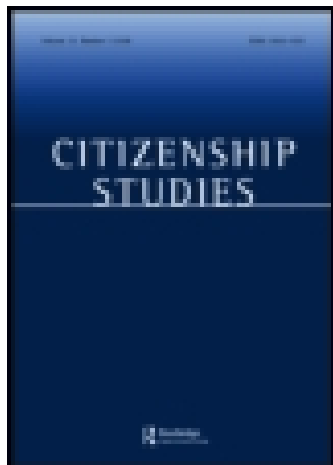


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The Square of Intimate Citizenship: Some Preliminary Proposals¹

KEN PLUMMER

This exploratory paper suggests some emerging arenas of public debate across the personal life—from 'test-tube babies' to 'lesbian and gay families'—which when taken together may be captured by the term 'intimate citizenship'. This suggests a plurality of public discourses developing about how to live the personal and intimate life in a late modern and global world where we are often confronted by an escalating series of choices and difficulties around intimacies. A framework of four key issues is suggested for fuller examination. This entails the changing nature of the public sphere; the growth of culture wars and the need for dialogue; the narrativisation process and grounded moralities; and the links to global intimacies.

Each cultural form, once it is created, is gnawed at varying rates by the forces of life. As soon as one is fully developed, the next begins to form; after a struggle, long or short, it will eventually succeed its predecessor. (Lawrence, 1976)

There are few countries in the world where there isn't intense discussion about sexual equality, the regulations of sexuality and the future of the family ... The transformations affecting the personal and emotional spheres go far beyond the borders of any particular country. (Giddens, 1999)

Human beings have a dignity that deserves respect from laws and social institutions. The idea has many origins in many traditions; by now it is at the core of modern liberal democratic thought and practice all over the world. The idea of human dignity is usually taken to involve an idea of equal worth: rich and poor, rural and urban, female and male, all are equally deserving of respect, just in virtue of being human, and this respect should not be abridged on account of a characteristic that is distributed by the whims of fortune. Often too, this idea of equal worth is connected to an idea

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of liberty: to respect the equal worth of persons is, among other things to promote their ability to fashion a life in accordance with their own view of what is deepest and most important. (Nussbaum, 1999)

Over the past few decades—largely since the arrival of second wave feminism and the lesbian and gay movement—a new field of enquiry that connects the public social life world to the private personal life world has been taking shape. Simultaneously, major new fields of both social investigation and social policy have been appearing: from domestic/sexual violence and reproductive rights to identity politics and gender/sexual discriminations. This terrain of scholarship is now really quite vast: as evidenced by the proliferation of journals, conferences, and publications. Likewise, these issues are firmly on the agenda of most (Western) governments. In this preliminary paper I suggest that this new field of enquiry and politics has grown up alongside a new series of turn-of-the-century social practices which I would like to provisionally identify by the label ‘intimate citizenship’. Variants of the term have now been in use for a few years; and this paper starts to explore some of the problems and difficulties inherent in such an idea as well as laying out a simple framework for further analysis.

The concept of *intimate citizenship* is a sensitising concept which ‘suggests directions along which to look’ (Blumer, 1969, p. 148). It starts to organise a series of somewhat disparate concerns around the personal life. For the time being, I will see *intimate citizenship as a sensitising concept which sets about analysing a plurality of public discourses and stories about how to live the personal life in a late modern world where we are confronted by an escalating series of choices and difficulties around intimacies*. It suggests appropriate ways of living lives with others and to foster the civilising of relations at a time when some people see only breakdown, ‘dumbing down’, and a general lack of civility in social life (Anderson *et al.*, 1992; Himmelfarb, 1999). At a time when a collapse of values and ethics is often claimed, it suggests a new climate of emerging moralities and ethics. It suggests ‘values for a godless age’ (Klug, 2000). Drawing from various traditions of citizenship studies, *it examines rights, obligations, recognitions and respect around those most intimate spheres of life*—who to live with, how to raise children, how to handle one’s body, how to relate as a gendered being, how to be an erotic person. It tries to sense that such arrangements are bound up with membership of different and complex groups and communities, bringing their own inevitable tensions and splits. It recognises that the particular dwells within the shifting universal. And all this means, there is a ubiquitous conflict that has to be lived with: there are no easy resolutions in sight. I am not yet wholly convinced of the value of such a concept, and this paper is part of a project to explore what it could designate, how it could be applied, and what its value might mean. It is a project I started in a recent book, *Telling Sexual Stories* (Plummer, 1995).

