

As feminists working in many quarters have by now recognized, basing feminist knowledge in any transparent appeal to women's experience tends to homogenize "woman" as a universal and obvious category. It also tends to lock into the structures of feminist epistemology a binary opposition between male and female which naturalizes gender and erases the other social categories across which "woman" is defined (Hennessy, 1993, p.68)

Therefore if the assumptions that i used when constructing the interviews could homogenize and reduce young women's experiences to either psychodynamic essences or social indoctrination, feminist discursive and postmodern critiques were called upon to help unsettle the way young women's experiences were read. Nevertheless i was not prepared to relinquish 'experience'; rather i looked to Dorothy Smith (1990) for an alternative way of theorising women's experience of the everyday/everynight. While Smith (1996) is critical of what she regards as a postmodern tendency to focus on discourse and the positions available without considering the ideological and economic structures of everyday life, she argues that we need to abandon the search for universal, singular, and objective accounts of experience. Smith suggests that [a] sociology beginning in people's everyday/everynight experience takes for granted that experience is as various as people are. It does not seek to supersede this variety by constructing a version that overrides all others... The project is to explore concerting and co-ordering and hence the organisation and relations that generate the varieties of lived experience (1996, 172).

This feminist approach to women's experience includes the idea that experience is partially mediated through the discursive but this mediation is also subject to patriarchal and economic structures that provide the institutional support for male violence that Dobash and Dobash argued for in 1979. The advantage of reading women's experience as plural and yet as structured by wider patriarchal relations is that women's oft-excluded experiences of violence can be voiced in ways that expose the privileged fictitiousness of objective, universalistic, and androgynous knowledges. For example, the delivery of flowers from an abusive ex-partner can then be read from the woman's lived experience as an implicit threat of harm that forms part of a systematic demonstration of the abuser's power to find her even when she is in hiding, rather than an act of romantic remorse that a male police officer may represent and excuse it as

(Busch, Lapsley, & Robertson, 1992). Embracing this standpoint reading of experience allows one to also assert that experiences do not just happen, they are constituted in relation to ideological and discursive fields where certain accounts are configured as less than others.

The potential problem with this approach is that it can 'assume in advance that there is a category of "women" that simply needs to be filled in with various components of race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexuality in order to become complete' (Butler, 1990, p.15). This is not to say that experience cannot be spoken about; rather, experience must be continually contested for how it presupposes a unitary subject, where experience is merely layered on top of a particular but nonetheless categorised self. I then read experience as a social construct. The social constructionist approach appears to liberate theorists from notions of experience as individually learned and instead focuses on the way certain narratives of experience are pre-storied by ideological and institutional manufacturing of meaning. Yet these social constructionist ways of reading experience can remain silent about the body, and hence can inadvertently resurrect a binary where the social is separate from and secondary to the biological or sexed body. The tendency to treat gender as social and sex as biological has implications for how desire as heterosexuality is deployed and reified as a naturalised oppositional binary.

Gender can denote a *unity* of experience, of sex, gender, and desire, only when sex can be understood in some sense to necessitate gender – where gender is a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self – and desire – where desire is heterosexual and therefore differentiates itself through oppositional relation to that other gender it desires. That institutional heterosexuality both requires and produces the univocity of each of the gendered terms that constitute the limit of gendered possibilities within an oppositional, binary gender system (Butler, 1990, p.22).

Feminist attempts to represent women, Butler warns, must not assume a uniform subject and, must, instead critique the invoked subject that feminism seeks to emancipate. Drawing on Foucault's work on juridical power, Butler argues that power operates to produce that which it claims to represent. When feminists seek to represent women's experience, it must not be according to a plural representative politics that assumes that One is speaking for, or about, a unified subject where the Other is figured as merely a different or supplementary version of the same Western voice. Feminist claims to represent women's experience, Butler claims, can be 'self-defeating' when this research subject is discursively

'produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought' (p.2).

In an interesting case in the United States, Phyllis Goldfarb (1996), a defence attorney working to commute the sentences of women who had killed their battering husbands, found that her use of the standard defence used hegemonic constitutions of the victim subject. The gender specific discourse of 'women as victims' was legally coded to apply best to white, married, middle class, adult, and heterosexual women who were (preferably) authorized sufferers of Battered Women's Syndrome. In the course of using the generic 'discourse of abuse' defence, she became acutely aware that this argument was disadvantaging the lesbian defendants who did not comply with the constitution of the declarable 'victim' (in this case the heterosexual defendants). Appeals to this legal authority to grant all women exemptions was based on a Western, humanist notion of the subject and sought to emancipate women from the very system that is premised on codifying 'women' in ways that privilege masculine rationality, whiteness, and heterosexuality. Women's experience, then, when read uncritically can exclude ways of refusing to be other than the unitary subject implied by many Western institutional and everyday forms. Refusing to be subject to these reifications of the subject is difficult; the pervasiveness strikes me as almost inevitable. 'Almost' because just as these constitutions are insinuated within many Western modes of organisation, when they are regarded as fictive, as constitutive of subjects, then the everyday performance of this fiction, like refusing to have one's experiences codified as signifying an inner psychological reality, can operate to disturb that which is given. As a result i have read the young women's experiences as both inscribed by the discursive fields that conspire to locate gender in uniform ways and as self-authored performances of their experiences in the context of an interview setting. This is not to deny that their accounts reflected what had happened to them and how they responded, but to acknowledge that accounts of 'what happens' take place within discursive soundscapes⁷ that have already been fictionally organised to serve certain power relations but these constitutions are never set and are therefore continually contestable.

Obviously, this also has implications for the way the Māori research participants' experiences were engaged with. Two of the women (Astrid and Zara) and one of the young men in the focus groups (Jonah) identified themselves as

⁷ i explain this idea of discursive soundscapes in a later section.

Māori. In reading their accounts and given that the focus of the research is on interrogating the normative constitutions of Pākeha heterocoupledness, i had to ensure that i did not include their voices as merely different or as unified by a singular Māori subjectivity. i risked reading the Māori participants from an imperialist position if i resurrected the assumption that their accounts were representative of a uniquely Māori experience. It was important to read these accounts as imbricated with constitutions of the subject according to gender, class, ability, age and ethnicity, but that these identity categories are not completely formed by an additive combination. As Māori are marked as different, marginal or other, while Pākeha often remain unmarked as (same, central or normal) subjects within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the accounts offered by Māori could help unsettle and subversively disturb the cultural configurations of Pākeha heterocoupledness as exemplary of the 'normal'.

i began the interviews with a modernistic notion of experience. The questions about gender in the interviews assumed that young women were being corrupted by their experiences of the social world. i saw the young women as having a very limited part in taking up, subverting or rejecting gender norms; they were living in a sexist world and hence would be inevitably dominated by this socialization. While i still think that sexism haunts women's lives, i have become uncomfortable with this social/biological binary for two reasons.

Firstly, Hollway (1989) has claimed that psychology has set up a difficult dichotomy between the individual and the social. By treating the individual as a central, unified site of action, social interactions are separated and rendered secondary. Social influences, like learning gender roles, become merely the corrosive effects upon what is often assumed to be, the 'real' individual, like the biologically sexed individual. In this constitution of the individual and social, the 'sexed' individual remains privileged over the 'gendered'. By splitting experience between the social and the individual a binary is assumed, but moreover, the privileging of the natural/biological over the social/environmental also means that a hierarchical power arrangement is promoted. Since i believe that hierarchies underpin patriarchy and violence by insisting upon master-slave, better-worse, win-loose power relations, i had to reconsider how i would read the participants' 'experiences'. No longer could i assume that the individual and the social were as separate and discrete as i had assumed.

Secondly, a focus on experience as socially learned is problematic in that it infers that people are passively conferred with gender. Social influences are not grafted on to us but are part and parcel of daily practice, and, as such,

subversion and acquiesce are also continually in action. For these reasons the dichotomy between individual and social experience should be collapsed, in favour of the concept of constituted accounts of experiences. Experience then becomes something that is more than an interaction between what is owned and learned but is an enmeshed complex of meaning/practice configurations. What this shift can mean is that experience is located within the relations with others, with history, culture, the political and personal; in sum, what comes to count as 'experience' is not just socially constructed, it is constituted through relations of power that both arrange and inscribe the terms through which one can speak and act. To speak of experience is an endless process that often is repetitive of fictions (like the binary construction of men and women), but these fictions are never complete, they are being remade and reformulated; they are also contestable. Much of the former discussion of experience is premised on an idea of language as constitutive of power relations. The 'turn to the text' that occurred part way through the interview process meant that i had to evaluate my conceptions of language.

IS TALK SO CHEAP?

The interview, as a forum for semi-structured, investigative talk between a researcher and researched, was thought to be a straightforward way of finding out about 'dating violence'. Talk would/could reveal the inner psychic reality or would at least describe young women's experiences. Language was seen as a limited and closed meaning system that we take up as we would take up tools. We know what we mean; we think it and we say it. Just as i contested and reworked 'experience', i simultaneously began to unsettle these notions of language. Language was reformulated as partially constructing and constituting reality (the text edited by Henriques, Hollway, Unwin, Venn & Walkerdine, 1984, was particularly helpful).

Language was then seen as performative and relational rather than simply a tool of communication that expresses inner cognitive, affective, and behavioural intentions (Butler, 1990). i came to see language as much more than the linguistic act of speaking, but as constituent of social relations, including how meaning is made, contested, and authorised. Making meaning is also to make

practice and is politically located within historical contexts. People are seen to take up meaning through language according to the context but also in relation to what Foucault (1972) called 'regimes of truth' that regulate what can be said with credibility and what can be taken for granted. Common sense and everyday language become dynamic sites of making multiple meanings. While language use may invoke multiple meanings and readings, the endless play of meaning that a form of postmodernism promotes, is constrained by the hegemonic constitution of that which is intelligible, sensible, or reasonable. With this new regard for language as socially constructed and inscriptive (rather being merely descriptive) the interviews were then read as containing a complex of interpretative possibilities that were enabled and constrained by a discursive context. The acts of asking, taping, transcribing, selecting text, analysis and writing were then seen as constituent acts of language. Instead of searching for a 'grand narrative of truth' (Lyotard, 1984) in the language of the interviews, i became interested in how meanings were performances, and how these meanings as practices provide places from which young people and myself could speak.

For instance, i met Anna (an 18 year old Pakeha participant) one year after the interviews had been completed and we began talking about how i was making sense of the transcripts. Anna told me that she and her mother had been reading over the transcripts and were really surprised at how much Anna's views had changed in just six months. "I can't believe I said some of those things" she said with laughter in her voice. i agreed with Anna that the time and context of our discussions, as well as our re-readings over time, were part of what created these shifting meanings. When i read the transcripts i often found myself attempting to reconstruct the context of our discussions and what we did in our conversations to create meaning; the looks we would give each other to acknowledge that we shared a similar meaning, the 'you knows' that indicated that we need not say anymore, and the after taping jokes and reflections on the day's interview. There were more chance meetings with Anna over the next three years. The theme of our conversation was carried over to our next impromptu meeting and we again discussed how we were now reading the transcripts. These different readings of the same text have continued over time but this does not mean that these shifting readings bear little or no relation to the context of our discussions. The readings of the texts were made in relation to the context established at the time and remembered afterwards, they were relative to the literature that i had read; they are, and perhaps most importantly, relative to the political and historical context in Aotearoa/New Zealand that has, in part,

structured how i could read our conversations. These readings of the text are also relative to my political positions and arguments that i assert throughout this thesis. The language of the transcripts may remain static, but different readings were made possible both on reflection and in relation to the way my politics have become a more explicit part of my approach to research. How these politics are inscribed at local and global levels remains contestable but the limits to these contestations are structured (in my view) by a context where the language of Western, globalised, late capitalist, representative democracies and neo-liberal notions of individual choice, responsibility, and progress, pervade and dominate much of everyday life.

In relation to the interviews it seemed that we were speaking and making meaning according to power/knowledge relations, subject positions and the discursive context in which we spoke. For Anna, the other participants and i, we spoke in localized and specific ways that changed the interpretative possibilities over the course of our interviews, within the transcripts, and in the later discourse analysis. What became interesting was how certain things came to be said and repeated while other, seemingly obvious, or innocuous things, remained silent or unmarked. My concept of power as oppressive and owned by the elite few had to be revised as did the theoretical turn to discourse that the above critiques of language and experience allowed. The result of these reflections was that the interviews began to be approached using a reformulated feminist discourse analysis. The final part of the research was then explicitly designed to explore the discourses that young women and men take up when discussing heterocoupledness, safety, and risk.

FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS: A FEMINIST DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY.

A newfound suspicion of taken for granted enabled the research to become a theory/practice of teasing apart the discourses that knit together the various ways young people constitute and reconstitute safety and risk in heterocoupledness at adolescence. The topic began as a matter of identifying the nature and extent of violence, moved to describe the experiences of young women, and, for now, sits as a project of interrogating the constitution of the experiences of heterocoupledness, safety, and risk at adolescence. My assumption was now that change was an important part of demonstrating reflexivity in the methodology. My assumptions as a researcher are part and parcel of a social and political context, and in order to remain consistent with an approach that interrogates how meaning is constituted, I decided to re-read the interview texts discursively. The focus groups, however, were specifically designed from the outset with these newfound feminist, discourse analytic assumptions about language, power and research in psychology. Further theoretical shifts concerning my conception of discourse, power, and post-structuralism/modernism occurred.

DISCOURSE.

Discourses are regarded as theories in action (Smith, 1992) that attempt to organize ways of performing and the meanings used. They can be understood as variously organized meaning systems that connect and constitute experiences and knowledge about what it means to be a 'subject'. These discourses can be examined through many textual forms. Writing, speaking, listening, moving, visual art, music, design, and silence can all be regarded as texts (Parker, 1997). It is not just what is said or recounted that is important, but what it is possible to 'say'. In other words, texts (the units of analysis) are organized in ways that simultaneously enable and prevent certain meaning-making possibilities. Texts

are understood to become 'sensible' through their intersection with discourses that are already available but discourses are not complete or totalising. Discourse, in Foucault's formulation (1978), is not beyond the text, but is part and parcel of the networks of power/knowledge circulating – discourse is neither a cause nor a reflection of society mapped onto individuals. As i read Foucault, the strength of his approach is that it does not seek to unravel the cause of discourse but rather focuses on how discourses continually shift and alter in relation to local contexts and in ways that are both open and closed to challenge. Foucault asks that we pay attention to how discourses are distributed in tactical and strategic ways:

It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and the different effects – according to who is speaking, his [sic.] position of power, the institutional context in which he [sic.] happens to be situated – that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes. Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. *We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy* (p.100-101, my emphasis).

The implications of this approach to discourse became clearer when i was in the midst of talking to the young people using a socialisation model of gender norms. i assumed that these gender norms were implanted by socialisation, and it would, therefore, follow that any analysis would attempt to unite the themes of their discussion under the rubric of dominant knowledges about why femininity and masculinity were practised in certain ways. i had assumed the position of researcher as representative of the young women and was assuming that i could uncover certain themes that could fit into model of gender socialisation.

Gender was spoken about in the interviews and focus groups but its meaning was not guaranteed by its announcement; it was spoken about in multiple ways that both contested the idea that gender is a socialised expression of a sexed body and yet it was also spoken about as a thing, as something that only comes into being in certain power relations. The participants would use gender to explain 'difference' (between general Girlfriend and Boyfriend relations) but it also remained absent when other differences and similarities were discussed (like specific examples of heterocoupledness). In both its absence and its presence, gender was reconstructed in ways that were both specific to the context of the

discussion and the wider, taken for granted, regimes of truth about how gender could, or could not, be spoken. For instance, it did not seem 'sensible' for Girlfriends to describe their Boyfriends as masters who administered control over them. Even in situations where we discussed Boyfriends' use of control, the Girlfriends did not reference this to gender but, more often, would attribute it to individual psychological qualities. The Girlfriends would use gender to explain how their behaviour as women was both a determinant of social expectations (like being loving, nice, and understanding to Boyfriends) and as a way of contesting these formulations (like being neither girly nor sexual, both nice and derisive). At the one time, there seemed to be in operation a discourse of gender as oppositional and gender as 'changed'. In other words, the theories in action (discourses) of gender were informed and played out according to dominant knowledges at the same time that gender discourses were potential sites of resistance, contestation, and remixing. Rather than theories of gender operating above the heads of the participants, theories were in action in the common sense meanings that circulated within the texts.

Discourse analysts can be interested in how everyday or common sense meanings are constituted through this very broad conception of language as performance (Nikander, 1995). I came to regard myself and others as agents who constitute ourselves and our accounts through discourses and in the process take up subject positions in various ways in localized contexts. Accordingly, it is through this web of movement and contradiction that our subjectivity is continuously constituted and reconstituted and our struggles as agents take place.

Discourses are performative of social constructions (Gill, 1995) and as such take place in relation to various contexts. One of the strengths of discourse analysis is in its attention to the process of taking up meaning in relation to local and wider contexts. As the research is about the meanings that young people in the context of heterocoupledness make, the focus groups appeared to be an appropriate way to examine discourses or theories in action. Discourses also provide places from which to perform. These subject positions are constituted through discourse in historical and political contexts. Rather than regarding language as expressing a pre-existing subjectivity, this conception of discourse proffers that the subject is (in)formed by the places provided in a complex of power/knowledge complexes. The

types of discursive activity such as describing, forming hypotheses, formulating regulations, teaching, and so forth, each of which has its own associated subject positions. So, for example, teaching as a discursive

activity positions those who take part as 'teacher' and 'learner'. (Fairclough, 1992, p.43).

The constituting of subject positions through discourse is also regarded as being informed by a complex field of power relations that are themselves pervasive and yet contested. For instance, 'teachers' and 'learners' may be positioned by a discourse of Western liberal education, but these positions are not settled. When i conducted the interviews in the school, a constant difficulty encountered was finding 'free' space. The classrooms were invariably occupied and we usually ended up sitting around a picnic table in the playground. On a particularly rainy day i decided to transgress the unwritten rule of school etiquette and led two young women into the staff room. We were hardly within the sanctum when we noticed that we had drawn attention from the only two teachers who were present. As i returned their gaze they asked what i was doing with 'them' in here. At that moment i decided that passing through to the adjacent door was the best way to preserve not only the teachers' need for their own space but also the students' position as 'students'. i apologised to the students for my decision and realised that at school, students have very few, if any, spaces that are free from a designation and regulation as 'students'. The teachers' positioned the young people as 'students' and yet i had positioned them as 'participants' and within a context where various discourses of education were circulating my transgression of the spaces within the school also disrupted the positioning of the young people as certain kinds of 'students'. Within the school context there were various discourses at work: the architectural discourses of school design and function, discourses of education as a public good, discourses of professionalism and pedagogy that inform relations between teacher, pupils, parents, and community. Each in turn offers up various subject positions from which 'teachers', 'students' and encroaching 'researchers' can speak/act. Subject positions then, while not completely defining the subject, offer up places from which subjects may appear and inscribe the ways through which the subject might be recognised. Power is productive and present within discourses and subject positions, and questioning how power operates became an important part of the feminist discursive approach that was used to construct the focus group sessions.

MORE POWER

The notion of power used in the interview design located oppression within structures of society as hidden but ever present forces that control those who are variously marginalized. Feminist theorising of patriarchy has constituted power as a unitary structural force that devalues and oppresses women's power. These understandings of power have enabled women to voice and disrupt the hierarchical power of patriarchy through consciousness-raising, academic critiques, and grass roots activism (Nicholson & Fraser, 1998). The feminist resistance to patriarchy was conceptualised, however, as a critical mass reaction of women who were less powerful than men. Paradoxically, this resistance signified some women's power to resist (often white, middle class, heterosexual, and educated) while at the same time, crystallizing the very dichotomy of the powerful as male and the powerless as female. Feminist revisions of power and gender have moved to problematize these dichotomies and hierarchies by reformulating, but not necessarily doing away with, power as a sovereign, dominating force. The desire to change existing power relations that privilege 'men' as a group and disadvantage 'women' as a group are still acknowledged but the ways of thinking about gender and power have blossomed. The feminist version of power that I utilize is drawn, in part, from the work of Foucault and Butler.

For Foucault power is seen as something that is not owned exclusively and necessarily by the 'dominant' but as productive, endlessly circulating, and disruptable.

[Power] is produced not only through differences in material resources, but in the meanings through which we understand our relationships, and in the effects of gender difference in conferring power on men, however, these meanings are multiple and contradictory. By recognising these contradictions, we are not struck with a political analysis which sees men's power as monolithic and unchangeable and which keeps women in the victim roles. Power is productive, and where there is power, there is resistance. Heterosexuality is a site of power and resistance for men and women (Hollway, 1983, p.140).

The young women interviewees both resisted and acquiesced in these endless operations of power in heterocoupledness. The point is that power was in operation even though it did not necessarily have guaranteed forms; this does not mean that young women were insulated against the material effects of male privilege but that power was 'everywhere' in the micro-politics of their accounts and did not just operate from beyond, enforcing compliance from above. Gill (1995) has argued that while discursive approaches can revitalise feminist discussions of power, the focus on localised power can be problematic.

[T]he emphasis upon looking at the micro-politics of power – how it is practised in particular discursive contexts – can serve to make structural inequalities invisible and lead to a neglect of the institutional bases of power...and the discourse analytic commitment to relativism...means that the grounds for feminist politics are disavowed (p.168).

Gill discusses the way a relativist position has often been teamed with a postmodern scepticism where the resulting analyses can appear as politically neutral. Nevertheless, she argues that feminist refutations of 'truth' need not result in the denial of politically interested debate. Rather than calling on objective claims of truth, she instead contends that '[w]hat we – as feminists want – is not truth but *justice*' (p.178). In a footnoted remark Gill notes that claims of 'justice' may also be based on some kind of foundational presumption about 'how the world 'really' is', but as Butler (1992) reminds us, this is not necessarily inevitable if a contingent foundationalism is applied. Claims about justice do not need to rest on universal and foundational givens. When issues of power and domination are located as the contingent foundations of justice the politics of contestation are at least made visible, and at most, are argued for in relation to political contexts where power can still subjugate, dominate, and oppress. Gill calls this a 'politically informed relativism' and I think that when theorising power this stance offers a useful beginning for feminists, like myself, who find Foucault's critiques attractive yet find that the idea of 'power as everywhere' must not be 'conceived in so diffuse a fashion [that it] loses its role in an effective political critique' (Bartky, 1995, p.189).

Some feminists have argued that if power is simply everywhere then any critique of the macro-structural is overwritten by an emphasis on the micro-structural workings of power in the everyday (Hepburn, 1999). The diffusion of power advanced by such a formulation of power relies on a conceptual distinction between the micro and macro-political. However, this distinction does not have clear and uniform boundaries and as the feminist mantra 'the personal is

political' implies, the 'political is also personal'. If power is everywhere just as resistance is everywhere possible, it does not mean that power will operate in distinctly separate and yet equivocal ways. What is perhaps most attractive for a feminist discursive psychology is that an analysis of disciplinary power focuses on the relational forms of power that constitute the subject in relation to the wider institutional and structural exercise of power.

In a Foucauldian account it is recognised that power operates not just from the top, in terms of the macro structures and institutional authority of the state, but also from below, in the day to day unquestioned acceptance and employment of particular 'micro' discourses. It makes no sense to talk of macro-structural inequalities which are not already constituted 'micro' discursively (Hepburn, 1999, p.6).

Hepburn's reading of Foucault's analytics of power makes it clear that the distinction between the macro and the micro must be critiqued. In *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *History of Sexuality* (1978) Foucault proposes that disciplinary (rather than sovereign power) characterises modern operations of power. He argues that sovereign power operates from the will of the king to administer compliance from feudal subjects through the use or the threatened use of force and physical violence. In the modern state, however, he argues that power operates not just from above, from the king's head down, but in multiple ways so that the population is controlled through the bureaucratic and faceless institutions that include the church, penal systems, hospitals, and schools where individuals are reduced to cases that are to be redeemed, policed, cured, and schooled. Disciplinary power operates from below, seeping into and constituting the social body in a capillary like fashion, calling people in to administer themselves in relation to the hegemonic forms of power/knowledge that also underpin the modern democratic state where more subtle ruses of power than the ruler of the sovereign feudal state operate. This does not mean that relational or disciplinary power was not also at work in the sovereign state (Parker, 1989) just as it does not mean that the modern state does not also utilise an effectively sovereign power to control constituents and shore up its power (see Alexandra, 1991, *Western state terrorism* for documented examples from last century and witness the U.S. led bombing of Afghanistan for recent examples). Disciplinary power does not exclude the operation of sovereign power just as the micro-structural operations of power do not exclude the macro-structural operations of power.

Bentham's plans for the Panopticon, an eighteenth century prison design, were used by Foucault as a metaphor for how disciplinary power operates through

the constitution of the subject as self-controlling. The prisoners in the Panopticon are housed within cells that encircle a central guard tower. The windows of the cells are positioned so that prisoners have the continual knowledge that the guards in the control tower can see them. The prisoners in turn cannot see the guard and therefore can never know if and when they are being monitored. The design is a particularly efficient mode of controlling populations of prisoners (the subject in modern states) because the presence of a guard, a representative of the state, is no longer necessary. The prisoners in a sense become their own jailors, self-monitoring subjects who are disciplined to collude in their own interment.

Nicola Gavey (1992) used the Panopticon in her doctoral research into sexual coercion as a way of demonstrating how power/knowledge regulates without having to be embodied and administered by a monolithic sovereign power structure. When negotiating the meanings associated with being coerced into sex, Gavey adroitly argues that various technologies of heterosexuality discursively position women in ways that mitigate and regulate what can and cannot be defined as 'rape'. In Gavey's study, the women's reluctance to call their experiences of sexual coercion 'rape' was not belittled as merely the result of 'false consciousness' or 'denial' enforced by a dominant macro-structure. Instead 'sexual coercion' was read as an operation of disciplinary power rather than the imperialist and corrective gesture of a 'knowing' researcher who interprets a duped subject. Gavey (1989) has argued that a post-structural, discursive feminism can provide disruptive spaces for resistance when the discursive politics of what is taken to be 'the way things are' (like the presumption that consent for sex on one occasion carries over to other occasions) are exposed as constructs that can be and are reconstituted by subjects. The complex of discourses provided access to various subject positions and as such regulated practices in various ways. In sum, post structuralism notices variability and inconsistency and asks how they might function to constitute and reconstitute our sense of selves and others. The gaps and contradictions between and within discourses are attended to as ways of recognizing and more importantly subverting the hegemonic constitutions that regulate our possibilities. In this way psychology's focus on the coherent, unified self is positioned as doubtful and, instead, subjectivity is seen as split, in flux, and in relation to power.

The Panopticon metaphor can imply that a 'subject' exists and is aware (at some level) of being controlled and who is invested (again at some level) with a concern for the guards' disciplinary viewpoint. Most of these potential criticisms do not necessarily follow from each other. A disciplined subject may be

constituted as a prisoner in relation to the penal system, but this does not mean that the subject is completely determined by the sense of surveillance. The 'subject' however, may exist, not necessarily as a stable, immutable personality (such as the professional psychological construction of the personalities of pervert, invalid, criminal, or psychopath), but as an individual that is constituted in relational contexts. Lorraine Code (1993) offers an intriguing idea about the subject. In arguing that people become knowable within relational processes and contexts, Code argues that a tension between the decentred postmodern subject and the unified Enlightenment subject must be 'acknowledged and *maintained*' (p.34, my emphasis).

In practice, people often know one another well enough to make good decisions about who can be counted on and who cannot, who makes a good ally and who does not. Yet precisely because of the fluctuations and contradictions of subjectivity, this process is ongoing, communicative, and interpretive. It is never fixed or complete; any fixity claimed for "the self" will be a fixity in flux. Nonetheless, i argue that something must be fixed to "contain" the flux even enough to permit references to and ongoing relationships with "this person". Knowing people always occurs in terms of this tension (p.34).

The postmodern subject that is disciplined in relation to the hegemonic constitutions of her/his subjectivity, through technologies of heterosexual coercion for instance, is also a subject where flux is contained by the fixity of certain power relations, and, who exists alongside the potential revitalisation of the boundaries that are constituted as containing the subject. An implication of a disciplinary view of power for resistance is that subjects may seize upon gaps, silences, and the unmarked to 'make strange' (Code, 1993, p.42) the constitution of the subject, but they do so within power relations that may be recuperative.

If power creates its own resistance, then the liberation from specific forms of power must take account of the kind of resistance that is being engaged in, on pain of repeating that which one is trying to escape (May, 1994).

The focus groups promised to be an interesting way to explore the operation of disciplinary power on adolescent 'subjects' who were under the surveillance of a video camera, in the institutional context of the school, and in peer group relations within respective groups of young women and men. i now shift to explain how i designed the focus groups.

Recurrent questions and feelings of doubt about the design of the focus groups helped to ensure that reflexivity was integral rather than something to expunge or resolve in the research process. The design of the focus groups was informed by the concepts of discourse, power relations, and the political formation of gendered subject positions. The interviews had focused on young women as Girlfriends, and i decided that the focus groups should include groups of young women and groups of young men. The interviews with the young women had implied that the assessment of relationships was based on the gendered discourses of (hetero)sexuality, romance and love, labour, safety and risks. It was important therefore to include young men as Boyfriends who would also provide accounts of heterocoupledness. The research now needed to be conducted within a group context in order to interrogate the processes of making sense through discourse.

THE FOCUS OF THE GROUPS.

Focus groups are an intensive, qualitative method of gathering information about a predetermined topic from a demographically constituted and apparently homogeneous selection of people (Hawe, Degeling & Hall, 1990). Taking various researchers' advice i decided to limit the group size to between five and seven participants (Krueger, 1988; Morgan, 1988; Thomas, Steven, Browning, Dickens, Eckermann, Carey & Pollard, 1992; Shaw, 1995). Using the information gathered in the survey and interviews, i decided that most young people seem to start to describe their intimate relationships as 'serious' from about the age of fifteen. According to past researchers, focus groups often work best if the participants are fairly 'homogenous' in terms of age, ethnicity and gender. Whether this is so, or not, is disputable, but i did think that by asking young people to talk with their friends that more familiar discussions would take

place. By putting young men and women into separate focus groups that were facilitated by a friend, i hoped to examine the particular ways that each friendship group accounted for safety and risk in heterocoupledness. The intention was to interrogate the unmarked or normative conventions of heterocoupledness. Therefore, heterosexual and Pakeha group members were advertised for, but if any participants who were queer or of non-Pakeha ethnicity volunteered and were part of these friendship groups, then their participation was welcomed.

In the interviews with the young women, two Māori 13 year olds volunteered, and in the focus groups one young man, aged 16, identified as Māori. Our discussions were similar in content to the ones i was having with the older Pakeha women and any differences appeared to be related to the age differences. Nevertheless, when i read the transcripts of the interviews it became clear that i was using predominantly Western psychological, feminist assumptions about development, identity, adolescence, violence and gender that may be inappropriately applied to Māori. Within Aotearoa/New Zealand, rangitahi is a relational status of youth and is not necessarily bound by age/stage assumptions as it is in European and Pakeha cultures (Macfarlane, 2001). Young Māori are often positioned (by schools, health and social agencies, the law and media) as 'adolescent', and along with a history of colonialism, the Māori subject is often constituted in comparison to Western constructs of normality. Irihapiti Ramsden (1991) contends that adolescence is a Pakeha cultural construct that has only recently been created and applied to Māori youth:

Māori people have inherited western adolescence, but with a sharp, violent colonial twist. Western adolescence is a product of the industrial revolution, of the unhealthy little nuclear family, of the capitalist economy and of the more accessible and much more extended system of education and preparation for western adulthood. The appearance of the whole culture has been generated by changes in the west brought to our people by the impact of colonialism and maintained by an economy voracious for the discretionary spending power of the people in this age group.

Western and Pakeha institutions and discursive formations may attempt to contain rangitahi as adolescent subjects and this representation is not only inadequate, it also extends eurocentric age/stage developmental models onto Māori. It became clear that i could not listen to Māori participants using these Pakeha constructs of adolescence. Overall, this also forced a questioning of adolescence as a category of identity. Instead, i locate 'adolescence' as a position, a site that is a fictional construct that nevertheless interpolates or hails individuals to identify as

'adolescents'. The project was then renamed as an interrogation of heterocoupledness at adolescence. The inclusion of Māori in the research could have further conflated the Western construct of adolescence with rangitahi if their voices were read as representative of Māori adolescents. I have attempted to read the Māori participants' texts in relation to a context of post-colonialism where the hegemonic constructions of Pakeha adolescence and heterosexuality are contested by notions such as rangitahi. However, given that the research topic was limited to an interrogation of Pakeha constitutions of heterocoupledness at adolescence, I have been unable to explore the wider implications of Māori constitutions of sexuality, coupledness, age, and gender. I acknowledge that this potentially marginalizes Māori praxis but hope, that by problematizing the continued imperialism of Western and Pakeha constitutions of the adolescent subject, that these terms are at least presented as disputable.

TEENAGE FACILITATORS

The interviews left me with a sense that my direct influence was containing the ways that the young women could discuss heterocoupledness. My presence as the interviewer was difficult to disrupt even by adopting a conversational tone. Whilst my influence is still very present within the focus groups, I wanted to create a space where I was not directly involved in the conversations. I decided to ask young people to facilitate the focus groups. With the help of the school's head pupils and after some negotiation with S.A.F.E. (Students Against All Forms of Exploitation) group members, three males and three females came forward to participate as facilitators. As the facilitators were in their final year of school I agreed that I should provide them with references for their contributions to the research. For one half day at the school, we sat around a table and went through the planned procedure and discussed the topic of heterocoupledness, safety and risk. The facilitators had been trained in peer mediation and were interested in the research topic. Together we discussed how we could recruit participants and came to the decision to focus on their own peer groups. We also voted to select a delegation that would present the research to other interested students in the upper school. Over the next four months and after many phone conversations the six focus groups were conducted. We conducted the groups in the kitchen of the

school's newly established 'cottage', a site located on the periphery of the school grounds where students were able to go to consult with community groups or where they could book space for their own activities. Each group was provided with refreshments during the one to three hours that they participated. I video taped the sessions and all of the participants met with me both before and after the sessions to fill out ethical consent forms just as the interview participants had (Appendix iii) and to discuss issues.

DESIGN OF QUESTIONS.

The focus group questions followed a general to specific format – however I stressed that the facilitators were not bound to follow this format and could conduct the session in any way that seemed appropriate to the general topic and the discussions that were going on within group. Ten open-ended questions were provided so that the facilitators had some structure around which to base their discussions (Appendix iv). The facilitators were asked to conduct the discussions according to what they thought was 'natural' to talk about in peer groups. However, I did remind the facilitators that they could be looked to as 'leaders' of the discussion and to try to include everyone in the discussion, and ask curious open-ended questions when they found something interesting. I explained that I was not looking for answers, but that I wanted to hear young people talking and making sense of Girlfriend-Boyfriend relationships. Given those broad parameters I hoped that they would be free to explore issues of particular importance to themselves in relation to the topic.

In order to link the interviews with the group focus discussions i decided to use a composite narrative of the young women interviewees' text. By asking young people to respond to the narrative, i hoped to both stimulate discussion and find out how young people made sense of situations where risk and safety were potential issues. The narrative was based around the accounts of harm and/or unsafety that young women interviewees had conveyed. The narrative included accounts of: a) Possessiveness and jealousy; b) Relationship importance and expectations; c) Physical assault; d) Sexual coercion; and e) Explanations and responses to unsafety. Threaded throughout these main themes were also accounts of emotional control, isolation, and intimidation. The narrative was composed using pseudonyms and the third person voice but the text style itself has largely been left in the young women's words. The text was also originally a spoken text and i needed to recapture this aspect within the focus groups. The three male and three female focus groups analysed a first person narrative (presented through a tape recorder and in writing) about a dating relationship at adolescence. The characters in this short narrative, 'Kim' and 'Paul', were created from the previous interviews with Astrid, Zara, Charisse, Angie and Anna. For the male focus groups, 'Paul' told about his love for 'Kim', their arguments and their break up. In the female focus groups, 'Kim' told about her love for 'Paul', their arguments and their eventual break up. After hearing and reading these accounts the focus group members discussed a series of prompts that covered a range of issues including how they define love, what kind of things are acceptable in Girl-Boyfriend relationships, and how responsibility for a relationship should be practised (Appendix v).

The group facilitators began the discussions with either a brainstorming activity on Boyfriends and Girlfriends, or by listening to the tape-recorded narrative. The facilitators made these decisions based on how familiar the group members were to each other. They were told that what they were hearing was drawn from the actual experiences of several young people. After reading/hearing the story of Kim and Paul, they were asked by the facilitator-participant to think about a number of questions. The facilitator either used the question prompts that i had designed or raised their own questions. In all of the

groups a combination of these tactics were employed. The negotiations of meanings in the groups around Kim's and Paul's relationship served as a discussion piece but also as a springboard from which participants talked about their own heterocoupledness experiences.

DISCUSSION OF THE FOCUS GROUP

Attempting to move beyond essentialist, unitary versions of truth presented ethical and epistemological difficulties. These dilemmas are not something that i hope to solve; i see these difficulties as necessary in order to maintain an ongoing contestation of the knowledge that is produced and argued over in this thesis. The suspicion of truths that a feminist discursive psychology advocates means that any attempt to deliberate over the tensions of materialism, relativism, and subjectivity can only hope to be partial and localized resolutions. This attention to the partial and local can also undermine the arguments that i will be putting forward if they are represented as disconnected from the wider hegemonic promulgation of foundational givens, like gender binaries. While partiality may ensure a continual academic contestation, it may also mean that this contestation can fail to 'make common sense'. In my lectures on gender, i am continually confronted with the task of provoking critiques of the manufacturing of gender/sex as natural and normal expressions of subjectivity. Tutorial discussions about gender often include exasperated pleas for me to provide them with a model, a structure, or at least one foundation upon which students can base their discussions of gender. i try to refuse to provide them with these things, at the same time that i am aware that the 'reality' of gender presents itself as an almost intractable given around which many students (including myself), even when they refuse foundations of nature or nurture, are continually confronted with. To contest the givens of gender is also to contest the minutia of confrontations with gendered discourses whilst also being confronted with the ongoing inscription of oneself by educational, medical, judicial, economic, religious, and media institutions and technologies. To be addressed as a woman does not guarantee how 'woman' will be configured within particular contexts, but the hegemonic force of gender binaries and categories pervades almost every interaction and encounter. A postmodern partiality and locality offers a useful way to disrupt the totalising force of the hegemonic constitution of gender and gendered subjects, but it must also be conceded that these confrontations take place in a Western context where fragmentary truth has been used and recuperated as a way to manufacture the illusion of variety, diversity, and plurality.

Marketers have become adept at using multiplicity to sell more of the same. Klein (2001), reflecting on her involvement in identity politics in the eighties and nineties, argues convincingly that marketers have merely adapted partial and local 'representations' in order to sell a multiplicity of identity images associated with brands. Media and marketing corporations have in many ways responded to calls for better representation of the diversity of women, of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered sexualities, of minorities, of alternative ways of performing subjectivity.

Rather than creating different advertising campaigns for different markets, campaigns could sell diversity itself, to all markets at once. The formula maintained the one-size-fits-all cost benefits of the old-style cowboy cultural imperialism, but ran far fewer risks of offending local sensibilities. Instead of urging the world to taste America, it calls out, like the Skittles slogan, to "Taste the Rainbow". This candy-coated multiculturalism has stepped in as a kinder, gentler packaging for the homogenizing effect of what Indian physicist Vandana Shiva calls "the monoculture" – it is, in effect, mono-multiculturalism (p.117).

