PALGRAVE HANDBOOKS



THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Edited by Louisa Allen and Mary Lou Rasmussen

The Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education

Louisa Allen • Mary Lou Rasmussen
Editors

The Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education

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For sexuality educators who want to think differently about sexuality education
And, in memory of Louisa's friend Sarah Kruger

Acknowledgments

Putting a book together with 56 contributors and over 720 pages might appear a bit daunting at first glance. However, this project did not transpire to be daunting at all, because it was made easy by the generous and expert help we have received from many others.

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An edited collection is nothing without the caliber of its contributors, and we have been very lucky to include some phenomenal researchers in this handbook. Many of these contributors are our friends and colleagues who we know have worked tirelessly and bravely in what is often a 'knotty' and challenging research field. We thank you for your generation of new ideas and persevering with us, in pushing at the limits of thought and possibility in terms of what sexuality education might *become*.

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1

Introduction to The Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education

Louisa Allen and Mary Lou Rasmussen

The Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education draws together a vibrant collection of writings from around the globe that highlight key debates and signal new developments in the field of critical sexuality education studies (Plummer 2008). A volume of over 720 pages and 32 contributions, involving 56 sexuality researchers, it is one of the first handbooks to attempt such an international overview focused specifically on sexuality education. Our aim has been to assemble contributions from a range of disciplinary fields, across a wide breadth of regional, national, and transnational contexts. We have sought to offer diverse and compelling accounts of how sexuality education is conceptualised, practised, politicised, regulated, struggled over, reconfigured, and hoped for. Imperative to this delineation of the field has been capturing the pulsating richness of the landscape of sexuality ducation research internationally. The handbook is structured into four parts, curated by leading scholars in the field of critical sexualities studies. The handbook is structured into four parts, curated by leading scholars in the field of critical sexualities studies; Global Assemblages

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of Sexuality Education (Part I), Sexual Cultures, Entertainment Media and Communication Technologies (Part II), Sexualities Education in Schools (Part II) and Re-animating what else sexuality education research can do, be and become (Part IV). Importantly, this handbook does not equate sexuality education with safer sex education; such an approach narrows the scope of the field. Instead, this text critically delineates the field to date, while sketching innovative conceptual and pedagogical possibilities for the future.

In order to achieve this disruptive agenda, the handbook is unconventional in its approach to what counts as sexuality education. It seeks to extend traditional conceptualisations beyond school-based approaches and into new spatial and ontological dimensions. Traditionally, sexuality education has been conceived as programmes to prevent 'negative outcomes' of sexual activity such as unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmissible infections (Sears 1992). Instead, contributions in this collection attest to the fact that sexuality education also inheres in other, less anticipated places. For instance, in an animated television series found in Mexico called *Catolicadas* (see Chap. 23 by Aldaz, Sandra Fosado and Amuchástegui), in commercial blog spots in Singapore (see Abindin Part II), and prisons in the USA (Chap. 14 by Fields in Part II). In addition to challenging entrenched notions of the concept of sexuality education and its practice across the globe, we also attempt to unsettle conventional perceptions of a handbook's creation. Taking up what is an emerging theoretical strand within critical sexuality studies, that of new materialism (Coole and Frost 2010), the next section reconfigures the idea of a handbook and its production. Via this theoretical discussion, our aim is to ontologically reconfigure what it means to undertake scholarship such as this handbook, within the field of sexuality education research.

The Handbook of Sexuality Education-Assemblage

The metaphor for this book is an *assemblage*. We borrow it from new materialist ontology to see what it might *do* (Rasmussen and Allen 2014) as a way of conceptualising the work of this collection and probing the boundaries of sexuality education research globally. Deleuze and Guattari (2013) have previously considered the possibility of books being assemblages when they write in the beginning of their joint-authored volume, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'A book is an assemblage. … There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made' (2013, p. 2). Their words were a precursor to an idea that now holds currency within new materialist thought known

as *onto-epistemology*, in which there is no separation between 'being' and 'knowing', but only a 'being in knowing' (Barad 2012, p. 207). Employing this idea to think about this handbook, we might imagine that there is no ontological separation between its subject, which is sexuality education, and the handbook itself as a material 'thing' (Bennett 2010). As Deleuze and Guattari (2013) explain, 'A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters. … To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations' (p. 2). It is to the 'working of matters and the exteriority of their relations' that we pay attention in this introduction. We illuminate those aspects of a handbook's production that do not usually appear in an introduction and attempt to foreground materiality. We do so in a bid to disrupt conventional notions of a handbook, as manufactured anthropocentrically[1] by humans, and also the parameters of sexuality education research itself.

Before we can conceptualise this handbook as an assemblage, we need to establish how we are using this term. Various theorists employ different terminology to invoke the notion of assemblage. For instance, it is an idea often associated with Deleuze and Guattari (2013) and the seminal quote in which Deleuze writes, 'in assemblages … you find states of things, bodies, various combinations of bodies, hodgepodges; but you also find utterances, modes of expression, and regimes of signs' (2007, p. 177). Within her evocation of a political ecology of 'things', Bennett (2010) also mobilises the term 'assemblages', indicating they are 'ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations' (p. 23). Similarly, while employing this term, less frequently than the previous authors, Barad (2007) explains 'an assemblage is a complex entangled web of phenomena' (p. 502). These evocations of the term enable seemingly cohesive entities, such as societies, institutions, and *even handbooks*, to be understood as groupings of heterogeneous elements of material, 'social, representational, discursive, subjective and affective orders' (Youdell and Armstrong 2011, p. 145). In this sense, we conceptualise the handbook as a heterogeneous collection of discourses, people, regional locations, affective imaginaries, spatial dimensions (e.g. cyberspace), matter, and phenomena we cannot/do not (yet) know.

Our use of the term assemblage draws from Barad (2007), Deleuze and Guattari (2013), and Bennett (2010) in distinct ways. In imagining this handbook as assemblage, our aim is to weave together elements of each of these theorists' thinking as a means of enunciating the process of this handbook's

[1] Anthropocentricism is a frame of thought that centres humans and human meaning-making as the sole constitutive force of our world. It places humans above other matter in reality, creating a hierarchy in which humans reign supreme (Fox and Alldred 2013).

formation. A unifying feature of this new materialist work is the way it offers 'a flattened' ontology (DeLanda 2002; Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010) where discourse and matter are mutually implicated in the 'unfolding emergence of the world' (MacLure 2013, pp. 659–660). For the process of this handbook's formation, this means that instead of understanding the editors and contributors as 'autonomous agents' (MacLure 2013, p. 660) who write and produce it, we decentre this human involvement and pay attention to other features of the handbook-assemblage. As described next, these other components can comprise 'all manner of matter; corporeal, technological, mechanical, virtual, discursive and imaginary' (Renold and Ivinson 2014, p. 4).