Changing Intimacies and the Renewal of Citizenship Debates

A concern with contemporary social change drives this paper. At century’s end,

across the globe, we all now live simultaneously—though at different paces and to differing degrees—in traditional, modern and post-modern worlds. Elderly folk and much of the ‘developing/majority/third’ world may still live overwhelmingly with tradition; and maybe many young folk and richer nations find the post-modern to be more and more congenial to the organisation of their lives: but all live with bits of each. It is, however, the post-modern ‘information age’—moving by many names like late modernity, ‘cosmopolitan’, reflexive modernisation, disorganised capitalism, McDonaldisation, the risk society—which is creating growing interest (Bauman, 1997; Beck, 2000; Browning *et al.*, 2000; Castells, 1997; Hutton and Giddens, 2000). There are surely differences but they all flag a sense of major change. When these theories and views of change get applied to a series of ‘arenas of intimacies’ like relationships, genders, eroticisms, bodies, identities, spiritualities, and emotions, we can hence, perhaps, talk of an emerging new form of life and culture as ‘*a postmodernisation of intimacies*’ (Giddens, 1991, 1992; Simon, 1996). Elsewhere, I have suggested this may include a growing individuation and self reflexivity, a ‘democratisation’ of personhood, the mediasation and globalisation of the personal life, post-identity possibilities, and a McDonaldisation of intimacies, and on on—each with their ups and downs (Plummer, 2000)!

To take just one of these themes—individual choice. The idea that we are autonomous beings who can choose whom we marry and when we divorce; choose how many children we wish to have and whether to abort them before birth or find them through artificial means; choose what kind of sex we have and who with—be it homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual or multisexual; and choose how to behave as a man, a woman or even transgender along a range of points on a continuum of genders; choose, indeed, what kind of bodies we have—all this a growing number of people now take for granted. To suggest the opposite—that others can tell us who to marry, or when we can have children or what kind of sex we should have—is to suggest a world that some see as rapidly in decline. Intimacy in the Western modern world has been shaped massively by the rise of an individualist ideology which increasingly seems to create a world of choices.

It will help to provide some rapid empirical examples of what I mean. To put matters bluntly: who would have thought at the start of the twentieth century that by its very end we would be seriously discussing:

- new forms of publicly recognised ‘family life’, including the value of single parenting; the legitimacy—moral and legal—of gay partnerships, marriage, adoptions and childrearing; the value of living alone, of ‘voluntary childlessness’ and adult friendships; and the widespread acceptance of divorce, out of wedlock conception, cohabitation and remarriage;
- the growth of the new reproductive technologies, including surrogate mothers, test-tube babies and the whole paraphernalia of *in vitro* fertilisation, egg donation, artificial insemination by donor, gamete and intra-fallopian transfer, and the decline of male fertility along with fertility boosting. Such concerns take us to the heart of key questions of intimacy: what is a mother? what is a child? why have a child? what is a family? what is a pro-natalist ideology?

- the even wider use of many technologies to transform that most central organ of intimacy: the body; these included medical, cosmetic, sexual, and disciplining machines which can now serve as direct adjuncts to our bodies, enter our bodies, replace our bodies. It is a new world and language of people as cyborgs;
- the public discussion (and private/public practice) of an array of non-procreative, non-penetrative coital sexualities, including the worlds of 'safer sexualities' linked to HIV/AIDS to such matters as cybersex, live sex acts and sex work, child sex abuse and the registration of paedophiles, the growing debates around courtship and harassment, as well as sadomasochistic practices;
- the development of transgendered worlds, including not only the breakdown of traditionally conceived notions of masculinity and femininity, but the full-scale arrival transglobally of TVs, TSs, bisexualities, gender benders, queers and transgender warriors; and
- the emergence of all sorts of new 'private problems and public troubles', including a whole gallery of new 'personal types'—from sex addicts and compulsives to PWAs; from surrogate mothers and 'women who love too much' to 'Iron Johns and New Men—through to a whole set of new anxieties, 'post-traumatic stress disorders', 'false memory syndromes', and the like.

This list could be hugely extended. But all of this serves to flag both *practices* of new intimacy and the *debates* around them. In the end, they lead us to ask: *how do we live and how are we to live in an emerging late modern world?* From a great many sources, there are signs—at century's turn—that personal lives are changing. Sociologists, and activists and politicians, need many ways of approaching all of this. This paper explores one.

A Political Crisis?

Over the past decade, there has been a growing sense of unease about the boundaries and positions of contemporary political debate, as the old divides between left and right become less persuasive and less extensively held. A string of candidates have arrived to try to fill this 'post-socialist' space: 'life politics', the 'politics of difference', 'radical pluralism', 'dialogic democracy' and others. Although they differ in specifics, they do suggest certain common features which include a recognition that politics is about difference and ways of living life, about dialogues between different groups, about not bringing fixed closures or strong agendas, but keeping things open.