The partiality and local attention paid to the reading of the interview and focus group texts are also continually subject to such recuperations. These recuperations iterate that whilst i do not claim to be representing either 'the Truth' or a multiplicity of truths devoid of political context, the contestations of truth in this thesis can also be taken up and used to affirm that which i contest – like the dichotomisation of gender. This means that i cannot ignore the way totalising regimes of truths inflict a structuring of everyday life, but it does not follow that i have to forsake my arguments simply because they are also subject to recuperation. The value of being reflexive is that no methodology or argument can be taken on without problems – including the problem of inadvertently remixing that which i claim to contest. i have written this thesis as a 'passionately interested inquiry' (Gill, 1995) where i hope to culture-jam the meanings constituted around safety and risk in heterocoupledness at adolescence. Just as contestations, like the identity politics of representation that Klein (2001) discusses, can be recuperated, these recuperations can also be used to as weapons of *détournement*, that is, 'the 'hijacking' and reorganization of cultural and textual materials for the purpose of ideological criticism' (Gardiner, 2000, p.107). Take for example, twenty one year old Carly Stasko who culture jams the marketing and media images that have been sent to recuperate feminism as 'girl power':

Stasko's interest in marketing began when she realised the degree to which contemporary definitions of female beauty – articulated largely through the media and advertisements – were making her and her peers feel insecure and inadequate. But unlike my [Kline's and my own] generation of young feminists who had dealt with similar revelations largely by calling for censorship and re-education programs, she caught the mid-nineties self-publishing craze. Still in her teens, Stasko began publishing *Uncool*, a photocopied zine crammed with collages of sliced-and-diced quizzes from women's magazines, jammed ads for tampons, manifestos of culture jamming and, in one issue a full-page ad for Philosophy Barbie. "What came first?" Stasko's Barbie wonders. "The beauty or the myth?" and "If I break a nail, but I'm asleep, is it still a crisis?" She says the process of making her own media, adopting the voice of the promoter and hacking into the surface of the ad culture began to weaken advertising's effect on her. "I realized that I can use the same tools the media does to promote my ideas. It took the sting out of the media for me because I saw how easy it was." (Klein, 2001, p.290).

It may require vigilance but contestation and culture-jamming does not necessarily require access to expensive computer hard/software. As Klein states, a simple vivid marker used on a Calvin Klein advert that says 'Feed me' was all that a high school group called the Bitch Brigade needed to conduct their own *détournement* of cultural and hegemonic promotions of the normal, natural, and 'cool'. While perhaps it is not necessarily advisable to use the Master's tools to dismantle the Master's house (iterating Audre Lorde's question), the Master's tools are not as infallible as they first might appear when represented as foundational givens. The next question that concerned me was whether there was anything left, including resistance, which was not 'discursive'?

THE EXTRA-DISCURSIVE?

Should all knowledge/practice be accounted for as discursive? Are there things beyond discourses, an extra-discursive space that cannot be read as 'theories in action'? Alternatively, is this desire to design research that reaches

beyond to reveal the unknown just a hangover from my past relationship with positivist methodology and humanism? These concerns with the extra-discursive are interesting in that they raise the possibility that language, however broadly we define it, is but one mechanism through which people may experience life. For psychology this is particularly important in that by paying such heavy attention to that which is discursive we may do ourselves out of a profession and discipline (Nightingale, 1997; Parker, 1997). Without the person, the subjective experience can appear to just 'happen' within discourses. Making psychology and its workers redundant is perhaps not such a bad thing, especially given its current modes of operation where psychology distinguishes itself through the production and reproduction of subjectivities, like the at-risk subject, that arguably become targets of intervention, therapy, and regulation. Trying to maintain a profession, like psychology, without considering how it operates to discipline and regulate is to continue to theorise/practise psychology as if it occurs in an intellectual vacuum where the status of 'expert' remains unscathed by feminist, critical, and discursive critiques. Reforming psychology so that it can still pay attention to the extra-discursive is perhaps a dangerously conservative aim. The search to name and claim subjectivity as the speciality of psychology, even if it is reconfigured as discursive, will be to maintain a narrow and impoverished discipline. The extra-discursive need not be the linchpin upon which psychology bases its knowledge/practices. The extra-discursive may be a topic that many psychologists may want to explore but it need not be explored in the name of retaining the subjective experience as the speciality of psychologists. In acknowledging the extra-discursive, feminist discursive psychologists can demonstrate that the discursive is but one very partial re-storying of the constitution of the subjective. However, in attempting to theorise the extra-discursive, (like subjective experience), one is also discursing the 'extra'.

Research into abuse using a discursive approach can mean that the terms through which abuse is mobilised are scrutinised but this can mean that all experience, including abuse, can be endlessly re-read and re-interpreted. Discursive readings of abuse can include contradictions and the resistance that women practise, in part because a plurality of meaning has already been assumed. Women's accounts of their experiences of battering can be regarded as discursively constituted in relation to history, culture, ethnicity, class, dis(ability) and sexuality. A problem with some postmodern approaches, where everything is regarded as discursive, is that it makes it possible to argue that the young people's accounts could be read and interpreted in endless ways. The dilemma is

that, in the end, nothing will get said or what is said can be closed down as just 'my' discursive account (Parker & Burman, 1993b). A strictly postmodern reading could result in an interpretative slide into relativism and anti-materialism (see Edwards, Ashmore, & Potter, 1995). However, the interpretative possibilities are not absolutely relative, they are located within a context and this must be taken seriously (Code, 1993). Reading a text beyond the discursive would, in a strange twist of plot, return to the traditional psychological predilection for studying individuals as extricated entities that exist apart from culture, history, and power contexts. I have, therefore, stayed close to the (con)text when analysing the interview and focus group texts, rather than searching for an extra-discursive echo in-between the young people's texts.

The accounts of safety and risk in heterocoupledness that the young people give are not just narrative fragments. Their accounts are as real as bruises are real and both are discursive. Power and resistance may be everywhere, but the material effects of power are distributed according to gender, ethnicity, age, ability and sexuality subject positions. They are also discursive as 'real', and feminist inquiry into these 'real matters' needs to be treated seriously rather than 'dismissed as rhetorical or discursive moves' (Gill, 1995, p.173). The wider power relations that discursively constitute these 'real matters' can be imbued with patriarchal discourses that can be deconstructed and contested by a feminist discourse analysis. At the same time, these same approaches can be used to deconstruct research into material problems like battering, sexual abuse, and poverty to a series of discursive narratives with only passing commentary on the implications of 'death' (Gill, 1995). The responsibility for the meanings created in research is of theoretical and ethical concern. I am painfully aware that the struggle for meaning is continuous and the history of feminism demonstrates that all too often feminist thought has been used to tell more convenient stories about 'women'. It would seem that no matter how well argued a theory is it can still be recuperated to serve dominant interests. Despite these appropriations of feminist theory, it is important to create consistent and argued for 'theory/practices'. The idea of reflexive and strategic subject positioning is useful to consider when designing discursive research projects, particularly when the epistemological genre of postmodernism can easily be used to mobilize relativism and anti-materialistic doctrines of what 'good' theory is.

The subject position of 'researcher' in discursive psychology offers up ways of viewing knowledge from partial, multiple, and fluctuating vantage points. The view from a feminist subject position is of the 'researcher' in context, in relation

and accountable to the researched. Included in both is the research strategy of reflexivity and the feminist form stresses accountability for knowledge in an explicitly political way that works for the emancipation from oppressions (Gill, 1995; Wilkinson, 1988). Together the subject positions offered by discursive feminism offer up ways of generating knowledge that can be sensitive to the material implications of research. It is important to note that i am assuming neither a relativistic nor a realist position. As Lather (1992) has argued, both positions of absolute objectivity and absolute relativism are based on modernistic Cartesian conceptions. What i am suggesting is that feminist discursive psychology needs to embrace what Gill (1995) has called 'passionately interested inquiry' (p.175).

The 'passionately interested inquiry' agrees with relativists that the search for the 'truth' has been dangerous for women but also proposes a strategic and explicit use of discourse in subversive and challenging projects. Far from a theoretical free-play of a fashionable postmodernist inquiry, a 'passionately interested inquiry' moves away from the search for the truth towards arguments for justice (Gill, 1995, p. 178). While Gill acknowledges that 'justice' can be prone to realist presumptions to reveal 'rightness', it at least locates feminist discursive psychology as a political rather than a solely epistemological debate. The value of research will then be contested around how arguments are constructed but also the kind of reflexivity that authors demonstrate within their research projects. The text selection process was therefore a 'passionately interested inquiry' into the power relations that govern the constitution of safety, risk and gender in heterocoupledness at adolescence.

TEXT SELECTION

The linkages between safety, risk, and gender in heterocoupledness at adolescence are at once coherent, complex, shifting, and varied. The young people in the interviews and focus groups often talked about heterocoupledness in traditional, monolithic, and 'common sense' ways, at the same time implying that they might take a more subversive journey. The assumption (often alluded to by the young women), that heterocoupledness 'can be done differently' and not necessarily according to dogmatically gendered ways that result in power abuses, is an important one. I have therefore used an array of texts to demonstrate that the context through which the discourses of heterocoupledness at adolescence are produced and subverted is a complex interplay between and despite (as opposed to within and without) ideas, gestures, voices, policies, principles, and orthodoxies of normality and nature.

I have read the texts over and over, and have settled on three main inquiries. Namely, I explore the way various discourses of heterocoupledness (en)gender a marriage between romance and risk, constitute the labours of love according to gender, and how harm, abuse, and violence are navigated by girlfriends. The stance I have taken in reading these texts has been to regard 'what has been said/written' as 'fictional' constructs (Weeks, 1995). At first this 'fictional regard' may seem to belittle the experiences of young people who would probably claim that they were not mere characters acting out their imagined lives. Similarly, the young people I spoke with were 'real' (in the sense that they 'existed'), and they were, most likely, 'truthful' in their accounts. It must also be remembered that our discussions were, perhaps, one of the first times that an adult had asked them to articulate and question their experiences and assumptions about 'going-out'. I am mindful that their texts are specific to the time and place of our discussions and therefore do not necessarily indicate any static, immutable truths that can be extrapolated beyond participants and the occasion. Furthermore, the young people were also situated, (as am I as the author of this thesis), in particular power relations that organise our regimes of truth and provide places (like identity and experience) from which to speak and act. If it is agreed that experience is lived out within social, historical, and contingent power relations then a fictional stance emphasises the constructedness

of these relations and how some notions can be more easily carried across time and place locations than others. In reference to what he calls the 'necessary fictions of sexual identity', Jeffrey Weeks (1995, pp.98-101) argues that a fictional stance does two things; it provides a critique that denaturalises the apparent intractability of social constructions (in this case the gendering of romance and risk) and, it regards human agency as potentially disruptive of 'the imposing edifice of Nature, History, and Truth' (p.99).

The nature/history/truth of heterocoupledness at adolescence is often portrayed as being based on a 'reality' that is ironically informed by the fantasy and infatuations of youth. Young people are assumed to be more vulnerable to the fantasies of romantic love and, through their temporal engagements, are often regarded as being in preparation for adult heterocoupledness. However, these splits between fantasy and reality, temporary and long-term loves, youth and adult heterocoupledness, between fact and fiction, are blurred. The split is a rhetorical device that serves to promote certain fictional truths upon which Girlfriends and Boyfriends may base their heterocoupledness and upon which others claim certain judgements. There is a disruptive power in treating heterocoupledness as a fictional construct. Embracing a fictional stance can enable an imagination of heterocoupledness beyond the political and moral conventions of nature/truth/history. The power of heterosexual 'coupling' and the taken for granted practices can be more actively challenged and many other ways of performing agentically can be entertained as plausible, if they are regarded as part of a fictional soundscape.

i have therefore used a contemporary metaphor to express the constructedness of safety and risk in heterocoupledness at adolescence. DJs remix various styles and forms of music to create soundscapes, and heterocoupledness and gender can also be regarded as constantly remixed soundscapes. Many styles of music have a history of sampling themes and motifs, and therefore, of rendering a new interpretative performance. The practise of musical sampling is not new; jazz and classical music often play with variations on a theme. Nevertheless, the contemporary remixing and sampling of musical tracks from a wide range of musical fields, from classical to jazz and rock, has created new sounds that cannot easily be defined or categorised. The music is regarded as original but its patterns are awash with slices of content from the sampled sound (that may also be based on an interpretive remixing) and mixed in with new contradictions. When DJs perform live mixing, they will often play with the expectations that the dancing audience may have for the way the music should

unfold. The musical pastiche that is created is both holding to old expectations and challenging them; it is both using fragments from traditional narratives and yet changing them into something that sounds entirely original. In a similar way, a discourse of heterocoupledness at adolescence samples from various notions of love and romance and remixes them into forms that are both repetitive of traditional themes yet potentially subversive. Unfortunately, these new remixes of heterocoupledness tend to distract from the idea that the kind of romantic movements that are charted by this new soundscape are partially sourced from a largely unchallenged soundscape of heterocoupledness. Just as consumer capitalism has seized upon the postmodern to market diversity in mono-multicultural forms, gender power relations in heterocoupledness have been remixed to promote the appearance of equality. At the same time, the audience is attempting to move with and against the music of heterocoupledness and the *détournement* can still be as radical as refusing to dance to the beat as set by the DJ.

Turning back to the design of this research, the focus is to explore the accounts that teenagers give of abuse and coupledness with the explicit political purpose of disrupting the masculine privilege that regulates and, in some cases, harms young women. Being a young person is a site of multiple and shifting power arrangements, and the accounts of being 'young' and 'male' may combine to form restrictive ways of being, but abuse is not a gender neutral phenomena. i start with this political bedrock, it may be epistemologically unworkable to reject realism and then simultaneously presume a reality 'out there'. Let the criticisms of this contradiction roll forth so that we may find some way to not just account but to be accountable for the knowledge that is generated within psychology and feminism. Hopefully through the project of analysing the interview and group focus texts from a discursive feminist stance i will begin to find a way of pulling together an argument that is a 'passionately interested inquiry'.

MR. EXCEPTION AND MS. RIGHT ARE GOING OUT:

A Gendered Marriage between Romance and Risk.

Introducing the man of your dreams, the ideal beyond reach yet always potentially available... He lives in the pages of Girlfriend magazines and can be viewed on TV screens nationwide but no one really believes he exists – its just romance. 'My boyfriend's different, he not like all the other guys'. Mr. Exceptional is the cultural instalment of the good man; he's kind, caring, respectful but never too nice; he's close, he's protective, he's there for you and, he loves you. We are told that it is hard to find him. Mr. Exceptional is available, but only to certain kinds of women. And as the women come and go they talk not of Michelangelo but of him; 'he's so sensitive and he always makes me laugh!' Ms. Right is a post-feminist woman, she knows her own mind and will even stand up for herself, and what's more, she's been careful in her selection of a boyfriend. Still she can't help thinking that's she's been lucky. To her he is sweet and shy, and while he can be as moody as the Bronte sister's romantic heroes, Heathcliffe and Rochester, with Ms. Right he is that special someone who allows her to know him.

When Romeo and Juliet first met, they knew that their love was inevitable. Despite the hatred between their families, the lovers struggled against the forces that threatened to separate them only to be finally united in death. As Western history's most memorable archetypes of adolescent romantic love, their story also represents the coupling of romance with tragedy. Romeo and Juliet is a classic tale of heterosexual romance wherein the protagonists notice each other across a crowded room, are

instantly and passionately attracted, or they discover that their 'true love' has been veiled by friendship. In either tale, the characters may risk transgressing class, family and/or personal barriers in order to be together. Whether it is Jane Eyre and Rochester, Heathcliff and Cathy, Romeo and Juliet, or the experience of first love at adolescence, the romance of being wooed into love is often portrayed as having tragic or at least risky possibilities. These tragic or risky possibilities are gendered. While male characters may risk rejection by the object of their desire and perhaps a wounded sense of pride and status, taking these risks often, in the end, enhances masculinity. When female characters pursue romance, they risk the consequences of transgressing gendered boundaries. For a female to safely pursue romance (without fear of rape, a tarnished reputation, a nervous breakdown, hurling herself under a train...) she must scheme, manipulate or selflessly win her way into heterocoupledness through a contortion act of innocence and guile.

But this caricature of romantic heterocoupledness would seem to bear little relation to the practices of Girlfriends and Boyfriends in the late nineties where a faith in more equal gender relations prevails - except that the themes of romance and risk remain married. It is my contention that a marriage between romance and risk is a discursive arrangement, where despite the multiple and merged meanings associated with risk and romance, masculine risk taking is privileged and feminine risk taking is undermined.

Risk is also relevant in a discussion where the people that I talked to were constituted as 'adolescents'. Western psychology has constructed a paradoxical relationship between risk and adolescence. On the one hand, Hall's (1904) depiction of adolescent risk-taking included associations with criminality, rebelliousness, and general unpredictability. On the other, psychologists like Erikson (1968) emphasised that risk-taking at adolescence can take the form of a powerful questioning of the demands of adult society and provides a moratorium where an autonomous sense of identity could be developed. Ayman-Nolley and Taira (2000) explored these contradictory views of adolescence in a recent critique of 2084 articles published in six main adolescent and developmental journals. Overall, they found that between 1985 and 1995, fifty three per cent of the articles were biased towards portrayals of adolescents as psychologically unstable, abnormal and at-risk. The two most frequently studied topics included psychological abnormalities and risk-taking. Furthermore, 'risk-taking behaviour' was the most frequently studied topic for Hispanics and Blacks, while 'family' was

the most frequently studied topic for Whites. Unfortunately, the relation between gender and risk-taking topics was not studied. What the Ayman-Nolley and Taira article does demonstrate is that psychologists assume that adolescent risk-taking is essentially negative, and that 'minority' groups are most often depicted as 'at risk'. An attempted fusion between the positive view of risk as experimental, and the negative view of risk as endangering has resulted in a paradoxical relationship between risk and adolescence. This paradox is played out in the wider socio-political Western context where risk-taking is revered at a general level as necessary but temporary experiments at adolescence, and at an individualised level, where certain behaviours, attitudes and affects are framed as dangerous or abnormal.

Both of these general and particular practices of risk involve experimentation. The latitude of these experiments is restricted by a heteronormative (Harris, 1999) morality that values a style of experimentation that locates heterosexuality as natural and primarily reproductive. Yet experiments with this apparently natural notion of heterosexuality are defined as most 'risky' when teenage women either become sexually active or pregnant (see Nathanson, 1991; Thompson, 1996). Overall, however, experiments that fit with established modernist conventions (like a linear graduation into a fixed heterosexual identity within marital institutions at adulthood) are sanctioned over those that unsettle or subversively put 'at risk' those established conventions of sexuality as revealed and fixed at adolescence (like queer plurality in coupledness and sexuality) (Leck, 1995). So while (hetero)sexual experimentation is constituted as natural and therefore expected at adolescence, it is also subject to various layers of regulation. For instance, sex education programmes often focus on the biology of penetrative sex and highlight the risks to morality, health, economic and educational detriments – particularly, to young heterosexual, often Black and indigenous women (Nathanson, 1991). The popular culture, on the other hand, 'shouts out the joys and freedoms of nonreproductive sexual play and performance' yet queer sexualities are often marginalised by depicting them as merely 'lifestyle' purchases, or are simply absent in classroom discussions (Leck, 1995, p.192).

i agree with Leck that this contradictory valuing of sexuality in popular culture and the traditional attempts to control sexuality is not a new phenomena. i would also add that the boundaries that are used to define a heterosexual double standard has morphed from the more straightforward proclamation that 'when boys went all the way, they were just being boys; when girls did, they were bad' (Thompson, 1996, p.31). Various messages about sexual freedoms have

proliferated in popular culture, but there has also been an unfortunate reassertion of restraining these sexual freedoms through careful self-management of choices.

Consequently the catchwords of adolescent experimentation are hinged around 'choice' and 'control'; a liberal/conservative presumption that a smorgasbord of choices await adolescents while concerns about controlling adolescent experimentation are promulgated, thereby reigning in the range of viable choices. Whether liberal and/or conservative, the licensing and regulation of adolescent sexualities and relationships according to prescribed moralities remains central. The licensing and regulation of adolescent heterocoupledness is one example of how this paradox inserts itself within a discursive soundscape that emphasises adolescent experimentation as variously 'risky' yet expected. The choices young people make are disciplined by the mistakes in judgement or choice they are deemed to be making and through which 'risk' is more often represented as most dangerous to women, Māori, the poor, the delinquent and the marginal.

Therefore, risk and romance are also intimately connected to the constitution of certain individuals as more or less agentic and safe. In this chapter i intend to examine how a discursive marriage of risk and romance makes available and privileges certain subject positions of Boyfriend and Girlfriend. i assume that a discursive soundscape of risk and romance at adolescence is material and symbolic, fictional and practised; it is iterated through teenage magazine advice columns, constructed and authorised through psychology's investigation of risk and (ab)normality, and the sense that is made by young people of their going out experiences. i do not subscribe to the 'hypodermic' model of message transmission where people are uncritically hooked by the dominant discourses of heterocoupledness. Nevertheless, i do believe that these discursive arrangements provide legitimated (and also illegitimated) positions from which to speak/act. In this sense i extend Valerie Walkerdine's (1984) assertion that young women and men are prepared for heterosexual desire not only through literary representations of romance but through cultural texts of meaning that

do not simply distort or bias a reality that exists only outside the pages of books – in the 'real world' – but rather that those practices are real, and in their construction of meanings create places for identification, construct subject positions in the text itself (p.164).

In other words, 'how we come to want [desire] what we want' (p. 164) is not a project of discovering individual choices or the romantic roles grafted onto the imaginations of young people; it is a practice of interrogating the many meanings that regulate romance and provide certain positions from which to participate. Whether romance is represented in a *Girlfriend* magazine or in the wooing of a potential partner, both can be questioned for the way they implicitly, but incompletely, offer up various stances or subject positions as *Girlfriend* and *Boyfriend*. To the extent that what we come to desire is at least partially constituted through the stories we tell ourselves about romance and risk, it is relevant to examine the way young people account for their entry into heterocoupledness at adolescence. I will do this by using three themes to outline a discussion of how romance and risk are married at adolescence. Firstly, I explore cross-gender friendships between young men and women and the implicit heterocoupling of these relationships. Secondly, I examine the dynamics of entering heterocoupledness through 'going out' practices and the constitution of gender power relations. Finally, I examine the constitution of romantic ideals and expectations, and the constitution of 'reality' in heterocoupledness at adolescence.

CROSS-GENDER FRIENDSHIPS & HETEROCOUPLEDOM

Heterosexuality is deployed, in part, through the presumption that attraction between men and women is a 'natural' consequence of the emergence of oppositionally constituted sexuality at adolescence. A discourse of heterosexual invariability assumes that the binary codes of socialised gender and biological sex unite to potentiate cross-gender friendships for attraction. Accordingly, cross-gender friendships are apparently loaded with a heterosexual potential that stimulates various trajectories of romance and coupledness; friendship might merge into going out which may include (hetero)sexual intercourse; friendship might involve sexual intimacy without 'going out'; sexual intimacy can spark a friendship or it may precede 'going out', or, friendship could remain platonic, and sexual practises need not involve any friendship or future relationship. As well as the various trajectories that are played out in cross-gender friendships at adolescence, an underpinning stream of gendered norms and moralities are called upon. These norms and moralities code the entry points into heterosexual coupledness with certain preferred performances. How young women should/can display heterocoupledness interest is often constituted in relation to sexual morality and in juxtaposition to the less questioned ways that young men should/can display heterocoupledness interest as a natural expression of masculinity. In this section i discuss the young women and men's constitutions of cross-gender friendships and the discursive soundscape that offers up ways of entering heterocoupledness at adolescence.

Anna (a seventeen year old Pakeha woman) and i discussed the implicit rules that governed her friendships with young men. Anna was new to a particular male friendship group and was aware that her status in the group was linked to representing herself as neither 'lady-like' nor sexually interested in the young men and thereby side stepping the multiple sexual double standards.

Anna: And girls do put on the big act and act real lady like and, but then again, like, yeah, most of the guys that I hang round with, like in the groups that I've hung round with, I don't actually go out with them. And I won't get with any of them cause that's when you breed disrespect among the group. Like I'm kind of new in this group of boys that we've been hanging around

with and my friends have slept with couple of them, and one is going out with them and they [the boys] don't like any of them. Like they'll, [the boys] they're not afraid to hang around with me and stuff like that, where the other ones they'll fully bitch about them and stuff. The guys go, 'so and so's a slut', 'so and so's a slut'.

Anna's friendships with young men were contingent upon her refusal to perform in ways that she described as 'lady like' as well as not going-out with or having sex with her male friends. The young men were 'not afraid to hang around with' her because Anna's subject positioning was neither traditionally feminine nor sexual and hence did not overtly question the young men's disrespect of those young women positioned as 'sluts'. Anna's friendships with young men depended on her repudiation of traditional femininity (by not putting on the 'big act') and sexuality, a repudiation that at first glance appears to exclude sexuality from these friendships. However, her positioning was made in relation to the disciplinary power that was exemplified by the young men's disrespect/dislike for 'girls who sleep' with them. The risk of 'breeding disrespect in the group' was presented through the young men's castigations of the feminine/sexual behaviour of young women who had shifted away from friendly (that is, nice girls who can but don't) relationships. Anna's positioning was supported by her 'single' status in the group; she was not 'going out' with any young men and had inserted herself as not available for relationships and hence as not risky to the friendship group. At the same time, any overt displays of feminine heterosexuality could still threaten Anna's reputation or her friendships with these young men. Anna maintains her position in this friendship group by managing to hover beyond the performances of traditional femininity and heterosexuality – yet her shift beyond is also formed in relation to these very constructs. In part, Anna's position was schooled by the knowledge that the young men could just as easily exclude her from the friendship group, or at the very least, call her sexual reputation into question (Lees, 1997).

According to Davies (1989, p. 29) 'category maintenance work' is a way of keeping gender boundaries meaningful by letting those that 'deviate' know, through teasing or derogation, that 'they are wrong'. Anna's 'category maintenance work' is interesting in that she is both the subject and object of the categories applied to women who are construed as disrupting male friendship groups. Anna 'deviates' from the category of 'feminine' because she does not seek to attract boyfriends (she does not put on the big lady like act) nor does she

plan to sleep with her male friends (she positions herself as ineligible to be named 'slut'). Anna also manoeuvres in relation to the risks associated with the way the young men deploy the categories 'feminine' and 'heterosexual'. She attempts to establish her cross-gender friendships beyond a discourse of heterosexual invariability, which simultaneously resounds with the meanings she is navigating. In Foucauldian terms, Anna's tactics of power simultaneously convey resistance and subjugation to the discursive positioning of herself and other women within male friendship groups.

Similarly, Astrid, a thirteen-year-old Māori woman, told me that 'going out' could ruin her friendships with young men.

What I've learnt is um, if you have a friend, a best friend, and he's a boy, you shouldn't go out with him because things change. Your friendship between him will change like you won't, I mean, it'll spoil that relationship you had with him before like being best friends so its better to stay best friends with that boy.

Astrid points out that 'going-out' changes friendships with young men and indeed, once you have gone out, the friendship will be invariably 'spoiled'. Her concerns about maintaining cross-gender friendships by not 'going-out' were also expressed by a group of young men. Ian, Barney, Mac and Cynan, (Pakeha males aged between 16-18), were divided over whether friendship would be enhanced or ruined by heterocoupledness. However, unlike Anna or Astrid, their main concern was not based on maintaining friendships by avoiding heterocoupledness, but whether friendships would create 'successful' heterocoupledness relationships:

Ian: That always happens in a relationship, if you got a really good, shouldn't go out with a really good friend of yours because it never works.

Barney: No it doesn't aye

Mac: I did. I did. I have.

Ian: It doesn't work.

Mac: I went out with

Ian: Are you with the person now?

Barney: I know what you're talking about.

Mac: Aye?

Ian: Are you with the person now?

Mac: Not any more.

Ian: Ya see, it never works.

Cynan: I, I

Mac: No, no, no, listen, listen. I was, you know the girl I was with ah (to Cynan)

Barney: Let him [Cynan] talk, let him talk yeah.

Ian: He hasn't talked yet

Cynan: No, I just think that, I do prefer to go out with my friends. I mean we always stay friends afterwards.

Mac: Yeah.

Cynan: I went out with my best friend and we went out for five months and then we realised that, that ah, I mean it was working, there was no problems, but we just decided to stay friends.

Ian: But it doesn't work, see. It never works.

Barney: Na, it doesn't, I'm sticking with you there aye.

Ian: Sometimes it can broaden a strong relationship like I was really good friends with a friend of mine.

Barney: Na, I don't reckon it does

Ian and Barney declared that going out with good friends 'never works', whilst Mac and Cynan disagreed saying that they could return to friendship with their ex-Girlfriends. However, because Mac and Cynan's relationships did not 'work', in other words, they stopped going out, Ian and Barney saw this as evidence of a failure on both counts of cross-gender friendship and heterocoupledness. Towards the end of their conversation, Ian added that going out could 'broaden a strong relationship', but overall Barney's conclusion remained centred on whether the intimate relationship continued. Astrid similarly expressed concern about the difficulty of returning to friendship relations after going out – however she was mainly concerned with the disruption to the friendship rather than the failure of the intimate relationship. The argument that extending cross-gender friendship into 'going out' is only successful if the intimate relationship persists, also assumes that friendship and heterocoupledness are discrete yet linearly connected relationships. A discourse of heterosexual invariability insinuates the reason ('natural' attraction) the pathway of relations (a lineal graduation from friendship to heterocoupledness) and the apparent

difficulties ('spoiled' friendships and relationships that don't 'work'). Given this 'one way' linearity, it is easy to see how cross-gender friendships are difficult points of arrival and departure. Cross gender friendships are implicitly coded as heterosexual and yet this heterosexuality is also risky to friendship – at the same time, friendship is regarded as necessary in heterocoupledness.

Later, Barney questioned Mac about why he seems to have so many Girlfriends. Mac, a very talkative member of the group, was pleased to explain (given that he had previously argued that friends can become Girlfriends). The reason he has so many Girlfriends is that he has 'friends' who are girls.

Mac: ... On a percentage scale what would you say your percentage of girl friends are? girls like you, do you get along or do you have more girl friends than guy friends? Like you could be sixty/forty. What would your percentage be - approx.

Barney: I don't know probably about fifty-fifty I'd say.

Ian: Seventy-thirty.

Cynan: Yeah

Mac: I'm ninety-ten.

Ian: Really?

Mac: With girls. I have hardly any guy mates. I get along well with guys

Ian: Maybe you're gay.

Mac: No.

Ian: Maybe.

Mac: No

Cynan: Well I'd be about the same as Ian. I mean my best friends are guys but I've got more female friends than guys.

Mac: On Sunday it was my birthday, right, and all I invited quite a heap of people and my brother walked down into the room and his mouth dropped. It was like girls, girls, girls, girls, girls - guy? Me.

Cynan: You were the only guy.

Mac: I was the only guy there.

Mac's 90% of female friends was given as a reason for his many Girlfriends but also raised questions over the stability of his heterosexuality. The

possibility was floated that because Mac likes hanging out with girls and he 'get[s] along well with guys' then he may also be gay . This, despite the fact that all of the young men estimated that their friends were predominantly female (half to three quarters). In response to this questioning, Mac went on to talk about his brother's open-mouthed response to his birthday party guests. Mac's 'category maintenance work' intensified as he conjured up images of 'girls, girls, girls, girls, girls..guy', as if his party was attended by Playboy bunnies and resided over by Hugh 'Mac' Hefner. As Lees (1993) comments, "masculinity only reflects superiority if it is differentiated from femininity" (p.89). In this case, Mac positioned himself as valuing his 'feminine' friendships but he was also impelled to rescue his status as an eligible bachelor. A discourse of heterosexual invariability intercepts and frames his friendships as potentizing his masculinity so that his attempts at representing his cross gender friendships as valuable in themselves were difficult to iterate.

Cross-gender friendships were also constituted as the foundation of heterocoupledness – whether that relationship lasted or not. Many of the groups expressed the opinion that the best partners are those that start out as friends, and many also talked about their Girlfriend or Boyfriend as their 'best friends'.

Savanah: Do you find that Anthony's your best friend?

Bianca: Immm

Savanah: That's the thing is that like after not having a best friend you find that your boyfriend becomes your best friend.

Sue: I think he has to be.

Connie: I think that Darren will probably be my best friend - I can tell him just about anything.

Sue: I tell Callum everything

Bianca: Yeah, I can tell him anything, even my women problems.

For Bianca, Savanah, Sue and Connie, their Boyfriends were becoming their 'best friends'. The degree of confession within friendship and intimate relationships ('I tell... everything' / 'even my women problems!') represented the apparent depth of a relationship. Later in their discussion, the young women returned to the topic of friendship. They described their conversations with Girlfriends as more detailed and involved than those they have with their

Boyfriends, although there was also a possibility that their discussions may leak into a wider social context.

Connie: But like with your friends it's like, cos girls are the biggest gossips.

All: Oh, ooh, yeah.

Sue: Guys I reckon, guys can be just as bad.

Bianca: They can be...

Connie: But it's about different stuff, like it's not like, girls its like heavy shit.

Sue: Guys are like, like you know, 'I did this and I've got a notch on my belt' or whatever else, and girls are like, are like, 'you know what he did' and they give graphic details. I mean guys just get the whole idea.

Bianca: They get the basics whereas girls go right into it.

Connie: Yeah but like if you are feeling real stink about one of your friends or something and you go and tell that friend, she's going to tell that friend, but if you tell your boyfriend they're going to go 'oh yeah', because they don't give a shit anyway.

The good thing about sharing with their Boyfriends was that they would not leak any information into the young women's social context. In part, i presume, because the young men may not have much to do with their friends, but also because the young men do not get the detailed descriptions provided to girl friends. These young women's confessions to Boyfriends are constituted as separate from their friendship circles because the young women also argue that the Boyfriends 'don't give a shit anyway'. Another group of young women noted that they enjoy talking with young men as friends as a way of remaining in contact with 'the male side of things':

Mary: But you don't want your boyfriend to be your only means of contact with the male side of things ah.

Brooke, Blossom, Rebecca: No, Mmm.

Mary: And sometimes I find that males are heaps better to talk to than some females...

Annalise: Oh definitely.

Brooke: Yeah.

Mary: It's wicked that aye.

Blossom: All my friends are guys who are like my, real girlfriends.

All laughing.

Blossom: (Unclear)

Brooke: Guys are really good listeners, like they don't you know girls end up butting in and saying their side of the story.

Melita: Oh yeah, their stories (Laughing).

Blossom: And then you get side tracked.

Annalise: Guys just sit there aye and you can babble for an hour or whatever.

Brooke: Yeah. But they sympathise and understand the stuff too so.

Rebecca: Or they pretend they do.

For Mary, Blossom, Brooke, Annalise and Rebecca, 'keeping up with the male side of things' was a way of remaining informed about masculinity beyond their Boyfriends renditions of masculinity. For Blossom, her 'guy friends were like... real Girlfriends' and in this way the basis of friendship was not dependent on the embodiment of gender in as much that the dynamics of her closeness were insinuated as being Girlfriend-like. On the one hand, relationships and relationship work is often associated with and practised as 'feminine'. Consequently, relationships were 'real' and 'close' when they were represented as 'feminine'. On the other hand, relationships with men that were Girlfriend-like were also different in that there was no competition for the story line. Many of the young women spoke about their male friends as sounding boards who would not contaminate their discussion by adding 'their own stories'. There was no competition for the story line and in this way the young men's tendency not to say much provided a space where they could speak without having to listen. Despite this, the young women were sceptical about whether their male friends actually 'cared', but they reiterated that their Boyfriends had at least given the signs that they had listened. It was also agreed that male friends (unlike Boyfriends who were represented as bound by a code of confidentiality) could 'gossip' just as female friends might – but would provide less detail. Therefore, confessions (as signifying depth) within friendships and heterocoupledness could also contain stark contrasts between male and female performances of talking and listening, private and public 'gossip'. There was also talk of the stark contrasts between private and public performances of 'self' in friendship groups and intimate relationships.

Romeo: Yeah, for sure. You might talk to your woman or something and its like really friendly friendly and then when you're with the boys its like yeah, and they're all talking and you're going 'yeah, my bitch is doing this' and doing that.

All laugh

Romeo: You don't, I don't know if you really mean it or not but...

Brutus: You don't say that to her aye.

Romeo: If you said that to her, it's like shit.

Junior: You never, never, never.

Romeo: You like call her your missus, your woman, and all that stuff.

Romeo, Brutus, Junior, Jonah, Ryan, and Patrick: Yeah.

Romeo: When you are with her man, if you said something like that it'd be like, 'What are you talking about? What is this?'

An imaginary line was drawn between how they talked when their Girlfriends were present and absent. The young men were careful to conceal the macho, dehumanising tone of these ways of talking from their Girlfriends – although this concealment was not entirely successful.

The young women also spoke about how Boyfriends talk when with their friends. They parodied the young men's slippages between their private Boyfriend selves and their public mate selves. In their focus group, Annalise, Blossom, Brooke, Mary, Rebecca and Wednesday imitated their Boyfriends macho performance by using low short utterance.

Annalise: 'Yep, get on the piss tonight, eh'.

Mary: 'I might bring my bit over, I don't know'.

Mary described the sense that:

... you're just something tacked on to the side of them that they occasionally play with or something, you know.

Their responses to Boyfriends 'character changes' (from the privately loving to the publicly staunch) included Annalise's 'little ways' where she publicly calls him 'dick' whilst Mary's tries:

to slap it back in their faces as quickly as they give it to you.

These Girlfriends described Boyfriends' character contradictions as giving a false impression of their personal relationships with their Boyfriends, inferring that the Boyfriends they relate to in private were the more authentic versions. Building on this theme, the young women were also concerned that the public performances of Boyfriend gave a false impression of their relationships. Many of the young women were concerned about the reputation of their relationships and protecting their status as Girlfriends who 'just wouldn't take that' (Angie & Charrise). Consequently, the Girlfriends' involvement in their Boyfriends' friendship groups included chaperoning their Boyfriends contradictory public and private representations of themselves.

Despite the young women's challenges to their Boyfriends' public character changes, some of the young women also spoke about the difficulty of mediating their simultaneous involvement and marginality within their Boyfriends cross-gender friendships.

Rebecca: I think sometimes guys just have to be with their mates, they just get this overpowering, they just haave to be with their mates

Annalise: Yeah, that's fine. I think guys should say though 'oh, it's guys night tonight' or 'can we go?' I think that was the big problem with me and Quinn was because I wasn't in his group, it was hard for us to go as friends, because he'd always constantly, 'this is my girlfriend', like he'd have to introduce me as that, you know?

Brooke: It wasn't even like that with Ewan because he only had guy friends aye like they didn't have girls in the group. Their group was

Wednesday: Oh, there's Cassandra, Megan and that. But they weren't there all the time.

Brooke: Yeah, but that was later on, he really only had guy friends.

Wednesday: It was a big acceptance thing, like Cassandra never talked to me. She wouldn't even say hello to me if I walked up. It was real bad. And Megan was trying to get into Phil and that was real good (*sarcastically*). And Kathy left little notes in Phil's car. Oh, 'ring me some time'.

There is a tendency for young women to become part of their Boyfriend's friendship groups whereas Boyfriends usually do not become part of the Girlfriends' friendship groups (Lees, 1993; Gray, 1988). However, as Annalise points out, being Girlfriend can make it difficult to be a 'friend' within Boyfriend's friendship groups. The declaration 'this is my Girlfriend' served to position

Annalise as somehow unavailable for friendship, even with other Girlfriends in the group. When young women as Girlfriends move into their Boyfriend's friendship groups, the 'other Girlfriends' and women in the group might institute certain entry requirements. Acceptance was difficult to achieve when the 'other' Girlfriends in the friendship groups were also establishing or maintaining a place within the male dominated friendship groups that, in the first place, was difficult to navigate. Consequently, the precariousness of cross-gender friendships in Boyfriends groups led many of the interview and group focus women to comment that they took care to maintain supportive links with their female friends and as separate from heterocoupledness.