How we wrote this introduction you are now reading offers a poignant example of the notion of assemblage as a mutually implicated unfolding emergence of the world. Or rather, as Deleuze and Guattari (2013) phrase it, the idea that 'There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made' (p. 2). Within a conventional understanding of writing a book's introduction, humans as its authors are deemed pivotal to its making. Understanding the handbook as assemblage deems its manifestation to have occurred within a living, throbbing confederation of entangled phenomena of which we, the authors, are just one part. For Barad (2007, p. 33), '*phenomena* are the *ontological* inseparability of agentially intra-acting components' that are not discrete entities but inextricably (i.e. *intra*-actively) entangled. Some of the entangled phenomena of this handbook introduction include computer hardware/software; virtual communication tools like Skype and Google Drive we as authors used to share ideas; transport like planes and cars that delivered us to book meetings in diverse regional locations—Auckland, Melbourne, and Brisbane; the movement of the train which carried us into Brisbane as we discussed book contributions; indoor/outdoor spaces such as offices, hotel rooms, and the Queensland Library's outdoor veranda where we worked on this introduction; and even the majestic tree that gave us shade from the Queensland sun, and the lapping of the Brisbane river as we tapped on our keyboards, talked, and thought together. This larger material arrangement (Barad 2007) is integral to the *becoming* (Barad 2007) of this introduction and acknowledges an exteriority of mattering relations (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, p. 2) which spill (i.e. intra-actively unfold) beyond human action. Within the flattened logic offered by the idea of assemblage, we as human authors of this introduction are not its centre, but just one of many intra-acting parts. This understanding of the handbook as assemblage attempts to destabilise our authoritative human influence as its editors/authors.

A characteristic of assemblages is that they are an 'ad hoc' (Bennett 2010) or a 'hodgepodge' (Deleuze and Guattari 2013) of diverse phenomena. From

this perspective, they appear to exhibit a kind of randomness that cannot be explained by human agency. Such an idea seems antithetical to the perception of a handbook as a carefully orchestrated collection of writings by experts in the field. But perhaps, such a portrayal of handbook creation is more human fantasy than most of us are willing to admit? When we allow the agency of human actors to recede and pay attention to other phenomena in the assemblage, it is possible to notice that what ends up in a handbook and what is left out are quite often not of human control. Complex webs of material–discursive intra-actions (Barad 2007) of unknowable/unnameable proportions meant tired, sick, and overworked bodies sometimes could not deliver on promised contributions. Or, faulty technology, physical distance, or lack of a shared language meant some invitations to contribute were not possible or successfully delivered. In some cases, lack of government funding or support for sexuality education regionally meant research in particular areas of the globe was not available. On other occasions, it was a chance meeting at a conference, conversation with a colleague, or stumbling across excellent research as part of an unrelated intellectual endeavour which engendered a chapter's inclusion. When the role of human editors and contributors collide and connect on the same ontological level as disease-carrying particles, space, cyber-technology, language, and insurmountable physical features of the environment (at least for humans), the creation of a handbook becomes much more ad hoc than (humans) might have originally thought.

So how then might we understand the role of editors and those charged with curating contributions in the handbook-assemblage? New materialist thinking about assemblages requires that we 'co-compose ourselves *with*' this handbook-in-the-making (MacLure 2013, p. 142). The decentring of humans and paying attention to other intra-acting features of the handbook-assemblage (such as surrounding matter) are one manoeuvre we undertake above as part of this co-composition. Another is to theorise human agency as something other than autonomous authority in the production of this book. Drawing on Barad's agential realist account, Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2013) provide a way of acknowledging our editing work as an 'agential cut' (p. 692). These cuts are according to Barad (2007), 'agentially enacted not by wilful individuals but by the larger material arrangement of which "we" are a "part"' (p. 178). The cuts we participate in enact the handbook at the same time as our entanglement in this assemblage means they co-constitute ourselves. Agential cuts cut things together and apart and are never enacted indefinitely (Barad 2007, p. 178). The idea of agential cutting does not, however, devolve human actors of responsibility for their participation. There is an ethics to agential cutting that configures the responsibility of editors differently from

that of authoritative actors presiding over a handbook's contents. This ethical relation is not premised on the handbook as 'an arbitrary construction of our choosing but because reality is sedimented out of particular practices that we have a role in shaping and through which we are shaped' (Barad 2007, p. 390). The ethical response this requires of us as editors is 'an accounting of the [handbook's] constitutive practices in the fullness of their materialities, including the enactment of boundaries and exclusions, the production of phenomena in the sedimenting historiality, and the ongoing reconfiguring of the space of possibilities for future enactments' (Barad 2007, pp. 390–91 [insertions not in the original]).

This is the work we have begun to undertake above by acknowledging the practices/phenomena which have constituted this handbook, including those relating to matter. It is also a conceptualisation which provides the structure for the rest of this introduction. In the next section, we engage in sedimenting historiality of this handbook by illuminating some of the referents and interlocutors preceding the book and the central ideas to which it speaks. Next, we draw the idea of assemblage back into a discussion of the book's structure and contents. Finally, as part of 'the ongoing reconfiguring of the space of possibilities for future enactments' (Barad 2007, pp. 390–91), we offer up ideas around the types of contributions we would have liked to include but did not/could not because assemblages are not of human control.

Sexuality Education's Sedimenting Historialities

This handbook is attached to innumerable interlocutors/practices/ideas/events/phenomena which precede this text, but are integral to contemporary sexuality education. These sedimenting historialities shape past, present, and future assemblages in ways that we haven't been able to anticipate, and can't possibly predict. In assembling this section, we turn to a decidedly partial collection of texts and events that continue to resonate in our imaginings of this space. But first, a few words about the naming of the assemblage.

Why call this *The Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education*, and not *The Palgrave Handbook of Sex Education* or *The Palgrave Handbook of Sexualities Education*? *All* these names are problematic descriptors of the assemblages we wish to evoke. If we look to key journals in the field: *Sexualities, Sex Education, Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, and the *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, it appears that there is no consensus with regard to naming. In the four-volume collection *Sexuality Education: Past, Present and Future Issues*, edited by Elizabeth Schroeder and Judy Kuriansky, there is a discussion of the

naming issue. Taverner, Garrity, Selverstone, and Wilson in a review of this text note that:

> While 'sex education' is the phrase most frequently used when referring to this field, editor Elizabeth Schroeder helpfully clarifies that 'sexuality is an expansive term that pertains to far more than our biology or sexual behaviors' (p. 3). She quotes Mary Calderone, MD, a cofounder of SIECUS (originally the 'Sex'—later changed to 'Sexuality'—Information and Education Council of the United States): 'Sex is what you do; sexuality is who you are' (p. 3) (2011, p. 207).