Recognising the continuing importance of a politics of emancipation, for growing numbers of people in the late modern world there are many decisions that can, and increasingly have to, be made about a life. As Anthony Giddens says: the questions of modern politics concern 'who do I want to be?' (Giddens, 1992, p. 216). Likewise, for Ulrich Beck, the problem is 'how to live my life in a runaway world' (Beck, 2000, p. 164). For Jeffrey Weeks, it is 'how to live with diversity' (1995, p. x); and for Kathryn Addelson, it is 'how should we live?' (1994, Chapter 1). For some, natural hierarchies of order and dominance, of a

fixed place in the world with a fixed agenda, of a stable story, are visibly crumbling.

My concern, then, lies with the emerging arenas of public debate across the personal life cycle and across social divisions which signal these changes. There could be a long list of such issues—personal decisions oozing into the public sphere (some of which were here 100 years ago, many of which were not; Showalter, 1991). I think of euthanasia, ‘test-tube babies’, lesbian and gay ‘marriages and families’, single parenting, safer sex, cybersex (and its linked cyber-stalking, cyber-rape, cyber-harassment, cyber-porn, and so on), ‘sexual correctness’, sexual violence of all kinds, transgender and bisexual politics, the new (eu)gen(et)ics debates, the appearance of ‘hate crimes’—and many more—as examples of these critical new discourses. The aim of this preliminary paper is not to discuss the specifics of these cases, but to sense the wider concerns that need to be taken into consideration.

Citizenship Debates

The term ‘citizenship’ now brings many debates, and has been reworked a great deal recently. This is not the space for an extended discussion on such concerns. Suffice to say that citizenship is now usually seen as a much more open concept than Marshall (1950) allowed for when he charted his classic development model of civil, legal and welfare rights emerging in Westernised societies. Whilst, even today, many books on citizenship are by men and about the old issues, there has also been a quite radical turn in the literature to which the journal *Citizenship Studies* amply testifies.

Many new concerns have been placed firmly on the agenda. The notion of ‘citizenship’ now raises issues about a plurality of rights and obligations shaped through participatory, differentiated social worlds (and communities), each with contested status and continuing tensions that need resolving. It draws from both the politics of redistribution and recognition; it sees citizenships as part of a ‘differentiated universalism’; and it continuously confronts the classic problem of moral boundaries (who is inside/outside, included/excluded) both within and across social worlds (including the racialisation of such boundaries and their global links; Ellison, 1997; Fraser, 1997; Kymlicka, 1995; Lister, 1997; Wolfe, 1992; Yuval-Davies, 1997). It now is part of a package of new (even post-modern!) approaches and terms being developed: from sexual citizenship (Bell and Binnie, 2000; Evans, 1993; Richardson, 2000; Weeks, 1998), to cultural/popular citizenship (Turner, 1993), feminist citizenship (Voet, 1998; Lister, 1997; Walby, 1994), global citizenship (Albrow, 1996), flexible citizenship, and the like. Intimate citizenship can join this assembly of new citizens by virtue of recognising an array of new moral and political dilemmas that people are having to confront in post-modern times. We have already been brought some considerable way to my concerns through the ideas of feminist citizenship and sexual citizenship. But although these concepts are helpful starts, my own preference is for a wider more inclusive concept of the personal life (in other words, one that is less focused on the sexual and less exclusively geared to gender—though both

figure prominently). To this end, I suggest the term 'intimate citizenship', which recognises a broader sphere.

Intimate Citizenship

Putting this much more concretely, it suggests looking at the recognition of emerging 'intimacy groups'—and their rights and responsibilities—in emerging zones of conflict. Many new kinds of 'citizens' may be in the making. Amongst these may be the cybercitizen, the new reproductive citizens (surrogate mothers, 'test-tube citizens' and the like), new family citizens (including post-divorce citizens, children and stepfamily citizens, lesbian family citizens, single parent citizens, the elderly citizens), as well as the transgendered citizen, the fetishistic citizen, even the S & M citizen ... I invent such a listing a little tongue-in-cheek; but to say such things does create a sense of who is 'in' and who is 'out'; whose rights and responsibilities we may need to look at more closely.

If we can accept, at least for the moment, the value of clustering diverse spheres of changing intimacy and the moral dilemmas they bring under the broad heading 'intimate citizenship', then four areas of analysis present themselves for inspection. I call this the 'square of intimate citizenship' and it highlights four arenas: (1) public spheres; (2) culture wars and the need for dialogue; (3) narrativisation and moral stories; and (4) globalisation. All I can do in a limited space is flag a few directions for further enquiry to take and provide a few examples.