Throughout these texts, I was surprised that notions of adolescent experimentation did not heavily inscribe the young women and men's cross-gender friendships. Girlfriends were often positioned in ways that were precautionary about the requirements of maintaining their 'sexual reputations' and their 'femininity' in ways that did not contradict or disrupt the dynamics of male friendship groups. Young men spoke about separating their cross-gender friendships from their privately performed heterocoupledness. These contradictions between their public and private masculinity were partially dependent on eschewing 'feminine' ways of performing and enhanced masculinity when in public. The young men who had friendships with women justified these friendships by calling on a discourse of heterosexual invariability whereby heterosexual desire is almost always present as part of doing hegemonic masculinity. The young men's cross-gender friendships tended to enhance their masculine reputations. In contrast, young women's heterosexuality was either remixed as a desire for heterocoupledness or when it was present, was inserted with the knowledge that young women were risking their sexual reputations. As Sue Lees (1997) comments:

Boys and girls talk about sexuality in quite different ways.... First, while a boy's sexual reputation is enhanced by experience, a girl's is negated...Second, a boy's reputation and standing in the world is not predominantly determined by his sexual status or conquests... For a girl, the defence of her sexual reputation is crucial to her standing both with boys and girls, certainly around the age of 15 or so.... Finally, for boys sexism appears to be very important in male bonding, in as much as denigration of girls and women is a crucial ingredient of camaraderie in male circles (pp. 18-19).

Both young men and women participated in policing the involvement of women in cross-gender friendships. Underpinning these movements within cross-

gender friendships was the assumption of an undercurrent of heterosexual interest. In other words, any interaction between the genders was constituted according to hetero norms where gender and sexuality were conflated yet dichotomised and attached differentially to male and female performances of friendship. There is a paradoxical distinction between cross-gender friendships being based on the eschewing of heterosexuality at the same time that the presence of heterosexuality inserts itself through this rejection. These texts on cross-gender friendship were also mixed with other discursive soundscapes.

A discourse of female sexuality as threatening and threatened informed young women's positions within friendship groups; their heterosexuality was scored as potentially threatening to and threatened by their status and reputations within cross-gender friendship groups. The discourse provided positions for young women that were based on navigating between the contradictions of 'doing enough girl' (femininity as being sensitive to heterosexual relationships) at the same time that they avoided 'doing too much desire' (displaying both heterosexual and heterocoupledness 'motives') within cross-gender groups. There were also various tactics that young women and men employed to maintain cross-gender friendships according to these tensions between heterosexual invariability and the appearance of non-sexual relations.

Calling Boyfriends up on their public performances of staunch masculinity occurred alongside the tacit acceptance that young women were responsible for navigating between 'friend' and 'Girlfriend' positions. Young men and women were sceptical about whether cross-gender friendships could make for successful heterocoupledness – at the same time that friendship was seen as the basis of heterocoupledness. Meanwhile, young men were wary about aligning themselves too closely with female friends (platonic friendships with young women could be read as homosexuality by others) and concealing the boundaries that they keep between their public and private performances of mate and Boyfriend. Young women worked between the slippery boundaries of Girlfriend and friend, and, 'slut' and 'lady'. Risks to the young women's sexual reputations coincided with risks to the reputation of their heterocoupledness. These Girlfriend and Boyfriend positions are however fluid and the regulation of cross-gender friendship and heterosexuality were not necessarily drawn on embodied gender lines. For instance, the young women and men were both involved in regulating how 'femininity' could be incorporated in cross-gender friendships but young women were most likely to be blamed for their lack of attention to the risks of inappropriately inserting femininity and heterosexuality into cross-gender

friendship groups. Given that cross-gender friendships that merge into heterocoupledness are constituted as both risky and yet the basis for heterocoupledness, how did the young men and women enter(tain) the rituals of going out?

ENTERING 'GOING OUT' AT ADOLESCENCE

In adolescence there are no words to mark the different stages of a romance. 'Boyfriend' and 'girlfriend' can mean anything from just a male or female friend to a sexual partner. Teenagers themselves find this confusing and so do their parents. Many get over-anxious about what their children are doing, thinking they are into sex every time they mention having a boy or girlfriend. Some misunderstandings are caused by the lack of the right words; others happen because boys and girls aren't very confident talking intimately to each other. In our society they have to work out their own way of finding a partner because there aren't many well-known 'rules' for doing it (Gray, A., 1988, pp 47).

Today, the rituals of 'going out' at adolescence appear to be more informal, varied and experimental than in the past. The 'lack of words to mark the different stages of a romance' are limited to descriptions like 'going-out' or 'seeing someone', which may indeed lead to confusion for teenagers and parents alike. One may ask if there are indeed 'stages' of romance given the 'lack of words' that inscribe the process of becoming heterocoupled? Does a 'stage' model of romance presume a certain trajectory towards an unambiguous status of 'heterocouple' and if so, what does a heterocouple look like? Does a lack of stages necessarily involve confusion for teenagers but not adults who may be similarly entering heterocoupledness without the imposition of romantic stages? Similarly, an inability to talk intimately and the lack of 'rules' for courtship may mean that not only young people but adults as well, 'work out their own way[s] of finding a partner'. In sum, do words, intimate discussion and 'rules' necessarily make for unambiguous messages and clearly defined stages in romance, and is this assumption of 'clarity' through verbal definition necessarily desirable? Further, how does an unambiguity of 'status' as Girlfriend and Boyfriend constitute certain entry points into 'going-out'? Do i necessarily want to articulate 'where i stand' as Girlfriend or Boyfriend when i also want to be free from trajectories of traditional romantic involvement and the subject positions that are insinuated by that status? Further, is 'over-anxiety' more about the presumed risks of experimenting (like having sex) and making up our own guides to

romance in heterocoupledness at adolescence than about the lack of 'rules' or confusion? Does the title 'Girlfriend' or 'Boyfriend' delimit exploration and experimentation with heterocoupledness? These questions must stand without answers but in relation to the assumptions that I query about young people's entry into heterocoupledness. In this section, I explore the entry into going-out at adolescence from this sceptical stance.

The Pakeha and Western courtship patterns of yesteryear were formally ritualised according to many community sanctioned practices, including parental chaperoning, father's permission to male suitors, assessment of the couple's compatibility, and community monitoring of couples that were courting (Lloyd, 1991). The risks of romance during the 19th century were set in relation to transgressions that could bring shame on both the family, the community and of course the individuals themselves. Experimentation with these rituals and the risks they may incur were hidden from community surveillance, particularly when women's sexuality outside of marriage was exposed through pregnancy. For example, up until the late 1970's, particularly in Pakeha communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand, unmarried and pregnant women would be sent to another city or town, or concealed from public view until after the child was born. Nowadays, the shame of pre-marital sex has receded although similar moralities continue to govern teenaged women's sexuality. The rate of teenage pregnancies in Aotearoa/New Zealand continues to be categorically admonished by politicians and concerned parents. Nevertheless, as Aotearoa/New Zealand has generally become less versed in formality and less rigidly concerned with 'proper' standards of behaviour, adolescents have increasingly come to define how they 'do' adolescence and specifically, going-out (Hanawalt, 1992). Heterocoupledness, like sexuality, is deployed within a series of social knowledges and conventions that replicate particular power relations. As Gavey writes in reference to Foucault:

According to Foucault (1980,1981) sexuality has been 'deployed' in relatively recent times as a domain of regulation and social control. This theorization of sexuality allows an understanding of how the positions available to women (and men) in dominant discourses on sexuality are not natural and fixed, and nor are they neutral – sexuality is deployed in ways that are directly related to relations of power (Gavey, 1992, p.327).

Therefore, the main question explored in this section is how heterocoupledness is deployed as a 'domain of regulation and social control', and the power relations made possible as young men and women enter heterocoupledness?

Firstly, as the last section indicates, friends are important sources of making contact with people to 'go out' with. Astrid, a Māori woman interviewee, (13 years), would approach young men she was interested in through her female friends.

Lisa: So when you actually get to know a guy and you kind of like him how do you get to go out with him?

Astrid: Oh if you're confident enough you ask them out yourself or you get a friend to ask then out for you cause its a bit, bit shameful.

Lisa: Why would it be shameful?

Astrid: Oh cause they - if you ask someone out then they might reject you so its better if a friend asks them out for you.

Astrid explained the process of asking young men out as being based on an individual psychological quality (being 'confident enough'). Asking someone out increased the risks of being rejected when it was done personally. Despite this, directly asking Boyfriends out was not completely out of the question for the young women i talked with. Many told me that if they liked someone they would approach them rather than waiting to be asked. However, they were more likely to do this in the company of friends and/or when they were around 14/15 years of age.

As the young women got older, it was less likely that they would explicitly ask to 'go-out' with a Boyfriend. The older teen women in the interviews, Anna, Angie and Charisse, (all Pakeha) told me that one of the differences between their younger and older relationships was that directly asking young men out, even through friends, became unacceptable as they got older (in other words, as they were increasingly described as 'young women' rather than girls).

Anna: No I don't think I would do that now [at the age of seventeen]. Just you kind of feel stupid saying to someone, I'd feel I don't know, I mean you'd feel really dumb if a guy came up to you and said 'do you want to go out with me', its like not really the done thing. You just kind of conclude that he's your boyfriend I guess when you've been together for a period of time.

Angie was first asked to 'go-out' after she had been doing 'Girlfriend and Boyfriend' for quite a while. They had been going to parties together, phoning each other, staying over at each other's places and neither Angie nor Linyl had asked each other if they would like to 'go-out'. However, when i asked Angie how she actually began going-out with a guy she explained that:

Angie: Well with my first relationship I didn't actually go out with him till sort of after a month we were sort of like 'together'. But, I don't know, I remember it was just one night on the phone he said that he hadn't actually asked me out and so he asked me out over the phone. But, I don't know, its not that much of a big deal these days, I don't think, people just sort of get together and everyone assumes they're a couple.

Similarly, Charisse began going-out soon after meeting her Boyfriend.

Lisa: How did you begin going out with Ricky?

Charisse: Um, I met him at a party. He asked me to go for a walk and have a cigarette with him but I don't smoke so I just went and sat with him and ended up just kissing and he rang me the next day. So we ended up going out.

Lisa: Did he ask you to go out or did you just fall into it?

Charisse: Well about, yeah, we sort of. Oh no well what happened we sort of ended up having a little bit of an argument but it wasn't really an argument, and he goes 'well do you still want to have a relationship?' and I was like 'Oh my god', cause no guy is usually like that. It was the second day I'd seen him and I didn't think he'd even want a relationship cause most guys aren't like that. So I was like 'Oh yeah, okay' (laughing).

Instead of asking for friends help or asking young men themselves, both of which involve expressing verbal interest in formalising heterocoupledness, these young women relied on a process of conferred heterocoupledness. The 'conclusion' of a relationship was made incidentally. After a period of time, Anna could conclude that she had a Boyfriend; Angie was asked out after a telephone conversation when her Boyfriend realised he had not asked her out, and, Charisse was Girl-friended by Ricky's assumption that seeing each other after two days constituted a 'relationship'. In contrast, the younger women (Zara and Astrid, 12/13 years) expressed interest in young men through their friends. These differences however could be because the young women had fewer opportunities for direct one-on-one social contact with their Boyfriends than the older teenaged women who relied more on a gradual process of doing heterocoupled. The younger and older teenage women constituted 'going-out' as a space for naming the un-named (heterocoupledness). While this entry into heterocoupledness could be described in terms of a stage model, I think this inadequately addresses the young women's use of the space to be two-gether without the explicit title of 'going-out'. The formality of asking to begin 'going-

out' was less important than actually doing heterocoupledness and in this way the potential to subvert the gendered risk warnings that police young women's intimate experiments with young men could be explored.

While the expectation of graduation into heterocoupledness may not have been explicit, their discussion also indicated that there were time and space assumptions about the process of entering into heterocoupledness. All of these young women expected that they would have to share time and space romantically dating young men before they could assume they were 'going-out'. For Charisse, the time span was shortened when the young man described them as being 'in a relationship' in the context of an argument. Charisse was surprised that Ricky wanted to go out with her because 'most guys aren't like that'. Charisse would have had to assume that 'most guys' are reluctant to have 'relationships'. Nevertheless, Charisse agreed to 'go-out' with Ricky and constituted him as her Boyfriend after two days of knowing him. It seems that Ricky's framing of their involvement as a 'relationship' also changed the terms of their argument. Was the argument stopped by Ricky's question 'well do you still want to have a relationship?' as if the parameters that govern heterocoupledness change the discussion dynamics once they were constituted as going-out. More specific to this discussion, what is the implication for young women who are positioned as 'not asking' but performing 'going-out'?

When 'communication' is constituted as the linchpin of successful intimate relationships, asking becomes loaded with risk dichotomies like accept and reject. Going-out becomes a matter of navigating gender-power relations between assumed dichotomies (like asking or being asked to go out). At the same time that the young women spoke about presuming heterocoupledness, they also spoke about the interchangeability of doing the asking and being asked out with ease. The gendered process of 'going out' was assumed to be based on equal choices by the young women; in other words, a discourse of liberalism was called on. I have often found in my discussions with young people that they believe that women and men have equal access to 'choices'. Therefore, to bring gender (and for that matter power) into a discussion was rare, and instead, the conversations were often based on individual 'choices'. Indeed, to even mention gender-power could have disrupted these assumed 'equal' choices. Charisse's shock when Ricky asked if they 'were still in a relationship' appeared to be less about equal choices than the disruption and recuperation of gendered norms. For young men to represent themselves as expecting intimate relationships and wanting to be a Boyfriend, was not the repertoire that Charisse expected. However, he only partially contravened the hegemonic masculine gender norms (because he asked and,

he did so through argument) and Charisse went on to accept Ricky as her 'nice' boyfriend who writes her poetry and letters.

The gender-power inequities of naming and being named as 'going-out' were concealed by the young women's definitions of themselves as 'free and equal'. At once the young women situated themselves as uninterested in asking or being asked to go-out, and yet they also experienced the conferment of heterocoupledness through their Boyfriends naming of the relationship. The young women described 'going-out' as an informal process where they could tactically and actively perform two-getherness beyond the title 'Girlfriend'. Two-getherness was discussed as a mutual process whereby going-out may or may not lead to a continued hetero-coupledness. The verbalisation of going-out was described as something that was 'not really the done thing', at the same time that the young women spoke about eventually being asked out by the young men they were seeing. Either way, there was an implied conferment of heterocoupledness through continued association in time and space – in other words a performance of becoming heterocoupled according to an implied trajectory into 'going-out'.

Notably, the young women's constitutions of 'going-out' were largely non-verbal. That is, the utterance, 'would you go out with me' is performative in the sense that as it is spoken it also acts, but, not asking is also performative. The young women were performing their bodies into heterocoupledness where the performative request may be realised in corporeal but non-verbalised ways. How this going-out time and space could be occupied remained open and varied. A discourse of heterosexual invariability was operating and yet it did not necessarily presume an inevitable passage into heterocoupledness.

The ambiguous process of entry into heterocoupledness could have led to multiple ways of getting together with a Boyfriend. The liminal status of not Girlfriend nor 'just friends', could have meant that their performances could not be returned to one side of the binary (going-out/single) and therefore the space for open experimentation with asking out is theoretically available. It must also be remembered that the young women were not operating in a social vacuum and as much as I accept that their performances could well have been subversive tactics that challenge the gendered trajectories into heterocoupledness, they were also subject to discourses about the dangers of signalling heterosexual desire and heterocoupledness interest.

The young women are reluctant to overtly position themselves as wanting heterocoupledness and the title Girlfriend. As Jane Ussher (1997) points out,

young women do not just seek love, they also want sex but have to be careful to conceal their desire from men in order to avoid being labelled a slut. 'Woman' and the impossible ideals that constitute 'woman' have lost much of their credibility, but 'woman' is continually re-positioned as being inclined towards romantic heterocoupledness. A quick flick through any number of young and adult women's magazines confirms that romantic relationships are still represented as the main concern and purpose of doing 'woman' in the 1990's (Peirce, 1997). Much of the romantic focus however is phrased in terms of women's psychological fulfilment and choices that are assumed to be free from politically constructed possibilities (mother, wife, girlfriend, career woman are all 'options' that are discussed as separate from everyday political forces). What appears to be happening is that young women must now also conceal any intentions or expectations for romantic involvement with young men at the same time that romance is largely represented as both a 'goal and problem' for women (Peirce, 1997, p.590). Hence, these young women described going-out as a process of waiting to become heterocoupled - as if Girlfriend is a subject position that they would ultimately achieve and grapple with. These young women's positions echoed Ussher's comments that:

in order to play their part in the romantic script without compromising their sense of being 'equal to men', women position their behaviour as a choice; it is something over which they have control (p.27, author's emphasis).

The young women that I spoke to made 'choices' that focussed on literally performing a gradual 'two-getherness' rather than 'choosing' (by verbally expressing) a desire for heterocoupledness. Actively wanting heterocoupledness with Boyfriends was something that would position young women as manhunters, as 'too dependent' (Charisse, 15) and as invariably undesirable or at least threatening. In a conversation with Anna, she relayed an account of a young woman who was a Girlfriend to one of the men in her friendship group and was positioned as disruptive. The young woman was described as not only taking her Boyfriend away from his mates, she was also dominating her Boyfriend's choices by insisting that their heterocoupledness take priority over his other friendships. They pejoratively referred to her as K.P. or 'King Pin'.

The young woman ('King Pin') was regarded as interfering in her Boyfriend's friendship groups and was positioned as inappropriately carrying-over her heterocoupledness positioning as Girlfriend into the group. On the other hand, because young men were unlikely to report involvement in their Girlfriends friendship groups, they were rarely available to be accused of interfering in

Girlfriends' friendships. In fact, the Girlfriends reported that they preferred to keep their friends separate from their Boyfriends. In other words, the young women as Girlfriends had to navigate a positioning that gave the impression that heterocoupledness was a non-intrusive performance. In other words, a romantic have/hold discourse promotes going-out as a process and outcome of heterocoupledness where the parties promise commitment and togetherness. The discourse positions young women as being motivated to seek out a romance with Mr. Exception especially at adolescence when young women's development is represented in terms of their 'ability to form lasting relationships' (Hudson, 1984, p.47). Nevertheless, the young women were careful to minimise the visibility of their availability as Girlfriends seeking have/hold romance. Becoming a Girlfriend is a problem in that it must not be explicitly sought at the same time that it is still represented as the goal of learning to do 'woman' at adolescence. It is no wonder therefore that the young women preferred not to directly ask boyfriends to 'go-out', but preferred to perform a gradual togetherness.

On the other hand, if the young women wanted to remain as 'just friends' with men, they would either withdraw from the relationship or employ various tactics to block male interest (as Anna did when she managed her cross-gender friendships by avoiding doing 'lady like' and any appearance of being heterosexually interested). The 'choice' to become Girlfriend was made in relation to the performed togetherness and the interest expressed by young men, but if the young women were not interested, they would overtly, but carefully, state their decision not to pursue a relationship. The choices for going-out were tactically silent whilst the choices against going-out were verbally cautious. Both 'choices' were made in relation to the social consequences for themselves and their Boyfriends (i explore this in more depth in the next chapter). For now, it must be noted that the young women reported that it was mainly the young men who eventually asked to go-out.

The information from young men was gathered through the focus groups. As a result, i relied on the young men to talk about their entry into heterocoupledness. They created their discussions without my direct influence and as such, i have few texts about their entry into heterocoupledness. Similar to the young women, the young men did not constitute their selection of Girlfriends as experimental, although experimentation is more often associated with a masculine passage through adolescence. One of the focus group men described how he selected his Girlfriend of three years.

Jack: Ha, do you want to know how mine started. I saw her at the beach and 'im, she's quite a babe, I'll score her next year' and she came to school so I asked her out and it was the start of our relationship.

Jack's initiation of the relationship was straight forward – he saw, he decided she was 'a babe' and he resolved to 'score her' and ask her out. Jack's fellow focus group participants referred to him as 'the man' of relationships because of the longevity of his relationship. His advice was often sought by other members of the group on how things should be in relationships. On this occasion, Jack's advice was based on his experience of direct action and was not dependent on knowing his Girlfriend within a friendship group first. Jack was admired by the other group members for being in a relationship of three years. The young men commented that he had lasted two and a half years longer than they ever had. A romantic have/hold discourse was in operation as they positioned Jack as a successful Boyfriend, indeed as 'the man'. His masculinity was enhanced by the longevity of his relationship. The term 'scoring' was used to describe Jack's entry into heterocoupledness. The project of 'scoring' is often associated with a predatory male sex drive discourse, and yet this is carried over to inform Jack's position within a romantic have/hold discourse of heterocoupledness. Underlying these discourses, a hegemonic notion of masculinity is recruited so that Boyfriends position themselves as 'scoring' rather than 'awaiting' their entry into heterocoupledness. Romantic heterocoupledness is largely assumed to be a feminine pursuit, and yet these young men remixed their involvement as an activity of masculinity. Interestingly, none of the young men spoke about needing confidence to ask girls out, but one group spoke about how they would 'get girlfriends'. These young men were discussing why some of the 'in crowd' did not seem to have very many girlfriends.

Barney: No, no communication at all.

Mac: Just one question.

Barney: Actually I just want to say something, they're real dropsticks when they're around women. They had no sort of how to treat them like. They don't give them any respect at all.

Ian: They have no understanding, aye.

Barney: If you treat women with respect they'll like you. That's how I get them because like I haven't really got the, you know, - the, the bod in my case. So you treat them with respect and you flippin, and you like charm

them up, tell them how good they're looking and all those sort of things and you'll get them [girlfriends].

The 'in-crowd' men's attractiveness was not enough to 'get girlfriends' because they did not communicate well or respect women. For these young men, moving from friend to potential Boyfriend involved 'respect' and this was demonstrated by 'charming them [women] up'. 'Respect' was aligned with a kind of communication that involved propositioning women through the way women look. Indeed as Barney points out, this kind of flattery is necessary if 'you haven't really got the...bod'. Instead of focussing on attracting women through his physicality, Barney presumed that women would find his commentary on their physical appearance appealing. I have little doubt that appreciating someone's physicality can be appealing, but the focus remains on how women look. In a devastatingly unquestioned way, women were approached as if their main asset/value is in how they look. Meanwhile, Barney's lack of a 'good body' did not detract from his focus on women's 'good looks'. Further, 'respect' (charm them up) is based on appealing to what women are supposed to represent and value, that is, beauty and decoration. In this case, I think 'respect' (as charming women up) is just a chivalrous gloss for 'getting' Girlfriends by calling on sexist representations of women as decorative objects. There is compatibility between a predatory male sex drive discourse, a romantic have/hold discourse and hegemonic masculinity. The position of Boyfriend was something that was achieved like a goal so that 'scoring', 'getting Girlfriends', and romantic longevity (going-out for three years) were represented as enhancing masculinity (Jack 'the man'). Taken that hegemonic masculinity is often something that has to be won and proved, it is often extended to their descriptions of 'scoring' Girlfriends.

Barney and Jack both based their entry into going out on the attractiveness of women. Even before Jack had experienced any interaction with the young woman he called 'a babe', he had decided that he would 'score' her. Barney noted that he had to rely on complimenting young women on their attractiveness as a way to show respect and to 'get girls'. Only one of the young women I spoke to discussed the physical attractiveness of young men. Angie noted that her ideal man was 'a six foot blonde' but preceded this statement with 'that's just dreaming'. There was a hegemonic masculine currency of evaluation in operation that made young men's focus on the attractiveness of women plausible whilst Angie's tall blonde man was relegated to the realm of fantasy. Largely, the young women recounted the qualities of the young men as Boyfriends. Charisse's comment about her Boyfriend is typical:

He's really nice. He writes me all these sweet little letters and stuff, its nice. He writes me poetry and stuff too.

In part, young women were positioned as awaiting conferment of going out from young men who they did not speak about as physically attractive, while young men were positioned as entering going out on the basis of the attractiveness of young women and their ability to engage with this surface of femininity.

Physical attraction was part of the entry into heterocoupledness for both men and women, but the emphasis on women's attractiveness was most obvious in the young men's discussions. (A focus group of young men even talked to the camera as if it was myself and proceeded to make various comments about my physical appearance. To be sexually harassed through the lens of a camera was an extremely strange twist to the power relations between researcher and researched, and deserves further commentary in a post thesis paper). A discourse of heterosexual invariability is therefore gendered according to the attractiveness of women for men, and men in relation to hegemonic masculinity. I must premise this by noting that the beauty industry is increasingly targeting young men between the ages of 14 and 24 as potential consumers of their products. I have little doubt that male attractiveness will increasingly become an issue that young men confront – however male attractiveness is watched over by an evaluative male gaze that is carefully unpolluted by 'femininity'.

For example, Clairol is promoting hair dyes to young men, under the label XtremeFX. The range markets 'colour shocks' (like orange, red, blue and bleach blonde) to young men who apparently want 'notice me colour', while women are marketed 'natural colour, softness or vibrant shine' products (Kelly, 2000, p.12). Most tellingly, Aramis market a line of male cosmetics called "grooming products" (rather than make-up) because '[w]e tried to keep all of the names in man-speak, so they wouldn't think there was anything feminine about them' (Kelly, 2001, p.12). In other words, masculinity must not be contaminated by femininity. It appears that there is a blurring of gender boundaries (because both young men and women use beauty products), but the terms remain traditionally gendered; men are associated with extreme and shock, women are associated with nature, softness and shine. It is perhaps not surprising given that consumer capitalism is itself informed by a hegemonic, evaluative masculine gaze that values product, image and appearance over substance, in traditionally gendered terms. Whether the beauty industry targets young women or young men the focus remains on appearance as substance, along with a gendering of attractiveness that re-

entrenches the regulating power of the masculine gaze. Young men are increasingly evaluated according to their attractiveness in relation to enhancing masculinity (devoid of 'femininity'), whilst young women are re-positioned as attractive for masculinity through a circumspect femininity. It is no wonder that young men still talk about 'scoring' Girlfriends when masculinity, even in its remixed version of the 1990's, relies of the boundaries of oppositional gender binaries.

Entering heterocoupledness is gendered around the performances of asking and not asking, and, female attractiveness and male conquest. The gender-power relations are remixed along traditional gender boundaries that stress female availability (in cross-gender friendships for example) and attractiveness, and male conquest and flattery of women. This traditional gendering has been reformed so that 'choice' and the refusal to accept mistreatment from young men has been asserted by young women. However, this reform has done little to actually destroy the remnants of oppositional gender constructs so that any adjustments in gender-power relations remain referenced to the privileging of male choices over female choices. The overall picture appears to be that young men still ask young women out, and young women await this confirmation (Dilorio, 1989). When masculinity is largely represented as a straightforward and goal directed performance, it is no wonder that young men ask young women out (even if this occurs after a substantial period of time/space sharing and probably quite a lot of concealed anxiety about how to ask young women out). Similarly, femininity, with its various remixing with liberalism and the girl-power of the nineties (when 'girls can not only do anything that boys can do', but girls won't take anything that boys give) means that while assertiveness is represented as young women's duty, the risks of being positioned as either wanting sex or relationship have to be navigated carefully. Consequently, the gender-power relations appear not to be drawn on traditionally active/passive lines because young women and men adopt a language of actively inserting themselves into heterocoupledness. At the same time, the performance of waiting the conferment of heterocoupledness, and the assertion of scoring heterocoupledness, are drawn on oppositional gender binaries and reassert power relations that credit masculinity with activity and femininity with passivity.

Again, the young people did not discuss their entry into going-out as experimental, despite psychology's constitution of adolescence as being played out around the theme of experimentation. Nevertheless, that young people, particularly young women, were reluctant to formally ritualise and verbalise their

relationships could mean that many going-out experiments simply remain unspeakable, (at least not to me), and therefore, are being performed. What makes these performances even more difficult to speak/write about is that European heterosexuality is a culturally normalised institution that inducts young people through various rituals of 'going-out' that are coded as natural pathways through adolescence. The ways of speaking about heterocoupledness are heavily inscribed by the binary of single or partnered leaving little room for performances that are about neither. Are there other ways of talking about entry into heterocoupledness that do not rely on the binaries of asking/being asked, passivity and activity? Could the subversion lie in the withdrawal of verbal clarification in the process of evaluating and entering into heterocoupledness? The entry points into heterocoupledness are no doubt numerous, but they are also underpinned by various ideals and expectations. In the next section therefore, i explore the ideals and expectations of romantic love that underscore heterocoupledness at adolescence.

IDEALS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ROMANTIC LOVE

Contemporary western ideals and expectations of romantic love inform many of our everyday practices of heterocoupledness. These everyday practices of romantic love are both deeply personal and highly present in our cultural context; in personal advertisements for Mr. Exception or Ms. Right in newspapers and online chat-rooms; in bookshops where psychologists sell their latest advice on how to love; in numerous public spaces where not only advertising depicts the ideal heterocouple, but where heterocouples themselves perform their togetherness rituals. The everyday experience of romantic heterocouple love is mediated through western cultural discursive fields where:

[e]veryday life is vulnerable to the effects of commodification and bureaucratic structuring, and exhibits tendencies towards routinized form. Late capitalism seems especially prone to such phenomena as social atomism, moral nihilism and possessive individualism, wherein person identity is constructed increasingly through patterns of consumption rather than forms of communal and interpersonal dialogue (Gardiner, 2000, p.13).

Similarly, 'love' is an everyday practice that has become vulnerable to the effects of late capitalism where relationships have also become commodified and routinized. At the same time, love promises sanctuary from such things as 'social atomism, moral nihilism and possessive individualism'. Love endures as a symbol of hope that promises that these nasties of everyday life can be escaped, or that love can provide palliative respite. Yet people do love in everyday ways, in mundane and overlooked acts of collective activity that are beyond consumerism and psychological self-help advice manuals; people couple not just because they are duped by romanticism. Despite these disruptive performances of love, the close up, Vaseline smeared lenses of romanticism continue to portray romantic ideals and expectations that are constraining and politically cleansed.

For instance, to proclaim to love someone is often to imply the existence of uniquely experienced, inner psychological and emotional states. The codes called on to claim love recruit various ideals and expectations, and credits a power of believability to certain depictions and conventions of romantic love over other less legitimated practices. Most commonly, 'love' is constituted as a state

and experience that emerges from within each individual and is spurred by unexplainable emotions that are simultaneously known by lovers to exist with a heartfelt certainty. As Burr (1995, p.24) observes love is often used as a psychologised verb, that is, love (including the ideals and expectations of love) implies certain forms of expression that emerge from within the person. Love, as a noun, denotes caring and intimacy but does not actually refer to the activities of loving. Love is often associated with action; love hurts, love rescues, resolves or redeems, love binds, blinds and bleeds, love takes, it gives, and so love reveals, dies, and blossoms. Therefore, love implies certain actions at the same time that these actions are subsumed by references to ideals and expectations that operate as if they are the 'real' proofs of love. The question, which i think is most often posed in the moments when love hurts in ways that it is not supposed to (as when violence and possessiveness are used), is: Is this what love looks like in action?

'Love' implies certain actions and these actions are often political, yet hegemonic representations depict love as separate from the socio-political context. Love in the West is supposed to involve a fortuitous mutual attraction between two individuals. Consequently, the heterocouple in-love is regarded as having its own idiosyncratic micro-social context that largely excludes political structures and struggles within; 'somehow things are different when we're together?'. Heterocouples in-love, are assumed to be private and personal in their expressions, and through the separations between the private and political (which, is still a commonly assumed 'truth') that heterocoupling remains depoliticised. Nevertheless, i argue that the 'joint action' (Shotter, 1993*) of constituting 'Us' and 'You and I', occurs in relation to various ideals and expectations that are themselves part of political knowledge-power relations. These political 'dances of relating' (Shotter, 1993) are (at least partially) constituted by variously mutating and unstable discourses that are taken up in ways that remain unproblematized. In the next section, i explore the ideals and expectations of heterocoupledness as personal/political 'dances of relating'. i regard 'ideals' to be distinct from but intertwined with 'expectations'. Ideals are the professed, hypothetical standards of perfection that exist in opposition to what is considered the 'real' world. Ideals are aspired to and may not necessarily reflect what is considered 'real'. In connection, expectations presume that something is likely to happen, or that certain things must happen. For instance, a discourse of the male sex drive promotes the ideal that sexual activity is active and predatory, at the same time that it calls on the expectation that men naturally

require sexual access to women. The next section examines these ideals and expectations of romantic love in heterocoupledness.

Some of the young men discussed their ideals and expectations of heterocoupledness by calling on romantic symbolism. Two groups of young men discussed the 'flower' as a symbol of love and a gift to be given to people.

Simon: And another thing, does love hit you? Does it, can you say like, within a minute, 'wow, I am now in love'

Kosmo: No. It definitely grows

Simon: It has to be a growing

Kosmo: I'd have to say, I reckon there's only like

Jack: The best way to say it, is that it's like a flower.

Frank: It blooms.

Kosmo: Blossoms.

Simon: Develops.

Frank: Blossoms into something beautiful.

Simon: Wow!

Kosmo: And then withers away.

Simon: And then withers away

(All laughing)

Simon: And dies. Na, oh yes, that's quite good ah. It takes a while.

The 'life' of this conversation gathered its own momentum as the young men used the symbol of a flower growing over time and withering into death to describe 'love'. The young men were playing off each other to develop an analogy of love. However, the use of the symbolism of flowers by the young men is interesting in that giving flowers is mostly portrayed as a masculine gesture within romantic liaisons; flowers are promoted as the most appropriate gift a male can bestow upon his female lover. (Admittedly, women will also give flowers to men but overall these exchanges are marketed as gendered gifts that males provide and females receive). Why did the young men use flowers to symbolise the ideal process of love? How did the play of associations seem so comprehensible, logical and indeed a sensible rendition of the process of love? Further, was this a 'free' play of associations or were the associations contained by the symbol and its implied object (in this case, the life cycle of a flower as

love)? Using the flower as a symbol of love predisposed the narrative's ending to a slow demise (withering) and ending (death) of a love relationship. I raise these questions to remind the reader that I am interrogating how meanings work in relation to a social-political context that allows some things to seem more sensible than others do.

These young men described their ideal of love as a developmental process. None of the young men in this conversation claimed to have been 'in love' and they discussed love in idealised terms. Accordingly, love grows, blossoms, blooms, develops, withers and dies. There were two ways that love could occur, but 'love over time' was more plausible and expected than a sudden emergence of love ('hitting you'). While the romantic ideal of 'love at first sight' is dismissed, the alternative notion that love grows, calls on a similarly romantic ideal. That is, love has a tragicomic life cycle as it grows over time towards death. The young men were laughing while they each contributed to the narrative of the life cycle of love as a flower but Simon at least was impressed (Wow) with the overall meaning – that is, love develops. Similarly, their tragicomic conclusion also called on the romantic ideal that love blooms only once, and whilst in bloom it is the most 'beautiful' stage in a romance – perhaps because for the first time a potential end is in sight.

Another group of young men were discussing what they give to women when they are going out with them. The young men commented that they would spend money 'buying things' for their Girlfriends, including expensive jewellery and flowers. They also discussed the symbolism of giving flowers but in the following conversation they regarded flowers as an inappropriate gesture of decaying love.

Ian: What else, I mean I love flowers but I'd never buy them for anyone because they don't last. What if you're saying 'ever dying love' or something, you put them in a vase and they die. You've got nothing to remember them from

Cynan: No, flowers are something I send to sick people.

Ian: Yeah, I don't. I buy a plant because imagine that and you might be on your death-bed dying of cancer or something and you give them flowers. In five days, and they slowly, slowly die. It's like 'I'm going to die soon' and they start crying like anything cause these, they watch these flowers and in five days they die.

Barney: It's like 'I give you these flowers. It represents your life'. And they're slowly, ever so slowly dying.

Ian: Give them a pot plant.

Cynan: Give them something that grows and lives.

Ian: Yeah, and grow and live and flower

Cynan: Give them a baby

These young men take an alternative approach to the traditional romantic representation of 'flowers'. Ian, in particular, disputed the appropriateness of giving something that would die by calling attention to the temporary nature of flowers. Barney also noted that flowers represent the recipients' life and could remind them of their own death and this might not be appropriate. Overall, flowers were a 'memento mori' (remember you must die) that was not to be given – especially to people who are 'sick'. Instead, the young men proposed that things like pot plants were more appropriate because they grow and live. The young men also used the symbol of the flower to position themselves as 'giving' within heterocoupledness.

The expectation that men provide was discussed in various other conversations about 'going-out'. Typically, the young men talked about paying for their Girlfriends when they take them out and 'providing for their needs' (Minge). Being a provider in relationships is still something that the young men rarely questioned, even when they were bemoaning how much money they had spent on their Girlfriends. The important point to note is that the position of 'male as provider' is a common way that young men inscribe their masculinity within their peer groups. In the above conversation, Cynan suggests that the most appropriate gift that symbolises 'growth' and 'living' is to give a 'baby'.

Was 'giving a baby' a symbol of cheating death at her reminder game, and simultaneously of investing relationships with a quality of endurance? Is 'giving a baby' something that Boyfriends/Husbands/Men can even 'give'? Without generalising from these very small extracts, it would seem that 'giving' was largely constituted in terms of either material items (jewellery), services (movie tickets, drinks, dinner) or sperm (babies). Providing was not only a masculine posture within heterocoupledness, it also symbolised a longevity that a romantic have/hold discourse promotes as successful heterocoupledness. Gifts, especially babies, are assumed to be enduring. A further question is why the young men in this group did not ask Cynan why he had offered the idea of 'giving a baby' as the ultimate gift of love? Cynan and Barney had already taken a position against

pre-marital, adolescent sex. They had described themselves as Christians and were committed to remaining virgins until they married. Ian and Mac remained quiet about whether they agreed with sex before marriage, or even as a young person, but nevertheless participated in conversations where sex before marriage was treated as 'wrong'. I turn briefly to their conversation to show that their ideals of love in heterocoupledness in adolescence involved certain expectations about how sexuality should be managed.

Mac, Ian, Barney and Cynan were discussing the scenario provided to the focus group. In the scenario, Kim was being pressured into having sex with her Boyfriend, Paul. Kim stated that she eventually wanted to have sex, but perhaps not as soon as many young men. The men were talking about what they found acceptable and unacceptable in the scenario.

Mac: Well I don't see, well she's like fifteen-and-a-half, sixteen, like you don't want to like go, 'oh, sixteen I'm legal, lets go full out and have sex all the time'.

Barney: She shouldn't be worrying about sex at that age. You know, she should be waiting for marriage

Mac: Yeah

Barney: I believe

Ian: So she should be there just for a friend and someone to talk to?

Barney: Well do you reckon they ought to wait till marriage? (Looking to Cynan)

Mac: Well at least until you know that this is it, like you've been going ...

Cynan: Yeah, well (unclear).

Barney: It's hard though, aye. It's hard.

Cynan: Fuck its hard.

Barney: It's hard having to wait, so. I mean it's not easy.

Cynan: When you've got like chicks going, arghhh. It's really really hard.

Mac: You know like, you get into relationships where the other person like you really, really want to do them and you really want to it

Cynan: Or then there's relationships where you

Barney: Oh man I've been like that. You really want to do it, man, and it's just so hard to say no.

Mac: But what's the point of it because once you've done it you just want to do it and do and do it again and you're not going to forgive yourself.