This passage traces movement in the naming of sexuality education assemblages, conveying the understanding that sexuality education is best understood as more than biological or behavioural. The notion that 'sexuality is who you are' suggests sexuality is something deeper than sex, something stable because it is associated with identity—'who you are'. There is also a distinction being drawn in the above quotation between 'who you are' and 'what you do', which is sometimes accompanied by further inquiries based on 'who you do' and 'when you should do it'. But, assemblages of sexuality education are not so neat. They are in flux, events, phenomena, matter, affect; they are intra-active, which also means that assemblages continue to be sedimented in humanist understandings of sexuality, of particular notions of identity and representation, responsibility, consent, disease, behaviour, and biology.

In their analysis of public pedagogy, sex education, and mass communication in mid-twentieth-century Australia, England, and the USA, Alison Bashford and Carolyn Strange turn away from an analysis of sexuality education in particular institutional contexts (e.g. educational, religious) and focus their attention on the flow of communication about sexuality education. They do this to better connect the history of communication with the history of sexual pedagogies. In making this turn, they argue that critical sexuality education needs to focus not only on the content but also on the context of the sex messages being purveyed (2004, p. 73). Bashford and Strange's focus is on broadcast radio and mass-produced magazines—two dominant modes of communication about sex in the historical context in which they situate their analysis. In the intervening period since the publication of this piece, sexuality education assemblages have proliferated and mutated as modes of communication have multiplied. Alongside this proliferation is a demand to continue to think about the context of sex messages being purveyed—that is, to think not just about what is said, but about sexual education as assemblages that are linked to other modes of communication, peoples, spaces, events, and practices.

Bonnie Trudell's (1993) *Doing Sex Education: Gender Politics and Schooling*, Mary Jane Kehily's (2002) *Sexuality, Gender and Schooling*, and Louisa Allen's (2005) *Sexual Subjects: Young People, Sexuality and Education* are three of several important studies of sexuality education that inform scholarship in the current work, as well as being valuable observations of earlier incarnations of sexuality education assemblages in secondary schools in the USA, England, and New Zealand. Trudell's study of sexuality in a ninth-grade classroom provides a picture of sexuality education's legitimation of traditional understandings of gender and sexuality, understandings that accord with desired curricula outcomes. Kehily's ethnography of English secondary schools attends to the workings of sexuality and gender and traces the naturalisation of heteronormative and homophobic sexual cultures in the formal and informal curriculum. Similarly, Allen's school-based New Zealand research explores young people's sexual subjectivities, knowledge, and practices revealing their gendered and heteronormative configuration within schooling culture, and sexuality education.

In another important study, *Get Real About Sex: The Politics and Practice of Sex Education* (2007), Pam Alldred and Miriam David look at the politics of sexuality education in all the secondary schools in one local government authority in the north of England. The context of sexuality education is critical to Alldred and David, and this is reflected in their determination to engage young people who are not in school, but clearly still sexual, and whose experiences of teenage sexuality are often intertwined with parenting, unemployment, and disengagement from education. These young people spoke about informal sexual cultures in school that reify 'having sex' and formal school cultures that provide below par sexuality education. Such work can be placed alongside US ethnographic studies including Jessica Fields' (2008) *Risky Lessons: Sex Education and Social Inequality* and Nancy Kendall's (2013) *The Sex Education Debates.* Like Kehily's work in England, both Fields' and Kendall's speak to the ways in which sexuality education can reinforce inequality, whether it is associated with liberal or conservative understandings of sexuality education. Both Fields and Kendall argue for critical approaches to sexuality education that will be measured not by declining birth rates or sexuality transmitted infections, but by the ways in which they help young people conceptualise inequality and imagine and participate in democratic conversations about sexuality education within the school context.

Scholars studying queer theory and lesbian and gay (and less often bisexual, transgender, intersex, and asexual) issues in education have also been fundamental to our imaginings of sexuality education assemblages. For some researchers within the field of sexuality education, queer theorising is integral

to the project of apprehending gender and sexualities in education and, relatedly, sexuality education. In *Sexuality in School: The Limits of Education*, Jen Gilbert (2014) notes the disappointment in the realisation that,

> you cannot put queerness in the service of socially progressive goals without foreclosing the more radical qualities of sexuality—the surprise of an awkward pronoun or an unexpected interpretation. Indeed an engagement with queerness must risk the failure of a certain dream of education—that prejudice can be educated and identifications anticipated. (pp. 93–94)

For Gilbert, queerness is not something that can be dictated for the purposes of education, however noble those purposes may be. Using the language of this introduction, this is because queerness, understood in this way, is a component of sexuality education assemblages that cannot be anticipated. For others, the queer in queer theorising is read as an association between queer theory, queer students, schools, and educators. Assemblages of sexuality education manifest queerness as identity and queerness as unpredictability. To our minds, akin to Gilbert's reading of queerness, assemblages of sexuality education can't be managed—nor are they distinct from cultural, political, economic, spatial, and affective histories, presents, and futures.

Debbie Epstein's (1994) *Challenging Lesbian Inequalities in Education* and William Pinar's (1998) *Queer Theory in Education* are two edited collections with, arguably, quite different locations within sexuality education assemblages because they depict distinctly different relationships to questions of sexuality, identity, and subjectivity. *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education*, as the title suggests, is a work rooted in an assumed relationship between sexual identity and inequality. It reflects a historical moment from the point of view of activists and educators embroiled in struggles against legislation on the prohibition of the promotion of homosexuality. While the struggles against such legislation have passed in some country contexts, many others find that conflicts over the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) issues in education in school contexts persists. These conflicts continue to make up part of sexuality education assemblages. In naming this work in *The Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education*, we reject a collapsing of categories—where LGBT issues are associated exclusively with minoritarian sexualities and genders.

William Haver's contribution in Pinar's collection *Of Mad Men Who Practice Invention to the Brink of Intelligibility* foreshadows contemporary thinking about assemblages in sexuality education. Haver observes that:

> The body is not yet an object in fantasy with which one can identify or disavow, but the very happening, the place of sociality; the body is not a 'thing' but an 'event', the event of its material thingness. This is the body that matters. (Haver 1998, p. 362)

For Haver, questions of intelligibility and representation may miss the point precisely because it is the body that matters. In tracing these parts of the assemblage, our intention is not to fix them in time, but rather to underscore some of the intricacies of sexuality education assemblages as we have encountered them, returned to them, rejected them only to embrace them again, in a different moment, event, location, grant application.