Intimate Debates in Public Spheres

Citizenship debates are bound up with the public sphere(s). This sphere and its continuing transformations have been well discussed and documented by numerous commentators but it was the translation and publication of Jürgen Habermas's *The Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962/1989) and the subsequent commentary it generated that has been most influential (for example, Calhoun, 1992; Okin, 1989). Habermas sees the modern public sphere as emerging out of a feudal era which denied public, open discussion on issues of universal significance. A critical public space appears in the coffee houses and salons of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But, so he argues, this falls into decline with the growth of press commercialisation: social life becomes more and more privatised and commercialised as we move from a 'culture debating' to a 'culture consuming' public (Habermas, 1962, p. 159). This decline is caused in part by the invasion of that sphere by commercial elements, in part through the pervasiveness of mass media as a passive medium that induces a kind of stupor, and in part through the collapse of a clear distinction between the public and the private.

Rethinking the Late Modern Public Spheres

Yet feminist scholars, amongst others, have suggested that Habermas's analysis of the public sphere is a deeply privileged one (mirroring their critique of the

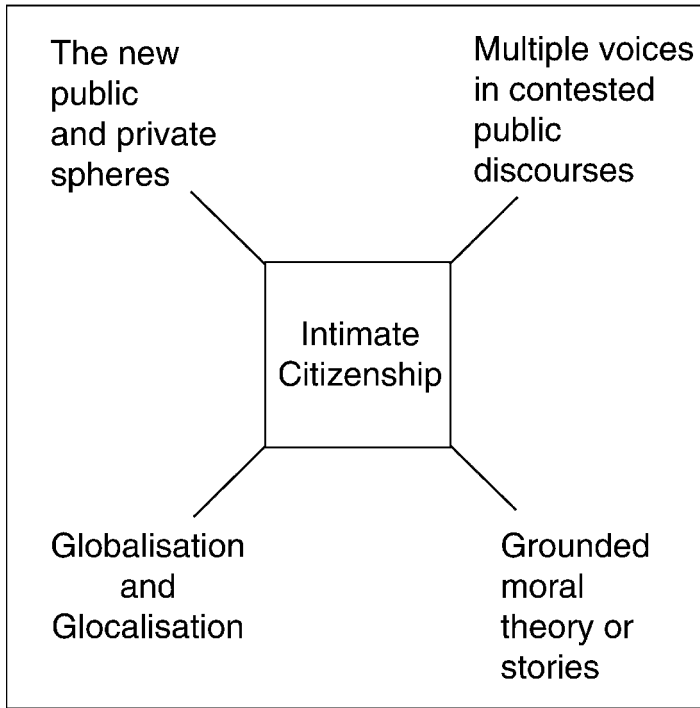


Figure 1. The square of intimate citizenship: opening dilemmas

‘male citizenship model’), and have argued that the ‘bourgeois public (of the past) was never *the* public’. As Nancy Fraser has powerfully argued: ‘virtually contemporaneous with the bourgeois public there arose a host of competing counterpublics, including nationalist publics, popular peasant publics, elite women’s publics, black publics and working-class publics. There were competing publics from the start ...’ Indeed, Habermas’s conception of the public—‘bourgeois, masculinist, white supremacist’—was flawed from the outset; and we need to recognise models of public spheres where there is the ‘proliferation of a multiplicity of competing publics’, some of which are ‘subaltern counterpublics’ (Fraser, 1997, pp. 75, 77, 81).

I thus now assume there are *multiple, hierarchically layered and contested public spheres*—for example, ‘the black public sphere’ (Black Public Sphere Collective, 1995), the ‘gay public sphere’ (Clarke, 2000), the ‘sex worker’s public sphere’ (Kemadoo and Doezeema, 1998) and an ‘Evangelical Christian public sphere’, and so on. I think the term ‘intimate citizenship’ must learn to denote a plurality of multiple public voices and positions: there can no longer be any expectation that pure blueprints will be found. Unlike earlier versions of citizenship which often floundered by marginalising and excluding certain groups, intimate citizenship cannot imply one model, one pattern, one way or one voice. On the contrary, it is a loose term which comes to designate an array

of tellings and a multiplicity of voices in which new lives, new communities and new politics dwell. It must actively embrace the empirical existence of voices of the personal life which are in sharp—sometimes fatal—conflicts. It must fit into the contemporary empirical reality of the ethos of pluralisation (Connolly, 1995).