Barney: And it's like if I don't have a taste of the bicky I won't know what's it like sort of.

There is a lot about this text that could be analysed. There are however several main points that underscore their discussion. Firstly, sexual intercourse should not occur in any adolescent relationships (not even once 'legal' age is reached). In particular, the young woman in question, 'shouldn't be worrying about sex at that age'. Secondly, sexual intercourse should only occur in marriage and therefore adolescence is a time of waiting. Thirdly, males have difficulty restraining their sexual appetite to 'do them' [Girlfriends] in adolescence, especially when 'chick's' display desire. Finally, waiting is easier when the young men have not had 'a taste of the bicky' (had sex) and fallen into an apparently perpetual cycle of having sex and not forgiving themselves for their fall into sexual activity before marriage. These young men thought that their teenage relationships were largely going to be temporary (Barney thought that about 90% of his relationships would end) and therefore sex with non-marital or 'permanent' partners was not an appropriate part of adolescence. Accordingly, heterocoupledness in adolescence was constituted as a temporary stage, while married heterocoupledness was idealised as permanent and therefore as the most appropriate site for heterosexual intercourse. In addition, sexual activity was aligned with having marriage and children.

Barney: Yeah, prepared anyway, like that's why you should be married. If you have a child in marriage, it's cool, you're prepared, you're one.

For Barney and Cyran, babies/children should only be born into marriage because it is an apparently permanent institution and, in this sense, marriage is a union of two into 'one' which constitutes a state of preparedness for sex/children. Male sexuality is described in the above three texts as difficult to control as a teenager (but controllable nonetheless) but if released within marriage it serves the apparently justified function of reproduction. There is an intersection between the romantic idealism inspired by a romantic have/hold discourse and a male sexual drive discourse. The formulation of these discourses within the men's talk has been re-mixed. These young men linked sexuality with reproduction and marriage (a romantic have/hold discourse) but positioned both themselves and women as (ideally) 'waiting subjects'. They also called on a male sexual drive discourse to explain the difficulties of restraining their sexual desires. That is,

after the first 'taste', their desire for sexual intercourse would become insatiable, especially when faced with women who were sexual. Rather than using a male sex drive discourse to justify needing 'sexual release' as natural, the young men used it to accentuate their moral restraint and thereby cast doubt on the range of sexual expressions that can occur outside of a discourse legitimated by 'nature' or 'morality'. The implication is that sex is 'sinful' outside of marriage, but within and for the purposes of reproduction, sex is constituted as meaningful, right and ideal.

Not only does this formulation of pre-marital sex assume that heterosexuality is normal, it supports the conservative notion that heterosexuality is limited to penetrative intercourse that serves to reproduce children and traditional notions of the 'family'. Potentially, this formulation also relegates other forms of sexual expression as wrong and abnormal. Furthermore, there is an expectation that Girlfriends (and women in general) tempt men when they display sexuality. Sue Lees (1997) argues that the sluts label used indiscriminately and is not necessarily related to sexual behaviour – indeed she regards the 'slut' label as a disciplinary technique that is used to regulate women for what ever they may be doing or not doing. Furthermore, women who are judged as sexually 'tempting' or flirtatious are also charged with responsibility and blame.

A discourse of female sexuality as threatening and threatened constitutes Girlfriends as responsible for controlling male sexuality. When discussing Kim (the scenario character) Ian's group applauded her stance on not wanting to have sex and positioned her as protecting a sexuality that was threatened not by Paul (her hypothetical Boyfriend) but by an apparent loss (virginity). Nowhere did these young men discuss Paul's pressure on Kim to have sex. At the same time, they admonished Kim for expressing a desire to have sex. Kim's status as a virgin was something that she alone must protect even when under pressure from a Boyfriend. In contrast, Barney commented that he had to 'trust' that his Girlfriend would prevent him from having sex with her when he got drunk and 'tried to have sex with her'. These young men assumed that women were sexual objects who excited them and made it hard for them to keep their vows of virginity. They positioned women as threatening sexual subjects who could entice Boyfriends when they were vulnerable (that is, drunk). Against my expectations, none of the other male focus groups discussed their expectations of sex in adolescence, however, the young women in the interviews thought that young men expected to have sex with Girlfriends in heterocoupledness.

All of the young women interviewees mentioned that young men expect to have sex when they become heterocoupled. For Astrid and Zara, young men were constituted as already sexually desirous and predatory. Astrid's mother allowed her to go out with boys but at the same time warned her to be 'careful'.

Lisa: And what does she want you to be careful of?

Astrid: Like if they pressure you - keep on saying no cause its not worth it.

Lisa: Yeah not worth it in terms of...

Astrid: Oh, mean ohh (exasperated sigh). Like, um Mum said if they keep pressuring you just tell them 'if you really like me you would take my, you would take no for an answer'.

Lisa: Pressuring you for sex?

Astrid: Yeah, and if I say no and if they keep pressuring me Mum just told me 'that if you really like me you would take no for an answer'.

To be pressured by Boyfriends was to be pressured for sex. Astrid was not only warned by her mother to be 'careful' about the pressures from Boyfriends but was prepared with a defensive strategy – 'if you really like me, you would take my... no for an answer'. The need to prepare Astrid with a defence strategy against a sexually insistent Boyfriend was presumed to be imperative for Astrid's safety as a Girlfriend. Her mother provided the rhetorical strategy that could simultaneously test a young man's 'real' liking for Astrid and hopefully keep her safe from coercive sexual activity that may include rape or consensual sex. While Astrid did not mention sex or rape as the things to be careful of with Boyfriends, the 'pressure' was already on her to regard her sexuality as already threatened and to prepare to protect herself. Zara, a Māori woman of thirteen years at the time of the interviews, linked sex with having a Boyfriend and the fears of pregnancy rather than rape.

Lisa: She [Zara's Mum] only knew that you went out with one boy. She doesn't like you to go out with boys?

Zara: Yeah

Lisa: Why do you think that is?

Zara: She's scared.

Lisa: She's scared of?

Zara: That I might get pregnant. Doubt it!

According to Zara, her mother was worried that her Boyfriend relationships could lead to pregnancy. Going out with Boyfriends involved the inevitable push for sex and the consequent threat that Zara would be left to bear the responsibility of sexually active heterocoupledness. Zara dismissed her mother's fear of pregnancy but was also reluctant to tell her mum about any Boyfriends that she might have had.

Astrid, Zara and myself also talked about what boys expect from Girlfriends. Not surprisingly, the importance of Girlfriend's sexual and moral behaviour was mentioned. They both commented that Boyfriends expect their Girlfriends 'not to be a slut'. I asked them what a slut was and Astrid replied that it was:

A girl who flirts with boys in a rather disgusting way.

Zara clarified that flirting happens 'when she's got a boy'. Later they went on to tell me that Girlfriends 'should have moral standards' (Astrid).

Lisa: What are they?

Astrid: She should, it would probably come under being a slut cause one thing is dressing nice. And sitting properly instead of wearing a mini skirt with her legs wide open showing every body the world.

While Boyfriends are constituted as entering relationships for sex, Astrid and Zara were also aware that to display their sexuality was a precarious and dangerous endeavour. Girlfriends' displays of sexuality were risky navigations of the treacherous slut-virgin dichotomy that constitutes female sexuality as threatening and threatened, and builds on a technology of reputation that regulates young women's movements within adolescence (Lees, 1997). In this case, the defensive strategies employed by Zara and Astrid were based on the young women's responsibility for containing how their bodies and moralities were displayed/represented, given that the Boyfriends were constituted as already sexual and therefore potentially unsafe.

Harris (1999) comments that the balancing act that young women perform between the competing discourses of femininity that regulate female sexuality are further compounded by how ethnicity is constituted within communities. In Aotearoa, there are regular periods of moral panic about the pregnancy rates of young women and a tendency to focus on young Māori women's rates of teenage pregnancy. These moral panics often exaggerate the rise in the levels of teenage pregnancy and are usually accompanied by calls for either more or less sex education to be made available in schools. Currently, in the United States and Great

Britain, there has been an increasingly vociferous campaign to encourage virginity in youth as a way of stemming what is conceived as the 'problem' of teenage pregnancy, along with HIV/AIDS and STI's (Schaer, 2001). While adolescents in Aotearoa/New Zealand are, in the main, not being encouraged through sexual education classes to take 'virginity pledges' and 'just say no', there is still a tendency to target particular groups, like Māori women, as 'at risk' and responsible for managing their sexuality. Teenage pregnancy is therefore represented as an unwanted sign of women's sexual activity and as an issue that not only threatens young women (because they are apparently 'immature' and unready for parenting), but also as if young women were themselves threatening the state (by going on Domestic Purposes Benefit, utilising health care resources, ceasing education or training and not being in paid work, for example) (Nathanson, 1991). Compounding this threatening status of young women's pregnancy, is the Colonial history of constituting Māori women's sexuality as 'rampant' and dangerous to the 'moral order' (read: Pakeha order), and the navigatory challenge of heterosexuality that these young women face is compounded by this selective moral panic. The Pakeha women did not speak about pregnancy and this highlights the way the competing discourses of femininity operate to problematise specific ethnic groups (like Māori) and not others (like Pakeha).

The Pakeha women also talked about sex and they also assumed that Boyfriends expected sex in heterocoupledness. When I asked Anna what she thought young men expected out of a relationship she replied:

Anna: Sex. Well they do, at this age, if you go out with a guy they expect that you sleep with them. And that's fine with me, I'd expect to sleep with him as well but not as soon as probably he would. Where a lot of girls wouldn't sleep with a guy and I think they do end up going out with people, the guys do expect them to sleep with them. And that's why a lot of relationships break up. Which I think is stupid. Cause if I went out with a guy and he didn't want to sleep with me for religious reasons or moral reasons or anything I don't think I'd worry that much. With guys they do worry, they expect to sleep with their girlfriends.

Anna then went on to explain why she thought that Boyfriends were most likely to be sexually unfaithful in relationships:

Cause they're [young men] more highly sexed at this age. Well you know don't you, that's what they say that guys are at their peak at seventeen and

girls don't get there until they're thirty or something? Perhaps that's why they think they need it more?

The explanation offered by Anna reiterates the widely held assumption that male sexuality is at its most potent and active at a young age. The explanation is underpinned by the assumption that young men's sexuality is unstoppable and driven by instinctual impulses. The discourse of hegemonic masculinity places penetrative sex with women at the centre of men's motivations and desires, and this normalizes men's material heterosexual (and sexist) practices by providing a distinctly non-social and conveniently non-agentic explanation. A discourse of the male sex drive is easily taken up by the young women to explain what Boyfriends expect from Girlfriends and further to place women's sexuality as less urgent. Anna expected to be able to have sex with her Boyfriend but her desires were relegated behind men's apparently more imperative sexuality. Charisse similarly thought that Boyfriends expected sex out of relationships:

Well probably after a certain age they do. When, um, probably everyone has lost their virginity by then and so they just think, 'well I'm in a relationship with this person, that's what I'm getting out of it'.

Not only is the male sexual drive instinctual, it emerges at a 'certain age' (presumably puberty) and therefore relationships become necessarily sexual. Heterocoupledness functions to provide a space where sexual activity can occur and where the servicing of Boyfriends' sexual expectations is an assumed consequence of going out – '[sex] is what I'm getting out of it'.

In contrast, Angie did not mention Boyfriends' expectations for sex. Instead she represented faithfulness as the most important quality that Boyfriends expect from Girlfriends. In true Tammy Winnette style, Angie spoke of Boyfriends' expectations of Girlfriends' binding supportiveness.

Lisa: And looking at the typical male, what do you think they expect? If they had a girlfriend, what would they expect out of her?

Angie: Probably to be there whenever he needed her, and to be understanding in decisions and stuff that he makes. Support him in everything he does and like stand by him and give him his friends. And don't be too possessive and umm, have a life of your own, like don't let him revolve.

In other words, 'typical' Boyfriends expect Girlfriends to be devoted mind readers capable of supporting Boyfriends' decisions/actions. A Girlfriend is

expected to be an eternal navigator capable of immediate response to her Boyfriends needs, a compassionate confidant and supportive aficionado, and all the while maintain the appearance of independence beyond the Boyfriend. For Angie, Boyfriends expect their Girlfriends to be capable of multiple and enduring support. A discourse of the good wife/girl/woman transcends age and crosses over into adolescent heterocoupledness even in the 1990's. The sexism of this state of affairs is inoculated against by the representation of the discourse of liberalism alongside Angie's narrative. To 'have a life of your own' is to support a Boyfriend's freedom, while also implying the Girlfriend's freedom by default. In the end, Angie and the other young women's representations of Boyfriend's expectations (for sex and nurturing support) were so available, so familiar to them, that I was left wondering just how anything had actually changed. The discursive fields of teenage heterocoupledness are so imbued with sexist and misogynistic constitutions that it is difficult to disrupt the notion of Girlfriends as at risk of rape or pregnancy but nevertheless acting as supportive, virginal sex objects and Boyfriends as sexual hunters who work as patriarchal rulers allowing their Girlfriend's freedom in relation to their 'needs'. Furthermore, that most of the young women said that young men expect sex when they were in intimate relationships, while the young women expected qualities like trust and faithfulness, repeats traditional themes that have constituted the girl in Girlfriend and the boy in Boyfriend. Whether the young men do expect sex or not from the Girlfriends is not the point. That young women constitute Boyfriends as expecting sex positions them as potential sexual suppliers for their Boyfriends. Most of the Girlfriends that I spoke with wanted to have sex with their Boyfriends, but they also spoke about entering into arrangements where Boyfriends were already positioned as the main stakeholders in negotiations over sexuality in heterocoupledness. Inserting oneself, as Girlfriend, into this arrangement and stating that you desire and expect sex from Boyfriends would be to contravene this power arrangement; a possible but circumspect position given the complex intermeshing of risk with desire, choice and femininity.

Apart from our discussions about sexuality, the focus groups and interviewees also talked about more general ideals and expectations of heterocoupledness. Both the young men and women spoke about the 'reality' of these ideals and expectations. Simon's focus group discussed how being teenager influences behaviour in heterocoupledness. At first, they drew a distinction between themselves as teenagers and 'older people...looking for marriage' (Frank). The conversation then turned to discussing whether they would like to have 'real'

Girlfriends in their teenage years and the ideals and expectations that the idea of 'real' Girlfriends inspire:

Kosmo: Yeh, a lot of people like specially when you are getting on, like twenty-five and stuff like that, you're like looking for a real sort of girl friend but I know that, I mean, I don't now but I definitely wouldn't be looking for a real girl friend.

Minge: I'd rather have a proper relationship at this age, than dating other people. I'd get tired of that.

Simon: I agree with Minge

Kosmo: I can't see myself like

Simon: That depends from person to person again ah

Minge: I can because I like stability.

Simon: Yeah, same.

Minge: That's me, I don't want to move house or anything. I want to move out away from my parents but as a family I don't want to move house and stuff because I like stability.

Simon: You want to know where you are a hundred percent of the time. You don't want to

Minge: Ohh, I don't know. I like to feel, I the feeling of having, knowing that someone like loves and cares for me.

Jack: You're a sweet kind of guy

Simon: Yeh. (Places his fist on Minge's and pretends to chip some off. Smiling).

Kosmo: I suppose if I had like, really had the chance to get into a real relationship I could probably go for it but

Simon: It'd have to be a special girl

Kosmo: Yeah.

Simon: Or a guy

Kosmo: Yeah or a guy

Simon: No sorry Kosmo, part of the criteria was that you're

Kosmo: Cut that out

Simon: Yeah, sorry Kosmo.

Minge: Yeh, well all I really want, is a house, ten million kids running around.

Frank: Ten! Struth

Minge: I'm going to be Mister Family Man.

Simon: Yeh, I can see myself like that ah

Minge: I'll work the radio night shift

Kosmo: Oh, I can see myself with a career woman. And not have kids for a long time, and only one or two, - and probably not any

Minge: I want lots of grand kids

Jack: I hate kids.

Simon: I love kids.

Kosmo: Oh, and I want a flash house. I'd have three good cars out the front

i have reproduced this conversation in full because of the way the young men quite seamlessly merged into a description of the contemporary nuclear family as an ideal and expectation. At first Kosmo did not want a 'real' Girlfriend, but after entertaining Simon and Minge's ideas about wanting stability in love, he began to consider that if had a 'chance' with a 'real' (and a 'special') Girlfriend he would 'probably go for it'. After joking about the (im)possibility of Kosmo being partnered with a guy and the subsequent (and telling) apology from Simon, the conversation began to describe heterocoupledness in terms of the romantic totems of heterocoupledness; family, houses, cars, careers, and children. Minge, Simon and Kosmo were the main proponents of the ideal family as the consequence of finding a 'real' Girlfriend and therefore having 'real' heterocoupledness. Jack 'the man' who had been in a relationship for three years, was quiet except to comment that he hated children, and, similarly, Frank's only involvement was the expression of astonishment at Minge's desire for 'Ten! Struth' children.

The romantic and highly old-fashioned rendition of how heterocoupledness ideals inform expectations may not be one that is necessarily lived out by these young men – nevertheless, a have/hold discourse provides easy access to talking about 'real' love, Girlfriends and heterocoupledness. Ingham and Kirkland (1997) have referred to Danny Wight's argument that young men can also position themselves as subjects within a romantic have/hold discourse. Wight has argued that far from the subject/object positioning being split across gender boundaries,

the young men he spoke with would alternate between these positions. Indeed, gender boundaries are not fixed as female/subject and male/object dichotomies, and the young men spoke as subjects of a romantic have/hold discourse. At the same time, the absent party in their future longings for house, car, wife and kids, the 'real' Girlfriend was assumed to be a willing subject in these romantic ideals and expectations. The have/hold discourse that these young men speak through is based on subjecting women to being had/held within romantic institutions. Rather than an alternation between discourses, i think that a simultaneous subject/object positioning within a romantic have/hold discourse is asserted, whereby male self-interest is served.

In this case, the women's positioning within a have/hold discourses remains untroubled and the presumption, that 'real' Girlfriends mean marriage, children, houses, and cars, and in one case, a 'career woman' who delays but may consign herself to childbearing, persists as an ideal. The trajectory of 'real' romance into institutions where traditional gender based performances infiltrate the young men's visions of a future bound up with reproducing a new façade for heterocoupledness where equal partner participation remains superficial. The façade presumes and therefore accommodates a western capitalist requirement that primarily men but also women must work outside the home (for less money and in more temporary employ than men, of course) in order to maintain a togetherness that is often formed in ways that actually serve capitalism (through family, home, car, career and children) more than heterocoupledness actually serves its professed ideals of mutual love and care. Meanwhile the bedchambers behind the façade of heterocoupledness's equality remain walled up by a compartmentalised consumerism that reduces heterocoupledness to a series of purchases – where ideals and expectations are premised on the illusion of change ('I can see myself with a career women'). How heterocoupledness, according to a romantic have/hold discourse, could ever get away with being 'romanticised' remains a mystery to me. Nevertheless, romantic love and marriage is a format that many teen and adult men and women desire and regard as an invariable consequence of long-term hetero relationships. Simultaneously, doing heterocoupledness differently is difficult to express given the pervasiveness of a romantic have/hold discourse.

The ordeal of trying to express something beyond this almost totalising have/hold discourse was alluded to by a group of young women. The young women (in both the focus groups and interviews) expressed their ideals and explanations of romantic love in heterocoupledness through what they *did not*

want. A romantic have/hold discourse was still in operation, but the young women positioned themselves in relation to it by naming situations, feelings and status' that they did not want to be subjected to or subject others to. The theme of accounting for their ideals through what young women did not want was a strong theme throughout this research. Annalise's group seems to capture the sentiment that whilst heterocoupledness and sexuality are desired as ideals, finding a way to express these desires is constrained and constructed by expectations about how things actually work out for women in heterocoupledness relationships.

Brooke: Are you scared, are you scared about having something so long term with Kaleb. You know cause its been so long together you're scared that there's no, that you haven't experimented or you know like learnt, you don't live together

Wednesday: I'd like to live with him but I don't want to marry him or anything. That's kind of bad but

Annalise: Are you worried that there's like

Brooke: That you'll always be with him and never with other people is that like, do you can you

Wednesday: I'm just thinking about the times like because I want to go out with heaps of guys

Brooke: I know what you mean

Annalise: Yeah

Mary: Yeah, you want to try them

Brooke You don't want to have to be with him and spend your whole life just having

Mary: Thinking what could have been

Wednesday: Oh you know I wish I could go away for a weekend

Brooke: ... you want other guys sort of thing, you want others

Annalise: Yeah and its not cause you're a slut, its this big thing of confidence again, it honestly is.

Brooke: And long-term relationships when you're young I just don't think I mean some people, like it depends on how you can handle it, but I'd hate to be stuck with the one person.

Wednesday had been with her Boyfriend in what was described as a 'long term' relationship and whilst she would like to live with him, she did not want to marry him, which was 'kind of bad'. Brooke's questioning of the way long-term heterocoupledness at adolescence can be regarded as a sign of monogamy, future marriage and the presumption of a permanent togetherness across time opened the space for a discussion about the young women's desires for more than this. Brooke wanted to experience being with 'other people'; Wednesday wanted to 'go out with heaps of guys'; Mary wanted to 'try them', and Annalise noted that wanting to experience a range of heterocoupledness relationships was 'not cause you're a slut, its this big thing of confidence again'. While the young women were expressing ideals about being about to play about between different heterocoupledness relationships, their conversation was also book-ended by a concern for the constraints of an expectation that heterocoupledness could mean a constraint on experience, and any divergences might position them as 'sluts'.

For the young women in the interviews, accounting for their notions of ideal heterocoupledness (they most often talked about love, respect, kindness and niceness) were constituted through what was not wanted. As I asked the young women to provide illustrations of these qualities we encountered the difficulty of describing the opposite of what we set out to discuss, namely, ideal love. Negative descriptions framed the young women's accounts of ideal love. The young women interviewees would make their statements about 'ideal' love whilst sighing, pausing or even by stating 'I don't know, but ...' The dilemma seemed to be one of speaking the unavailable.

For Anna, the ideal relationship was with someone that she could be easy with; her natural self would be revealed but this depended upon her sense of confidence (or lack thereof) matching his.

Lisa: What is your ideal relationship at this stage in your life?

Anna: Um one where I don't have to feel like I'm making a big effort to go out with them. I don't know it should just be natural, you should be really comfortable with them and stuff and don't have to wear whatever, and just feel, don't have to feel like you have to put make-up on to see them, or not be embarrassed about waking up in the morning and looking funny you know that sort of thing. Like when I was fifteen I wasn't really comfortable with myself I guess, and we just, I don't know, he felt completely comfortable with himself but I didn't so it creates heaps of problems and then you know its. What else would he have to be? Have to be really nice to me (laughing)....

The ease of a 'natural comfort' with a Boyfriend was Anna's ideal and one that I imagine many young men would share as well. However, insisting on him being 'really nice' to her was not only something to laugh about, it was described through what Anna did not want. For instance, she wants the activity of comfortable relating to include 'wearing what ever... not feel[ing] like you have to put make-up on...or not be embarrassed about waking up in the morning and looking funny'. These signs of comfort however not only link women's self confidence to men's acceptance of the female body without decoration, but are also constituted through the negative. Anna's vision of comfort is constituted through what is not wanted and therefore what is wanted (comfort, being natural) is based on absence. At the end of her commentary Anna laughed as she mentioned that being 'nice' would be part of an ideal relationship and Boyfriend. Mr. Nice remains sufficiently undefined to provide room for a uniqueness of expression of 'niceness' – but trying to describe Mr Nice without slipping into clichés of romantic symbolism can seem absurd.

For me, the ease with which ideals were represented through what was not wanted was unsettling. When the young women in the interviews accounted for their ideal relationship it was consistently with regard to what they did not want, often giving material accounts of the unsettling things that could or did happen to them in heterosexual teenage relationships. Angie had positioned herself as a 'Needy Girlfriend' and when discussing her ideal heterocoupled relationship described the 'really good guy':

Lisa: And how do you know if he is a really good guy and he's good for you?

Angie. Oh I don't know, you can sort of tell. Like with your friends and that whether their boyfriends are good for them. I don't know sort of like the things they do and that. Like I don't approve of drugs so um like I know Patricia's boyfriend (I mean I don't mean to be talking about, you know) but I know Patricia's boyfriend, he's into drugs heaps and like I've just seen a difference in her. Not that much but like it's what did you do in the weekend and she said 'oh -got stoned'. It was like, you know, like she never used to be like that so I don't think that's good, you know, to be into drugs and that. And like if they beat them up or anything (I mean I don't have any friends that do that) but you know you can just sort of tell if they're good or bad. Like they treat you nice and they've got respect for you and that they don't go behind your back with other girls and stuff - yeah.

Angie's examples of a good relationship were disturbingly characterised by the absence of 'being beaten up' and infidelity, whilst niceness and respect remained as abstract ideals that 'you can just sort of tell'. The Catch 22 story of Mr. Exception is that he must not have an obviously negative influence on his Girlfriend (like introducing her to drugs, beating up, or being unfaithful) but in order to be considered a 'good guy' he will be known through what he is not. Furthermore, describing Mr. Exception through what he is not makes 'not getting beat up' sound like a small mercy to be grateful for. Surely being a 'nice' or 'good' guy involves more than just being non-violent and faithful? It's not surprising that our attempts to describe ideal heterocoupledness and Mr. Exception are founded on negatives and absence when the soundscapes of heterocoupledness are littered with binaries. The young women interviewees used binaries to describe their ideal heterocoupledness (good is known through bad) and in many ways the negative became the centre around which notions of ideal heterocoupledness turned.

Ideals and expectations of heterocoupledness were present in many ways in the focus groups and the interviews. They were most often discussed when the conversation turned to the topics of love and sexuality. The young men tended to utilise a romantic have/hold discourse and a discourse of male sex drive to constitute themselves as subjects and objects within heterocoupledness. Overall, the young men talked more about romance as fleshed out ideals and expectations whilst the young women talked about romance in relation to the risks to sexual and heterocoupledness reputations and the constraints on experience that long-term heterocoupledness can imply. Love and heterosexuality were almost conflated as equally difficult practices. Yet taking up heterocoupledness and traditional femininity is often an expected part of young women's development (Hudson, 1984). Connie spoke about this simultaneous centrality of love and the 'stigma of loving':

Melita: So what do you think it means to really love someone so that they are all you need, how would that influence you?

Connie: I don't reckon anyone can be all you need. Like there's never going to be one person that he's exactly what you want

Sue: Yeah or completely satisfies you every different way

Savanah: Yeah

Bianca: And even if you had them, I don't think you'd be happy

Sue: It's not right

Savanah: Yeah you can work on it, and you can build it but its still not gonna be perfect

Connie: I think like, heaps of stigma is put around like loving someone. I reckon you can fall in and out of love like heaps of times, like I don't think there's like one person that you love 'the best' kind of thing, like you love heaps of people all for different reasons

Bianca: Mm

Sue: And in all different ways

Love is a cultural code for exclusivity, complete satisfaction and perfection that none of these young women found attractive at all. Indeed these young women described the notion of love as stigmatised in itself. In this sense, they talked about love as something that constrains actions, experiments and the experience of being 'in love'. 'You can work on it, and you can build it [love] but its still not gonna be perfect' (Savanah), in other words, love is not as traditionally romantic as is often represented. The expectation of love is that it will not be ideal, and that, love carries a stigma especially when young women try to divorce themselves from these traditional pressings of love. It would appear that Mr.Exception is neither expected nor idealised by young women, yet Ms. Right is waiting in the margins to join young men in a romantic fairy tale ending.

Within this chapter i have explored the soundscape of heterocoupledness at adolescence for the way risk and romance are married. Accordingly, i argued that cross-gender friendships were underpinned by a discourse of heterosexual invariability that assumes young men's masculinity would be enhanced by cross-gender friendships, yet young women's reputations as feminine or friend were precariously inserted into these relationships. Secondly, i argued that entry into heterocoupledness is based on a gendered performance of asking/not asking. In other words, young men spoke about deciding and asking young women to 'go out' whereas the young women spoke about being able to ask young men out but often preferred to perform a two-gatherness that would avoid accusations of desiring heterocoupledness (man hunters or wanting girly romance) and/or heterosexuality (slut and the disrespect of male and female friends). Risk was again married with heterocoupledness in a way that was intimately tied to the notion that 'women'/Girlfriends are 'at risk' – either through their reputations or from young men under the spell of a 'peaking' sex drive. Finally, i argued that the ideals and expectations of romance reconstitute traditional trajectories and practices of love. The traditional ideals and expectations of romance appealed to

the young men's constitution of heterocoupledness, yet the young women regarded these traditional ideals with suspicion. However the young women did not refer to new ideals and expectations of love – instead they constituted their ideals in relation to the negative. Love was known through what it is not; it is not being disrespected, beaten up, uncomfortable, unnatural, and unfree.

Overall, risk and romance were married in ways that offered up circumspect subject positions for young women, while the young men's subject positions were largely unregulated by the idea that they themselves were at-risk. Instead both young men and women regarded risk as derived from young women, either as inflamers of male sexual passions or as inappropriately presenting themselves in friendship groups, as sexual agents or potential Girlfriends. These entries into a soundscape of heterocoupledness were based on the implicit gendering of a marriage between romance and risk, a marriage that positioned young women as navigators of risk, reputation, heterosexuality and heterocoupledness, and young men as already safe, sexual and traditionally romantic Boyfriends. The young women's navigations in heterocoupledness were described as 'work', and in the next chapter, i explore how Girlfriends and Boyfriends constitute and engage with the labours of love when they are going-out.

LOVE ME LONG TIME:

Navigating the Labours of Love in Heterocoupledness.

Labour

3. An instance of bodily or mental exertion; a work or task performed or to be performed. a labour of Hercules, a Herculean labour: a task requiring enormous strength. labour of love (see LOVE n.¹).

Love

4. a. That feeling of attachment which is based upon difference of sex; the affection which subsists between lover and sweetheart and is the normal basis of marriage.

for love (in love): by reason of love (often placed in opposition to pecuniary considerations); also in weakened sense;

8. In various proverbs and proverbial phrases. a. Proverbs. ... b. labour of love: work undertaken either from fondness for the work itself, or from desire to benefit persons whom one loves.

Oxford English Dictionary Online, (1989) (2nd Ed.). <http://oed.com/>

At the end of last chapter, Connie claimed that 'love' is stigmatised. The discussion about the stigma of love reiterates Peirce's (1997) claim that love is often constituted as both a 'goal and problem' in women's lives. Specifically, Connie's group had a problem with idealised notions of love such as the exclusive bonding to one person, the idea that being loved by that person would 'completely satisfy', and with the idea that love would be perfect. Despite the prevalent romantic promotion of Cinderella dreams within Western cultures, the young women that I spoke with were doubtful that love would be as easy as these

portrayals might lead one to believe. Savanah (a member in the focus group where Connie spoke) commented:

Yeah you can work on it, and you can build it but its still not gonna be perfect.

The young men that i spoke with were more enamoured with the traditional trajectory of romantic love where love leads to marriage and 2.4 children; however, many of the young men also commented that they expected that love would take work.

Ian: Yeah, that's right, you have to work on it

Barney: You just don't automatically like love them.

Both young men and women spoke about this often-stated assumption; love/relationships take work. In this chapter, i will be exploring how heterocoupledness operates through two notions of labouring for love:

1. Love me long time...but give me some space: working the space between heterocoupledness and beyond.
2. Choosing safely: working for equality and choice.

Each of these notions of labour conveys certain presumptions about and implications for how successful heterocoupledness can be done by Boyfriends and Girlfriends at adolescence.

When Girlfriends and Boyfriends heterocouple they are engaging not just with each other but also with the wider discursive fields of adolescence and gender. The discursive fields where heterocoupledness, adolescence and gender mix/remix (the soundscapes of heterocoupledness) have an excess of meaning (an extra-discursive echo) that cannot be fully tuned into. Love is subject to these discursive fields and extra-discursive echoes. Indeed, 'love' is perhaps an apt example of the Derridian notion of the at once undecidable/decidable; that is, while love is potentially subversive of many categories and definitions because it can neither be confirmed nor denied, it is also contained within a social context that privileges certain practises as signs of true love, like the idea that love takes work. Furthermore, the kind of work that goes on in the name of a heterocoupledness love is based on the management of hierarchical separations

between sexuality and emotion, irrationality and rationality, and, femininity and masculinity.

Jackson and Scott (1997) argue that sexuality and emotion have become 'Taylorised'. From the late 1800's, Fredrick Winslow Taylor spent over two and a half decades studying and applying scientific principles to the labour process. Braverman (1974, p.86) analyses Taylorism as being about 'the adaptation of labour to the needs of capital' utilising the scientific method of classification and organisation to advance management power and increase profit. Accordingly, Taylorism utilised three main principles in controlling labour.

Thus, if the first principle is the gathering and development of knowledge of labour processes, and the second is the concentration of this knowledge as the exclusive province of management – together with its essential converse, the absence of such knowledge among the workers – then the third is the *use of this monopoly over knowledge to control each step of the labour process and its mode of execution* (Braverman, 1974, p.119. Author's emphasis).

Taylorism informed the creation of assembly line style production (a Fordist mode of production) and legitimated the further separation of workers from the conception and overall process of labour, thereby denying workers holistic craft skills and knowledges. The de-skilling of workers also inhibited the cultural practice of passing on craft skills and knowledge to other generations, but more than this it asserted the notion that the rational planning, organisation and management of workers was the privilege of management in the interest of capital accumulation. Rationalism underpins Taylorism and was part of the Western love affair with modernism and its empirical effort to describe, explain, predict and control the social world of humans. More latterly, Jackson and Scott (1997) argue that the rationalism of Taylorism has infiltrated the social construction of sexuality and emotion.

Jackson and Scott (1997) argue that within late modernity, scientific discourses have rationalised sexuality and emotion, and as practices that are amenable to 'classification and explanation' (p.557), they have been subject to advice and education. Hence, a plethora of 'experts' produce advice manuals, magazine columns and books designed to teach the mechanised components of how to have the best sex, the best relationship, the best romance...

Adolescents are targeted as consumers of advice by counselling, education, psychology, medical, media and commercial industries (through the work of counsellors, teachers, psychologists, doctors, social and health workers, journalists, advertisers and salespeople). Many of these industries and their workers sell their particular versions of how to do heterocoupledness but some are obviously more well financed while others have more credibility because of their humanist focus on progress in human relationships. Yet, the boundaries are blurring and as the language of the free market and globalisation has invaded almost every space in Western and developing world cultures, it has become an imperial presence in the language of relationships. Consumer product pushers and the so-called helping professions have become bedfellows in using the language of globalisation and a form of postmodern relativity that pays convenient attention to multiple versions of heterocoupledness (de-facto, serial monogamy, same-sex coupledness) whilst recuperating the potential subversiveness of these relationships. Commerce clamours for the so-called 'pink dollar' by utilising a caricature of the gay male community as extravagant spenders and government social welfare department application forms conflate de-facto and married partnerships under the same rules and regulations. Similarly, the popularly marketed advice and self-help industries (whether therapy, education, media, or advertising) that focus on relationship skills and sexual performance, utilize a remixing of traditional norms overlaid with a cosmetic appeal to a supposedly new age of sexual fluidity and flexibility in gender power relations. Magazines aimed at young women assume their target audience are not only savvy about relationships but that are most interested in reading about relationships and how to make them work. In the mainstream media and psychological discourses, relationship work is conceived of as a feminine concern and this mobilizes the taken for granted assumption that women will take most of the responsibility for managing relationships. As Harris, Aapola and Gonick (2000) argue that

[y]oung women are seen to achieve adult identities through relationship management rather than independence particularly in their placement in heterosexual relations (p.376).

When young men as Boyfriends are addressed by these mainly adult advice industries, the messages often re-stress the assumption that while Boyfriends are biologically driven to have sex, they must not force Girlfriends into sex (No means No). On occasion, messages to young men will mention their

emotional involvement in intimate relationships (heterocoupledness), but overall the discourses of hegemonic masculinity tend to privilege an inherent male sex drive rather than the emotional experience. Even when there is little apparent privileging of sexuality over emotions, the separation of sex drive from emotional experience persists so that no matter what the qualities are, the divorce acts to individualize and rank experiences, identities and practices. For example, when the Family Planning Association of New Zealand asked adolescents what they would like to learn about sexuality, the young people reported that they had little trouble finding out about the physical 'facts' of sex, but they would like information about rights and emotions in intimate relationships, specifically sexual rights and love (Lungley, Paulin, & Gray, 1993). Mainstream sex education (when it is provided in schools) has traditionally been based on privileging the 'facts' of sex over emotions in intimate relationships. The divorce and ranking of apparently rational sexual facts over emotions works to legitimate the teaching of sex education by giving sexual knowledge the appearance of moral neutrality. On the other hand, pamphlets like 'Sex with Attitude' (Cowan, Grant, Heilmann, 1996) put out by the Christian group, Parenting with Confidence, utilise a separation of emotion from sexuality to advocate emotional closeness over practising heterosexual desire in adolescent heterocoupledness. These kinds of constructions of emotion and sexuality repeat two key assumptions that the rational education/advice industry is based on. Firstly, it is assumed that increased knowledge (as rational facts about sex and/or emotion) will improve, protect, and enhance lives, but more so, it promotes the second assumption, that the delivery of this knowledge will be untainted by any moral or political presumptions about how heterocoupledness at adolescence should be managed. Just as Taylorism divided workers from the management of production, the separation of emotion and sexuality operates at adolescence and the attempted management of this separation (by adult advice industries among others) adapt young people to the strictures of a gender based, mass marketed promotion of heterocoupledness and heterosexuality as normative. The collection of excerpts from pamphlets, books, newspapers, and magazines below illustrates how advice giving is part of the everyday production of knowledges about sexuality, adolescence and gender.

Every person longs to love and be loved. The closest and best relationships have that quality called *intimacy* - that special, relaxed closeness where you can be you, and can share your feelings, your secrets and your emotions in complete safety. **Every human craves intimacy. Sadly, many only get sex.** (Cowen, Grant, & Heilmann, 1996, *Sex with Attitude*. p.2).

...Sex for a **teenage boy** is akin to being placed in the pilot seat of a **F-15 fighter**. For a **teenage girl** it is akin to an **unfolding power** otherwise dreamed of only for film stars. For both it is the start of an agonising process of self-scrutiny and internal doubts, and often a desperate search for acceptance by the opposite sex. Fortunately, nature has equipped us well. Despite the huge variation in human shape, form and image there are very few people who remain single through their lives except by choice (Marris, 1996, *Teenagers: A parents' guide for the 90s*. p.155).

"In their **late teens**, children are better prepared for a sexual relationship" says Dr Robyn Dixon, a senior lecturer in developmental psychology at the University of Auckland... "They are more cognitively, socially and emotionally mature and in a better position to see the **consequences of their behaviour**". (Schaer, 2001, *Weekend Herald*. p.15)

First date sex. How far do guys want you to go?" (Girlfriend New Zealand, (1996). *Girlfriend*. April Cover).

Sorting out those male myths

Boys are only after one thing...

Conclusion: Guys reach their sexual peak in their late teens, which could be the scientific basis of this myth. Although most guys do enjoy sex, it's not the be-all and end-all of their existence. (McNulty, 1992, *Dolly*, June. p.70).

When a girl's body develops early, she is more likely to hook up with a boy – and before the developmental work of the latency period is done. "That," says Pipher, "has all sorts of **harmful social, academic and psychological consequences.**" (Lemonick, 2000, *Time*. October, 30, p49).