We now turn to some key events within contemporary assemblages of sexuality education. First to *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, a collection edited by Carol Vance, bringing together papers originating from a conference Toward a Politics of Sexuality. Held in 1982 at Barnard College in New York City, the conference was attended by over 800 women. It was also a decidedly interdisciplinary conference; this is reflected in the inclusion of poetry, images, and essays contributed by academics, poets, photographers, sexuality educators, and reproductive rights activists. The conference was denounced by 'Women Against Pornography, Women Against Violence Against Women, and New York Radical Feminists … for inviting proponents of "anti-feminist" sexuality to participate' (1984, p. 451). A petition in support of the conference states its aim,

> was to address women's sexual autonomy, choice and pleasure, acknowledging that sexuality is simultaneously a domain of restriction, repression and danger, as well as exploration, pleasure and agency. The organizers were concerned that a premature orthodoxy had come to dominate feminist discussion. (1984, p. 451)

Sexual autonomy, choice, pleasure, and agency continue to shape assemblages of sexuality education—though increasingly pleasure, its enactments, and assumed dispositions are coming under scrutiny as scholars wonder whether new orthodoxies are associated with pleasure imperatives (Allen 2012). Which isn't to say pleasure isn't still part of the assemblage. For instance, how does apprehending sexual autonomy, choice, and pleasure as more than human shift their enactments within assemblages of sexuality education?

Danger and repression also continue to loom large in sexuality education assemblages. Arguably, sources of danger are now more diffuse with the emergence of new technologies of sexuality. Childhood and sexuality are prominent in *Pleasure and Danger*, with over 25 entries listed under the heading

children. Children are, have been, and will continue to be part of sexuality education assemblages. How do children matter differently 30 years post the Barnard event? What cuts are made around child sexuality in an era where sexual cultures penetrate everyday spaces in ways that couldn't have been anticipated in the early 1980s?

Looking back on this text also provokes speculation about contemporary orthodoxies in sexuality education, and some of these might pertain to the place of religion in assemblages of sexuality education, including perceived cuts between the public and private, and the sacred and secular. Abstinence doesn't make an appearance in the index of the *Pleasure and Danger* collection, though it continues to be the subject of much debate, and is associated with many practices across diverse religious and secular traditions. Might abstinence matter differently when understood as entangled phenomena?

In the Australian context, home to Rasmussen, 2016 marks the 20th anniversary of the publication of *Schooling and Sexualities: Teaching for a Positive Sexuality* (1996), a publication by the Deakin Centre for Education and Change (based on a conference held the preceding year). This publication turned out to be critical in forming Rasmussen's attachment to sexuality education. She began her doctoral studies at Deakin prompted, in part, by this text. The text organises studies of schooling and sexuality into four sections: Schools and the Social Construction of Sexuality; Teaching about Sexuality; Teaching against Homophobia and Beyond the Silences?; and Violence, Harassment, and Abuse. Notably, 20 years after the publication of this collection, the place of sexuality education in curricula in Australia continues to be tenuous and contested; there is still no national curriculum statement on the teaching of sexuality education. Teacher education in Australia also seems to largely overlook sexuality education as a space for engagement with beginning teachers. Australia is not unremarkable in this regard. But, the absence of movement regarding the place, status, and disciplinary location of sexuality education in school curricula and in teacher education is an impetus for our determination to construct this handbook in a way that does not perceive the school as the central focus for imaginings of sexuality education. *Schooling and Sexualities* is organised in such a way that a section on countering homophobia is distinct from a section on sexual violence and abuse. While there are clearly crossovers between the sections in this volume—the organisational distinction between studies of sexuality education, and studies of sexualities and genders in education, may appear as distinct projects in the minds of peers and scholars in the field. Assemblages of sexuality education don't sustain such distinctions. Cindy Patton's *Fatal Advice: How Safe-Sex Education Went Wrong,* also published in 1996, was a seminal text (and we use this word knowingly) for helping us apprehend sexuality education as assemblage. Here Patton, a Professor

of English, examines how the battle against acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) can only be grasped through reference to porn, specific sexual practices, mass media, public health policy, homophobic cultural politics, and American anxieties about teen sex (to name just a few of the things that went into the production of *Fatal Advice*). This book explores the tensions between US government-sanctioned approaches to teaching about AIDS and counter-public approaches that were much more sexually explicit, as well as being manufactured by people touched by the crisis—radical safe-sex educators (as Patton terms them) who were enraged by the information about the epidemic being purveyed by the state.

The importance of looking to archives of education and sexuality is underscored by Daniel Marshall in his discussion of queer reparations. For Marshall, the point of departure for such reparations must not be a false hope that it is possible to put people's lives back together (p. 357). While queer reparations don't assume that the past can be repaired, it does attend to the sedimentation of the past in the present—this is manifest in the production of sexuality education assemblages. What assemblages come into view? What assemblages were never able to take shape because of attitudes towards non-normative bodies, genders, and sexualities? What stories of sexuality education's colonising and pathologising tendencies continue to be erased because the tellers of such stories are no longer here, or, because lives/practices/bodies/events continue to be constituted as ungrievable, unbearable, and therefore unknowable? In *Too Early to Talk About Sex? Issues in Creating Culturally Relevant Sexuality Education for Preadolescent Black Girls in the United States*, Adilia James (2010) wonders about the racial politics of sexuality education assemblages in the academy and the ways in which they efface the experiences of young black girls, while Jesse Mills' (2012) *I Should Get Married Early: Culturally Appropriate Comprehensive Sex Education and the Racialization of Somali Masculinity* considers the 'stereotypes of African American class, gender, and sex pathology at work in shaping the acculturation process for refugee youth' and the ways in which histories of sedimentation of black sexuality in the USA obscure young Somali refugees enactments of gender, race, and religion and their intra-actions in contemporary San Diego.

To be clear, this idea of queer reparations is not something Marshall perceives as specific to people, things, or practices that might be constituted as queer. Rather, queer reparative work can be utilised in thinking about the status of sexuality education as a field in education more broadly. As Marshall notes, 'until researchers across the broad field of education reconcile themselves to the various ways in which they are writing over sexuality in their own work, queer matters will continue to be seen as marginal, as the personal proj-

ects of queers themselves, and thus lack credibility across the system at large' (2014, p. 357). Our own intra-actions with sexuality education assemblages have produced this space as boutique, marginal, salacious, white, middle class, not for nice straight girls, well suited to not straight girls and a cul-de-sac (Rasmussen and Allen 2014).