Just what constitutes the Public Sphere at the start of the twenty-first century, then, is hard to determine and it might be helpful to go back to the drawing board and consider just where the public voices debating the personal life are most likely to be heard at the start of the new century. One of the most striking immediate conclusions is that they can be heard in many places—there is a ceaseless discussion about how to live a life in the late modern world. Indeed, and perhaps because of the radical doubt and ‘risk’ that post-modernity brings in its wake, we could say that the post-modern society is now characterised by a constant public talk around how to live the life (Beck, 2000). Along with classical (usually male) public spheres (of political participation) these are newish forms of public spheres which need analysis. Some of this talk may simply be seen as *babble and chatter*—as opposed to *deliberative reasoning*. And I assume that *deliberative reasoning* must be a hall mark of the Public Sphere; though this is not to exclude other forms of talk (Gamson, 1992; Goldfarb, 1998; Shattuc, 1997). Still, suspending judgement on whether it is *babble* or *deliberative reasoning* for the moment, amongst the emerging zones are:

- new social movement worlds: from the women’s movement and lesbian and gay movement to Christian evangelical movements. All of them have a prime task of establishing the rhetoric and claims about their key concerns; to set a public agenda for debate. Indeed, this has to be one of the ways in which their workings can be judged as a success or not;
- media worlds: contra Habermas, television, press, and websites are packed with debate and public talk about the personal life. Here is the ‘mediation’ of personal life, where the media become a pervasive influence through which we conduct our talk in everyday life. From the moral dramas found in soap operas, through chat and talk shows and on to the very ‘News’ itself, it is through these very media we get many of our ideas for public debate from. In addition, we now also have the major problem of the emerging world of cybertalk—large networks of like minded people are merging somewhere out there in cyberspace, and many are talking quite seriously to each other about social change (Eisenstein, 1998);
- educational worlds: despite persistent talk of ‘dumbing down’ we can find more and more people gaining access to education, and all its ramifications such as international publishing and international conferences to debate sexuality, reproduction, queer theory, the family and the like; and
- art worlds: art may be housed in special buildings where many may not go. But nowadays it spills over into endless public debate about what constitutes art (for example, novels, ‘art’, music, photos; Steiner, 1995) and how it is to impact the personal life.

In all this, the role of the public philosopher and public intellectuals needs to be reconsidered, along with the many other voices who are starting to claim a right to speak about the directions of their lives.

We must also come to recognise the multiplicity of public spheres. One example of all this, from many, can be seen in what I call the emergence of *gay and lesbian public spheres*. There is now quite a significant series of studies which chart the way in which lesbian and gay cultures have emerged over the past century, but especially since the symbolic rallying of Stonewall in 1969. We can see within this culture the emergence of distinctive public spheres—with their own media, professionals and spokespeople and an enormous outpouring of books and writing which have helped to make gay debates very public indeed. Of course, it is a voice still surrounded by silences and hostilities, but that it has a place on the public agendas of debate in growing numbers of countries is undeniable. The silence of the past has been broken, a ‘gay issues’ culture has emerged, and gay and lesbian public spheres are now—like it or not—a noted feature of public life (Smith and Windes, 2000).

These *gay and lesbian public spheres* may be seen as (a) developing their own visible and positive cultures, which (b) leak into the wider public spheres and cultures, whilst also (c) providing alternative, subaltern cultures. In doing this they shift the margins and the boundaries of the wider society (compare Plummer, 1998).

The visible culture has led to increasing recognition (‘coming out’, ‘finding a voice’, ‘making a space’, and creating a flow of texts), increasing equality (in areas of the law, in equal opportunities and anti-discrimination programmes, and in the widespread championing of ‘gay rights’), in the emergence of more ‘gay institutions’ (political organisations, commercial organisations identified as ‘the pink pound’, and welfare organisations such as AIDS support groups and switchboard/help lines). More, the gay public culture has created a new language in which ‘gay rights’ and ‘gay citizenship’ can be discussed—words such ‘homophobia’, ‘heterosexism’, ‘sex panics’ and hate crimes now capture very tangible phenomena that need addressing.

But this visible culture is not hermetically sealed off. It also leaks into the wider culture. Thus, gay cultures have led to such things as the gentrification of urban spaces (for example, San Francisco, Manchester); to improved health deliveries in such things as AIDS buddy schemes, AIDS support groups, and health education, as well as in shifting some notions of kinship—like the ‘families of choice’ described by Weston and others (Weston, 1990; Weeks, 2000); and indeed in creating a broad aesthetic in wider cultural forms like dress, music, art.

But it is important to remember in all this that there is also a subaltern Queer Culture which will not be mainstreamed or co-opted into the citizenship culture. Seeing the roots of gay and lesbian life in transgression, there remain strands—queer strands—that seek to keep (at least some) gay cultures on the borders, challenging dominant cultural forms and assumptions, and seeking to highlight ‘the trouble with normal’ (for example, Bronski, 1998; Warner, 1999).