Social commentator and former sex therapist Bettina Arndt says first love can be a different experience for boys and girls. "I have always been interested in the **first love experience for boys** because it tends to be very much the **first drink after a long drought...** the first bit of intimacy since childhood. Most boys have very little physical contact other than footie and wrestling and I think they end up very parched of basic human contact, even verbal intimacy. They keep their feelings deliberately hidden for long periods and all that pours out in their first love experience". This makes boys "incredibly vulnerable" she says. (Chisholm, 1995, *Sunday Star Times*. p.D1).

A BIGGER BETTER ORGASM: Both men and women can use the following to make orgasms longer, stronger, more intense and ultimately, more healthful.

1. Gain pelvic muscle control
2. Control voluntary movements in sex
3. Monitor your arousal levels.

(Keesling, 1999, *Psychology Today*, December, p.60)

The advice/education industry does not exist above the heads of those who participate in heterocoupledness, monitoring and managing the practices of intimacy. Rather, heterocoupledness operates in everyday ways that are informed, but never pre-determined, by the moral politics of advice/education experts.

A major contradiction within this education/advice industry is that on the one hand, sexuality and intimacy are supposed to be spontaneous and 'natural', and on the other, they are treated as something that has to be taught and worked at. Similarly, emotional closeness is simultaneously representative of the 'special' character of a relationship while the messy qualities of love's irrationality (like anger, miscommunication, disagreements) have been targeted as needing containment and organisation, often in the name of reducing risk (read: danger). Emotions have become

constructs of an age of psychology and therapeutic knowledge and practice... they are inconceivable apart from those institutions, social relations and forms of thought... one of the distinguishing features of this psychological age is that emotions acquire a meaning previously absent: feelings of anger, sexual longing, guilt, anxiety, and so on, become significant objects of one's attention and action; emotions are 'worked at' and 'worked on', one has an 'emotional life'... in which its protagonist, the self, discloses and creates it [as] authenticity at the same time (McCarthy, 1989, p.66, cited in Williams & Bendelow, 1998, p.148).

The construction of emotions as requiring work on the self have instituted surveillance mechanisms that attempt to contain emotional disorder and maintain social order. Williams and Bendelow (1998) argue that 'Western consumer-orientated, media-scape societies' have supported this containment so that emotions

have become truly McDonaldised by the culture industry – carved up into handy bite-sized, pre-packaged, rationally manufactured products that are then consumed by the masses like fast-food in a burger bar (p.150).

The pre-packaging and mass-consumption of 'appropriate' emotions has implications for the kind of work that will occur in heterocoupledness. To be sure, women's sexuality, emotions, and practices have been and are subject to a range of abuses from men – and the emotional, psychological and bodily effects can hurt. However, the labour required to refuse these subjugations must not lie solely

with women or individuals alone. Much of the advice/education aims to unravel, or equip women with the ability to refuse, reject or react to male violence, yet the hierarchical organisation of power, the commodification of everyday life, and the practices of hegemonic masculinity that create 'risk' for women remain naturalised and therefore unproblematised.

Contemporary discourses of heterosexuality are highly gendered and instrumental so that advice on male sexuality is often focused on the assumption that sex is about copulation and condoms, whilst advice on female sexuality is about the achievement of orgasm and protection from STD's and pregnancy (Diorio, 1985). In contemporary women's magazines and self-help books, women are entreated to perform a variety of sexual tricks that will impress, pleasure and maintain relationships with men. Sexuality and emotion are now broken down into their constituent, gendered and ranked parts, and repackaged as healthy relationship skills that allow the rational management of risk. It would indeed appear that

within discourses of consumption and social marketing, 'healthy sex' ranks along with high fibre low fat diets as part of the personal management of bodily vitality (Jackson and Scott, 1997, p.558).

Healthy sex rests on the acquisition of a range of skills and formats for how to put together the appearance of a natural, spontaneous and apparently democratic performance of sexuality.

Jackson and Scott (1997) argue that post-Fordist flexibility (where adaptability and re-skilling are stressed) operates as an extension to Taylorism. Fairclough (1992) describes a discourse of post-Fordism as situating workers as

no longer function[ing] as individuals performing repetitive routines within an invariant production process [as Taylorism prescribed], but as teams in a flexible relation to a fast-changing process...To describe these changes as 'cultural' is not just rhetoric: the aim is new cultural values, workers who are 'enterprising', self-motivating and, as Rose has put it, 'self-steering'. These changes in organization and culture are to a significant extent changes in discourse practices. Language use is assuming a greater importance as a means of production and social control in the workplace (p.7).

This discourse of post-Fordist flexibility, Fairclough continues, has become internationalised and represents a 'new global order of discourse' (p.7) whereby

the traditionally private skills of relationship management, like good communication, have been imported into workplace culture. The pervasiveness of a post-Fordist discourse teams with other discourses of individualism so that self-expression, working through issues, talking things through and compromise have pervaded not just workplace culture but much of everyday human relations. While these labours are assumed 'good' and 'necessary' things to do within personal relations, they also serve to regulate the way relations are conducted. Team work and communication, when advanced as a means to increase productivity, or as a way to improve the quality of relations, can serve to reduce relations to their output value, or to require solutions to personal difference. It seems to me that many relations have become emotionally sanitized, where obligatory niceties and compromise usually involves both parties relinquishing values of difference or, one party working to please the more powerful. Resolving difficulties places the emphasis on working to reach a compromise that avoids engaging with why 'difference' (say in not liking someone or something) should be a problem in the first place. In this supposedly postmodern era, where diversity is the new rhetorical value, a discourse of post-Fordist flexibility reduces difference to yet another problem that needs to be merely tolerated, solved or worked around.

Accordingly, i argue that the message is now *adapt, reskill and retrain your gender performances rather than challenge the structures of gendered heterocoupledness*. Post-Fordist flexibility means that gender power relations take on the appearance of 'both order and chaos, liberty and discipline, transgression and taboo' (Williams & Bendeow, 1998, p.154). There remains an asymmetry between these both/and calculations of the traditional and the challenging. These post-Fordist 'adaptations' can be viewed as remixes of traditional themes of gender asymmetry where male privilege and female compromise remain as givens. Gender asymmetries are expressed in the kind of emotion work that women do when in relationships (Duncombe & Marsden, 1993). While men are now asked to express and be in touch with their emotions, they are still expected to keep a tight rein on their feelings. Women are also encouraged to remain in touch with their emotions while remaining positioned as

sexual carers who do the emotional work and police their own emotions to ensure that they do not place excessive demands on men (Jackson and Scott, 1997, 567).

Just as women have been positioned in the West as emotion workers within private spheres, the source of women's power has been limited to the influence that caring for others may bring. Lipman-Bluman (1984) argues that the position of women as 'moral guardians' has meant that women were assumed to be working in private to influence men in public. Taking a back seat to male influence, females as moral guardians have often been stereotyped as the secret strength behind public male actions. However, this positioning of women as moral guardians assumes that there is an innately feminine goodness that is expressed through nurturance and the defence of apparently universal moral goods. Moreover, the positioning of women as moral guardians has served to weight women with both the responsibility and blame for protecting a moral order that, in the West at least, has largely been conducted from the pulpits, the courtrooms, the lecture halls and the war rooms through an imperialist Western and hegemonic masculinity that claims to value equality, fraternity and liberty but is constituted in ways that produce inequity, possessive individualism and constraint.

Indeed, the sentiments of equality, fraternity and liberty have also influenced the constitution of work within heterocoupledness. Contemporary Western heterocoupledness is portrayed as private, equal, and mutually chosen relationships that are apparently free from the past burdens of economic survival, class, and/or, familial allegiance and obligation (Jamieson, 1999). Theorist Max Weber contended that the rise of capitalism was supported by a Protestant work ethic whereby hard work and acquisitiveness were recast as righteous practices that can pave the way to God. More recently, Colin Campbell (1987) has expanded on Weber's thesis and argued that a romantic ethic provided the philosophical legitimation of pleasure seeking, the ideals of creative self-expression, an individualism that stresses a person's uniqueness and the desire for novelty 'that has served to provide ethical support for that restless and continuous pattern of consumption' (p.201). In the Western context of consumer capitalism where romanticism is commodified and where personal relationship skills are sold and/or promoted, working hard within love-based heterocoupledness takes on a different currency than what might have existed in the past. However, as Stevie Jackson (1993) cautions coupling for love is not as recent in European history as many theorists would have us believe and can not be entirely tied to the rise of capitalism, Protestantism or romanticism. Whether people couple for love or not is beside the point, love and the practices of heterocoupledness are likely to be influenced by the discursive context in which these meanings are created. Contemporarily, a discourse of love as labour interlinks the concepts of

romanticism with unique individualism, paid and unpaid work, consumption as pleasure, and the free-market promotion of post-Fordist flexibility in gender and coupledness. Accordingly, gender has been represented as remixed performances, where young women wear t-shirts that depict a stick figure woman holding a gun to the head of a man, while walking the streets of down-town hoping to catch the eye of a young man that they like⁸. Informing heterocoupledness is a discursive field where traditional and subverted gender performances, adolescent agency and consumer conformity, and romantic yet cynical postures are all simultaneously available. In conjunction with the romantic and consumerist ethos surrounding contemporary practices, heterocoupledness is near-mythologized as providing individuals with a space that is somehow removed from this context. Jamieson argues that

personal relationships are not typically shaped in whatever way gives pleasure without the taint of practical, economic and other material circumstances. Few relationships, even friendships, are mainly simply about mutual appreciation, knowing and understanding (1999. p.482).

Indeed, the Western context of heterocoupledness is inscribed by capitalism, where the imperative of 'working hard' has invaded descriptions of individuals, attributions of success, and personal relationships alike. Arising out of and in the service of capitalism, the ideals of liberal democracy have also helped to constitute the ideals of equal participation in heterocoupledness. The Western faith in representative democracy as a deliverer of political stability and the liberal notion of equal opportunities has served to subtract the political from the personal and to distance personal from public life. In this Western context, the clinical and interpersonal literature in psychology often 'conceptually uncouple[s]' the personal from the inhabited political and social, all the while forgetting that male-female interaction might not take place on a 'level playing field' (Dryden, 1999, p.11).

Dryden claims that this tendency has produced gender neutralised (or at least footnoted) accounts of heterocoupledness in the mainstream psychology

⁸ The illustration was provided by an encounter with a fifteen-year-old woman friend whom i met one day in town. She was wearing just such a t-shirt and told me that she hoped to catch the eye of a man she liked. i thought that the combination of fucking with the threats that are made against women's safety and the practice of seeking out the attention of a young man quite an interesting juxtaposition of the traditional and the remixed.

literature. In particular, she notes that gender issues are often 'rendered safe' by promoting natural or cultural gender differences as individual expressions that need to be 'worked round' (1999, p.11). Mainstream psychology has promoted the view that relationships take certain kinds of work in order to be successful. Many of these psychological narratives about labouring in and for love are reiterated as common sense. A familiar narrative in my informal discussions with people about heterocoupledness is that work makes a relationship worthwhile. By 'working at it' (through, communication and compromise for instance), successful (read: long-term) heterocoupledness will be achieved. One of my female friends commented that she regards working at her heterocoupledness as a kind of investment in the potential longevity of a relationship, without 'investment' my friend concluded, she would 'too easily leave' a relationship that wasn't 'working'. These kinds of market based renditions of heterocoupledness work as investment and security strategies, are promoted as individual skills that can be learnt through education, self-help manuals and therapy sessions (particularly by women) and they are regarded as essential to the democratic equality of relationships. For instance, the proposition that if a partner can 'communicate' verbally and they can 'listen reflectively', that this will insure that each participant will be equally represented in discussions, never mind the power of the voices through which each speaks, never mind the social context that already privileges some voices over others, never mind that even if you are heard, mere reform not revolution is the likely response.

'Apparently equal' relationships are created out of 'good' communication. Jamieson (1999) notes that relationship experts promote self-disclosure (as good communication) without considering that self-disclosure may act to enhance regulation and control of private lives according to the therapeutic call to divulge all secrets within a relationship. Jamieson argues further that a therapeutic discourse promotes the idea that changing the self will change the world, thereby individualising (and, in the case of many women, pathologising or victim blaming) and disabling the possibility of diverse and collective resistance and challenge to discourses of heterocoupledness that are themselves co-ordinated around maintaining gender/power distinctions that serve neither men nor women. My argument here is not that 'work' in relationships should not happen, but that late capitalist forms of 'work' (as rational and flexible components of successful intimacy) are constituted as necessary to the management of personal life and have reasserted gender divisions of labour within heterocoupledness at adolescence. Labouring for love has become an integral part of the process of

heterocoupledness and i argue in this chapter that much of this labour is manufactured by the various discourses of individualism that entreat us to strive to improve our personal lives rather than the structures that constrain and limit them. (Jackson, 1993, p.202).

i also argue throughout this chapter that there is a gendering of labouring for love in heterocoupledness, although there are some problems with this analysis. While women are most often constituted as the emotional party within heterocoupledness, and this can mean that women take on the emotional work of maintaining and sustaining relationships, this is not an essential aspect of 'doing woman'. Carol Gilligan (1982) argues that the cultural conditions of young women's lives leads many into developing a moral voice that is concerned with relationship care and responsibility. While Gilligan is clear that she does not regard this different moral voice as essentially feminine, she does tend to paint the picture that all young women's morality is based on a concern for relationships rather than a concern for abstract, moral (and androcentric) principles as advanced by Kohlberg. By utilising a dichotomy of rational masculinity and relational femininity, Gilligan has inadvertently played down the diversity among young women's moral voices and this has led to accusations of essentialism. In this thesis i stress the cultural context where many discourses of femininity position young women as moral carers in relationships, but i also refute that these gender differences are essential to femininity. Nevertheless, by calling attention to the gendering of emotional labour within heterocoupledness, i also risk reifying that which i claim is not an inevitable, essential or a unitary way of doing Girlfriend or Boyfriend. Identifying gender patterns without ascribing essentialised gendered dichotomies is a perpetual problem that remains difficult to counter given the pervasiveness of totalising and gendered discourses that continue to resonate in the mundane and everyday.

Dryden (1999) identifies two problems that pervade research on gender and coupledness. Firstly, there is the conceptual problem of exploring the "crossroads" of heterocoupledness that occurs

between 'intergroup' and 'interpersonal' relations (intergroup as denoting the dynamics of (unequal) gender relations and interpersonal as between the two unique individuals). (Williams, 1984, paraphrased by Dryden, 1999, p.11).

Dryden argues that it is conceptually difficult to explore these crossroads because psychology has traditionally separated and privileged the individual over the social. In following this line of argument, i tread a fine line between interrogating the material division of emotion and sexuality in heterocoupledness, and reifying these social constitutions as invariably separate and gendered. Dryden attends to this problem by calling on Bhavnani and Phoenix's (1994) claim that

the project for psychologists should be continually to question what it means to be an 'individual' and, in so doing, continually to challenge the boundaries between concepts of 'individual' and 'social' (1999, p.11-12).

i shall therefore analyse the discourses of heterocoupledness and the labouring for love in adolescence by 'continually questioning what it means to be an 'individual'' at the crossroads of heterocoupledness where the boundaries between 'individual' and 'social' are blurred.

Secondly, Dryden acknowledges the considerable difficulty involved with a feminist study of love and heterosexuality. In part, this difficulty arises from the tension between unwittingly supporting patriarchal institutions (like marriage) that have traditionally harmed women and privileged men and wanting to document an account of the diversity of women's intimacies with men. Interestingly, after years of teaching women's studies courses, Dryden has found that women students are still reluctant to believe that gender inequality could be part of their heterocoupledness. Perhaps part of this reluctance has something to do with wanting to protect the reputation of one's relationship. Smart (1996a) posits that an ideology of heterosexual guilt has been mobilised by some feminist analyses that reduce women's heterosexuality to a patriarchal 'false consciousness'. As a consequence, Smart (1996b) also argues that the discursive formation of heterosexuality has become fixed around the dichotomous struggle between oppression and freedom and this has ironically fixed feminist representations of heterosexuality in a Victorian framework – despite many feminists adopting a Foucaultian re-interpretation of the repressive in the Victorian period itself. Contemporarily, alternative feminist reconfigurations of heterosexualities that are not apologetic or informed by a guilt manufactured by the oppressor/victim constitution of heterosexuality have been difficult for heterosexual feminists to create. Smart (1996a) argues that this phenomenon has perpetuated a general silence around feminist heterosexuality. Filling this silence with subversive depictions of heterosexuality is all the more important when the mass media

promotes heterosexuality in decidedly antifeminist forms that whilst entreating women to be hetero-sexual, centre on the servicing of male pleasure under the scrutiny of a male gaze. When feminists do speak publicly about the pleasures of heterosexuality they speak into a space that is saturated with suspicion (see, Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1993 as an example) and where heterosexual desire and pleasure is often appropriated by the mass media to promote remixed versions of male-female gender relations that remain just slippery enough not to appear antiquated. (A viewing of 'Sex and the City', the latest female action movies, Britany Spear's music videos where her sexuality is objectified and her 'innocence' questioned as she gyrates to a publicity backbeat that lords her virginity pledge, or one of the many women's and men's magazines provides some interesting examples of a remixed but nonetheless, traditionally gendered heterosexuality). Heterosexuality and heterocoupledness are wedged between two silences; a feminist silence premised on a suspicion of being co-opted into supporting patriarchy, and, the absence of mainstream discourse of female (heterosexual) desire (Fine, 1992) that is beyond the surveillance of male gaze. These heterosexual and heterocoupledness silences also permeated many of my discussions with young people, particularly young women, who were reluctant to position themselves as being at-risk of either victimization or of perpetrating inequality or harm in heterocoupledness.

Finally, whilst i argue that there is a gendered labouring for love in heterocoupledness at adolescence, i share Mason's (1996) contention that caring is not usefully conceived as a dichotomy between labour and love. Mason argues that love/labour caring is relational and cannot be easily split between 'caring for' (love), which involves feeling attached to another, and 'caring about' (labour) which involves the physical work of maintaining and sustaining relationships. Feminist scholars, reminds Mason, have shown that women's 'caring about' activities have often been made invisible through being both privatised and regarded as a natural extension to doing woman. Whilst acknowledging the importance of these contributions, Mason goes beyond in conceptualising a non-binarised notion of caring in heterocoupledness as being formed in relation to the participants and a wider social context inclusive of multidimensional caring activities. She proposes that caring and responsibility for negotiating relationships involves the interconnected practices of sentient activity and active sensibility. Sentient activity involves, among other things

attending to, noticing, hearing, being attuned to, seeing, constructing, interpreting, studying, exercising an interest in, thinking through, working out, organising, planning the needs, health, well-being, behaviours, likes and dislikes, moods, individuality, character, relationships of specific others, relationships between oneself and others, or between relationships between others (Mason, 1996, p.27).

As socially/psychologically/physically demanding tasks, these sentient activities are often rendered invisible both to carers and others because 'when one takes responsibility for the work, others rarely think about it' (DeVault, 1991, p.41, cited by Mason, 1996, p.29). In conjunction, active sensibility is conceptualised as the acceptance of responsibilities to care for others which are formed between participants and constituted in relation to 'material constraints and opportunities [that] shape what responsibilities people are able to accept' and the 'cultural notions of, say, what constitutes a good... reputation for a woman or a man' (Mason, 1996, p.32). Mason's conceptualisation of caring activities is useful to this analysis of labouring for love in heterocoupledness at adolescence because it emphasises the relational and the contextual. Whilst i argue that there is a gendering of labour and love, the activities of caring are constituted within the specific relation of Girlfriend and Boyfriend, and within a cultural context that shapes the form of negotiations within heterocoupledness. In this sense, the sentient activity and active sensibilities of caring in heterocoupledness are not tagged as binaries that posit an essential feminine/masculine split between the emotional/physical aspects of caring. The conceptualisation allows that there may be aspects that remain, for instance, representative of femininity while also acknowledging that young women do not necessarily care for all the people that they are in a relationship with simply because they have been socialised and familiarised with caring for others. In this chapter, i will draw attention to the many differences within Girlfriend and Boyfriend groups, as well as those between Boyfriends and Girlfriends.

Overall, both Boyfriends and Girlfriends laboured for love in diverse ways that involved negotiations about the activities of caring. In the last chapter, i argued that a soundscape of heterocoupledness remixed the appearance of femininity and masculinity. i build on this idea of a discursive soundscape by adding that heterocoupledness is not just negotiated, it is also navigated. In much of the discourse analytic literature that i have read, the negotiation of power,

subjectivities and subject positionings within discourses is used. Mason (1996), for instance, argues that:

Negotiations, which can be implicit as well as explicit, are about more than 'material' aspects of responsibilities to kin, such as exchanges of goods, services, and support. They are also about 'moral' aspects of responsibilities and,... the ways in which negotiations are carried out have implications for people's moral identities and reputations (p.24-25).

Negotiation emphasises that individuals are continually involved in bargaining within material and meaning power arrangements. This use of the term negotiation also needs to convey the sense that the positions from which bargaining takes place both shift and remain static. The power relations that govern negotiations within heterocoupledness occur within soundscapes that are more attuned to responding to the agency of Boyfriends rather than Girlfriends. Consequently a discursive soundscape of heterocoupledness elevates not just certain subject positions from which to negotiate, but also accentuates some choreographic (read: agentic) movements as most viable. The choreographic movements that are explored in this chapter are therefore more aptly expressed through the idea of navigation.

An integral part of discourse theory is the idea that one's possibilities for speaking, doing, thinking and interacting are circumscribed by particular and contextually located discursive fields. Subject positions are just these pathways of possibility that constitute and re-constitute the meaning of one's subjectivity and practices. Just as 'discursive fields consist of competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organising social institutions and processes' (Weedon, 1987, p.35), the subject positions made available by these discursive fields provides multiple but asymmetrical power/meaning possibilities. The subject position is temporary and yet may be carried over into other contexts because of one's discursive memories (Hollway, 1989) or because our social contexts are often riddled with reminders about 'how things are meant to be'. With reference to Mike Mascolo, David Nightingale has argued that

it is important to recognise human beings as 'co-ordinators of experience' [who] are engaged in a perpetual 'effort after meaning' and that our self-stories (and we may construct a number of these) are a result of this. The reality of the constructed self is evidenced in our conduct. It constitutes a

framework of assumptions from within which we can act, and will greatly affect what a particular person finds it possible or feasible for them to do, think, feel and say (1997, p.3).

In other words, subject positions offer up ways of being that constitute and re-constitute not only what is possible but also how these possibilities can be exercised. In relation to the subject positioning as Girlfriend or Boyfriend, a network of knowledge/power relations constitutes and re-constitutes the kinds of labours for love that the young men and women may engage through. As 'co-ordinators of experience' these young women and men are therefore theorised as engaging in a perpetual navigation of the many meanings and forms of power that make certain labours for love more feasible to speak about. A theoretical distinction between navigation and negotiation can be made on the basis that navigation implies that agents choreograph engagements, and at times, contestations of power/meanings, and that navigation does not necessarily occur between agents with equal access to power/meaning legitimation. On the other hand, negotiation implies that the agents organise within existing power/meaning relations and that each party is assumed to be entering into negotiations as if they occur between equal parties. The question nonetheless remains; how do Girlfriends and Boyfriends navigate the various labours for love in heterocoupledness.

LOVE ME LONG TIME ... BUT GIVE ME SOME SPACE

Charisse: I reckon it would be good if you were close but you can have your space as well like to be able to go out with your friends when you want to and stuff. And that's good because Ricky always says to me like, 'if you want to go out with you friends you can, you know'. So I do!

Lisa: And what about you with him?

Charisse: Oh with his friends, yeah he goes and sees his friends a lot, so I don't mind. So I don't mind.

If romantic heterocoupledness is largely constituted as an exclusive togetherness, then a space between the centrality of Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationship and the othering of relationships beyond heterocoupledness is formed. If heterocoupledness is located as a central occupant in individual/social space, then relations outside of heterocoupledness are constituted not only as secondary but also as supplementary. In the interviews and focus groups, the young men and women spoke about managing the space between their partners and the social world beyond. Indeed, they spoke about being at the crossroads of heterocoupledness (Williams, 1994, cited by Dryden, 1999, p.11), where the boundaries between the individual and social are blurred and yet navigated between.

Charisse and the young women interviewees often talked as if they were impelled to navigate for personal space amidst the discursive demands to have an 'enduring' (and exclusive) love with their Boyfriend. Managing the split between heterocoupledness and relations outside of heterocoupledness was framed as an issue of personal independence, but it was also spoken of as a labour for heterocoupledness. For Charisse these labours involved an intersection of power relations between her heterocoupledness and her relationships with friends. In the above extract, the proximity between Charisse as Girlfriend and Ricky as Boyfriend was mediated by her desire to also be with her friends. The 'good' thing is that Ricky *allows* Charisse the space to be able to see her friends, 'when you want'. In return, Charisse 'doesn't mind' that Ricky regularly acts to see his friends.

The shape of Charisse's text implies that the space to be with her friends is allotted to Charisse the Girlfriend by Ricky the Boyfriend. In contrast, Ricky assumes his leave and does not apply to Charisse for permission to see his friends. For Charisse 'to mind' could constitute the situation as a problem and hence she could inadvertently be positioned as requiring his permission on a more explicit level. That Charisse assumes Ricky's right, while he has to reassure her of hers, elucidates the differential power dynamics that operate between them. Charisse represents Ricky as granting her rights and involves the assumption that she lacks access to her friendship space or at least needs reassurance to assert relations beyond heterocoupledness. Contrastingly, Charisse assumes Ricky's rights to go out when ever he wants and that she has no choice but to accept the state of affairs designed by his actions. Similarly, when Angie was describing her ideal relationships, she talked about navigating the space between her Boyfriend, Linyl, and being her 'own person'.

Angie: Um one where, I don't know, you're both honest with each other, you give each other your own space and like you've got your own friends and that. And you know like you can sort of just be your own person still, keep you own friends and stuff but, I don't know, still spend time with him. I don't know it's a hard question.

In the last chapter, I noted that the young women often accounted for their ideals through what they did not want and, in this context, describing an ideal without reference to the negative is a 'hard question'. Navigating the space between 'your own space and...your own friends' and spending time with a Boyfriend was described as a 'hard question'. The gap between heterocoupledness and other relations was a difficult space to move between and having the time to move between both spaces was a part of the navigation dilemma for these young women. A group of young men spoke about the importance of having the space-time to be with their friends.

Romeo: Just an example. Umm looking at myself, it was a lot harder to have a relationship within the same school. Cause the gossip's like unreal.

Brutus: It's all the peer pressure

Romeo: Yeah, it's like the peer pressure goes round and its like, 'what the' and 'she said what?' and 'she said this' and 'she did that?' and, 'I did this' and 'you're an asshole'.

Junior: Yeah I agree with that

Jonah: You find out different things about them too

Romeo: Yeah at the moment we're at different schools and it's a lot better. We don't see each other as much but I don't think you really want to see them, like everyday.

Patrick: Do you think that's part of a relationship, like having your own space?

Romeo: Yeap, sure.

Patrick: I think that's important aye, cause like if you see them everyday you just go mental, can't handle it.

Romeo: You've got to have a good balance and things. Like you can't just be with your girlfriend, every minute of the day, you've got to be with other friends and with your self and just have a balance.

These young men located the space between heterocoupledness and their friends within the social context of school. They also alluded to wider social relations that mediate their heterocoupledness. Notions of peer pressure, mental space and balance were referred to as ways of forming the boundaries between Girlfriends, self and friends. In the context of the above text peer pressure regulated through school gossip about Girlfriends reputations ('she said what' 'she said this', 'she did what') and Boyfriends' ('you're an arsehole'). For Romeo, being at different schools alleviated much of this pressure and supported the contention that not seeing Girlfriends everyday helped to keep a balance between Girlfriends, self and friends.

Each of these boundary concerns can also be found within mainstream psychological discourses on relationships, adolescence and the individual. The idea of organising boundaries can also be heard reverberating as a tenor of Taylorism, where individuality is managed using a separation between self, partners and friends. Within psychological discourses of adolescence the idea of peer pressure is often assumed to be central to adolescent's everyday lives, and it implicitly privileges an individuality based on rational control and autonomy. Since autonomy has been constituted (in mainstream psychology in particular) as the linchpin of masculine adolescent identity development, and is simultaneously privileged over and contrasted with a feminine adolescent identity development where relations with others remain central, the navigation of the space between self and others is likely to be more consistent with what is regarded as 'normal' identity development for males rather than females. Taken that the mainstream

psychological discourses have drifted into the young men's everyday talk (indeed two of the participants in Patrick's group were taking a psychology course at school), it is likely that a 'self-contained individualism' would have underpinned the young men's discussions about how space-time should (ideally) be managed.

What is interesting about this text is that mainstream psychological terms are found operating within the community that they were meant to address. Social pressures were spoken of in terms of the external operation of peer pressure on the individual. The discoursing of peer pressure as an external influence on the individual implies that the individual adolescent is separate from power relations and must not make decisions with sole reference to an internal desire to be liked or to conform to group norms. The term also gains social momentum as a term that is used to explain the problems of adolescents. Somehow, adolescents are cast as particularly vulnerable to individual co-option by peers who threaten to interfere with the taking up of an individuality based on historically constituted and prescribed norms about what is good, right and acceptable. Implicitly, 'peer pressure' values a self-contained individualism, and advocates a 'balance' between self and others. In many ways the notion of peer pressure assumes that friends, as reference points, are 'risky', and an establishment of the self as central, immutable and unchangeable. Yet, the reference points for establishing individuality are not freely formed within but are largely informed by the way that the boundaries between individuals and society, self and others are constituted. The individual remains privileged and constituted as atomised and self-contained units within both positivist and humanist psychology. This privileged constitution of the 'individual', aligns with the privileging of a hegemonic masculinity that few men have the institutional authority, access or perhaps even the inclination to realise a performance of this 'rational autonomous man' in their everyday lives (Connell, 1995). Perhaps, the young men were speaking from the position of complicit masculinity, that 'draws a patriarchal dividend' without necessarily attempted or even aspiring to embody a hegemonic norm of masculinity (Connell, 1995, p.79). I can not make any judgement about how this collusion between masculinity, individuality and privilege may or may not have been happening, suffice to say that many Western norms of masculinity advocate an allegiance between these traits – even in the apparently tumultuous times of adolescent development where 'hormones' are cited as the cause of 'boyish extremes' (fights, drinking, sex, sport...).

Melita's focus group also discussed the influence of being at the same school with their Boyfriends, but constituted this separation as necessary for the development of intimacy. Initially, Connie noted that she 'kind of misses him not being there at school' and Bianca thought that having a Boyfriend at school was 'better than not'. However, they went on to discuss how the space between school and with their Boyfriends made their heterocoupledness closer.

Connie: It makes you a bit closer I think not being together at school, you don't feel like such a little teeny bopper kind of thing.

Bianca: Yeah you don't aye.

Sue: And then you spend more time out of school with them though, like now they're not at school.

Connie: Yeah you do.

Savanah: Yeah cause you value your time with them out of school.

Bianca: Yeah.

Sue: and if you see them at school every single day and then you like go home it's like 'ohh',

Melita: And the phone rings and,

Connie: So what shall we talk about...

Sue: It's like 'ohh so what do you want to do?'

Bianca: Yeah I think when at school you go and you have your time with them, like,

Savanah: Yeah, you do.

Sue: Yeah, its a better thing.

Bianca: Like sometimes I don't want Anthony to go home but he has to go...

Connie: Yeah

Bianca: and I don't want him to.

Connie: And also like, it's a whole new part of your life. Like schools one part and then he's another and its kind of he's got his own part, whereas when he's at school its just like a big part. Wow. And then yeah, so it's pretty cool.

The space at school without Boyfriends created more intimacy with their Boyfriends and helped them feel like they had 'less teeny bopper' or perhaps,

more adult-like heterocoupledness. Although Connie and Bianca missed their Boyfriends, these young women agreed that not having Boyfriends at school made their heterocoupledness closer by helping them value Boyfriends and giving them more things to talk about. What is absent from this discussion is any mention of personal space for self, for friends or for relations and activities beyond heterocoupledness. There was no talk of creating a balance between self, friends and Boyfriends, and an overriding consideration of the affects on heterocoupledness and their intimacy with their Boyfriends. Connie summarised their discussion by noting the separation between in-school and out-of-school heterocoupledness. In-school heterocoupledness forms 'a big part' of her life, whereas the out-of-school relationships create a space where 'he's got his own part'. Absent again was a discussion of what these separate spaces meant for Connie's individuality and instead emphasised the benefits for the Boyfriend. Unlike the young men's discussion above, where separations were seen as necessary for self, these young women reframed the separations as enhancing heterocoupledness. In this sense, the young women were labouring for love by mining these separations for relationship benefits, whilst the young men were labouring for self by asserting the importance of space between self, heterocoupledness and friends.

Both Boyfriends and Girlfriends described space as important in their relationships and noted that schools and parents rules about going-out generate space constraints but also provide space for other relations. However, young men and women also framed the separation of time and space between heterocoupledness, self and friendships, as requiring different navigational labours and serving different outcomes.

Charisse, Angie and many of the other young women spoke about the navigational labours for the space and time to be with Boyfriends and friends. This labouring for love was simultaneously constraining and yet contested through a representation of this separation as problematic. On the one hand, they were navigating a separation between heterocoupledness and other relations that requires the sentient activities of recognising, attending to, thinking through, and organising, and the active sensibility of accepting responsibility for managing this navigation in the interests of heterocoupledness relations (Mason, 1996). Love's labours centred on managing a separation between friends and Boyfriends that Angie and Charisse described as difficulties, but this separation difficulty is also manufactured by the largely unchallenged constitution of heterocoupledness as

private arrangements that are separate from the social world. On the other hand, these young women were navigating to maintain spaces that were beyond the centrality and the potential consumption of individuality by heterocoupledness at adolescence. But, the difficulty of framing the space-time between heterocoupledness and other relations potentially also provides yet another space and stance from which to doubt the constitution of romantic heterocoupledness as necessarily exclusive.

To illustrate, Angie initially described herself as someone who needs to have a Boyfriend. Initially, she found that her Boyfriend, Linyl, was all that she needed. However, after a series of arguments about her choices to engage in activities and friendships, (especially her decision to go to a Pearl Jam concert without Linyl), she began to question the ties that bound her to a romantic heterocoupledness and Linyl. The issue of space became important for Angie as Linyl began to demand a great deal of her time and the active sensibility of reassuring him that she would not leave him. They had had several disagreements about where Angie could and could not go without Linyl, and towards the end of our interviews, she had decided to finish their relationship.

Lisa: So what's brought you to the point of deciding?

Angie: I'm sick of it. I just want to go out and meet other guys and have some fun, you know, like light-hearted fun, nothing deep and meaningful.

Lisa: Can you identify any point in the relationship when it stopped being fun?

Angie: When I stood back and looked at the relationship and I saw that I wasn't that happy, and I was bored.

In part, the space of standing back from Linyl supported Angie's move to leave. Two weeks later I spoke to Angie as she was heading off to another class. In that time Angie had found herself another Boyfriend and described him as much 'freer' and more fun than Linyl. Leaving Linyl was not easy for Angie; he had threatened that he would kill himself and had said that she was all he was living for. Despite these threats, Angie was resolute about breaking up with Linyl and had decided that any decision he made to kill himself was his responsibility alone. She knew that Linyl would find it hard to break up with her, but she had reformulated her previous 'need' for closeness with a Boyfriend, and had decided after experiencing the demands for continual closeness with Linyl that she wanted

'light-hearted fun, nothing deep and meaningful'. The love/labours of being in a romantic heterocoupledness required a sentient activity of reassuring Linyi of their two-getherness and the active sensibility of taking on the responsibility of keeping Linyi alive – and according to Angie, this was an unhappy and 'boring' labouring for love. Angie found that this kind of exclusive heterocoupledness was exhausting and, that it exhausted the possibilities to regard heterocoupledness as 'fun' in itself.

A discourse of adolescence promotes adolescence as a time of experimentation and exploration and often the fun of experimenting is ascribed to male subjects. 'Fun' is also marketed as the hallmark of adolescent practice and brands are marketed as if 'fun' is the unequivocal anthem that informs youth choices. Perhaps fun is important for young people, but it is not the easy purchase that marketers might like us to believe. In the world of marketing, fun often comes as pre-packaged items that require a financial and subjective investment in the brand's persona itself, and in this way fun is also a gendered, classed, aged, and ethnicity orientated package.

Within the Western market saturated context, fun also informs adolescent heterocoupledness. Shaw's (1998) thesis argues that fun rather than romance is a significant concern for some of the Australian young women that she interviewed. Part of the allure of 'fun' is that it does not command compliance with a romanticism that requires the sacrifice of personal freedoms (like having friends) in heterocoupledness – yet at the same time, fun can also be '...deep and meaningful'. Whilst Angie rejected the labours of love required by her Boyfriend and her own sense of 'needing' a Boyfriend, her navigation away from a possessive Boyfriend involved rejecting the taken for granted meanings of romantic heterocoupledness in favour of fun heterocoupledness. Nevertheless, Angie resumed her heterocoupledness status within two weeks and although 'fun' was now informing her heterocoupledness, there is no reason to assume that this 'fun' did not also require the navigation of other labours for love. As stated, an advice industry targeted towards teenage women often stresses a particular way to work within relationships, and being a fun-loving Girlfriend is promoted as the best way to be a Girlfriend. A male gaze is often present in the call for young women to have fun, and to police themselves by not placing too many demands on Boyfriends (Jackson and Scott, 1997, 567). In the previous chapter Angie commented that Boyfriends "probably" expect Girlfriends to support them in their decisions, and that Girlfriends not "be too possessive and umm, have a life of your own, like don't let him revolve". While Angie left her Boyfriend because of

his possessiveness, the space of fun heterocoupledness, may also be inscribed by the active sensibility (caring responsibility) to avoid being a possessive Girlfriend by 'hav[ing] a life of your own'.

As the last chapter argued, the young women spoke about preferring to maintain a distance between their Boyfriends and peer group friendships. Both young men and women stated that Girlfriends would most likely be part of their Boyfriends' friendship groups, while Boyfriends would remain separate from young women's friendship groups. The young women also spoke about preferring this arrangement, but the labour of love involved intensive navigation of these spaces between heterocoupledness and friendships.

Annalise: Like um Aaron used to like, emotionally abuse me in a way because he had such bad mood swings like it was scary, you'd just.

Wednesday: You didn't know where you were.

Annalise: Yeah, you'd do things so he wouldn't get angry or so he wouldn't get down like. I remember once I was meant to be staying at Julia's house and like I told her I'd be there at 9 o'clock that night cause we were going away that day and just at the end, the last 10 minutes travelling in the car, he decided to pick a fight with me and I knew it was so he could look sad so I wouldn't stay the night and wouldn't go to Julia's. I mean, it is just, he did it all the time. Like and you don't click on till afterwards when you look back and say, 'they were games'. I mean he knew I was going to do that, he knew I was going to go, 'baby, don't be sad', and he'd sit there pouting or he'd have a cry, or he'd go 'don't talk to me' so you'd have to stay. Have you all been through that?

Brooke & Blossom: Immm.

Mary: Arghh. Yesss (hands over face, smiling when speaking).

Annalise: It is so, no, it is so awful. And so I didn't, I rung and I said, I'm not coming over because Aaron's really down and so I'm just chucking my friends away because he decided to pack a paddy which he didn't need to do. Do you know?

Wednesday: And was he right 10 minutes later?

Annalise: Oh, we sat, we honestly sat, I will never forget it, for an hour to get him right. And then as soon as, you know, he knows he's kind of got his

own way I suppose, I don't know, it was fine, but I call that abuse, like when you think back, it's like

Mary: It's not till you look back and look at the events and you think, 'hang on, that's, that's wrong, that's, yeah, that didn't have to happen'.