In thinking through sexuality education's sedimenting historialities, Marshall's work on reparations is also instructive in thinking about the future of sexuality education. Drawing on Eve Sedgwick, Marshall argues that queer reparative work can be signified by a practice of determining how to put information together differently (2014, p. 357). In compiling this handbook, we are keenly aware of the limitations of the distance between imagining that something can be done differently and the reality of execution—the mattering that limits what voices, objects, spaces, projects, bodies that have been incorporated in this space, and what are left out. We were very keen, for instance, to incorporate disability into this assemblage, but timelines, illness, and other contingencies thwarted our efforts. Dan Goodley and Katherine Runswick-Cole's study of the 'leaking, lacking and excessive' bodies of disabled children is a valuable contribution to assemblages of sexuality education that sits outside the handbook, but helps inform our analysis. Goodson and Runswick-Cole think about how young people's bodies can quickly become constituted as excessive when disability is conjoined with sexuality. They tell the story of Mandy, a 16-year-old girl who has 'the label of moderate learning difficulties' and attends a mainstream secondary school (p. 11). One day she is sent home with a note about inappropriate touching, in reference to excessive hugging. Hugging, Mandy's mother observes, is a practice that had been sedimented in Mandy's exchanges with peers and teachers over many years (p. 12). Through this note, Mandy's hugging is now sexualised, and it is non-normative, 'in lacking the words to describe of justify an "appropriate sexual encounter she is, potentially, denied sexuality"' (p. 12). How can young people like Mandy become a part of sexuality education assemblages that is not overdetermined by excess or risk? In short, we are keenly aware that this particular assemblage of sexuality education is partial and incomplete. We hope it will also generate future assemblages that surface different cuts, possibilities, turns, and sedimenting histories.

Delineating the Assemblage (or Organisation of the Handbook)

Part of the beauty of an assemblage is that although some of its phenomena might be recognisable in advance, it is not possible to appreciate what their intra-relating will look like beforehand. This has been our experience in editing this handbook, and one which we have endeavoured to encourage in the *assembling* of contributions. Premised on our aims for the volume outlined above, and in accordance with established ideas about how handbooks are structured, this work was divided into four sections. These agential cuts (Barad 2007) do not constitute a categorising or cordoning off of elements of the field as a conventional notion of 'cutting' or editing imply. Rather, we conceptualise this work in the Baradian (2007) sense as 'cutting things together and apart' (p. 178). As such, these parts are conceptualised as phenomena that intra-actively form part of the larger handbook-assemblage while simultaneously comprising their own intra-acting phenomena. In accordance with the ad hoc nature of assemblages, we delineate the parts of the handbook below, but not traditionally in the running order of their appearance in the book. Instead, we address each one in accordance with the *force* (Bennett 2010) of (our authorial) ideas as they unfold, and subsequently in the directional flow in which this introduction takes us.

Part I of the handbook offers a useful example of this web of intra-relations, in that it is named 'Global Assemblages of Sexuality Education'. As such, it offers a collection of intra-relating phenomena (an assemblage) connected to the larger handbook-assemblage. Rather than offering a nation-specific exposition of the politics of sexuality education as a regional reference to 'global' might imply, we envisaged it comprising writing that engaged with the field's historical and philosophical derivations. That is, it would span diverse temporalities, places, nations, spaces, and technologies (legal, medical, religious, feminist, and scientific). The phenomena within this section would be historical and philosophical, articulating with critiques of sexuality education in terms of its heteronormalising and colonising capacities. Overall, our aim was that contributions would reveal how sexuality education has been conceptualised and critiqued across time and cultures.

As the leading scholars who head each of these parts write their own introductions, we do not detail individual contributions in each part of the book here. Instead, in accordance with Barad (2007), our aim is to account for their 'constitutive practices' (pp. 390–391). While we outline our original imaginings for each part of the handbook, you will see from section introductions

that heads and contributors stretched and moulded their shape in directions we could not foresee. Indeed in alignment with the notion of assemblage, this is something we had hoped for. For instance, almost all these scholars renamed the working titles we offered for their sections. As one example, in keeping with our intention that sexuality education be more broadly envisioned than formal sexuality education, Part III was originally named 'New Technologies, Space, and Sexual Cultures'. Its focus was on learning via new technologies including Facebook, MySpace, and sexting as well as what are now more conventional spatial forums such as film and television. Our aim for the section was to reveal the expansive way in which sexuality is 'educated' and attendant sexual cultures that are produced in virtual spaces and contexts beyond the classroom. Due to the ad hoc nature of assemblages described above, the final title of the section *became* 'Sexual Cultures, Entertainment Media, and Communication Technologies'. This enunciation better encapsulated the way contributions in this assemblage came together and section heads and contributors interpreted their task.

Part II, as originally imagined by us, spoke to 'the production of phenomena in its sedimenting historiality' (Barad 2007, pp. 390–391) as captured in its original title: 'Sexuality Education in School Contexts' (later renamed 'Sexualities Education in Schools'). This section's focus recognised that historically sexuality education has (and continues) to occur predominantly in school-based settings. Contributions were envisaged to focus on how such learning occurs as a consequence of the specific nature of this institutional environment with emphasis on how students are constructed via discourses and practices as 'child', 'gendered', and '(hetero)sexual citizen'. We imagined attention might be given to the ways parents, administrators, governments, and expert commentators are woven together in the project of designing and enacting school-based sexuality education while highlighting what has been (im)possible to achieve in this context. As conceived by the section heads and contributors, Part II stretches this original brief with the inclusion of illuminating pieces on sexuality education outside school-based contexts and within, for instance, sites of mass incarceration (See Fields and Torquinto (Chapter 14)). In the unforeseen coagulation of this assemblage, we as editors are excited by the way this chapter unexpectedly highlights how sexuality education in prisons offers a critical mirror to the inadequacies of some school-based programmes.

The final part of the handbook entitled 'Re-animating what else sexuality education research can do, be, and become' participates in 'the ongoing reconfiguring of the space of possibilities for future enactments' (Barad 2007, pp. 390–91) of the field. While the previous sections were envisaged to sketch sexuality education's historical and contemporary conceptualisations and

practices, this section was geared to orient readers towards future possibilities. It aimed to press at the edges of current thought around sexuality education by exploring new ways of conceptualising this field. To do this, critical sexualities scholars were invited to bring research and conceptual insights, sometimes beyond the field of sexuality education, to articulate a reshaping of this area. We did suggest possible names and topics for inclusion, yet the ad hoc nature of assemblages meant only one of the final contributions was someone on this list. In characteristic anthropocentric fashion, we had underestimated the flow of this particular assemblage. Its twists and turns meant its form as it appears here could not have been imagined by us.

Our desire as editors for this kind of unknown, and the accompanying sense that this project could only ever be more-than-ourselves (Lorimer 2013), was captured by another (editorial) agential cut that we have not yet accounted for. We decided to invite key figures in the field of critical sexuality studies to oversee each section in order to stamp their own mark on it. Via this cut, we attempted to divest some of our own authority in this project and enable significant others to lend shape to it. Our basis for reaching out to these people was the fact they had made significant contributions to the field, having either written authoritatively on sexuality education, and/or offered ideas that have been influential to its development from outside of it. We also recognised that as leaders in their field, they had reach into geographical locations, communities, and ideas which we did not. The nature of the handbook of sexuality education-assemblage is that (human) editors cannot orchestrate who/what joins it, but by some 'wonder' (MacLure 2013b) everyone we asked to be involved as a section head said 'yes'. In joining the assemblage, each section head brought with them vibrancies of flow, ideas, people, and other matter that make this handbook a unique confederation of thought, affect, corporeality, and materiality which we feel privileged to be a part of.