Culture Wars, Moral Conflicts and the Need for Dialogue

Once these diverse publics are recognised, we enter public worlds that are far from homogeneous or agreed upon but which are deeply pluralised, heterogeneous and subject to what has been called the 'culture wars' (Hunter, 1994). At an international level, it is the 'clash of civilisations' or 'Jihad versus McWorld' (Huntington, 1996; Barber, 1995). The post-modernisation of intimacies has led, then, to an ongoing moral and political struggle over the kinds of lives people should be leading. There is nothing especially new about this debate—as many others have documented (for example, Showalter, 1991).

Yet in recent times, the cacophony of voices around 'sex wars', 'family wars', 'identity politics', 'body politics', 'gender' and the like have surely become very strident and visible. Indeed, in *When the Shooting Begins* (1994), Hunter sees the United States as a culture being torn apart by a series of escalating moral conflicts. Most of these conflicts centre over the body, as a key symbol of the wider social order; and the so-called 'abortion wars' must be seen as its prime exemplar. Here, indeed, are matters of life and death: and the notorious abortion clinic bombings vividly demonstrate how culture wars may indeed become shooting wars (Blanchard, 1994). He finds advocates on all sides culpable of seriously debasing public and democratic discussion; even those who claim to be neutral are in fact duplicitous, and have their own axe to grind.

Dialogues and Pluralities

To be of value, I think the term 'intimate citizenship' must hence learn to denote this *plurality of multiple public voices and positions*: there can no longer be any expectation that pure blueprints will be found. This poses one of the major challenges to the whole concept, because in the past the term citizenship has usually been a term of unity and hence by implication a term of exclusion. To be a citizen meant being within a certain framework of values. But now we are talking about recognising society as harbouring multiple cultures. This is not to say that some thin or minimal consensus cannot be attained—indeed as we shall see it has to be attained. Yet there remain serious problems if we are to hold such a view. As Iris Marion Young remarked:

In a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, insisting that as citizens persons should leave behind their particular affiliations and experiences to adopt a general point of view serves only to reinforce the privilege; for the perspectives and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate this unified public, marginalising or silencing those other groups. (Young, 1990, p. 259)

Traditional values of the personal life, then, are placed severely under threat from a multiplicity of conflicting voices. Yet these traditional voices are usually the privileged voices. Will one drown the other out? Can they co-exist, and if so how? What are the possible relationships of different positions to each other? The idea of 'intimate citizenship' brings with it positionality and arenas of

contested moral discourse that have to be worked through. Ultimately, we enter here many of the classic problems of contemporary political philosophy—where issues of democracy, freedom, community, participation, empowerment, equality, and justice have been paramount concerns in a theory of citizenship.

What is also crucial to grasp in these ‘arguments’ is that they go way beyond matters of simple discussion, debate or reason. To hear people argue their positions is to sense immediately that something much grander than reason is at stake: it is often as if these people are literally fighting for their lives. The arguments are heated, passionate, drenched in emotion and rage. Any attempt at resolution or reconciliation cannot be at the simple cognitive, rational or intellectual level. It goes much further than that. Pearce and Littlejohn, in their important study of *Moral Conflict* (1997), suggest that:

Each side considers its own position to be so vital, and that of the adversary to be so dangerous, that neither seems mindful of the costs of the battle. Allegiance to one side or the other often requires individuals to set aside feelings and beliefs that do not sit easily with official positions and statements associated with their ‘side’. Those who join neither side are devalued as uncaring or muddle headed. The whole system suffers as valid concerns on both sides are belittled and important values are denigrated. Passion, energy and material resources are depleted in fruitless and redundant battles. Participants in the battle, as well as many bystanders to it, are left frustrated, turned off, or sometimes despairing. (Becker *et al.*, cited in Pearce and Littlejohn, 1997, p. 6)

Narratives, Stories and the Grounded Moralities of Everyday Life

‘Intimate citizenship’ could sound like an abstract political doctrine posing questions around how we should lead a life (Addelson, 1994). And yet this may also well be one of the most common questions of living everyday life: everywhere we turn—bars, street corners, school yards, dining tables, churches, media—there is an evident swirl of human activity and talk around ethical and moral issues. Moral debate may well be too important to be left to the philosophers:

virtue is much more complex than even moral philosophy has imagined ... it is not so much a product of reason and rational thought as it is a construction in everyday life. Morality may be a subject for moral philosophy, but moral philosophers are not needed for people to be moral ... (Noblit and Demsey, 1996, p. 185)