Annalise: You think 'fuck, [both hands gesturing from her temples up to the heavens] why don't you just say nah!' because as soon as you put your foot down once, it's fine the next time, they won't try it again.

For Annalise, the labours of love involved dealing with the 'emotional abuse' from a Boyfriend who would use her sense of caring responsibility to prevent her from spending time with her female friends. Brooke, Blossom and Mary each acknowledged having the same experiences and Wednesday even suspected the Boyfriend would be 'right 10 minutes later' after getting his own way. Mary added that with hindsight, these situations are not inevitable and Annalise suggested that their resistance to such manipulation was to 'just say nah' by 'putting your foot down once'. Pre-emptive resistance to the potential for Boyfriend's to abuse them is a theme that will be discussed in the next chapter. This exert, however, exemplifies the pre-emptive and post-Fordist flexibility that Girlfriends often use as a way to navigate the power relations within heterocoupledness and as a way to protect their reputations as women who are not easy victims of abuse, inequality or traditional feminine compliance with Boyfriends. The labours of love were therefore gendered in such a way that the young women spoke about navigating to maintain heterocoupledness, friendships and self, whilst the young men more often spoke about maintaining boundaries between friends, self and Girlfriends.

The space between heterocoupledness and beyond was navigated in strategically pre-emptive ways. For the young women, keeping friendships outside of heterocoupledness was framed as supportive and as an insurance against isolation and potential harm in heterocoupledness. They had previously discussed the importance of maintaining friendships that were separate from their Boyfriends as a way of providing themselves with support. For instance, Terry's friend had tried to make friends with her Boyfriend and she explained that "I just want her, you know, for me, not for him". Later, Lee, Cindy and Terry were talking about the difficulties of leaving an abusive relationship.

Lee: And then the people sometimes don't have their friends to get away.

Cindy: Yeah.

Terry: Cause they've relied on their boyfriend so much.

Lee: Yeah.

Cindy: Yeah, yeah that's true. Probably one of the main reasons why you need to um have equal time with your friends ah. Oh well not equal time, but see your friends

Lee: Yeah.

Cindy: Because if you rely too much...

Terry: That's what I mean you need that space as well I mean if you're not getting that space and you're just with that person then you will have no one there for you.

For young men, keeping friends was discussed as a way to provide them with physical and mental spaces that protect their 'independence'. Brutus, Patrick, Ryan and Romeo were continuing their conversation about the importance of being with their friends whilst in relationships when they moved to discuss what can happen if 'love becomes all you really need'.

Brutus: If you become addicted to another, you cease to grow. I reckon that's thing to watch out for.

Patrick: Yeah, if you become addicted to another.

Brutus: Yeah.

Patrick: Another what?

Ryan: Another person.

Romeo: Like a vegetable.

Ryan: You're feeding off each other, you know it's really claustrophobic you know. How can you grow as an individual?

The young men described their friendships beyond heterocoupledness as supportive of their independence in a similar way to the young women. Friendships were supportive of young men in heterocoupledness. The young men were talking about possessiveness as an example of abusive behaviour when Jack asked his group:

Have you guys like, um, do you guys talk to your mates about your chicks, like do you have a real shit session?

The discussion remained focused on talking to close friends, ('Cause a bloke's always there' commented Frank) and did not turn to how these outside friendship may be supportive of their heterocoupledness.

The reference points of the young men and women's conversations in the focus groups were distinctive and required different labours. For these young men, friends provide spaces that prevent being 'addicted to another' and becoming 'claustrophobic' or going 'mental', which in turn prevents individual growth. 'Blokies' are always there, they provide space for a 'shit session', and they help to keep the balance between heterocoupledness, self and friends. The young women also valued their time with friends and these spaces were not simply about supporting their heterocoupledness or their Boyfriends. As Charisse commented, 'when we're over at a friends together, we are just that, we're not anything to do with our boyfriends'. Space away from Boyfriends might also provide spaces for reassessing heterocoupledness – particularly romantic heterocoupledness.

However, the labour required to manage these separations was gendered. The young women provided many details of how they labour and navigate between heterocoupledness and friends, and tended not to speak of space for themselves. While the young men gave no details about the process of navigating for spaces beyond heterocoupledness, they emphasised the principle of maintaining space for the self. The gendering of labour/love in the young men and women's texts required specific navigations; the young women spoke about the navigation of spaces requiring the flexible labour of sentient activity and active sensibility; the young men spoke about the navigation of spaces as requiring the distinct maintenance of separate boundaries between self, Girlfriends and friends. The young women's pre-emptive navigations enabled the management of the potential consequences of these space separations. The repercussions of not seeing friends were weighed, (like, isolation, getting a reputation as clingy, or being unable to escape abuse); managing the space and resources to be with their Boyfriends alone outside of the gaze of parents or Boyfriends' friends (Connie used Motel rooms as a form of 'therapy' for the relationship); organising spaces to keep friends and Boyfriends separate (Terry); talking on the telephone to friends about their heterocoupledness problems (Charisse) but not revealing too

much in case the reputation of the relationship was jeopardised (Cindy, Jo, Lee, Terry); assisting friends to see their Boyfriends by providing 'sleeping over' alibis (Melita, Sue, Bianca, Savannah, Connie); not becoming too possessive with Boyfriends (Angie); and finally, acknowledging and/or not questioning the importance of Boyfriend's space.

To pre-emptively navigate requires a labour that involves both sentient activity and active sensibilities, and much of the labour for space was represented as the perpetual dance of Girlfriends. What could it look like to have a heterocoupledness that was neither intrusive nor separate? Further, what would it look like if Boyfriends were as acutely descriptive of their labours of love as the young women? What would it look like if Girlfriends talked not of their labours for Mr.Exception but of their freedoms, desires and passions without any sign of the disciplining gaze of 'risk' warnings? These space issues work out to be power/knowledge issues within adolescent heterocoupledness. Where, as a Girlfriend, it is possible to stand as an agent has implications for the practices of relating, and according to Anna's analysis a main choreographic movement that is made available to young women is 'love me long time'.

Anna offered up the subject position of 'love me long time' as one that she recognised as being available to young women as Girlfriends but as a movement that she actively refuses. We were talking about female gender role expectations and Anna discussed the submissive and less powerful role that young women may end up taking on as Girlfriends. I asked her about the young men's awareness of this disparity.

Lisa: Yeah and what about the young men?

Anna: I don't know if they do think that they're in charge but they do end up being in charge pretty much. Unless you've been going out for quite a long time I think that they kind of get, get a say in what happens. They get the most say. They yeah are the bosses of a relationship. Which is really terrible but it's true. Well that's how it comes across to me. I mean we call it the 'love me long time' face. Like they have to sit at home with the male.

Lisa: The love me long time?

Anna: Yeah.

Lisa: What for the girls?

Anna: Yeah, oh well we just say they're doing the 'love me long time' thing and its doing what the boyfriend wants to do and not what we want to do, not what the girls want to do.

Lisa: That's quite good, 'the love me long time' thing. (Both laughing).

Lisa: It's almost as if you have to, (pause) um, conform to what he would like otherwise you loose him.

Anna: Yeah.

Lisa: And it's as simple as that?

Anna: Yeah that's basically it. Cause if you're not doing what he expects his girlfriend to do then you're gone. And most people know that.

Lisa: Yeah?

Anna: That can be, it's not really the same thing for him I don't think though. I think that men, boys, they get a lot more leeway in what they do sort of thing.

Gender, according to Anna, has an unfortunate ('terrible but true') influence on the way Girlfriends can participate in heterocoupledness. Although Anna was careful to note that this 'was how it comes across' to her, she was nevertheless convinced that personal resistance (hers included) could only go so far to alleviate the double standards that operate in heterocoupledness. The love me long time subject position that Anna discussed was not something that Anna identified as a place that she navigated from, however it was a space that Anna recognised as being available to her. The dance that this subject position charts is one where Girlfriends' movements are pinioned to the Boyfriends' freedoms – love me long time was a position that constituted a way to begin and sustain heterocoupledness. The disciplinary effect of this subject position works to remind Girlfriends of the potential to loose Boyfriends if the masculine 'boss' position is challenged. All of this assumes that keeping a Boyfriend is important and, of course, that Boyfriends expect Girlfriends to perform in accordance with their wishes.

Many Boyfriends would probably reject such an assumption on the basis that they do not want a Girlfriend who is a 'push over' and many Girlfriends would probably guffaw at the idea that they should play the 'submissive' girly to any man. Anna rejected the stance for herself at a time when the 'coolness' of being a 'nice-nice' girl is loosing its credibility and appeal. Media/advertising

depictions of the postmodern, alternative, counter-culture, diverse identities of young men and women have been co-opted as 'cool' and sellable positions so that even 'alternative' youth identities are sanitised of their subversive edge (Klein, 2001). And just as 'cool' has sanitised resistant identities, protection has been re-made into women's individual responsibility that, for example, entreats women to 'refuse to be victims' (Sandell, 1994). Doing the love me long time dance is an available cultural artefact, and this has been partially recuperated by the concomitant assertion that women can/must also do their own versions of girl power. The gender remixing of Girlfriend spins between the binary poles gender: Girlfriends must be feminine enough to be loving, but masculine enough to be able to stand up for themselves. Buried by the cultural saturation of this 'good-bad' girl are accounts of alternative and subversively 'queered' performances of Girlfriend – performances that were present in the young women's exasperated decision that they must 'say nah' and put their foot down. Young men are also grappling with a somewhat different remixing of masculinity but the extent of which these challenges have gained social meaning has been mitigated by the reluctance to scrutinize masculine performance and the 'dividends' of hegemonic masculinity. Boyfriends' labours for love are less scrutinised; in Anna's words, 'they get a lot more leeway in what they do'.

Girlfriends' labouring for space in heterocoupledness is characterised by series of navigational stunts that include a pre-emptive readiness to predict and resolve any potential difficulties. The result is one of watching for spaces, of observing the rules of the game in order to know how to insert oneself - safely. For Boyfriends, the navigation appeared to require less laborious attendance; the 'autonomous' self is historically and culturally mobilised by the discourses of adolescence and hegemonic masculinity. As such, the need to labour to co-ordinate spaces is based on concern for self and the negotiation of constituted separations (which it must be conceded, were not complete in their operations, and may in themselves constitute particular problems for young men). A further theme in both the young women and men's discussions, was that equality, choice and power existed on a 'level playing field' and therefore that the labours for love were generally fair. In the next section, I examine how the remixing of gender labour/love relations was apparent in the texts where equality, choice, and power were discussed.

CHOOSING SAFELY: WORKING FOR EQUALITY, CHOICE AND POWER.

'Choice' was spoken of as a marker of equality in heterocoupledness; equality was the umbrella under which the choices of Boyfriends and Girlfriends could be expressed. The Girlfriends' and Boyfriends' labours were shaped by a liberal discourse and its demands for individuality, autonomy and an over riding presumption that parity between the genders is given. Both young men and women talked about equality as the bottom line of how power should be organised in heterocoupledness and it is to this theme that I now turn.

According to a discourse of liberal feminism, women's freedom could be assured by equal access to the same resources, careers, and representative positions held predominantly by men. Equality was signified by the ability to choose, and for many Western, often white, middle class, able bodied, and straight women, this has delivered a certain amount of economic independence from men. As more women join the labour market, albeit often in casual, part-time or temporary positions, and more women (as our local media never tire of telling us) are in positions of institutional power (government and corporate executives are the favourite icons to cite), the sometimes explicit message is that women are now equal with men and somehow 'free' of past constraints like sexism. The presumption is that women can now 'compete' on equal terms with men through education as the launching pad for jobs, for money, for market based doctrines of success. In addition, a New Right discourse posits that greater competition in the market leads to increased choice in the range of commodities available for consumption. Along with the language of liberal representative democracy, a New Right discourse conveys (what has, unfortunately become 'common sense') that once conditions are equal (read: equal opportunities for women, or level playing fields for the market) that it is up to individuals to 'progress' towards that which is constituted as 'success'. These reductionist and taken for granted allegiances between liberal representative democracy and a New Right discourse have implications for the way 'equality' is constituted within

heterocoupledness. If Western liberal representative democracy in its partnership with the dominant discourses of late capitalism (that formally lie outside of government in 'the free market' but are inextricably interrelated) acts to normalise certain choices over others, certain forms of equality over others, then what kind of labours are going on in heterocoupledness to maintain equality and choice? In relation to the labours of love in heterocoupledness, has the rhetoric of equality and choice become Taylorised according to a post-Fordist flexibility?

The young women spoke about 'choice' as a means of insulating against harm from Boyfriends and as a way of asserting their independence and agency. While each woman expressed different (re)formulations of a liberal feminist discourse, their labours in heterocoupledness were disciplined by an attendance to the flexible management of their equality and the consequences of choices. The young women insisted that they could remain safe, strong and insulated from inequality in relationships with Boyfriends by adopting a keen eye for the choreography of power within the soundscapes in heterocoupledness. After discussing what is expected of the typical Boyfriend, Angie, Charisse and I moved to talk about their approaches to maintaining equality.

Lisa: Have you got any plans about how you could avoid those rigid roles?

Angie: Have we got any plans? I can be a real bitch to Liny!; I just - 'do it yourself'.

Discipline!

Charisse: Just make sure you're doing an even amount of work and not getting stuck with all the jobs.

Angie: No I can pretty much guarantee that it would be pretty equal.

Charisse: We just wouldn't take that ah!

Angie: No, a lot of our friends are like that. I think we've all grown up like that too.

Personal responsibility for gender equality involved the labour of setting and maintaining baselines of equality. Positioning themselves as 'bitches' who 'discipline' for equality within heterocoupledness, Angie and Charisse guarantee equality by insisting that they 'wouldn't take' inequality, or, as Annalise commented 'just say nah' and 'put your foot down' as a way to prevent future inequality. Throughout, the assumption is that Boyfriends and heterocoupledness will demand that Girlfriends refuse to do 'all the jobs' and that equality can be assured by insisting that Boyfriends do things themselves. Angie's and Charisse's insistence that they had grown up expecting equality sat alongside their claims

that they would also labour for maintaining this equality. It was not noticed that the responsibility for monitoring equality was again left to the woman, itself another variation on the gendered division of work. The labouring for equality involved policing their responses to Boyfriend's requests as well as monitoring how work is shared between Girlfriends and Boyfriends. In other words, the demands for 'equality' in heterocoupledness extracts an invisible labour from Girlfriends and in this invisibility, it remains normalised.

Young men also spoke about the labour of managing equality.

Kosmo: Do you, ah, like joke with her and call her fat arse and stuff like that?

Jack: Yeah, but that's not abusing her, like.

Simon: Cause she probably gives it straight back again.

Kosmo: Does she give it back?

Jack: Yeah. She knows when I'm joking and when I'm not joking and vice versa. She gets pretty shitty with me. I've got the scars.

(All laughing)

Kosmo: Would you call that abuse?

Jack: No, because I pissed her off first. I probably deserved it.

Simon: Yeah.

Jack: We know where the point, I mean, we know when we piss each other off. *(And I shouldn't be swearing on camera).*

Simon: Did you think you sort of held an upper hand because you were older?

Jack: Me? Holding an upper hand because I was older, what do you mean?

Simon: You know like being a lot older always holds the upper hands.

Kosmo: Yeah, that's what I reckon but I've never been out with a girl that's been younger than me though, I was just wondering, does that?

Jack: No I doubt it. If she said 'No', I wouldn't do anything to her.

Simon: No but I mean, - sort of, feel more confident?

Jack: Experienced or something?

Simon: No, no, not that. The person that, I don't know if you said let's go to movies, even if she didn't want to, she'd say 'oh, okay' because you're older or...

Jack: No, no, she wouldn't do that. She tells me to get stuffed.

Jack's Girlfriend 'gives it [gender joking] straight back' and similarly would not be compliant with Jack's wishes by telling him 'to get stuffed'. Jack, in contrast, would listen to his Girlfriend's 'no' and 'wouldn't do anything to her'. Again, the sentient responsibility and the active sensibility for assessing and giving the appearance of equality was left to the Girlfriend. Equality was discussed as something to be navigated for in tandem with inequality. In the text above, Jack relies on his Girlfriend's refusals and resistances to police the apparent balance between male and female equality in heterocoupledness. In the young women and men's text the idea of balancing for equality in heterocoupledness involves the assumption that power works in a similar way to the scales of justice; that is linearly, and always in connection with and referenced to its oppositional weight. Girlfriends' refusals to be put down; the giving back as good as you get and the overall emphasis on young women standing up for themselves within heterocoupledness was saturated with particular notions of power. An assumption about equality was that an equal division of jobs/roles would necessarily lead to fairness, yet this fairness was due to individual labours, particularly Girlfriend's labours to project a Taylorised response to blatant sexism, and a post-Fordist flexibility which called for a more nuanced response to gender-power issues.

The young people often talked of power sharing within heterocoupledness. The presumption was that sovereign power was present in heterocoupledness; one person owns the power but this power differential could be equalised by splitting the amount of power available into two.

Brenda: You always, you always have people above the relationship.

Rebecca: Someone else...

Brenda: that takes control.

Rebecca: Or, well you don't always see it.

Annalise/Brenda: No you don't.

Annalise: Me and Quinn honestly had the most equal ever.

Brenda: Equal relationships are the only way to go because when you've got one person above it doesn't work, ever.

Annalise: I think you find with an older, girls always seem to get into relationships with older guys but even though Quinn was older because we were like two years apart, we were kind of like equal because, I don't know why, we were equal, its like he never thought he was any better than me. You know, like maybe it was cause he wasn't so cool at school or something like that. But Aaron was and he, because Aaron was like three or four years older, it's like, and I was so young as well, like he probably thought oh you know, 'she's naive and I know a lot more than her type of thing'. And that's where abuse comes in. You know?

The power factors that Annalise and many of the other young people talked about were related to disparities between older Boyfriends and younger Girlfriends; between more experienced Boyfriends and less experienced Girlfriends and between traditionally masculine and feminine relationships. Despite pointing out these differentials, Annalise and Brenda interjected with the argument that relationships are not fated to be unequal. Overall, however, the young people talked about calculating power disparities in 'equality' and compensating through a power sharing approach whereby partners specialise their labour inputs.

Melita: And everything's just like 'wouw'. What if one person has more power in the relationship than the other?

Sue: Then it's not a workable relationship. It should be mutual, everything should be shared.

Connie: But that's hard as well because...

Blossom: Sometimes one has more power and then maybe a couple of hours later the other will have more power.

Savanah: It depends what situation you are in.

Brenda & Connie: Yeah.

Savanah: Like sometimes if you are at his friend's house, like he's gonna sort of have more power, 'cause he's...

Connie: Yeah.

Savanah: In control but like at your friend's house you will probably be in more control.

Brenda: Yeah.

Connie: Yeah, and there's kind of things that you like specialise in kinda thing. Like he's useless as shit with money and so I got kinda more power over the money. I say oh, cause otherwise if he has all the money then he will go and spend it all on spacies and (*all laugh*) that but I'm not saying 'oh give me your money, you don't get it', but I will just like kind of nag him a little bit kinda thing. Cause otherwise when we go out I have to pay for everything and I don't think that is fair, so I try and have a bit more power over that. But there's stuff that he has power over like fixing things, I'm not allowed to do that, 'cause I can't', and he's kinda got more power over that. Like he tries to do everything, but it doesn't really bother me 'cause I don't really want to fix things anyway.

A similar kind of management of power through labour specialisation was proposed in the following young men's focus group.

Ian: So what if one person has more power than the other person?

Mac: Learn to even it out.

Cynan: What if one...

Barney: That automatically happens. In some relationships you've got one person that takes control.

Cynan: Does anyone watch Caroline in the City?

Barney: In my family, I think my Dad makes the decisions. She said to me, she said to me she's married him because he's good at making decisions. She's very see-sawy. One moment she's in and one moment's she's out. So Dad makes all the decisions. So Dad sort of inherited that part of the department. But quite often I'll go 'oh, Dad, is it cool if I go somewhere?' And, oh no, I'll go to Mum like, 'oh, Mum, can I go here?' and she'll just go like 'okay, ask your Dad', and Dad will say yes to anything because he doesn't, he cares but...

While power, in the above extracts, is analysed as if it were solely juridico-discursive, it is also disciplinary of gender-power relations. In this formulation and in Foucault's analysis of sovereign power, the individual possession of power

is exercised from unitary sites where it is exercised over and/or suffered under. According to the young men and women and a discourse of liberalism, equality is a personal power that is possessed and can be balanced by the expression of individualised specialities (like decision making, money management, or fixing things). Power in this formulation is one-dimensional and seems only to apply to the individual with the power to assert control over someone or something in a given situation. 'Power sharing' is sovereign in that Girlfriends and Boyfriends take turns at exercising power. This power-sharing model normalises a gendered specialisation of labour by bringing

five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule; that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, and the 'nature' of individuals. It introduces, through this 'value-giving' measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other difference, the external frontier of the abnormal...The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes* (Foucault, 1977, p.182-183).

The assumption that power operates as a purely individual force is normalised through differentiated labours, these, in turn, differentiating Boyfriends and Girlfriends from each other in relation to a 'minimal threshold' of balancing power and measuring equality whether that be in relation to age disparities or individualised dominance in familiar contexts or according to ascribed abilities/talents. The 'external frontier of the abnormal' in heterocoupledness is inequality and imbalanced power relations that are themselves constituted through the individual specialisations of labour. Girlfriends are positioned as love's labourers who prevent inequality and, Boyfriends are positioned as merely expecting Girlfriends' insistence/promotion of equality. These individual specialisations of labour are differentiated, hierarchic, homogenized, and excluding, power is like a switch that once enough pressure is applied, it is either on or off, equal or not. A disciplinary operation of this

normalization is that the responsibility for establishing equality, (which remains conceptually 'uncoupled' from wider gender power relations), is treated as a purely individual force.

Equality in this sense is constituted as a labour product that can be bought into as a way to mediate against the abnormality of inequality. Equality as balanced power operates to both homogenise power as sovereign and individually possessed, at the same time that it operates a disciplinary technique, that is, the normalisation of gendered specialisation of labour. Labouring for equality (as shared power) in heterocoupledness becomes a normalised practice that obscures not only what kinds of labours are done and by whom, but also disguises the idea that power operates beyond the presence/absence of equality/inequality. In this way power relations in heterocoupledness at adolescence are constituted as sovereign and therefore self-managed, even though power also operates through the taken for granted, normalisation of labouring in heterocoupledness.

The rhetoric and practices of 'power sharing' are disciplinary in that they operate through the normalisation of specialised labour in heterocoupledness. The young women operated to pre-emptively target sites where Boyfriends power could be abused and they took tactical steps to either avoid or ameliorate future events. The power of resisting the potential for harm in heterocoupledness was not gifted to the young women to exercise in certain situations; it was a tactical resistance that was informed by both a sovereign power (that can and will use force), and a disciplinary power of gender norms. Young women practised power sharing responsibility by navigating pre-emptively yet these navigations were also resistant in their agency of refusing to accept that the 'little things that happen' must inevitably go on (Mary: 'hang on, that's, that's wrong, that's, yeah, that didn't have to happen').

Girlfriends and Boyfriends labours in heterocoupledness are normalised in relation to gender polarities that constitute appropriate forms of equality and the labours required to regulate equality (like power sharing and pre-emptive tactics). The normalisations of a gendered specialisation of labour in heterocoupledness also impose responsibilities and penalties within heterocoupledness.

Ian: So whose responsibility is it to solve arguments in a relationship?

Cynan: Both.

Barney: I believe the woman.

Cynan: Laugh

Barney: You're not married, in a marriage yeah, probably both of you, but you're not married, what the heck. I'm sorry but that's it.

Ian: But if you love a person?

(Question unanswered and they discuss the food they are eating.)

According to Barney, it is women's responsibility to solve arguments in unmarried heterocoupledness. They were previously discussing the specialisation of labours in heterocoupledness and Barney had asserted that this specialisation based on individual abilities would lead to power sharing in heterocoupledness. In the final analysis, however, it is women who are outside of what Barney considers to be legitimate (that is married) heterocoupledness that must take responsibility for solving arguments. Barney's response, however, is an exception to the most common response from both Boyfriends and Girlfriends who asserted that problem solving in heterocoupledness should be mutual. Despite these assertions that mutuality was important, the young men remained silent about the labours of solving problems and sharing power, yet the texts gathered from young women are replete with detailed descriptions of how they will manage, plan, assert, preempt, avoid, approach and resolve arguments, power disparities, abuse, harm and inequality.

Savanah: Yeah, I reckon you should be able to turn round and say it yourself as well though, like if you're in a shitty mood and you go off at him, and 'ohh', like I reckon you have be able to turn round later and go look 'I'm sorry I was a bitch, I was in a bad mood you know'

Bianca: But they sit there and say 'really, I didn't notice!'

(All Laughing)

Connie: But just acknowledging that you know you're in the wrong and blah, blah can make, makes them not hung up over it.

Savana: Yeah. Makes them feel better too. Like I feel better and he says to me 'I'm sorry for doing that', whatever, I know I feel better.

Bianca: Yeah - its cool when they say I'm sorry for doing this

Saying sorry was not just a tactic of acknowledging being 'in the wrong', it also served to alleviate heterocoupledness pressures and was framed as a way to

prevent Boyfriends being 'hung up'. Many of the other young women's focus groups spoke about the importance of both parties being able to say sorry, and yet none of the young men mentioned apologies or the acknowledgment of 'wrongs' except to state that both parties should take responsibility for managing arguments. Another women's focus group noted that Boyfriends 'apologies' maybe greeted with some scepticism.

Brooke: I've learnt not to go, not to trust anymore. You can't trust 'I'm so sorry'.

Rebecca: No

Brooke: 'Yeah, whatever - get on your bike'

All laughing

Annalise: I used to say 'well if you're sorry, don't do it again, just don't do it again' but then when they do you just say it again, 'well don't do it again'.

Rebecca: Yeah, 'don't do it again', I know.

While this group of young women talked about the way that their Boyfriends might make-up with them after arguments, they also regarded apologies as meaningless if they are only verbally performed. For these young women words must accompany action and as Connie (a member of this group) commented, often there is too much talk in heterocoupledness and not enough action. The detailed labours of maintaining equality, solving problems, and power sharing that these young women discussed, emphasises that the practices of doing heterocoupledness are gendered forms of caring. The sentient activity and active sensibilities of caring in heterocoupledness were discussed as practices that should be shared, however it was only the young women who spoke about how these practices could be choreographed. The young men also emphasised that both parties should take responsibility for solving arguments and sharing power in relationships, but engaged in little discussion of how these practices might be performed.

Young women and men were familiar with a discourse of equality as power sharing in heterocoupledness but there is more at work here than mere conversancy. When one considers the prevalence of post-Fordist, market-led liberal individualistic discourses alongside the discourses of gender polarity that are threaded incoherently between these discourses, the gendering of labouring for love becomes obscured by the rhetoric of equality as sameness. The call to

engage in mutual problem solving and power sharing at once blur the power relations between Girlfriends and Boyfriends labours in heterocoupledness at the same time that binary divisions are resurrected in the practises of negotiating and navigating for power as a commodity that is owned and managed. Attempts to 'manage equal power relations' assumes that both parties are interested in sharing a limited resource, that negotiation occurs on a level playing field and that labours of equalization are separate from gender power norms. In part these convenient separations are indicative of Taylorism where workers/lovers are individually assigned to repetitive tasks that remain separate from the overall (re)production process and the profits yielded.

The constitution of certain labours as masculine and feminine cannot be tied to Taylorism alone. A post-Fordist discourse has reframed labour as a team activity that requires flexibility and self-expression, and as 'good' as these things sound, they also operate to lubricate the wheels of capitalism by calming workers with mere reforms to a system that remains set up to benefit the few by sapping the many. The flexibility and self-expression that Girlfriends discussed in their management of equality in heterocoupledness elevates young women's voices, just as it loads young women with the labour of attending to and navigating the minutia of heterocoupledness. The labour specialisations of Girlfriends and Boyfriends are submerged by a discourse of liberal individualism where a post-Fordist flexibility obscures the way these differentiations are just as much about individuals' experiences of 'the little things that happen' as they are about the cultural normalisation of remixed gender-power relations.

The normalisation of Girlfriends as labourers in heterocoupledness is constituted, in part, by the discourses of adolescence, gender polarity, and liberalism. Barbara Hudson (1984) has argued that a discourse of femininity contradicts with the discourses of adolescence in a way that undermines young women's power to speak themselves beyond these normalising discourses. A discourse of adolescence, as a time of inevitable trouble, fun, experimentation, and change, has been constituted as equivalent to a discourse of hegemonic masculine development. Conversely, a discourse of femininity has been constituted in opposition, as

dependent, passive, subjective, not competitive, not adventurous, not self-confident, not ambitious, and also as tactful, gentle, aware of the feelings of

others, and able to express tenderness and emotion easily (Deaux, 1976, cited by Hudson, 1984, p.37-8).

When young women fail to perform in ways that are constituted as 'feminine' at adolescence, Hudson argues, young women are often described as troubled and troubling. This hegemonic discourse of femininity may have been remixed by today's young women who embrace equality and power sharing, but I suspect that Hudson's argument that this discourse of femininity continues to act as a 'master' discourse over the discourse of adolescence is still applicable. For example, while a discourse of adolescence promotes shifting allegiances, changing friendships and movement, a discourse of femininity promotes stability, relationships, the ability to make lasting friendships and to care deeply for a few people as 'normal' (Hudson, 1984). The contradiction between these discourses means that for young women the task is to be conferred with a static 'femininity' signified by how they relate, manage, and represent themselves as both independent and caring, and as being tough rather than fluff when it comes to standing up for themselves. For *Girlfriends* the task comes down to an endless process of navigating for agency at the same time that the contradictions of heterocoupledness are laboured for on an individualised basis; I put my foot down *but* I am feminine; I don't take that shit *but* I can work around it; I won't do the 'love me long time' thing *but* I will talk about it, compromise, say sorry, choose my time to raise issues, reassure you that I love you; keep in contact with my friends, not intrude on your friendships; I have equal choices *but*...

Choice is a potentially liberating yet concealing way of inserting one's self into existing social arrangements. A discourse of feminist liberalism from which the signifier, choice, gains so much power, also intersects with the discourses of femininity and adolescence. Utilising the discourse of liberalism, some early second wave feminists argued that equality of opportunity and freedom of choice be extended to women. Liberal feminism has organised the discourses of contemporary liberalism in favour of women. However, its failure to challenge the hegemonic power of patriarchy worked to constitute gender-neutral analyses (whereby equal came to be signified as the same) and, concomitantly, continued to use the male norm as a reference point for how women should be. To paraphrase Simone de Beauvoir, (1949) women were still 'other' to men, who were themselves positioned as the central characters of normality. Of all of the forms of feminism, liberal feminism has been most readily absorbed into the currently dominant ceremonies of discourse. In the mid to late nineties the 'Spice

Girls' interpretation of feminism as 'girl power' served as an example of the liberal promise that girls can do anything, even in five-inch platform heels. The allusions to the freedom to do anything that were represented by the Spice Girls were perhaps liked by young men and women alike for their sexist representation of women as either virginal (Baby Spice), unattainable (Posh Spice), athletic tomboys (Sporty Spice), sluttish (Ginger Spice) or ethnic and, by dint of being different but represented for the white target audience's entertainment/consumption, defiant (Scary Spice). The Spice Girls represented a way to navigate between the discrepancies of the discourses of adolescence, femininity, and liberalism with the least amount of risk. It is just this project of navigating and negotiating, between competing discourses that makes the practice of being young, female and 'free' agents difficult. Together these discourses raise serious dilemmas for young women struggling to take up the subject positions of safe and Girlfriend and lead into the problematic of navigating harm in heterocoupledness.

HIT ME AND THAT'S IT:

Girlfriends' Navigating Harm.

☞ *Personal exchanges, interactions, and daily conflict form the seedbed of specific violent events, yet these occur within wider cultural contexts that affect the general position of husbands and wives [and Girlfriends and Boyfriends] in a given society or subgroup... If so, this [cultural context that supports men's violence against women] should be discernable in the specifics of everyday life and the discourses about such relationships and their inherent conflicts (Dobash & Dobash, 1998, p.144).*

☞ *I know, if a guy hit me, that's it! I say that to all guys. 'If you hit me!' One guy gave me a playful whack on the leg and I said, 'if you ever hit me out of jest, that's it! Even though we were just really good friends (Anna).*

☞ *When women study feminist self-defense and pay lower taxi fares than men at night and the police provide abused women with alarm systems, all this can be characterised as change. But from another point of view, we can see it cements and validates or stabilizes the very phenomenon against which women are rebelling. Do we conceive of gender power as inevitable and our only defense as self-defense, ourselves incapable of enabling changes (Lundgren, 1998, p.169).*

The seedbed of everyday personal interactions is informed by a social context where discourses about women's responses to violence have focused on self-defence but if 'our only defense [is] self-defense' then 'risk' becomes a further regulating force within the challenges that women seek to make against violence, abuse and harm. In this chapter i turn to the young women's accounts of harm and risk in hetero-coupledness at adolescence. Specifically, i am interested in the pre-emptive and resistant tactics of power in Girlfriends' discussions of Boyfriends' use of violence, abuse, and harm. In the last two chapters i have examined how the entry points of going-out and romantic ideals and expectations

marry romance to risk, and, how the labours of navigating space and equality in heterocoupledness at adolescence position young men and women in gendered ways. Throughout this analysis i have attempted to capture something of the context of heterocoupledness where power operates in relation to a discursive soundscape that locates young women as already at-risk. i have also introduced the idea that young men and women are navigators; perpetually enacting, creating and remixing what it means to be a Boyfriend and a Girlfriend as Pakeha, Western, adolescent agents. In this context, young women have been represented as choreographing their navigations between the positions of 'equality', and as agents that 'stand up for themselves' by taking responsibility for predicting, pre-empting, and preventing potential and actual difficulties with Boyfriends, friends, parents, resources, space, and time. In this chapter i extend this analysis to consider the choreography of pre-empting and acting against the risks of harm, abuse, or violence. In order to analyse these navigations as non-essentialised yet nevertheless informed by the knowledge/power of gender norms, i have positioned myself as a feminist who is a sceptical postmodern cynic of the everyday truths that are told, represented, lived, resisted and remixed in heterocoupledness. i have therefore read the Girlfriends' texts for the way they create certain meanings/practices around which harm is navigated in heterocoupledness.

These meanings are not inevitable and nor are they permanently ascribed to; they are not free floating, relative truths. Some truths, like violence, do operate in a wide range of contexts, in contradictory ways, and in relation to a social order that re-presents some truths and privileges some meanings/practices over others. As agents, young women and men were involved in this research as analysts of the meanings of heterocoupledness that they utilised, just as they also utilised pre-existing notions of 'how things are' to speak about their experiences. Over the course of the interviews and focus groups, an absence, an almost resonating quiet, permeated these accounts of heterocoupledness. Namely, while the young women offered accounts of harm, abuse and violence perpetuated by Boyfriends, none of the young men offered any accounts of either doing or being subjected to Girlfriends harm, abuse, or violence. Young men, when they did speak about violence in heterocoupledness, offered moral injunctions against the principle of using violence; 'never hit a girl, never!' i framed the interviews and the focus groups as a time to discuss the young people's experiences of being Boyfriends and Girlfriends and asked them to analyse various accounts of violence in heterocoupledness (the interviewees analysed a questionnaire on abusive and

violent tactics in teenage relationships and the focus groups analysed a scenario that included accounts of harm, abuse and violence). Nevertheless, only young women provided accounts of how they had either been harmed, abused or in some events, had violence directed against them by Boyfriends. Therefore, in this chapter, I shall turn to examine the various accounts of harm, abuse, and violence that were provided by the young women.

The terms harm, abuse, and violence have been used because the accounts that follow do not provide any seamless definitions. For some of the young women, their Boyfriends were described as doing uncomfortable, undermining, scary or hurtful things and therefore I use the term 'harm' to encapsulate these experiences. In other accounts, young women specifically talked about being abused and these experiences often related to instances where they were threatened, unfairly evaluated, monitored, and dominated. Still, in other accounts, the young women identified times when Boyfriends had used physical violence. In the accounts of sexual coercion, the young women's accounts encapsulated all three expressions of harm, abuse, and violence. Therefore these terms are not used to denote or define exactly what counts as 'harm', 'abuse', 'violence', but rather to underscore that I am presenting the young people's accounts as already analysed by themselves as lived, embodied, and consequential. That is, I am interested in exploring the Girlfriends' accounts as 'situations of domination' (Bell, 1993, p.41).

Bell (1993) offers a feminist/Foucauldian reading of incest and the law, and provides not only an insightful analysis, but one that challenges the idea that Foucault, and postmodernism (for want of an encapsulating term), is necessarily redundant to feminists who are concerned with exposing the material truth of harm, abuse and violence against women. Concerns with materiality have been raised by many feminists who consider that any form of postmodernism will necessitate sacrificing political claims that women are subjugated, dominated, assaulted, and raped to name but a few (Bell & Klein, 1996). If there are no grand narratives, no grand truth, then, it is asked, on what basis can feminists argue against violence against women by men and, that its perpetuation benefits all men and subjugates all women. In response, Bell (1993) argues that a Foucauldian analysis of power can be useful for feminism and can address issues of harm, abuse, and violence without recourse to universalism. A feminist/Foucauldian analysis power can break the spell of over-generalising in the name of a fixed, stable Truth, in order to make a case for political activism to cease violence against women. A case for political activism can be based on the

argument that while truths are bound to the local context, they are also discourses and these discourses can be regarded with scepticism: The materiality of harm, abuse, and violence in teenage heterocoupledness does not exist in isolation from the local and increasingly globalised discourses about harm, abuse, and violence. Harm, abuse, and violence are discourses in ways that make noticeable or hidden, sanction or condemn, and justify and excuse some truths over others – and everywhere, power is in operation, disciplining **and** punishing, resisting **and** subverting. Hekman (1990, p185) argues that

the transformation of thought required by Foucault means that feminism must abandon its conception of universal political interests (women against patriarchy) and transform its politics into a Foucauldian conception that power, being everywhere, must be opposed everywhere, without the need to appeal to universal values of human dignity, autonomy, freedom. In many instances of oppression these western humanist values are irrelevant' (cited in Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993, p.249).

If power and therefore resistance is everywhere as Foucault claims, then feminists can continually scrutinise and oppose the operation of hegemonic power and discourses in local and specific ways without calling on universal and often Western values. There is little reason why feminists cannot support each other on issues that transcend the local and specific, in fact, paying attention to the local operations of power can also support a multiplicity of resistance that refuses to repackage women as universalised entities. Bell (1993) asks that we abandon the off-implicit assumption in much feminist work that all men possess a stable power over women. In advocating for an alliance between Foucault and feminism, she argues that challenges to the hierarchical relations of force, domination and the ordering of everyday life around regimes of truth need not be relinquished. Instead she refines her analysis of power to an examination of what she calls situations of domination.

Thus domination is a situation, still based on the operations of unstable tactics of power, but where a reversal in power relations appears to be almost impossible. For feminism, domination would denote the patterns of asymmetry between men and women that repeatedly emerge from feminist investigations. But such a Foucauldian/feminist perspective retains an awareness of contradictions within that 'domination' as well as optimism, because if power is exercised not possessed, contingent rather than static, feminist opposition to the various operations of power may expect to identify more gaps and weaknesses in power's operations (Bell, 1993, p.41).