Becoming Sexuality Education-Assemblage

Continuing with the Barad's (2007) appeal for the 'accounting of … constitutive practices' in the becoming of this handbook, in this last section, we turn our attention to 'the enactment of boundaries and exclusions' (pp. 390–391). This work forms part of the 'ongoing reconfiguring of the space of possibilities for future enactments' (Barad 2007, pp. 390–91) within the field of critical sexualities education. In the spirit of new materialisms' orientation to open-endedness, and the impossibility of knowing in advance what might yet

become, we do not signal the limits of the collection in any conventional form. This practice usually involves editors identifying issues and areas of the field which were not/could not be included in a collection. Instead, we orient the reader to these boundaries and exclusions via a series of questions which we hope hold open, rather than close down, possibilities for being/knowing in the field. You, the reader, may notice that in the interests of opening possibilities, we do not even pose these questions conventionally. Instead of asking fully formed questions, like 'How do space and sexuality intersect?', we offer up particular ideas, such as 'spaces' and 'sexualities'—the coming together (*becoming* of), we cannot/prefer not to, predict.

How do the following come together in sexuality education?

- Spaces and sexuality
- Time and sexuality
- Clothes, comportment, and student bodies at school
- Sexuality education research and ethics
- Sexuality education and dementia
- The sexual 'unmentionables' (e.g. paedophilia and sadomasochism) and learning about sexuality
- Affect and learning about sexuality
- Dementia and learning about sexuality
- Cisgender and sexuality

And then, there are the questions that with our anthropocentric limits we have not/cannot imagine. The dots at the end of this sentence mark their inclusion, while acknowledging they are *unknown*.....

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Part I

Global Assemblages of Sexuality Education

Mary Jane Kehily and Anoop Nayak

Introduction

This section concerns the diverse practice of sexuality education. In particular, we are interested in how these messages are produced, consumed and 'made sense of' by young people in different parts of the world. Commenting on different aspects of diversity and difference, collectively, the nine chapters in this section consider international perspectives on the emergence of sexuality education as a field of research and a site of policy intervention and practice. While many of the chapters discuss sexuality education in specific geographical locations, the focus of the section extends beyond nation state boundaries. It considers how our notions of what constitutes sexuality education can be enshrined through human rights legislation, forms of global mass media, the Millennium Development Goals on education and broader ideas of modernity and global citizenship. To this extent, transnational understandings of sexual learning work alongside, through and against, the various organs of the nation state. Ideas on what constitutes 'appropriate' sexual learning are disseminated through the discursive apparatus of the state including legal, medical, religious, feminist and scientific technologies. An aim of the section

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as a whole is to profile the ways in which sexuality education has been conceptualized and, importantly, how it might be re-conceptualized.

A key idea underpinning the chapters in this section of the book is the recognition that ideas of sex, sexuality and sexuality education vary across time and place. This point has been amply illustrated by a rich canon of anthropological and 'cross-cultural' studies. The transition from girlhood to womanhood, for example, as explored in the work of Mead (1972), Gilligan (1982) and Fine (1988) comments upon both a cultural history and a biological life stage that can be given meaning in relation to time and place. These celebrated examples can be seen as a point of orientation for many of the chapters. Contributions from Australia, North America, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, New Zealand, Mozambique and Ghana build on these examples to provide a contemporary portrait of the abiding significance of location and temporality.

The concept of assemblages is a productive one that can be used to situate the chapters in this section. As a generative idea, assemblage theory can be deployed to consider the 'bringing-into-being' of sexual learning through different embodied, discursive and emotional relations. Importantly, our understanding of sex and sexuality throughout the life course is always in a process of becoming. For many children and young people, sexuality is rarely derived from any singular source or formal pedagogy. Rather, sexual learning involves a 'sticking together' of different experiences, practices, knowledge and understanding. It is then contingently assembled in diverse ways through bodily practices, including first-hand experiences, peer-group interactions, formal and informal sexuality education, popular culture representations, as well as social media networks and technologies.

Working at a meta-level, across many of the contributions, the concept of assemblages helps us think about sexuality education as a meeting place for a range of epistemologies, knowledges and practices. As a number of chapters in this section lucidly testify, there is often a hierarchy to these knowledges that may prioritize Western values, scientific thinking and the signifiers of modernity. In doing so, there is a tendency to institute the vocabulary of Western modernity as an unequivocal 'regime of truth' when it comes to sexuality education, sexual health and sexual practices (Foucault 1976). The imposition of these norms can mean that customs and practices in the global south can be seen as archaic, barbaric and backwards. However, as the chapters in this section make clear, ideas of sexuality education are relational and need to be located in the contexts in which sexual practices occur if they are to hold any meaning.

In Chap. 2, **Kate Fisher, Jen Grove and Rebecca Langlands** use sexual objects from the past to generate sexual discussion with students in the present. In presenting young people with an object, image, painting or other

sexual ephemera, young people can discuss these artifacts from a historical distance that diminishes embarrassment. Furthermore, these historical objects intimate that our fascination with sex and sexuality is centuries old. As the authors argue, such non-linguistic objects can incite 'open, lively, respectful and important conversations' (Fisher et al. this volume) about sexuality. One of the most interesting aspects of this material approach to sexual learning is the way in which objects from the past—such as a chastity belt—can be used to elicit critiques of patriarchy and the male order. Here, sexual learning constitutes an assemblage of human and non-human actors and agents. It is a coming together invoked by researchers, teachers, students, objects and art in a manner that can provide innovative, open-ended and participatory modes of teaching and learning.

In Chap. 3 of the section, **Ekua Yankah and Peter Aggleton** consider how consensus is achieved or rather 'created' in the process of developing the United Nations (UN) Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education published in 2009. The chapter provides a well-informed and compelling account of the key issues and debates informing this significant piece of international policy-making. The chapter reveals the many ways in which politics is imbued in sexuality education at all levels. In developing the Guidance, the political sensitivities of representation and cultural acceptability were central to UN concerns. As the authors demonstrate, the impetus for developing guidance on sexuality education in national and international forums is commonly based upon assumptions and untruths, most notably the idea that talking to young people about sex incites early sexual activity and sexual risk-taking being the most pervasive over the last 20 years. Providing an incisive commentary on a range of studies and meta-analytic reviews of studies, Yankah and Aggleton document key findings and characteristics of effective sexuality programs in different geo-political contexts. Here, what works and why may risk puncturing the silence surrounding the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) response in some locations or be in dialogue with cultural and religious opposition to sexuality education more generally. Discussing the complex negotiations surrounding the development of the UN Technical Guidance document, Yankah and Aggleton conclude that, despite the critical commentary on the contents and finer details, the Guidance gives sexuality education new-found status as a field in which consensus is agreed upon and achieved at the most senior level of the UN system.