Of course philosophy is important: it offers linguistic clarification and rule based accounts. Many of its principled discussions on the *ethics of recognition, of care, of redistribution, of freedom or of minimal harm* do ooze (slowly) into the public sphere (for example, Bauman, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; Hekman, 1995; Fraser,

1997; Hamelink, 2000; Nussbaum, 1999; Plummer, 2001). But the term intimate citizenship does not readily lend itself to this mode of analysis. We are not dealing here with abstract debates on morality; people are not academic philosophers or social theorists and they tire quickly of such accounts. To make politics work, what is needed are *the grounded day to day stories of new ways of living which reveal how people confront ethical dilemmas and deal with them practically*. The philosophers often spin their tales devoid of human experience, of how people go about their everyday affairs engaging in dense webs of moral significance. Yet moral tales are to be found in common sense versions of everyday life. Further, 'people in their everyday lives suggest possibilities for us all to consider' (Noblitt and Demsey, 1996, p. 185).

In looking at ethics this way, a 'grounded everyday moralities' approach would mark out the importance of:

- *grounded processes*—what living, concrete, 'real' people from all areas of lived experiences actually say and do about moral issues in their everyday lives;
- *life stories, autobiographies and narratives*—just how do people get through their days making decisions about what can be done through telling stories of their moral choices which are embedded in their lives and their environments;
- *the presence of multiple voices*—of the lack of one voice and the presence of many containing their own contradictions and tensions (Gilligan, 1982);
- *the importance of the local and the situational*—the ways in which moral life is rarely abstract and usually bound up with the very immediate crisis at hand (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000);
- *awareness of 'the others' and sympathy in moral life* of sympathy giving and the so called 'micro-hierarchies of sympathy', of how so much everyday life depends on the 'kindness—and solidarity—of strangers' (Benhabib, 1993; Dean, 1996; Clark, 2000); and
- *embodied emotions, honour and shame*—moral debate is rarely simply a matter of purely rational debate but is also bound up with bodies and feelings (Scheff, 1990).

A key feature of this is the telling of stories. Indeed, Richard Rorty sees stories as the new bases of public life: 'the novel, the movie, and the TV program have, gradually but steadily, replaced the sermon and the treatise as the principal vehicles of moral change and progress' (Rorty, 1989, p. xvi). But Rorty is not alone: through a wide range of different traditions there is a strong sense of the connections between self, narrative and story, public life, history and politics. The development of ideas of intimate citizenship may well depend upon proliferating communities of such stories.

The Globalisation of Intimacies

Although globalisation is well recognised and much discussed, very few studies ever talk about the connections of this process to the intimate life. Yet such huge changes as we are discussing must clearly start to have their impact upon the

way personal life is lived across the globe. I suggest we can talk of a *globalisation and glocalisation of intimacies*—processes through which local cultures pick up, and usually transform, many features of the personal life displayed across the globe. I suggest too that we can speak of a certain *McDonaldisation of intimacies*—a trend towards more and more sameness in sex, marriage, bodies, identities—as well as a simultaneous *hybridisation of intimacies*, in which the personal life often becomes more diversified. These contradictory processes happen side by side!

These changes can be seen in many spheres of the personal life. They are present in families through global care chains, global families, migration patterns, and global intimate friendships; in sexualities through sex tourism, transnational sex scenes, international sex work, global sex consumption, and global sex media; in bodies through the international traffic in body organs, the new reproductive technologies, the transgender movement and the transnational concerns over genital mutilation; as well as in identities—as localised national identities (Iranian, African American) struggle against more globalised sexual (lesbian, sadomasochistic) and gendered identities ('new man'/'radical woman'). And of course, running ahead of all this, is the internet—well known for its sites of cybersex at every click of the button: a global sex machine only just hidden from sight (for example, Altman, 1997; Eisenstein, 1998; Hochschild, 2000; Kempadoo and Doezema, 1998; Parker, 1999).

To take a few examples. The universal pandemic around AIDS has now been of concern for over 20 years: every country has been 'touched' by it, and major international organisations—from WHO to the UN—have been involved. Although it is a global cultural phenomenon, it can also be said that each culture picks up its own concerns and brings its own cultural modifiers to a range of issues. However it is modified, though, a core language of 'safer sex' seems to have been at work; along with safer sex campaigns that often highlight individual stories. Likewise, the issue of gay and lesbian 'registered partnerships', 'families of choice' or even 'gay marriages' were unheard of 20 years ago but are now being confronted in more and more countries. All the Scandinavian countries now have such partnership laws in place, as does the Netherlands and France. And it goes further as models of new families move across the world; children become adopted into these new families across countries; and as migration swells, partners live their lives at a distance from each other (often with the help of phones, e-mail, and mobiles). Further, many social movements—especially the women's movement, and the lesbian and gay movement—become organised around intimate matters generating their own stories which glide across the globe. The US model of Stonewall becomes a symbolic tale across the world, but at the same time each culture reworks this in its own style (Adam *et al.*, 1998). These same spaces also create a means of global radical communication. Many women's groups, for example, may now be found on the web and are furthering many women's interests across continents and many countries with the arrival of 'net feminism and virtual sisterhood' (compare Eisenstein, 1998). Many of these new forms of global intimacy raise acute issues of intimate citizenship.