These 'situations of domination' can be seen in the operations of power between Girlfriends and Boyfriends that incoherently organise, legitimate, define, and authorise certain practices and meanings over others. It follows that while I do not define harm, abuse, or violence, the terms themselves are discourses through their usage within the accounts provided by young women. The young women's accounts of harm, abuse, and violence were varied and can be conceptualised as positioned on a continuum (Kelly, 1988). To one extreme exist the more overt and therefore socially and legally prohibited acts of violence and these acts are more readily named as 'violent' (like legal rape). Moving along the continuum are a range of acts that are progressively defined as less 'violent' in themselves, but nonetheless, exist as implicit, everyday and often unacknowledged acts of violence (like sexual harassment). Kelly's continuum does not rank the 'seriousness' of violent acts, and is useful in showing that the socially admonished acts of explicit violence often overshadow the more implicit acts of violence that are themselves sanctioned through a hierarchical categorization. However, while Kelly's analysis is a useful way of demonstrating that the ranking and disapproval of aberrant violent acts serves to disguise and therefore normalise everyday acts of violence (like sexual harassment), I share Bell's concern with maintaining a distinction between violence and power.

While recognising that the feminist project of naming men's violence against women has revealed its pervasiveness and has highlighted the effects on women, including the extended threats to women's safety and the containment of women's movements, such a conflation of violence with a range of dominations may serve to reduce conceptions of power to those acts that stop, prevent and oppress. My particular concern is that the conflation of all potentially subjugating acts with violence may produce a further discourse of risk that works in concert with the array of discourses that already position young women as unsafe and vulnerable, and therefore further regulate young women's movements as if they are locked into a perpetually oppressive and unchangeable dynamic of harm, abuse or violence.

Furthermore, when the young women in this thesis talked about being threatened with violence, their discussions centred on the operations of power – including their own power to act. While power may operate as sovereign (from the top down) it may also operate as disciplinary (as networks), and if we take seriously Foucault's idea that power is productive, then power is never complete in its workings:

Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities. And it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible, somewhat similar to the way in which the state relies on the institutional integration of power relationships (Foucault, 1978, p.96).

Maintaining a distinction between violence and power allows violence to be retained as the ultimate expression of the power to force, oppress or destroy, and acknowledges that disciplinary power operates throughout, discouraging how harm, abuse and violence act upon and are acted out and, yet, because discourses are not completely pervasive nor coherent, 'points of resistance' can open up revolutionary possibilities. All of this assumes that resistance is enabled by the incomplete operation of regulatory mechanisms that attempt to confirm and conceal the maintenance of hegemonic power by not explicitly using violence to maintain power and control.

In order to illustrate that violence is often unnecessary; powerful groups or individuals do not need to resort to violence. At its most general the distinction is that power is much more subtle and discreet than violence. Foucault continues this perspective when he states 'power's success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms (1981: 86). For Foucault power is 'actions upon actions'. That is, the one who is constrained (the abused in the example of incest) is maintained as an acting individual. The operation of power does not stop people acting (chains or locked cells are not always necessary), but acts instead upon their movements (Foucault, 1986b). (Bell, 1993, p.59).

That Western states continue to utilise explicit forms of violence (whether that be through warfare, economic sanctions, imprisonment, or by legally punishing dissident civilians who refuse to comply with its rules and regulations) is a reminder that 'we need to cut off the king's head' (Foucault, 2001, 122), to enact in the everyday, productive revolutionary power that refuses to be subject to totalising regimes of truth. Violence is therefore regarded as the threatened or actual use of force that is backed up by political, economic and cultural institutions of privilege, while power is conceived as operating as productive, acting upon actions in local ways that may have allegiances with global 'regimes of truth' and multiple forms of resistance. Throughout this research i have been struck by the way discourses of risk have insinuated themselves into the young

women's repertoire of 'sensible precautions' against the threat of violence, abuse, and harm. Power was discourses as 'sovereign' and i have represented young women's pre-emptive navigations as attempts to prevent or avoid contact with the potentially dangerous – as if, paradoxically, violence, abuse, and harm operate as purely rational and foreseeable acts. At the same time, young women talked about their power to act, they did not talk about living their lives under siege, perpetually fearful and tuned into 'risk' warnings – they desired, flirted, taunted young men about their sexism, and did not constitute themselves as 'victims' or 'survivors'.

Therefore, in the next section i shall analyse the young women's accounts of harm, abuse, and violence as instances of both sovereign and disciplinary power. The following accounts of harm, abuse, and violence are interrogated around three themes that were present in the young women's accounts. i have selected accounts that repeat certain themes so that, for instance, i provide one example of sexual coercion, but in the transcripts, three accounts were provided. The main themes that are focussed on are: flirting, sexual coercion, and possessiveness; threats and breaking-up; hitting and response-ability. In utilising an account of power as temporarily located as sovereign and yet as simultaneously disciplinary, I share Bell's argument that while violence is something that happens, there are also other operations of power that act upon young women's movements.

Firstly, the disciplinary power of normalising judgement relies on the assumption of a series of 'norms' against which all women are homogenized at the same time that they are individualised by comparison to these norms. The operation of normalising judgement's disciplinary power is seen in a discourse of remixed femininity where young women are collectively represented as at-risk (read: vulnerable) at the same time that their at-risk status is judged in relation to an individual ability and responsibility to pre-empt harm and danger. Secondly, a panoptic gaze provides a useful description of the way power disciplines through the sense of surveillance. A panoptic gaze that operates without the direct presence or the direct absence of an observer disciplines young women. Young women can be 'rendered powerless by the gaze, [and] must identify with the very power shaping their lives if they are to seem to re-gain any power or authority for themselves' (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1993, p.211). In relation to the gaze, Girlfriends are disciplined in relation to a hegemonic discourse of masculinity that is privileged in heterocoupledness and conveys the sense that Girlfriends' individual acts are being scrutinised, policed and observed from a site of power

that can act to punish. Holland, Ramazanogul, Sharpe, and Thomson (1998) conclude from their study of young people, heterosexuality and power that heterosexuality is not, as it appears to be, masculinity-and-femininity in opposition: it is masculinity. Within this masculine heterosexuality, women's desires and the possibility of female resistance are potentially unruly forces to be disciplined and controlled, if necessary by violence (p.11).

FLIRTING, POSSESSIVENESS & SEXUAL COERCION

Female sexuality is often constituted through two competing axes – discoursed as both threatening and threatened, dangerous and endangering. The binary of female sexuality that splits young women according to the reputations of ‘slut’ or ‘virgin’ has been remixed so that young women are now positioned as transcending a moral boundary that appears to move around the axes of being sexual enough to be interesting to a Boyfriend, but not too sexual least she threaten her relationship and reputation, and fail to protect her credibility as an unworthy victim of male sexual attacks. Sue Lees (1997) has pointed out that avoiding a ‘slut’ reputation is made even more difficult for young women when the designation is used indiscriminately to police not just female sexuality but almost any agency that might be regarded as unacceptable. When young women flirt, the boundaries that they navigate are riddled with contradictions about the nature of women’s flirtatiousness and the moral opprobrium that is bought to bear on women who ‘cross the line’ and become ‘cockteasers’.

Flirting is also constituted as a sign of a biologically aroused adolescent female heterosexuality at the same time that it is contained through notions of body management where bodies are groomed and displayed as heterosexual enough (Harris, 1999). When young women display their sexuality by flirting they are also regulated through discourses of heteronomy that stress that achieving a mature female adult identity is through responsible management of heterosexual relationships (Harris, Aapola & Marnina, 2000). A complication of flirting is that while today young women are encouraged to express freedom and independence in ‘sexual choices’, it remains that these choices are structured by the institution of heterosexuality and its rules about femininity (Harris, Aapola, & Marnina, 2000, p.376).

Flirting is a sign of normalised female sexuality while also being constituted as a risk that young women must take responsibility for managing and navigating. A group of young women described flirting as a normal female practice.

Blossom: Yeah. And things like going places and thinking that I was flirting with other guys. I mean, I probably was, but I didn’t mean anything by it. But, it’s like that...

Brooke: Do you reckon like, I reckon, every girl does that?

Mary/Blossom: Yeah.

Blossom: Its fun.

Annalise: Every girl does that but...

Brooke: Guys don't understand that every girl does that, they don't, ah.

These young women discussed flirting as common to their performances of girl. In and of itself, flirting was described as harmless and not a necessarily problematic display of sexuality because it was something that 'every girl does'. By collectivising their experiences of flirting, these young women normalised their practices thereby potentially alleviating the potential to be named 'sluts'. Their flirting became troubling however, when Boyfriends regarded these 'normal' practices of flirting as contraventions of sexual morays, of Boyfriend status, of good Girlfriendness, of heterocoupledness status.

Brooke: Yeah, but it doesn't mean that you don't, it's nothing to do, it's probably different, it's a totally different situation, ah, it's flirting it's nothing to do with ...

Annalise: It's nothing to do with their boyfriend. It's doesn't mean that you're putting your boyfriend down by doing it. It honestly doesn't! It doesn't like, they don't understand, like okay I used to go to the pub with Brent or whatever, and the guys there you'd talk to, like you might flirt with them, but it doesn't mean I don't like Brent anymore. Do you know what I mean?

Mary/ Blossom/Brooke: Yeah.

Annalise: Like, they take it as 'oh she doesn't like me anymore', but it's got nothing to do with that.

Brooke: You always like people to like you ah, and so...

Mary: hmm

Rebecca: It gives you more confidence.

Annalise: Yeah, it is. And once you've been in a relationship for a long you still like to know that, that you know people are still thinking that, do you know what I mean? That it's not, just cause your boyfriend is just in love with you and that's how it should be or whatever.

For these young women, flirting had little to do with their Boyfriends. Flirting was described as a practice of affirming their attractiveness and

confidence albeit by being liked through the eyes of other people and men – and it was not something to be denied. Furthermore, Annalise argued that heterocoupledness should not limit flirting and nor can heterocoupledness extinguish the desire to flirt simply because a ‘boyfriend is just in love with you and that’s how it should be’. Flirting was represented as a legitimate practice that should neither require justification nor necessarily imply harm. However, as flirting was a practice that the young women defended, it was also constituted as requiring justification. Another group of young women noted that flirting was linked to Boyfriend’s possessiveness.

Cindy: Well that happens in lots of relationships, ah like um, it said that she talked to a guy and um, he’d automatically think, you know, she’s a slut, that’s what he called her didn’t he.

Terry: Yeah. A slut and that – that is so wrong. I mean just because she’s talking to another guy I mean, its okay to be a little bit envious for her, I mean, of the other guy when you are...

Lee: I’ve experienced that before though. I’ve talked to guys and then my boyfriend would go off his handle because he thought ‘oh you’re cheating on me’, just because I’m talking to a guy and it was a very possessive relationship.

Lee did not go on to explain what happened in this relationship, but connections between flirting, Boyfriends ‘go[ing] off’, cheating and possessive heterocoupledness were made. The group was analysing the scenario where Paul called Kim a slut because she was talking to ‘other guys’ and noted the connections between flirting and reputation accusations. Flirting was represented as producing an understandable ‘envy’, but the further accusation of ‘slut’ was regarded as ‘wrong’. Nevertheless, Lee noted that Boyfriends could construe the connection between Girlfriends talking to other men as ‘cheating’ and this characteristic of her experience of possessive heterocoupledness. Simply talking to other men was regarded as a navigational dilemma for young women who described wanting to maintain cross-gender friendships (as noted in Chapter 5), yet also being bound by a code of heterocoupledness that required that cross-gender friendships be concealed from the direct surveillance of Boyfriends and their friends. Girlfriends talking to ‘other’ men and Boyfriends responses were also part of Angie’s interview. Angie was reading through the Teenage Relationship Questionnaire and responding to the specific items that she had experienced in her relationship with Linyi.

Angie: Do you mean physically afraid?

Lisa: No in any way, if you've ever felt.

Angie: Oh, like I've felt really afraid of Linyl before, he's just so, he just smothers you. But that's just Linyl!

Lisa: What do you mean?

Angie: Oh just like he's always got his arms around you and like when you say, I don't feel like being all cuddly and that, he just won't listen to you.

Lisa: Yeah and that can be really intrusive, or invading.

Angie: I've been made to feel guilty before. Its just he's really jealous when I talk to guys and stuff. But, yeah.

Lisa: So he makes you feel guilty because you?

Angie: Oh, just oh cause I talk to guys and go out with guys and he never does, like he's totally devoted to me.

Lisa: And how does that make you feel guilty?

Angie: Oh cause he makes you feel guilty, like afterwards. Like when he's saying what he thinks, afterwards, sort of like naughty.

Talking to other men was something that Angie was made to feel guilty about and even 'sort of like naughty'. Angie had transcended the code of exclusive heterocoupledness by talking to other men and Linyl had called on this apparent transgression to mobilise guilt. Guilt was a disciplinary mechanism that operated in relation to a normalised code of heterocoupledness exclusivity where young women are expected to relinquish not only contacts with 'other men' but to regulate behaviours that might be construed as sexual. Talking to other men was constituted as threatening not only to the heterocoupledness, but as indicative of sexual infidelity. When young women merely interact with other men their behaviour is judged as necessarily sexual and once again guilt is mobilised to constitute these relations according to a discourse of heterosexual invariability. Linyl's 'devotion' and 'jealousy' was naturalised as the individual character of 'just [being] Linyl', for while Angie had felt scared by Linyl's 'smothering' insistence on physical closeness, it was also constituted as an inherent quality. Later Angie explained that their heterocoupledness was 'all he [Linyl] was living for' and, therefore, that 'this guy's scary'. Combined with Linyl's suicide threats when Angie tried to break up with him, talking to other men was not only threatening to Angie but the responsibility for endangering Linyl's life was placed on Angie.

Refusing to take responsibility for this potential suicide attempt, Angie nonetheless concealed from Linyl her movements, her interactions with others, and her desires for 'fun'.

Hence a possessive hegemonic male gaze intercepted and mediated her navigations within and outside of heterocoupledness least she be accused, made to feel guilty, scared, and further smothered by Linyl's apparently inherent devotion to her. Throughout, a discourse of heteronomy targeted Angie as responsible for managing the relationship, yet she refused to accept this discursive arrangement of her femininity and independence and after several attempts, managed to break up with Linyl. Despite her resolve Angie choreographed her resistance in relation to the disciplinary power (surveillance and normalised feminine relationship responsibility) that carried a potential threat to enact Linyl's sovereign power that could force Angie's compliance with her Boyfriend's demands. In other words, Angie was constituted as both threatening (to heterocoupledness and Linyl) and threatened (by heterocoupledness and Linyl).

Michelle Fine (1992) has argued that sexuality education in the United States often positions young women's sexuality as vulnerable to victimisation by predatory young men and highlights the risks of sexual activity, including both diseases and harm to emotions. Fine also argues that heterosexuality is often conceived as a matter of individual morality and self-control, where young women are encouraged to contain their desire and expressions of sexuality. Hence, when young women did articulate notions of desire, these were closed down within sex education classes and therefore, Fine theorises that a missing discourse of female desire was constituted. Similarly, these discourses of female heterosexuality discipline flirting as the slippery quality that whilst construed as necessary to 'normal' female development, if displayed 'inappropriately' can also potentially threaten young women's reputations, or cast them as irresponsible, or as either immature (naïve) or too mature (too sexual for her 'age'). Nevertheless, some of these young women constituted flirting as a sexual practice that 'has nothing to do with Boyfriends' despite the promotion of a missing discourse of female desire.

Flirting has also been discursively positioned as threatening to the male sex drive which (so the story goes) when aroused to the limits of endurance can incite sexual predation or justify the rape of women (Lees, 1997; Hallway, 1984). The discursively positioned moralities that attempt to discipline female sexuality also operate with reference to a male sexuality that is often positioned as irrepressible, easily aroused, and uncontrollable. In this respect Girlfriends flirting as 'harmless' displays of sexuality can be remixed as female sexuality that provokes male

jealousy and possessiveness, and in some cases, as part of the context of sexual coercion.

Mary: Hmm, yeah. No, yes, yes last year as well, yep. We'd been going for a long time, 'cept we had a big break in between in which I sort of tried to have another relationship with another guy, and ohhh, it was horrible. I won't tell you who he was cause I feel real stink for him about it. But I was in his room once, I had to go to work, and this guy, and he held on to me and he wouldn't let me go until I kissed him. He says 'No! you're not leaving my room until' and

Annalise: Oh my god!

Mary: That was horrible. I remember that was really scary. It was like 'I really want to go'.

Annalise: And then you go, 'yeah, like I want to kiss you now' (sarcastically).

Mary: Yeah.

(All laughing)

Mary: Yeah, exactly, like.

Annalise: So much passion! (sarcastically).

Mary: Yeah, seriously, I was trying to get out of the room and he had such a hold on me that I couldn't get out, that was so horrible.

Annalise: And then after that did you leave him, like was that it when you walked out of the room?

Mary: Yep. That was it, yep. I kissed him of course - before I could get out, but.

Mary was exploring another relationship in between a break in a more long-term relationship. In the above situation she was ordered to kiss a young man (whom she protected with anonymity) before she could leave his bedroom. When *Girlfriends'* described flirting they positioned their sexuality carefully, choreographing a space between slut and nice girl, between performing in sexually safe and unsafe ways. In the above situation a kiss was constituted as the price that Mary had to pay in order to remain safe. Kissing was the key to her escape and it was not a trade that occurred between equally invested agents. The young man held on to Mary and demanded that she complied and in this way her power to act was determined by his sovereign act. What gave this ultimatum the power to cause fear and compliance was enhanced by his physical hold on Mary

while in his space (bedroom). It was also powerful because it mustered a fear in Mary that worked in conjunction with the discourses of risk that situate heterosexual males as already safe in and of themselves (that is, as invulnerable) and yet potentially unsafe towards others, particularly towards women who are constituted as sexually provocative. The kiss was constituted as an act of power that caused fear rather than as an act of 'passion'. The young women responded with sarcasm towards the young man's attempts at 'passion' and in this way the kiss was also constituted as the antithesis of sexual desire - 'it was really scary'. Nonetheless, Mary felt embarrassed for this young man and decided not to reveal his identity.

i regard Mary's account as an instance of sexual coercion that demonstrates the way power operates not just to enforce compliance, but also to constitute the possible array of responses to sexual coercion. Mary had to kiss in order to leave – if she resisted she may well have been aware of what Nicola Gavey's (1992) participants described as the potential for the act to escalate into a situation that was inescapably definable as 'rape'. Gavey's (1992) research on heterosexual coercion showed that women were often reluctant to describe instances of forced sexual interactions with men as rape. Gavey utilises the Panoptica schema in her research to demonstrate how the dominant discourses of heterosexuality discipline the sense that is possible to make of sexual coercion. Rather than theorising women as dupes of false consciousness, she argues that the 'technologies of heterosexual coercion' normalize the meanings and practices of femininity so that we come to 'regulate our own behaviour in ways which comply with androcentric versions of sexuality' (p329). In Mary's case she not only had to trade her kiss for her escape, but she also protected the young man's identity and potential embarrassment. i do not think that Mary should have necessarily exposed this young man. What this strategy indicates to me is that Mary was also disciplined by the notion that even after an event of harm, there are consequences for the way the event is spoken about and framed. Mary appears then to be regulated by a femininity that requires that Girlfriends protect young men's reputations from harm. Power operates in this instance as both sovereign and disciplinary – although not in direct proportion to each other because the young man's sovereign power exacted its asking price and yet a disciplinary power ensured that his acts remained revealed as an instance of an anonymous masculine sexuality (*he could have been any man*).

THREATS & BREAKING-UP

Annalise: Do you think that, that half the time they realise they are abusing you? Like they say, like they know you want to break up with them but they'd be happy going out with you again, if you'd give in. Like and that is so ridiculous because you've practically told them you don't want a relationship, so how can they be happy with you being in one with them still. Like half the time they don't even realise they are abusing you by telling you, don't break up with me, it's just their real feeling, you know but like, what you said, if he's putting you down and

Mary: Yeah that was horrible. Except for some reason it didn't occur to me that, you know, that I am fine, I am not useless, you know. It didn't, it doesn't occur to me if somebody who knew me that well, cause he knew me really well, and he saw me all the time.

Breaking up from heterocoupledness proved to be difficult for many of the young women. In the above extract, Mary was discussing the difficulties of leaving a Boyfriend who would tell her she 'was useless and stuff'. Mary described their relationship as 'a sexual relationship' that was 'a lot more concrete', but because she felt that he did not have any respect for her she wanted to break up.

Mary: Yeah and he wouldn't let me, he could fall into tears and stuff every time I wanted to break up with him – I didn't know what to do. So in the end I did it over the phone and Mum was sitting next to me supporting me and he screamed and yelled at me saying that 'I'm such a bitch' and all this and the last thing I wanted to do was break up with him being angry.

Mary had finally been able to break-up with this Boyfriend, and had even surprised herself when she 'got over it quite quickly'. What was perhaps more surprising, not only to Mary but many of the other women, was how it did not occur to them that they were 'fine' despite their Boyfriends put-downs. Annalise questioned how Boyfriends could ever be happy with a togetherness based on coercion. Unfortunately, exclusion of possibilities (Mary: It didn't occur to me that... I am fine) and coercion are not surprising when read as hegemonic Western values. Compulsion and coercion have become taken for granted and accepted within many Western social relations: citizens compliance with the State,

children's obedience to parents, women's subjugation to men, animals enslaved and slaughtered for humans. Of course, coercion is not just sovereign, where the powerful enforces compliance; disciplinary power is a concealed and continually re-forming mode of operation and re-articulation. Disciplinary power includes the important idea that, for instance, many citizens, children, and women contest prevailing power relations and norms, yet the hegemony of prevailing discourses can also appropriate, recuperate, or absorb resistance by manufacturing the illusion of responding to the dissatisfactions of those who are constituted or who actively constitute themselves as 'other'. Compliance can be manifested through 'negotiations' or 'consultation' with the 'other' and the promise of 'reform'.

Hegemony is about constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes, through concessions or through ideological means, to win their consent (Fairclough, 1992, p.92).

i assume that compliance and resistance are constantly 'on the move', and i am wary about promises of reform. Whilst compliance can involve winning of consent, sometimes, this hegemony, which is rarely explicit, is refused. The Girlfriends in the last chapter argued – 'I've learnt not to go, not to trust anymore. You can't trust 'I'm so sorry' (Brooke). These young women argued that apologies by Boyfriends are meaningless unless they are backed up by the cessation of abusive acts. The option of re-forming into a different version of abusiveness was withdrawn. These young women withdrew their consent to trust and did not comply with a hegemonic discourse of femininity that promotes understanding, forgiveness, and compromise.

When Boyfriends' coerce Girlfriends into not breaking-up, Boyfriends are practicing their freedom (to have what they want) by compelling another or attempting to regain consent. Coercion in heterocoupledness should come as no surprise when these kind of practices are condoned by the kinds of mutated freedom advanced by laissez faire capitalism, or the Nation state, or repres(entat)ive democracy (rather than direct democracy). In relation to Kelly's (1988) continuum of violence, i would also argue that coercive and disciplinary power must be seen in relation to the implicitly sanctioned discourses of compulsion and consent winning that exist within contemporary Western, neo-liberal, capitalism and representative democracies.

Coercion exists in relation to political contexts (like Western neo-liberal, capitalist democracy) and it simultaneously coerces at the political level of the individual. When coercion is part of a pattern of political/personal regulation that

suits some more than it suits others, then the consequences of non-compliance by individuals can further weight how individuals may be able to respond. There is a crucial difference between not wanting a relationship to end and asking someone to stay, and, using a pattern of political/personal leverage to manipulate or coerce a partner into staying. Breaking-up was made even more difficult for Girlfriends who were with Boyfriends who had established a pattern of coercion by threatening suicide or threatening to kill young women who tried to leave.

Blossom: Okay this is one example um he said to me if I ever broke up with him he'd kill me

Brooke: Huh?

Wednesday: Hmm! Hit man style, yeah.

Brooke: Did he really?

Blossom: Yeah when I broke up with him the first time it was fine you know, its the second time of the relationship it was more serious. So um, when I did break up with him he said 'right, that's it, there's a hit out on you' and things like that on the phone

Annalise: There's a what?

Blossom: 'I'm putting a hit out on you' and stuff like that. And for about 2 months afterwards I was like, I couldn't go out, my Mum wouldn't let me go out, wouldn't let me walk down the street by myself. And like when I'd go to town I'd just be constantly looking over my shoulder. It was so horrible, like everywhere, I'd kept thinking he was going to jumping out of a bush or something

Brooke: That's so awful!

Annalise: Oh, that is awful!

Blossom: I mean, Mum took me away to Auckland for about a week, just us two and we stayed in a motel up there to get away from him.

Annalise: Oh. You don't realise that happens.

Blossom: He rang up, but my parents told him that I was down south for the holidays so that he'd think I wasn't at home.

Mary: Oh my gosh!

Brooke: That's so shocking!

Blossom: Um, oh it was just like 'oh, you're mine now' and, 'no one else is going to like you' and stuff

Blossom's heterocoupledness was characterised by emotional put-downs from her Boyfriend and when she had previously tried to break-up, he threatened that he would kill himself. Wednesday and Blossom also explained that the Boyfriend's father had pulled a shotgun on them and some party goers and so Blossom also knew that her Boyfriend had access to a gun and therefore a means to carry out his threats to kill her. As a group, these young women surmised that the Boyfriend's abusiveness resulted from his childhood history of abuse. Despite their attempts to locate the causes of his violence in his family and childhood, the effects on Blossom were also discussed. Over the course of this relationship Blossom felt increasingly 'like ugly and really not, you know real retarded and stuff, and I used to walk with my head down all the time'. When asked what he would do to make her feel so down, Blossom explained that he would tell her 'oh, you're mine now' and 'no one else is going to like you'. Like many women in abusive relationships, leaving can be one of the most dangerous times and in many cases the young women continue to be monitored, threatened (either through phone calls or letters), and harassed into returning (Levy, 1993). When abusive Boyfriends threaten to kill a Girlfriend who leaves this may also compound the already established patterns of intimidation, threats, coercion, and emotional, sexual and physical abuse (Gamache, 1991) and can compound the effects of abusiveness (as Blossom points out she already felt sad and unlovable). When Blossom reflected on this relationship she stated: 'I don't know what I went out with him for'. Similarly, Mary reflected that she did not know why it did not occur to her that she was 'fine' when her Boyfriend was telling her that she was useless. These exasperated questions occurred in both Mary's and Blossom's accounts of trying to break-up with coercive or abusive Boyfriends. They also stand out as 'little comments' that indicate how sovereign, punitive power can operate as if they are complete and irrefutable when in the midst of abusive heterocoupledness. Furthermore, when a discourse of heteronomy regards feminine identity as achieved through relationship responsibility, and when a discursive network of risk re-constitutes femininity as vulnerable to harm, an abusive Boyfriend's acts can serve to temporarily fix his power within this situation of domination. Breaking up is an attempt to unfix the Boyfriend's sovereign power to do harm, while also being a precarious navigation of Boyfriends threats and the various discourses of femininity that discipline a safe way out of abusive heterocoupledness.

A safe passage out of abusive heterocoupledness may be impeded by the discursive soundscape of heterocoupledness and the normalisation of heterocoupledness as a private arrangement that should not be interrupted from outside. Levy (1991) speaks about the tendency of adults to minimise the seriousness of adolescent heterocoupledness and therefore the failure of adults to recognise that abuse in adolescent coupledness can be just as serious as in adult relationships. Furthermore, Levy discusses the reluctance of young women to involve parents when they may place further restrictions on young women's independence. When gaining access to greater freedom of movement is already difficult for young women telling adults may also risk the reassertion of controls that are designed to keep young women safe. Again the focus remains on keeping young women safe – not on the male agents, the hegemonic masculinity, the discourses of vulnerable femininity that help to constitute and materialise this unsafety in the first place. Despite these concerns Mary and Blossom both talked of using the mothers as supports in the process of breaking up safely. Each of them was able to break the silence and isolation that keeps many women captive within abusive heterocoupledness. There were complicating factors to this process.

Other young women also spoke about protecting the reputation of their heterocoupledness by not talking negatively about their Boyfriends with friends. They also spoke about wanting their heterocoupledness to be regarded as loving and they talked about wanting to publicly display the care that their Boyfriends bestowed on them. When a discourse of heteronomy positions young women as responsible for managing their relationships, handling abuse on their own becomes another sign of being a 'grown-up' navigator of heterocoupledness. In other words, what I call a double danger operates so that not only does a sovereign power exert the threat of force but also the danger of not managing heterocoupledness for risks. Double dangers are constituted fictions that discipline not only what subjects are supposed to be careful and fearful of, but moreover, they operate to constitute certain subjects, like a heterosexual Girlfriend, as at-risk yet risky to the hegemony of femininity if Girlfriends' fail to take responsibility for managing risk. I read this double danger as operating within the young women's discussions about how they would manage risk. Many of the young women talked about their Boyfriends' possessiveness and control in relationships, noting that if they did 'not put their foot down', then heterocoupledness could become abusive. The young women were alert to the possibilities of abuse at the same time that they took responsibility for pre-empting any escalation of harm, abuse, or violence. The assumption that young women could sever the links between

possessiveness and controlling behaviour and Boyfriends more explicit use of harm, abuse, or violence was based, in part, on the notion that Girlfriends could rationally recognise, predict, and therefore control risky Boyfriends, without Boyfriends' taking responsibility for their own practises. Despite positioning themselves as pre-emptive risk navigators, another group of young women spoke about the difficulties of proving harm, abuse, or violence.

Savanah: Yeah, at first you feel scared, like, 'cause you got no proof, and then once you've got some proof.

Sue: Like what can you do about it, sitting there going 'oh'...

Savanah: And then you feel stupid as well.

Connie: Fully, and then at one stage they do something physically or something you can say 'get - ' you know 'that's it!'. But you got to have that kinda physical thing to you know, give you the courage to say 'bugger off'.

Sue: But then again if someone gets hit and they haven't got the courage in the first place they're just going to sit there and let you hit them again and again and again. You've got to make sure like if they do hit you that you've got the strength to turn around and say 'just get out of my place!'

Connie: Yeah well that comes down to the pers, the character of the person as well, yeah.

Savanah: See, it's like Nathan all that shit that went down. I mean he'd ring me up and do that kind of stuff and like I could do nothing. But once I had that letter, I had actual proof of all the stuff he'd written

Bianca: So you could...

Sue/Savanah: I reckon!

Savanah: I felt really stupid showing that to his Mum and that, but then they all found out and they all gave Steve shit about it and he's left me alone, so it made me feel so much better, because I actually had something to prove that he was doing it.

Connie: Yeah, cause guys are actually really nutty aye.

A final disciplinary mechanism that structured the process of breaking up with Boyfriends was the comparisons and attempts to assess the severity of emotional over physical violence. Many of the young women spoke about emotional abuse as either 'just as bad' or 'worse' than being hit. In these discussions the young women discussed how the hidden quality of emotional

abuse can be difficult to verify and hence difficult to act on. Once they had been hit, Connie noted that being hit could provide young women with the 'courage' to tell the young man to 'bugger off'. Nevertheless, Sue warned that young women should feel strong enough to stop the abuse otherwise it could escalate into further violence. For Savannah, claiming emotional abuse without proof can lead to feeling 'stupid' – as if there was a level of concrete evidence that had to extend to physical assault for abuse claims to be justified. These young women had an intricate knowledge of the dynamics and effects of abusive relationships. They were also aware that their claims required an almost legal level of proof in order to support their responses, which included having to answer to others about why they would want to break up from Boyfriends. In this context emotional abuse operated as 'worse' than physical abuse because the requirement to prove emotional abuse was almost impossible to verify without material evidence. After receiving an abusive letter from her Boyfriend Savannah then had the proof to justify her break-up and to call on others to support her decision. She showed the Boyfriend's letter to his mother and this knowledge was distributed so that he was disciplined by others and had since left her alone. Whether the publicity about his abuse actually stopped him from continuing his verbal abuse is unclear. Nevertheless hitting was discussed as the ultimate proof that abuse had happened and was needed before this group of young women could act. Just as entering heterocoupledness was based on safely being conferred Girlfriend, leaving heterocoupledness seems to be bound by certain rules as to what counts as a good reason to leave – even when verbal or emotional abuse is present.

HITTING AND RESPONSE-ABILITY

Charisse: Yeah, um, get scared by his actions, gestures or looks. Once we had an argument and a really big argument over something really trivial. And he was just like looked really, really angry and sort of grabbed me by the shoulders and started shaking me sort of thing. I don't know why I think he just wanted to bring me down to earth or something.

Charisse did not characterise her relationship as abusive, harmful, or violent. She had experienced an incident of physical violence but this was not described as existing within the context of a systematically abusive relationship. Similarly, Anna offered an account of being hit by an ex-Boyfriend.

Anna: I've got slapped by my ex-boyfriend. He had a real problem aye. Yeap, he was, after we broke up he said we'll still be friends and stuff, and I went, okay. Cause we both wanted to break up. Then something happened, oh I said something to him, and he went whack, and I just stood there and went, and I said 'oh get fucked' and walked away. And he came up to me screaming, look you weren't listening to me, would you just shut up, and I said I don't care, I don't care what I'm telling you, you still can't slap me. No matter what I'm doing you've got no right to hit me, I didn't hit you. You've got no right to it. And I was like, oh no. Cause he can't like, I mean, if we were in a relationship that would have been it, but even though we weren't I still went arse at him. He shouldn't hit me, he slapped me across the face, not real hard, but I was just was really shocked. It was like, 'you bastard'.

In both of these accounts, the young women responded to being physically assaulted by yelling at the young men, telling them to stop and in Anna's case threatening him with an assault charge. These assaults were unexpected and they responded by unequivocally telling these young men that their behaviour was unacceptable. At the same time, Anna suggested to the young man that he should seek counselling because he was apparently traumatised by his parents recent break up and Charisse explained that her Boyfriend only wanted to 'bring her down to earth' because he 'just wanted to make me listen to him I think'. While these experiences may not be located within the context of a systematically abusive relationship, both of these young women sought to explain these young

men's behaviour. Like much of the psychological literature on dating violence (see Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989), the causes, risks and predictive factors are sought out – as if capturing these factors will enable the rational control of men's violence against women. Just as young women search for the causes of violence, much of the mainstream psychological research continues to search for the factors that cause violence. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) have theorised that young people will define abuse as acceptable and as a normal sign of love in relationships. They call this 'normative confusion' and also claim that violence is often regarded as the expression of underlying problems that need to be solved. Whilst these young women were adamant that their experiences of being hit were not normal, both Charisse and Anna sought to provide reasons for their Boyfriends' problems and hence their violence. The concept of normative confusion however serves to locate abuse as a failure of young people to recognise that violence in heterocoupledness is abnormal. It presumes that violence is unconnected to the everyday location of responsibility for heterocoupledness with women and it further characterises violence as aberrant expressions of normal masculinity. Furthermore, what is not theorised is how the production of these explanations serves to consolidate women's responsibilities for remaining alert and precautionous of dangers.

Studies in New Zealand indicate that women are more likely than men to report being 'very worried' about all crimes but particularly violent offences (Morris, 1997). It is therefore perhaps not surprising that since women are positioned by a discourse of heteronomy to take responsibility for relationship management that they will take note of the various factors that are supposed to explain and/or allow prediction of the risks of being hit. That many women already feel fearful of violent crime, particularly from strangers, may also indicate that this discoursing of risk is also operating as a disciplinary mechanism. Not only does fear monitor women's movements in public spaces, but it may also police the kinds of knowledge and practices about how women should pre-empt and react in relation to the threat of violence.

Numerous social knowledges inform young people about what is unacceptable, risky, or dangerous. 'Hitting a girl' is never acceptable and both the young men and women in this thesis expressed these moral statements. Asserting that hitting women is wrong however does not gel with the continued prevalence of violence against women by men they know (see Jackson, 1999; Leibrich, Paulin and Ransom, 1995; Young, Morris, Cameron, & Haslett, 1997). Whilst violence against women by men continues, there has also been a

simultaneous increase in media coverage and campaigns that highlight the occurrence and risks of domestic and more latterly dating violence (see New Zealand Herald, August 1999 for special series on violence). Beck (1992) has argued that late capitalist societies have become 'risk societies' that have produced and unequally distributed risks across individuals like the 'irreversible threats to the life of plants, animals, and human beings' (p.12). Beck argues that risk has also been conflated with danger and has been promulgated through industries like psychology that claim to be able to assess and predict risk factors, that have also heightened people's awareness of being increasingly at risk themselves. Similarly, Mary Douglas (1992) has argued that risk is always political and moral in its applications so that risk (as danger)

acts within cultures as a bargaining weapon, but different types of culture select different kinds of dangers for their self-maintaining purposes (p.47).

Violence against women campaigns have been useful in 'breaking the silence' surrounding men's abuse of women, but they also generate a simultaneous 'bargaining weapon' that categorises all women as an at risk group. While Brownmiller (1975) has argued that rape serves to victimise all women because of the fear that it generates – this generalised discoursing of violence against women has also served to redistribute risk as a peculiarly feminine quality. The discourse at once consolidates the notion that hitting women is unacceptable just as it generalises and normalises women's fear and more to the point, women's responsibility of readiness to prevent, avoid or minimise violence. As Lundgren (1998) has commented, when women take

feminist self-defense and pay lower taxi fares than men at night and the police provide abused women with alarm systems, all this can be characterised as change. But from another point of view, we can see it cements and validates or stabilizes the very phenomenon against which women are rebelling. Do we conceive of gender power as inevitable and our only defense as self-defense, ourselves incapable of enabling changes. (p.169).

A hierarchical gaze disciplines women's gaze; just as the practise of harm, abuse, or violence can monitor how young women respond to violence, the production of pre-emptive and reactive strategies against risk warnings also shape young women's gaze. Whilst the panoptic power of being watched over by the threat of violence can instil fear at the same time that it has prompted women's defensive and assertive resist-stances, it has also meant that women's gaze

remains directed in relation to the risks of failing to pre-empt violence. In other words there is a double danger in operation that carries the notion that harm, abuse or violence can occur but also that young women are responsible for pre-empting these transgressions. Young women discussed their numerous strategies for entering into and labouring for love in normalised heterocoupledness just as they asserted that they had a range of available tactics to call on when managing harmful, abusive, or violent heterocoupledness. Just as the young women were imbued in the gender power relations of heterocoupledness, they were also engaged with gender resistance relations. To use Foucault's (1978) terms, just as power is relational so too is resistance and:

These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. But this does not mean that they are only a reaction or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat. ...Hence they too are distributed in irregular fashion: the points, the knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups or individuals in definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behaviour (p.96).

While Foucault conceived of power and resistance as similarly 'everywhere' and as capable of multiple relations – the gendered position of these young women meant that their strategies and tactics of resistance were often formed in relation to a discourse of heteronomy that stressed Girlfriends' response-abilities for resistance. In this way their resistances were, in many ways, choreographed in relation to and as reactive to risk. Unlike Foucault's assertions above these reactive resistances however were not 'always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat'. To position Girlfriends as pre-emptive risk navigators is not to resign them to being forever within a discursive soundscape of heterocoupledness that is marked out by the dichotomy of either resisting or submitting to domination. It is an acknowledgement that resistance is always possible and yet resistances can also very easily be recuperated when the form they take is structured by the discourses of risk that coincide with a discourse of assertive girl-

power femininity that entreats women to remain safe by defending our equality in order to remain safe by standing up for ourselves, to remain safe by being aware, strong and assertive, and, as the story implicitly goes, to be worthy of equality with men. The young women's resistances were structured in relation to an agentic position of response-ability.

Throughout the research texts, young women would interject with statements that reasserted their agency within heterocoupledness. Each interjection worked to remind me, that these young women were from a cultural generation of young people who recognise the harm that can come from young men, but that as Girlfriends they are capable of 'choosing' beyond these dangers through a range of resistant response-ability positions.