Researching in the context of Ghana and Mozambique in Chap. 4, **Esther Miedema and Georgina Yaa Oduro** draw upon a postcolonial framework in order to dismantle the 'colonizing assemblages' of white, Western sexual health programs. Their chapter addresses how the contemporary preoccupation with 'what works' and 'evidence-based policy' is derived from Western

neoliberal epistemology, knowledge and paradigms. To be clear, critiquing this framework does not mean resorting to tribal knowledge, local traditions and superstition. Rather, the unreflexive flexing of Western episteme can lead to abstract policies that offer standardized solutions to complex problems located in the global south. Such accounts risk absenting local women's power in sexuality, extinguishing a rich oral culture of learning, and ignoring the place of 'southern theory' (Connell 2007) more generally. The chapter offers progressive ways of thinking about sexuality education outside of the discourse of HIV/AIDS and Western notions of development and citizenship.

The significance of postcolonial and indigenous knowledge is made evident in the work of authors **Kate Senior and Richard Chenall** in Chap. 5. Through deep and longstanding ethnographic connections with Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory of Australia, the authors are able to provide grounded and participatory ways of working that utilize 'body mapping' and a community form of 'risk mapping' to harness local understandings of sexuality. This approach challenges the textual, disembodied approach familiar to sex education classes by encouraging young people to draw figures to express emotions regarding teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases or casual sex. In doing so, practitioners can gain insight into young people's moral values, which can offer a vital entry point for further discussion into sexual inequality and abuse. The sensitive research undertaken is about collaborating with local communities rather than marking them out as abject figures that need to be brought back into line through the medium of education.

In Chap. 6, **Mary Lou Rasmussen** considers the relationship between faith, progressive sexuality education and queer secularism in a thought-provoking commentary on approaches to sexuality education in the USA. Reviewing key studies in the field, Rasmussen focuses on the apparent paradoxes between comprehensive sexuality education and abstinence-based approaches. Importantly, Rasmussen is keen to collapse the binary relationship that usually haunts such discussions. In doing so, she questions the common characterizations of comprehensive approaches as liberal, secular and sex-positive that are defined in opposition to the sex-negating, religious and conservative framing of abstinence-based approaches. Rather, Rasmussen asks how these positions have been framed and naturalized in the political arena of sexuality education. From this vantage point, it is possible to see faith differently, to consider how religion may feature in young people's lives and the work it does in relation to sexuality, sexual learning and sexual identity. Rasmussen calls upon researchers in sexuality education to question the secular and progressive underpinnings of comprehensive sexuality education in order to develop an understanding of how religion and progressivism are 'mutually entangled'.

Chapter 7 shifts the focus from the USA to northern Europe in **Stine H. Bang Svendsen's** discussion of the cultural politics of sex education in the Nordics. In contrast to embattled comprehensive versus abstinence approaches to sexuality education in the USA, Nordic countries agree upon and support a sex-positive approach to sex education as a universal aim alongside gender equality and child rights. The 'open' approach to sexuality education and the success of public health initiatives in northern European countries have achieved recognition as a global example of good practice, an ideal other countries could learn from and follow. The success story breaks down, however, when cultural diversity is introduced into the normative and self-congratulatory national narrative. In a fascinating reading of sexuality education in Nordic countries through the prism of 'race', Svendsen argues that the history of imperialism is central to the contemporary practice of sex education. Drawing upon historical readings, social theory and feminist scholarship, Svendsen characterizes Nordic sex education as a site of 'sexual racism' in schools, thus providing a striking counter-narrative to the liberal timbre that normally accompanies Nordic policy and practice in this field.

Following up some of the themes introduced by Rasmussen in Chap. 6, **Heather Shipley** in Chap. 8 considers the relationship between sexuality education and religious education in Canada. Shipley points to the many interconnections between sexuality and religion and their implications for pedagogic practice. Her careful analysis pays attention to what happens in secular and religious spaces, particularly for sexual minorities and those living at the intersections of religious and sexual diversities. In an analysis that illustrates the ways in which secular spaces are not always inclusive and religious spaces are not necessarily opposed to sexuality education, Shipley engages in some significant and insightful myth busting that makes a valuable contribution to the section.

Chapter 9 continues the interest in religion and sexuality education in an essay addressing a leading question posed by **Louisa Allen and Kathleen Quinlivan**, 'How might sexuality education respond to cultural and religious diversity?' Based on an analysis of sexuality education in New Zealand, the authors develop a think piece that considers how the concept of cultural and religious diversity can be reframed and understood differently. Drawing upon the work of feminist philosophers Todd and Barad, Allen and Quinlivan develop an account of difference shaped by new materialist readings and understandings. From this perspective, difference is not a pre-existing property of individuals or groups but is rather constituted through moments of encounter and interactivity. Furthermore, cultural identities such as being Muslim or Christian, for example, come into being through a conjoining of

human and non-human forces. Here, embodied and corporeal features are inextricably entwined with material objects as markers of difference that come into being in inter-relationships. Allen and Quinlivan conclude with the generative thought, Might we understand that there is no 'other' but rather we are entanglements of selves—our bodies become porous, so that our difference is a consequence of those humans and non-humans whom we encounter.

In the final entry in Chap. 10, **Rob Pattman and Deevia Bhana** explore issues of race and sexuality in South Africa. The HIV/AIDS pandemic that has been most acute in impoverished areas of the global south has also given way to a realization of the imperative for good sexuality education as demonstrated by the authors. They reveal how the apartheid system that divided schools along the fictitious lines of 'race' continues to pervade in the postcolonial moment. In what was a former 'Indian' school that now includes around a quarter of South African black students, the authors found particular 'heterosexual hierarchies' (Kehily and Nayak 1997) predominated. They recount the pleasure and pain of a group of young black women who desire to attend a forthcoming dance, but are aware that Indian boys are unlikely to invite them, while Indian girls in particular position them as less attractive. What Pattman and Bhana draw attention to is the emotional and often unconscious aspects of sexuality (Freud 1977). This includes in particular the way in which we invest in forms of beauty and self-worth, but desperately seek to avoid the humiliation of rejection. Sexuality and emotions are then critical to young people's sense of well-being, and to overlook these is to ignore so much of what it means to be human. The challenge for sexuality education is to offer embodied, emotional and participatory knowledge of sexual relations—as each of these chapters so convincingly do—in order to connect with the life experiences of children and young people growing up in a risk-laden and precarious world.