The Global Citizen and the Globalisation of 'Human Rights Regimes'

At the heart of what I am calling the globalisation of intimacies is an increasingly recognised claim that human beings across the globe have 'rights'. There is a 'human rights regime' that is spreading around the world (Held *et al.*, 1999, pp. 65–70). This global citizenry may take many forms—some provide an 'elite global culture' mainly composed of wealthy males who have little civic responsibilities whilst 'jet setting' around the world. But others suggest a new kind of citizenship—*global citizenship*—which 'begins in people's daily lives, is realized in everyday practices and results in collective action up to the level of the globe' (Albrow, 1996, p. 177). Martin Albrow sees the model for this being the international working-class movement in the nineteenth century, which nowadays finds many roots into this through citizens who are—as he puts it—'performing the state' (p. 177). Here are global actions at the local level: conspicuously from the Green Movement of Eco-Warriors and the Seattle Siege; but also from the gay/lesbian/queer/transgender movement and the women's movement. These may not reinforce national systems of governance and may indeed even run counter to them. They challenge for the recognition of key issues—often linked to how a person can gain control over their (personal) lives in a 'runaway world'. They organise global conferences that establish world wide agendas of political change.

One of the clearest and strongest examples of all this can be found in the declarations produced from the International Conferences such as the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing in 1995:

The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between men and women in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences. (UN FWCW September 1995 Declaration and Plan for Action para 96; compare Petchesky, 2000)

The origins of 'reproductive rights' and 'sexual rights' may have been the US and Europe but they have moved quickly around the world, developing their own analyses and programmes for actions—often in countries which are extremely hostile. A model for this kind of work may well be IRRRAG—the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group. Building on much earlier work from the feminist movement, it was established in 1992, and is based in seven countries—Brazil, Egypt, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines and the United States. One of its initial goals was to take the concepts of 'sexual and reproductive rights' away from the abstract and into the concrete: to hear the different meanings around reproductive health and sexual rights for women across the life cycle across the world (Petchesky and Judd, 1998, p. 1; Petchesky, 2000). Grounded in a notion of 'cultural citizenship' that takes seriously the

injunction to listen to specific women's voices around these experiences across the world, 'reproductive rights' comes to be seen as a much wider issue than the traditional approach of 'population control'. Rather it is seen as parts of programmes to improve women's health and living conditions generally. As Roslind Petchesky *et al.* say:

the basic international human rights vocabulary now includes not only 'the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and the means to do so' but also freedom from 'violence against women and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation' including 'systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy', freedom from genital mutilation; 'the right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence'; and the right 'to have a satisfying and safe sex life'. (Petchesky and Judd, 1998, p. 10)

Conclusion

This article has sensed an emerging world of public talk around our most intimate and personal lives that is likely to proliferate in the coming century and which is going global. I have suggested that it touches on, and indeed challenges, many of our most cherished, taken for granted, traditional ideas about our bodies, our genders, our families, our young and old people, our eroticism. A multiplicity of new worlds are in the making in all these areas, and I have started to suggest that a language of recognition, rights, responsibilities and care—of what I provisionally call 'intimate citizenship'. As we move into the twenty-first century, more and more issues about our personal lives are on the political agenda.

Issues around 'intimate citizenship' will not be like the citizenship of old. For it has to recognise the constant skirmish of (a) insider with outsider, (b) of traditional tribalism struggling against multicultural diversities, (c) of the need for dialogues across these seemingly impossible differences, and (d) of the need to try to establish—against all the fragmentations of post-modern social theory—some emerging sense of a 'differentiated universalism'. Life in the future worlds of intimacy will not be any easier than it has been in the past.

Note

1. This paper was first presented at the European Sociological Association Meetings in September 1997, and developed further for the 'Rethinking Citizenship' Conference at the University of Leeds in 1999. It is now in the process of becoming a short book—*Inventing Intimate Citizenship*—to be published by the University of Washington Press in their Stice Lectureship Series. I am grateful to friends and colleagues for many helpful suggestions.

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