Anna asserted that without physical safety, the love that she might feel for someone would have to be relinquished.

Anna: Even if you really, really love someone there are things that cause you not to.

Lisa: And what are those things?

Anna: Money, violence. Like if I loved a guy and he hit me, he'd be down the road, I don't care how much I love him, he can't love me. To love someone you've got to love yourself first, more than you love them otherwise it doesn't work. Well that's what I reckon. And if you let someone hit you and you still love them, then you can't love yourself very much cause you're not putting yourself kind of important, you well being, you don't care for your well being.

At some point, many of the young women claimed a similar resolve to protect themselves from Boyfriends' potential for violence by developing a strong sense of their personal value and their ability to re-act. I would add to Anna's assertions, by arguing that many young women, who initially declare that they would not stand for abusiveness, find that abusive heterocoupledness can effectively dilute this sense of safety and agency. As Sue in an earlier text pointed out: 'make sure like if they do hit you that you've got the strength to turn around and say 'just get out of my place''. Similarly the responsibility for managing relationships can position young women having the responsibility to assert a range of response-abilities to deal with the numerous ways that they may be constituted as 'at risk'. While feeling worthless and an inability to act can be potential effects of abuse in adolescent heterocoupledness they are however, partial effects that can never quite eliminate Anna's response-abilities to remain

positioned as safe. From this perspective Anna marked out a terrain of unacceptability and an intention to discard abusive partners. Even when read as 'intentions' that may not necessarily be related to her practises within heterocoupledness, they hold at least the possibility that Anna has mapped a benchmark of unacceptability and a potential pathway of escape from an unsafe relationship.

The response-ability positioning that Astrid and Zara represented was based on their cautious assessment and contestation of Boyfriends' excuses for their unsafe behaviour.

Lisa: If you're in a relationship and you really, really like the guy, and some of those things [possessiveness and controlling behaviour] were going on, but only occasionally, what do you think you'd do?

Astrid: Umm, I'd sus him out. I'd sus him out.

Zara: Sit down and talk with him

Lisa: You'd talk with him Zara?

Zara: Yeah.

Lisa: What would you say?

Zara: I'd start arguing.

Lisa: 'I'm really, really stressed out and angry, you know I didn't mean to grab you by the arm, I won't do it again'

Zara: I wouldn't believe him

Astrid: Most girls would fall for it.

Zara; Yeah fall for the trap. That's an old trap.

Astrid: You go, 'No, that's old. Tell me something new'.

Sussing out, talking and arguing with an unsafe Boyfriend were verbal defences that Zara and Astrid used. Somehow the 'trap' of making excuses 'is old' and Zara and Astrid, (as not 'most girls') would not let such a defence count. Locating themselves as 'girls who don't fall for boys' excuses, Astrid and Zara positioned themselves as 'safer' Girlfriends. They were 'safer' because they had prepared a verbal defence against any potentially unsafe Boyfriends and as such provided themselves with the response-abilities that could act to resist harm, abuse, or violence.

Similarly, Charisse and Angie stated that they would assert their response-ability positions by adopting the 'bitch' personae. After they had told me that the stereotypical Girlfriend is neither demanding nor obsessive and is willing to take second place to a Boyfriend's friends, they went on to locate themselves in opposition to this traditionally feminine Girlfriend.

Lisa: Taken that stereotype of feminine, how do you fit into that, or not fit into that?

Angie: Umm, I don't, I don't think. I think I'm a really dominant partner.

Charisse: Yeah me as well!

Lisa: Yeah, so being dominant what does that mean?

Angie: A bitch! I don't know it's just really easy to tell him what to do and that.

(Angie and Charisse laughing)

Charisse: It's just like 'go get me a drink please', or something, just things like that and they'll do it.

The response-ability that Angie and Charisse spoke of involved taking charge by voicing their needs and concerns. The assumption was that they could stick up for themselves and that this placed them in a position of dominance in their relationships with Boyfriends. It is interesting to note how simply asking for what one wants is represented as alternatively dominant or bitchy, especially when what one is asking for is domestic (read: traditionally female) service from males. Both notions of dominant or bitchy womanhood have traditionally been scorned upon and remain as potentially unsafe places to position one's self. Nevertheless, some teenage women use Bitch as an acronym for 'Being In Total Control Honey'. It follows then that the position of safety and agency that Angie and Charisse find for themselves is based on the response-ability to manage any inequalities by pre-emptively asserting themselves. A discourse of assertive girl-power femininity positions Angie and Charisse as agents who can defend themselves. How they defend themselves is interesting because they are using a term that can be used pejoratively and yet they have taken this term and culture jammed it by turning it into a stance of power.

I have read these texts as response-ability positions that are, in part, made necessary through various safety and risk warnings that speak to women as at-risk and risky subjects within heterocoupledness, and in part, made possible through a

discourse of assertive girl-power femininity, that is, the presumption of gender parity that is underscored by the idea that 'girls can do anything' and is practised through the agency of 'choosing' and 'speaking out'. A discourse of assertive girl-power femininity is characterised by the calling in of ways of being, like voicing ones concerns, fears, being a 'bitch', being cynical of men's excuses and behaviours, or rejecting harmful men. These ways of 'speaking out' have traditionally been cast as an unfeminine and hence unsuitable quality for women to display and the fact that young women are speaking for themselves is not to be minimised. But even this requires scrutiny. It must be asked of young women's supposed liberation: how and in what terms are young women legitimated in speaking up for themselves? In the context of heterocoupledness at adolescence, safety and risk operate as techniques that discipline how and in what terms young women can and indeed must speak up for themselves. A position of response-ability is informed by a hegemonic femininity that places the duty to care with women and the discourses of liberal individualism that locate responsibility and blame primarily with the individual. Individual responsibility and blame may support agency, like response-ability, but without considering the political structures and discourses that distribute and target safety and risk as the concern of particular individuals, then this response-ability will continue to be done by young women in response to terms that remain unquestioned. The terms that locate women as response-able are tied to the risk warnings that underwrite many of the discourses that entreat women to assert girl-power as if this assertion alone is enough to protect safety, equality, and reputation. Should safety, equality, and reputation remain unquestioned as things that require women's pre-emptive manoeuvring? Self-defence should not remain the only defence because it locates risk management as the default stance through which safety is granted.

i would also warn that a subject position of taking response-ability and a discourse of assertive girl-power femininity could also locate blame with young women. After all, if Boyfriends act violently the young women would have less control over the forms that such violence could take and yet this position of response-ability is based on the assumption that violence from Boyfriends can be foreseen, controlled, avoided, or managed by young women. i can envision a complex of blame being born out of the young women's subject positioning as responsible for response-ability. What happens when even the young women's response-ability (of having self worth, being different or bitchy girlfriends) and their resistances (namely, being able to not only leave a violent relationship but also to scrutinise Boyfriend's defences and manage inequalities) fail to protect

them from Boyfriend violence? In an age where a discourse of liberalism and the associated implications of personal responsibility disguise the social-cultural-historical structuring of agency, young women could be left doubled over with both the material bruises of assault and the complexities of taking the blame for allowing violence to happen? ('Should they have known better'? will be the question that young women will again be asked to respond to.)

The young women's response-ability positions worked to set up a sense of dutiful risk management. Boyfriends' use of violence remains a sovereign power but the disciplinary power of the discourses of normalised heterocoupledness, a discourse of assertive girl-power femininity, and a discourse of heteronomy worked in cacophony to make the subject position of response-ability necessary in the first place. The following discussion serves as an excellent summary of respons-ability. The group were talking about how they forgive their Boyfriends and have learned to pre-emptively manage their heterocoupledness and the 'little bad things' that happen.

Rebecca: One time [apology] used to cover ten bad times.

Mary: Same. If Theo would do some stupid things sometimes..

Brooke: But that's so bad. You shouldn't put up with that, but I know its hard at times – but you've gotta! After you've done it once, after you've had it done to you, once you know, in future and you'll be heaps stronger and you can see the first sign of it and you'll just go.

Rebecca: But it's always just the little, little bad things, never, never anything big

Brooke: Yeah but they still, umm, bad

Rebecca: Oh yeah, I'm so much stronger now.

Brooke: Yeah. Yeah, you'll find that now, for the future it'll help you

Mary: The good thing about all these relationships, especially if you have a few normal, then you'll end up

Brooke: Yeah, it's learning aye.

Wednesday: Yes.

Brooke: You learn so much.

Mary: Start working these things out and that. Cause I've learnt that sometimes I've, even like I've definitely stepped over the mark a couple of

times where I shouldn't, I've done things I shouldn't have and been really horrible but, I just won't do that again.

Blossom: You learn in relationships what to do and not.

Blossom/Annalise/Brooke: What not to do!

Brooke: Definitely

Rebecca: I'll just be, I'll see something that somebody will do that could have hurt me and now I'm so much stronger, I just blow it off and I think 'I'm not going to get upset about that, why should I?' and I feel really good about it.

The young women above have summarised the structuring of response-ability in heterocoupledness at adolescence. Safety and risk are techniques of containing how young women will manage heterocoupledness, themselves, and others. Just as these safety and risk warnings offer up a stance of response-ability that is potentially powerful and assertive of a girl-power, the terms of managing harm, abuse and violence are set within situations of domination. These situations of domination may be unstable and the young women did speak about resisting many of their Boyfriends' acts of harm, abuse, and violence. The navigations to remain safe by managing these situations of domination or by pre-emptively learning how to avoid and respond to these situations also meant that the possibility of women's resistance beyond the terms already set is disciplined. Young women are constituted as already at-risk, but more than this, as response-able and responsible for the management of safety and risk. The disciplinary mechanism at work here is that women are located as subjects that are vulnerable, must be protected and protect themselves; risk warnings aimed at increasing safety may actually inscribe the kind of safety that is made available and discipline young women's response-abilities in relation to the double-danger of harm, abuse and violence, as well as, the danger of not protecting oneself.

OPEN ENDINGS:

Some final comments, reflections, and questions.

A feminist theory begins when the feminist critique of ideologies becomes conscious of itself and turns to question its own body of writing and critical interpretations, its basic assumptions of terms and the practices which they enable and from which they emerge. This is not merely an expansion or a reconfiguration of boundaries, but a qualitative shift in political and historical consciousness. This shift implies, in my opinion, a dis-placement and a self-displacement: leaving or giving up a place that is safe, that is 'home' (physically, emotionally, linguistically and epistemologically) for another place that is unknown and risky, that is not only emotionally but conceptually other, a place of discourse from which speaking and thinking are at best tentative, uncertain and unguaranteed. But the leaving is not a choice: one could not live there in the first place (de Lauretis, 1998, p.138-139, cited by Brooks, 1997, p.211).

The process of conducting this research has been one of continuous displacement, of leaving the safety of modernism, humanism, and the disciplinary boundaries of psychology, and risking an uncertain terrain where the terms of the arguments put forward here have been, and will continue to be, contested. There can be no clean and sure endings, no definitive conclusions drawn. i can not state that Girlfriends are wholly positioned as risk navigators and that Boyfriends are rendered completely safe but i do argue that this formulation is implicitly taken for granted in gender power relations in heterocoupledness and must be contested. The terms that make it seem sensible for women to be response-able for managing safety and risk when they are often the victims of male violence in heterocoupledness must be questioned: these terms that make the pre-emptive navigation of risk necessary in the first place must be challenged. The argument

must not be limited by the terms that are already on offer because these terms mean that my only legitimate argument is to, firstly, prove that violence happens, and, secondly, to assume that women will invariably be the objects of male violence. Taking up these tasks is important when male violence is systemically legitimated yet denied and minimised. But my task in this thesis has shifted to explore how Girlfriends are disciplined by safety and risk.

As subjects, women are not already unsafe and men are not already safe, but are constituted in ways that make them appear to be un/safe. It is in this appearance of un/safety and in the gendered distribution of safety and risk warnings that women's engagements with resistance can be limited to acts of self-defence. The terms of contestation must not be set only in relation to those that position women as already unsafe and men as already safe and potentially dangerous. Feminist analyses that begin with the assumption that male violence is a reality for many women have been very powerful in exposing the unsafety of the supposed sanctum of domesticity. I became interested in this topic because I found that many young women and men had reported in a Teenage Relationship Questionnaire that I developed and administered to high school students that they had experienced violence in heterocoupledness. What led me away from the academic safety of further exposing this violence had much to do with a mounting concern for how women are often constituted as objects and men as the subjects of violence. I became interested instead in how safety and risk might operate as techniques that depend on a conception of male violence as 'out there' and inevitable. I became interested in how safety and risk warnings can serve to produce women as subjects of fear. In roaming from the discipline of psychology I came across various literatures that dealt with the cultural ways that fear and risk are mobilised in late capitalist and Western cultures (Beck, 1992; Douglas, 1992). I began to ask how safety and risk warnings, that I once thought of as necessary for the protection of women, could also serve to re-produce women as fearful subjects and objects of violence.

Marcus (1992) reiterates Gordon and Riger's claims in *The female fear* (1989) that women often report being more fearful than men of violence, even though they are not the sole victims of sexual violence and even in situations when it is men who are more likely to become victims of violence. Men on the other hand are less likely to express fear even in situations where they are likely to become victims of crime and will instead 'tend to displace this fear onto a concern for their mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters which usually takes the form of restricting their mobility by means of warning these women not to go out alone or

at night' (p.394). Women, Marcus argues, become subjects of fear because the category 'women' is often used to 'incite us to become subjects by subjecting us to fear' (p.394). When discussing Brownmiller's influential book on rape, Marcus argues that we need to challenge the language around which rape is constructed as a

fixed reality of women's lives, against an identity politics which defines women by our violability. ...In efforts to convey the horror and iniquity of rape such a view often concurs with masculinist culture in its designation of rape as a fate worse than, or tantamount to, death; the apocalyptic tone which it adopts and the metaphysical status which it assigns to rape implies that rape can only be feared or legally repaired, not fought (p.387).

Marcus' article concerns the way that women can defend themselves against rape by refusing to follow the grammar of the rape script that positions men as predators whose penises are already weapons which can and will be used, and where women are often advised by Police not to respond by fighting back unless women are certain that they can be successful. Resistance to the rape script is assumed to be futile because it can only result in women's injury as the rapists' anger is exacerbated. Instead, she argues that this formulation disables women from using and subverting our positioning within a rape script as already violated, as already victims, as already raped. This fear she claims often results in a freezing where women attempt to negotiate their way out of rape using the same scripts of passive femininity that position women as rapable in the first place – and these negotiations, she states, are often unlikely to stop a rape. Marcus goes on to point out that rape prevention techniques can utilise and subvert the positioning of women as already violable; women can respond with violence and be successful not only in resisting rape attempts, but also in disrupting the idea that 'the rapist's body [is already] powerfully real and really powerful, this self defence strikes at the heart of rape culture' (p.400).

i think Marcus' analysis captures some of the problems with addressing women as already violable and men as already violent. She shows how fear can be used to mobilise and pacify women's resistance and how the very subjects of women and men need to be contested. For the present purposes, Marcus' contention that violence and a disruptive resistance can be used by women in self-defence is an important one. The women that i represent in this thesis did not identify themselves as victims of violence. Each of the women told various tales about how they had either defended themselves against harm, abuse, or violence, or had pre-empted, avoided, and contested attempts to limit their freedom in

relation to Boyfriends, to become responsible for preventing and managing arguments, and to protect the reputation of themselves, Boyfriends and heterocoupledness. It began to seem sensible that just as women must be warned about the risk of men's violence, they must also take charge of preventing men from becoming violent; must defend their equality; must be careful to maintain links with their friends just in case they become isolated; must ensure that Boyfriends have the space to be with their friends; must not sleep around if they value their sexual reputations; must.... Much of young women's time and space as Girlfriends was taken up with this management of safety and risk. It became necessary to question the discourses through which these performances of Girlfriend made sense.

Following Emma Goldman, i ask: "If the sensible dance of Girlfriend is set to the tempo of remaining safe and navigating risk, then how and what will Girlfriends' dance to?" If the discursive soundscapes of heterocoupledness provide precautionary positions from which young women may dance, then is safety itself a disciplining technique and risk its defining limits? Surely, safety is more than avoiding or managing risk. Indeed, risk was practised by the young women as resistance and was an important tactic for contesting the power relations that governed heterocoupledness. Taking the kind of risks that might be deemed 'unwise' or at the very least, not 'sensible', can be a way to assert a subjectivity that is not disciplined by fear. Taking risks may be dangerous but it can also be a way of refusing to be positioned as a subject who is constituted as already violable, at-risk, and hence, in danger. Taking risks may be a way of sabotaging the discourses that position young men as already safe and in turn, can be a way to refuse the terms that limit women's safety to the avoidance of risk.

In this thesis i have analysed the mundane details about how Girlfriends and Boyfriends do heterocoupledness as instances of the gendering of safety and risk. Safety and risk are insinuated into heterocoupledness through the discursive constitution of the gendered subject at adolescence. If the subject of Girlfriend is constituted as already unsafe and at-risk then concerns for remaining safe and managing risk seem to be 'sensible'. If the subject of Boyfriend is constituted as already safe and as a capable risk-taker, then safety and risk seem to be 'sensible' engagements. Yet safety and risk, as they are constituted in relation to hegemonic masculinity, are based on an assumption that safety and risk can be rationally and legitimately played with. Safety and risk are not discursively constituted as problems with hegemonic masculinity – although this is certainly problematic. Boyfriends are not saturated with advice about how to be a thin

enough/attractive enough Boyfriend, they are not warned about talking to strange women, and they are not warned that they are at-risk *because* of their masculinity. Boyfriends in the focus groups did not justify why displaying sexual desire and flirting is normal, they did not discuss how they would care for a relationship, how they would provide space for privacy or 'therapy' for the relationship, how they would protect their own and their relationships' reputation, how they work, compromise, plan and co-ordinate their relationships with friends and Girlfriends in order to have safe, equal, and respectful heterocoupledness. Boyfriends may very well do these things, they may even worry about being depicted as unsafe to young women. The point is not 'what' are Boyfriends and Girlfriends thinking or feeling, but how they discussed heterocoupledness and what discourses were available that allowed these ways of speaking to make sense. According to a hegemonic masculinity, the safe can become dull, normal, and uneventful; risk can involve challenge, and by moving away from what is safe, risks can test and extend the bounds of what is safe. Risk and danger are not necessarily something to avoid. It is more likely that any dangers within heterocoupledness that are particular to Boyfriends, will be limited to the apparent risk to freedom a Girlfriend might demand (or so the cultural narrative goes). In this representation of hegemonic masculine engagement with safety and risk, i have associated safety with the everyday and risk with the unusual and the strange. In this thesis however, i have attempted to theorise safety and risk as part of the everyday discourses of heterocoupledness at adolescence, which i have tried to 'make strange' (Code, 1993).

Throughout this thesis, i have sought to unsettle the assumption that when Girlfriends 'take care' they are being 'sensible'. Most of the thesis is primarily concerned with the subject position of Girlfriends within heterocoupledness. Young men were part of the focus groups, but on reflection i have paid less attention to how masculinity is employed to legitimate the belief that a Boyfriend subject position is largely and already safe. i do not apologise for my focus on the subject of Girlfriend, but it is important that the Boyfriend subject position be questioned. Young men and women discussed safety and risk in gendered ways, so that it made sense that Girlfriends take pre-cautionary steps to avoid and prevent unsafety, while it did not seem sensible that Boyfriends should be careful to protect their sexual reputations, their heterocoupledness status, or themselves from Girlfriends.

Gender is theorised as an incomplete performance and throughout i have emphasised the shifting and fragmentary fictions of gender that act as if gender

were real or sensible. A discourse of heterocoupledness (like that of heterosexuality) remains normalised, and yet the way that gender is employed within heterocoupledness has changed the way Girlfriend and Boyfriend is performed. While young women and men spoke about the importance of equality in their relationships, a hegemonic femininity was not entirely absent. As young women manoeuvred between the various discourses of hegemonic and girl-power femininity, the duty to care, to perform as moral redemptionists of their own safety, a double-danger was also in operation. In chapter four i argued that, for girl-power feminist women of the 1990's, romance and risk are married in such ways that young women enter heterocoupledness already prepared to adopt a stance where romance is married to risk, and that romance is both a goal and a problem for them.

Accordingly, it could appear that i have argued that Girlfriends are made vulnerable by heterocoupledness and that Boyfriends continue to be enhanced by heterocoupledness. This kind of argument presupposes that heterocoupledness is a stable and monolithic social structure that provides only two places of affiliation – one where Girlfriends will be oppressed and one where Boyfriends will conquer. Similarly, in chapter five, i have argued that Girlfriends participate in a labouring for love that demands of them flexibility, compromise, and an attention to the details of managing heterocoupledness. In chapter six, i focussed on how Girlfriends account for Boyfriends harm, abuse, and violence, and are positioned as strategic risk navigators. i hold that it is not exclusively the conventions of heterocoupledness, nor gender, nor techniques of safety and risk, that guarantee how Girlfriends and Boyfriends will perform relationships. i have argued that various discourses constitute Girlfriends as already unsafe and Boyfriends as already safe. These include a discourse of heterosexual invariability, a romantic have/hold discourse, a predatory male sex drive discourse, and a discourse of female sexuality as threatened and threatening, position Boyfriends and Girlfriends in relation to safety and risk in unequivocal but multiple ways.

A heterosexual invariability in cross-gender relations seemed to underscore the context of heterocoupledness, but the discourse did not guarantee that women would be positioned as simply objects to be conquered and scored. Young women navigated this discursive field in multiple ways and attempted to subvert how they would be positioned as friends/Girlfriends. Not all of the young men assumed that heterocoupledness was an extension of cross-gender friendship, although it was generally claimed that heterocoupledness could disrupt male friendship groups. A romantic have/hold discourse was shown to position both

men and women as subjects of romance. However, the young women's romantic subjectivity was not represented as being based on the cultural ideal and expectations for nuclear family and forever. Instead some of the young women questioned, somewhat cynically, the implications of monogamous long-term heterocoupledness on their desires to flirt, to sexually and romantically explore beyond heterocoupledness. Some of the young men tended to position themselves as subjects of a romantic have/hold discourse where the romantic ideals and expectations remained unquestioned and women's involvement in this romantic future consisted in being both wife and career woman, child bearer, and carer of men. A discourse of a predatory male sex drive was also read as positioning Boyfriends desire as central even when sexual chastity was advocated. The young Māori women spoke about being prepared to defend against male sexuality and the possibilities of pregnancy. Other young women spoke about the male sex drive as most primary and at its most potent in adolescence. Female sexuality was presented as both threatened and threatening in heterocoupledness. This discourse of female sexuality as threatened and threatening, positions women as both problems to male desire and as targets of male desire - women's desire is othered, but it is not missing. The young women desired and took pleasure in their heterocoupledness, but they regarded the popular representations and trajectories of romance with suspicion.

i have also drawn on the context of a late-capitalist, Western, consumer culture where youth culture is sourced and re-marketed back to youth as various products and brands. Consumer capitalist marketers have recuperated a modernist rendering of postmodern multiplicity to market new and seemingly liberated representations of Girlfriend and Boyfriend. The archetypes of the good and bad Girlfriends still exert their presence, but a Western globalised-cultural recuperation of postmodernism has meant that this surface has multiplied with various versions of the nineties young woman. Many of these multiple and contradictory representations of femininity, like that performed by Madonna in the early to mid 1990's, have been read by theorists as alternatively subversive and reminiscent of traditional feminine sexuality and desire (see Brooks, 1997). Young men too may draw from a range of masculine designer performances; 'staunch' or 'poof' are no longer the simple dichotomies that they once were. Despite the disruptive impact that such renditions of gender can have, these supposedly postmodern forms of gender are merely the multiplicity of modernity across contexts, in space and time. These renditions still reverberate with hegemonic references to gender polarity.

In this 'politically interested inquiry' (Gill, 1994) these performances of Boyfriend and Girlfriend have been cast as engagements within a discursive soundscape that disciplines and disrupts the hegemony of gender. Nevertheless, i have emphasised the disciplinary operation of safety and risk over the subversive. The problem with this emphasis is that i may have inadvertently layered another level of risk on-top of that which i theorise as problematic. However, at the very least, i hope that i have paid enough attention to the everyday resistances that young women and men do make. Even in a Western context where it appears that almost every space is branded with discourses of liberalism and a post-fordist flexibility that entreats individuals to express themselves through the successful management of the minutia of everyday life, it is also in this minutia of the everyday that resistance is lived and embodied.

Heterocoupledness is a site where Girlfriends and Boyfriends mess with gender and where, even if gender is not transcended per se, its normative status can and is being questioned and rephrased in everyday/everynight ways. As largely familiar, the discourses that are called on to explain and discuss what happens in heterocoupledness are also unmarked and difficult to question – but it is also hard not to question gender when 'something is different', when the marked (the different, the confounding, and the marginalized other) perform in ways that are not easily contained. While a 'blueprint' for future gender relations might seek to impose a set of conditions on 'reality', it is apparent that moments of resistance are already and always present in the little everyday ways that normalisations of gender, safety, risk, and heterocoupledness are made strange.

Throughout this thesis i have made strange my own and my friends' heterocoupledness. i have upset friends who were watching daytime soaps with my exasperated claims that the romance depicted is invariably all about risk, and how women will either cause or escape it. i have been with men who have become confused and disorientated as i refused to manage the relationship according to the cultural norms of heterocoupledness. i am now with a person who i love – or at least that's the only term i have on offer to describe it - and i am pleased that it remains unnameable. We try to disrupt each others' gendered performances and we both refuse to 'work' at our relationship. i do not compromise my principles in order to 'get along', and the romantic ideals of marriage and 2.4 children have been gladly dismissed. The something different that happens may not be transcendent of the pervasive discourses of gender and the discipline of safety and risk, but in many small moments and un-named gestures, something different is performed.

APPENDICES

Appendix i: Teenage Relationship Questionnaire Items

During any of your relationships, did you ever...

- Feel afraid of your boyfriend?
- Have your things smashed, ruined, or destroyed ?
- Get scared by his actions, gestures, or looks?
- Feel afraid to disagree with him?
- Get put down or made to feel bad?
- Made to think you were going crazy?
- Made to feel guilty?
- Feel that you could not see your friends, or family because of his jealousy?
- Feel forced to justify everything you do, everyplace you go, and every person you see to avoid his temper?
- Not go anywhere without him watching you?
- Feel unable to go out, get a job, or got to school without his permission?
- Get slapped, pushed or grabbed by your boyfriend?
- Get beaten up by you boyfriend?
- Get objects thrown at you?
- Have a weapon used against you?
- Get pinched, squeezed, or bitten?
- Get repeatedly and wrongly accused of flirting or having sex with others?
- Feel forced to have sex?
- Feel afraid to say no to sex?
- Feel pressured into doing something sexual that you did not want to?

- Get blamed for making him hurt you?
- Get told that he only hurt you because they were drunk, angry, jealous, or out of control?
- Find yourself apologizing to others because your boyfriend treated you badly?
- Get pressured into doing illegal things?
- Get threatened that you or your family would get hurt?
- Get threatened that he would commit suicide if you didn't do what they wanted?
- Get threatened that he would tell your secrets to others unless you did what he wanted?
- Become secretive, ashamed, or hostile to you parents because of this relationship.
- Have you ever been violent to your Boyfriend?
- Have you ever gone out with someone who has been violent to you?

Appendix ii: Interview Schedules

Relationship development and experiences

Weeks one/two:

During these sessions i will focus on establishing a rapport with the young women. Consent forms and information will be organised before the formal sessions begin.

Questions that i will ask involve seeking:

- Demographic information, family situations, friendship groups, entertainment and leisure activities, past and current relationships with Boyfriends.
- i will ask about how the young women began going out with young men, how they meet Boyfriends, how they express a desire to 'go-out', how seriously they view their relationships, what they enjoy about 'going-out', how parents, teachers, and other adults have treated their teenage relationships.
- i will ask about the kind of things that they would like to talk about as Girlfriends in teenage relationships.
- i will discuss how the young women want to conduct the sessions, including the timing of interviews that will be conducted during class times.

Ideals and expectations of heterocoupledness and romance

Weeks two/three:

During these sessions i will focus on examining what counts as an ideal Boyfriend and intimate relationship. i will also examine their expectations of intimate relationships with men. Ideals and expectations are very closely related and i will focus on negotiating what these terms actually mean for the young women.

Questions that can be asked include:

- When you think of your 'ideal' relationship, what would it look like?
- What is your 'ideal' Boyfriend?
- What do mean when you talk about your ideal of ___?
- Romance is often portrayed in the movies and in magazines as particularly interesting to young women. What part, if any, does romance have in your relationships with young men?

- When you are going out with Boyfriends what do you expect from them?
- What do you expect from your relationships with Boyfriends?
- What do you think is expected of young women in relationships?
- What do you think Boyfriends expect in relationships?
- What do you think Boyfriends expect from Girlfriends?

Gender and heterocoupled om

Weeks four/five:

During these sessions i will focus on how gender plays a part in young women's teenage relationships with young men. Most of the questions in this session will follow up on material from previous interviews and will be focused on how they see themselves as young women.

- Last week we discussed ideals and expectations, and this week i'd like to ask you about 'gender'. When i think about gender, i think about the expectations for how i am supposed to act, and also, about the ideals of femininity that are depicted in beauty magazines and on television. Can you tell me what you think about when you think of yourself as a 'woman'?
- How do you think being a woman influences your relationship?
- It is often said that women are equal with men. What does this mean for you?
- When talking with my friends, we often talk about how things have changed since our mothers were young. Do you think things have changed for women, and if so, how?
- What is a feminine woman? What do you think is a 'good' girlfriend? What is a bad girlfriend? What is lady-like? How do you fit or refuse to fit these descriptions?
- What is a masculine woman? What is a real man? What is a good/bad man? How do the men you know fit or refuse to fit these descriptions?

Naming harm or violence

Weeks five/six:

During these sessions i will focus on exploring how the young women name harm or violence in intimate relationships. i will draw on past interviews to ask the young women about their experiences of feeling uncomfortable, uneasy, angry, or threatened:

- What is acceptable treatment from Boyfriends?
- What is unacceptable treatment from Boyfriends?
- When we talked about _____, i wondered how you came to see this experience as understandable/unacceptable/etc ?
- When ___ happened, how did you feel, what did you think, what did you do?
- What do you think caused that to happen?
- How regularly did your experience these kind of things?
- How do you define what happened?
- Women sometimes say that being in an abusive relationship is hard to define – things can get so messy, that sometimes its hard to work out whether he’s just tired, or he’s stressed-out. Some ‘experts’ have said that teenagers are often ‘fuzzy’ about what relationship violence or abuse looks like – what do you think about this point of view?

Experiences and responses to unacceptable and/or violent behaviours.

Weeks seven/eight:

During these sessions i will continue investigating the young women’s experiences of harm or violence. In these sessions i will focus more specifically on their experiences and the contexts in which any harm, abuse, or violence occurred. As a primer, i will use the items from the Teenage Relationship Questionnaire and ask the young women to identify any item that they have experienced. i will use similar questions used in sessions five/six in order to elaborate on these experiences. Given that i should have established a more conversational tone in these sessions, i will try to focus on discussion. i will also try to draw out some of the main themes that i have noticed in the past weeks. Session eight will probably be the last session that i have with the young women and i want to ask the young women about how i am interpreting their interviews. i will also ask specific questions about anything that i am unsure about from the past interviews.

With the school’s guidance counsellor, i will provide the young women with various phone numbers, resource books, and information about any of the topics that we may cover, as well as any abuse/violence community resources (like the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project and Women’s Refuge).

Appendix ii: Interview & Focus Group Ethical Consent Forms

Name of Research Project: Teenage Dating Relationships.

Name of Researcher: lisa parker

Affiliation: University of Waikato, Psychology Department.

Status: Psychology Doctoral Student.

Contact: Phone: 856 2889, Hamilton.

I have received an information sheet about this study and the researcher has explained the study to me. I have had a chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw at any time.

Signature: _____

False Name: _____

Date: _____

Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Participant.

The research that i have asked you to participate in is about teenage experiences in their boyfriend and girlfriend romantic relationships. As a participant in a group focus session you and your group agree to be video taped. The information that you provide will remain **anonymous** (that is, nobody, except for myself and the other group participants will know who you are). In order to protect your identity as well as the other members of the group you agree to supply a pseudonym or false name to be used in the research.

Some of the information that you share or hear within the groups may be very personal and private. As a participant you need to agree to treat the information talked about in the group as **confidential** (that is, do not talk about the issues discussed or the people in your focus groups with others). You might want to talk to other members of your group or a counsellor about the sessions, and as long as you feel comfortable that you are talking privately, then feel free. But remember, your fellow group members right to privacy must be respected.

During the research, if you decide that you do not want to be involved in the research - you may withdraw at any time. 'At any time' includes all of the

time that you participate, even until after you have already completed the focus group discussions. You may withdraw from this research by contacting me at 856 2889 and be quoting your participation number (on your consent form) and I will remove your information from the transcripts.

You may also phone me at any time if you feel that you need to talk about any of the issues raised by the research. Sometimes you can respond in ways that you might want to talk about. If you're feeling uncomfortable or just want to have a chat about the research don't hesitate to phone me. Similarly, if you see me around school and would like to discuss anything with me feel free to approach me.

Please make sure that you have filled out the consent form.

Thank you for your help.

lisa parker.

Doctoral Student:

University of Waikato, Psychology Department.

Appendix iii: Composite story used in Focus Groups

At fifteen and a half Paul was her first serious relationship, you know, the idea of love and everything. Her Dad had just died and she had to move out of home because she just wasn't getting on with her Mum. Kim was on her own and she depended heaps on Paul. She thought she was just the kind of person that needs a boyfriend cause usually, she's really close to her boyfriend, like Paul was her best friend. Paul was nineteen and was at tech. Kim's/Paul's my best friend and Paul/Kim is my brother/sister and I set them up after finding that they had the hots for each other.

Paul really loved Kim. It wasn't that he wanted to control Kim, (oh maybe he does) but he just always wants to be guaranteed every day that she's not going to leave him and that she'll always be there for him.

Kim too felt that Paul was all she needed. Paul would always have his arms around Kim and when she said that she didn't feel like being cuddly he just wouldn't listen to her. But that's just Paul, he couldn't help himself all he was living for was Kim. On Friday's they would go out to the nightclub; dancing and partying. Paul's a very devoted guy and sometimes he would get really jealous when Kim talked to other guys and stuff. Kim felt that because she was in a relationship, especially because Paul was insecure that she had to tell him everything, like where she goes and who she is with. Paul would often think that she was flirting with other guys, (which I suppose she does do). That just makes him feel really bad and he ends up calling her a slut.

Sometimes they would have arguments, I mean who doesn't. They were walking down to the supermarket and they started arguing on the way. It was over something really trivial. Paul just looked really, really angry and sort of grabbed Kim by the shoulders and started shaking her. Kim didn't know why but she thought that he just wanted to bring her down to earth. Paul said that she wasn't listening to him because he'd said it lots of times and she'd just, you know, wouldn't listen and he just wanted to make her listen to him. Kim yelled at him because she didn't like being touched in an aggressive way. Generally Kim has opinions that are often very different. A few months later Kim told me that she felt lucky to have Paul because he never, ever tries to make her listen to him.

After a while the question of sex came up. Paul really wanted to have sex with Kim and he had told her this often. Kim didn't want to at this stage and she felt that if Paul really liked her he would take no for an answer. One day I blurted out to Paul; "How dare you pressure Kim" and he said "well that's life I suppose". I told Kim and she was really angry. She said that it made her feel like 'no' was the wrong answer, like she was a baby or something. Kim told him that sex wasn't going to run away but he just thought she was dongy, you know, like mad in the head, like she doesn't know what she's talking about. Kim thought that guys at that age expect you to sleep with them. Which was fine with her because she expected to sleep with him as well but not as soon as he did.

Kim always wanted to be there for Paul but she was only sixteen. She was in love with him but she was also confused. She just wanted to have some fun, like light hearted fun, nothing deep and meaningful. She wanted to talk to Paul but sometimes she felt afraid to disagree with him for fear that he would dump her or hurt himself. A few months back he told her that he tried driving his car off the deviation into the water. She decided to talk to Paul. Much to Kim's surprise Paul felt that he was being a bit possessive and he couldn't handle it. About three weeks later something happened. Kim had lost respect for Paul and she was teasing him about his recent holiday away. "Did you score any nice chicks down there" said Kim. He just went hypes (cause his/our Dad had an affair and now their/our parents are separated) and he slapped her, fully on the side of the head. He ran after her screaming, "Look you weren't listening to me, you just wouldn't shut up!"

Kim didn't know what to think. She still loved him and he did have real problems. Kim had always said if a guy hits me, that's it! She says that to all guys. But it also depends cause there's different sorts of hits as well. Cause I mean you can wipe it off really easily. 'Oh, he only did it as a joke', cause sometimes people can slap you in jest. Then there's the quick reaction when you can see that you have gone whack, like oh my god. Or when they've gone off in anger, they do it suddenly, you can see the change in their expression and you kind of think 'oh he did it by accident' or he just must have had a bad day. Paul too couldn't believe what he had done. He really wanted this relationship and he never wanted to hurt Kim, he loved her.

Appendix iv: Focus Group Guidelines for Facilitators

1 CHOOSE IF YOU WILL ASK THIS: What is the mood of the group? Are they relaxed and in a conversational style? Do they need warming up? If yes...then you could:-

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF BOYFRIENDS OR GIRLFRIENDS AND HOW YOU DECIDE WHETHER SOMETHING IS ACCEPTABLE TREATMENT OR NOT?

2 PLEASE SIT BACK, LISTEN, AND READ THIS STORY ABOUT KIM AND PAUL. THE STORY IS BASED ON SOME TEENAGERS EXPERIENCES AND IS IN THEIR OWN WORDS.

- WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT KIM AND PAUL'S RELATIONSHIP?
- What did you find acceptable or unacceptable? (What specific sections of the story?).
- What features of --- did you find un/acceptable?
- What do you think caused --- to act like that?

(Purpose: To get the group thinking about the specifics of intimate relationships).

3 HOW DO YOU RELATE TO KIM AND PAUL'S STORY?

- What kind of things have you experienced in relationships that make you wonder? (Either about your own or your partner's behaviour?)
- How did you decide what was unacceptable or acceptable?
- What was it about that made you feel uncomfortable?

(Purpose: To get the participants to talk about their experiences of deciding about appropriate behaviour in relationships).

4 WHEN KIM SAID THAT SHE REALLY LOVED PAUL, 'BUT SHE WAS ONLY SIXTEEN', WHAT DO YOU THINK SHE MEANT BY THAT?

Follow up: How does being a 'teenager' influence the way you make decisions about behaviour in your intimate relationships?

(Purpose: To find out how being a teenager impacts upon intimate relationships).

5 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'REALLY LOVE' SOMEONE SO THAT THEY ARE 'ALL YOU NEED'?

Prompt: How does that influence you?

(Purpose: To get the teenagers talk about 'love' and going out in everyday ways).

6 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'BRING SOMEONE DOWN TO EARTH'?

Prompts: How might this statement influence the way conflict is dealt with?

- Whose responsibility is it to solve arguments in a relationship?
- What if one person has more power than the other?
- What if one person has abused the other person?

(Purpose: To get participants talking about abuse in intimate relationships.)

7 "HE NEVER WANTED TO HURT KIM; HE LOVED HER."

HOW DO YOU RELATE TO THIS STATEMENT?

Prompts: How does being 'in love' influence the way you judge your relationships?

- What does hurt have to do with love?
- Who is responsible if abuse is unintentionally caused?
- What about if it is intentionally caused?

(Purpose: To get participants talking about the associations between love and abuse?).

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