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2

‘Sex and History’: Talking Sex with Objects from the Past

Kate Fisher, Jen Grove, and Rebecca Langlands

Imagine taking a medieval chastity belt or a Roman phallic pendant into a classroom of 15-year-olds.[1] What kinds of conversations would ensue? How might such conversations help achieve the goals of school-based sexuality education? How might such activities contribute to promoting healthy sexual development? These are the activities and questions driving research at the University of Exeter, UK. The Sex and History project uses intriguing, surprising, and often beautiful historical artefacts that either depict an aspect of sex or sexuality, or had a sexual significance or purpose in their original historical context, as a tool for generating open conversations with young people about sex.[2] Originating from the historical research conducted by historian Kate Fisher and Classicists Rebecca Langlands and Jen Grove, the project

[1] The authors are jointly and equally responsible for the text and accompanying research.

[2] Information about the project can be found here: http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/sexandhistory/

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has worked with sex educationalists and the museum sector in the UK in a range of activities to develop an adaptable methodology that uses objects from the past as a means of encouraging healthy sexual development.[3] This has supported museum outreach programmes, brought sexuality education into core subjects such as history and performing arts, and created specific classroom resources for use within stand-alone sexuality education programmes for pupils aged 14–18. The project responds to issues identified by the health and education sector in the UK and internationally, particularly relating to the widely attested difficulty for teachers of opening up conversations around important topics such as consent and pornography.

The Methodology: How it Developed and How it Works

Our project uses objects from the past as its starting point. It builds on our research investigating the ways in which people and cultures throughout history have thought about their own sexual identities and practices through comparison with those from history (Fisher and Langlands 2009, 2011, 2015b; Grove 2015). This new approach to the history of sexuality has found that interpretations of the past have been used across human culture as a means of legitimising, articulating, and disseminating knowledge about sexual identities, customs, and practices (Fisher and Langlands 2015a, Fisher and Funke 2015). In particular, we have identified the value of historical, visual, and material culture to inspire debates about contemporary sexuality (Grove 2015). For instance, we found that the large quantity of sexually-themed statues and wall paintings from the ancient Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum have sparked public debates following their mass rediscovery in the eighteenth century up to the present day (Fisher and Langlands 2009, 2011, 2015b). Such ancient images, we found, have been viewed as immediate and accessible snapshots of the ancient past and its attitudes to such issues as censorship, acceptable sexual behaviours, and sexual libertinism—provoking rich reflection for many modern audiences on how contemporary society compares.

Applying this historical research to our work with young people today, we have found that historical objects can be used to form the basis of open, lively, respectful, and important conversations around issues deemed important by

[3] For the underpinning historical research see, for example, Fisher and Langlands 2009, 2011, 2015a; Grove 2015.

teachers and of significance to young people's lives. This builds upon museum studies research, including that of our collaborators in the museum sector, which also champions the use of historical objects as a captivating medium through which to provoke discussion of contemporary issues (Vayne 2012).

The methodology works in the following way. Young people are introduced to objects, either through museum visits to see collections, or remotely via models, replicas, 3D imaging, or—by far the simplest and cheapest method—through the medium of photographic images. During workshops facilitated by professionals in the area of youth work, museums, creative arts, and/or sexual health, young participants are invited to imagine and discuss the potential purpose and significance of these objects; this initial exploration is subsequently enhanced by expert historical opinion, which is used to further highlight important areas for discussion or prompt exploration of key themes. As a result of in-class observation, feedback from teachers, sex educationalists, youth facilitators, focus groups, and interviews with young people, we have identified five main factors that make historical objects, and the interplay between the past and the present which they evoke, particularly productive starting points for valuable discussions about sex:

- Arresting, visually stimulating objects provide a sense of immediacy and non-linguistic engagement with the past (making them useful for students who are less confident with written or highly verbal materials).
- Historical uncertainty (even among experts) about the meaning or purpose of some objects provokes independent thought that raises confidence.
- The unfamiliarity and otherness of objects from past cultures highlights cultural diversity, which can lead to the development of a new critical distance from today's cultural attitudes and a new perspective on sexuality today.
- The historical status of the objects creates a sense of distance and depersonalises discussion, reducing the pressure on participants to talk directly about themselves and their own experiences.
- The existence of objects from past cultures communicates the sense that an interest in sex is perennial and an acceptable part of being human.

Easier discussion about sex is generated by focusing on intriguing and unusual objects from the past, rather than basing the session explicitly around the modern-day issues confronting young people. Using historical objects is a 'distancing technique' which sexuality education guidance has recognised as valuable in facilitating classroom debate (Blake 2013, p. 38, 85). A discussion which explores attitudes and ideas from other cultures and societies enables

young people to bring as much or as little of themselves to the fore as they feel comfortable doing, and provides them with mechanisms through which important issues that concern them can be addressed without a spotlight being shone on their own particular circumstances or experiences. For many teachers and students, this method has been proven to be effective in reducing the potential for embarrassment, which is a common risk during sexuality education sessions. As one facilitator told us:

> I think they [the objects] worked absolutely brilliantly because it's a difficult subject to bring up with young people. … So by putting an article in the middle of the room, everybody is able to put their attitudes or their opinions or their thoughts onto it without feeling too exposed themselves. … It just puts the object at the centre of the discussion as opposed to the young person, or the adult who is delivering the session. (Louise McDermott, Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro)

The value of this method is that, even when such distancing techniques are in operation, young people are able to draw parallels between the historical cultures and attitudes and their own contemporary experiences. In the sessions that we have observed, conversations about the history of sexuality were always implicitly about contemporary issues, generating debates about historical societies which moved easily into more direct and explicit articulation of modern issues. For instance, we have worked with a wooden mirror-box made in nineteenth-century China which, if opened with the right alignment of components, folds out to reveal painted scenes showing couples engaged in various sexual acts. This object was used in one session by a 17-year-old male participant to talk about intimacy and the private use of images of sex between a couple; through the object, he and his peers also examined and critiqued their own ideas about commitment and attitudes towards having multiple sexual partners.

Often with minimal guidance, participants were able to draw sophisticated inferences from the historical material and apply them to their own lives and concerns. One teacher we have worked with reflected:

> [The] objects act as a go-between. They facilitate discussion, they make it okay to talk about sex. … The students unburdened stuff they wanted to talk about … we've never found a better way to do it. It was a revelation. (Rev Hammer, Exeter Academy of Music and Sound)

Participants also reported that after the sessions they found themselves able to talk with their parents about sex and relationships in ways that they had not

been able to previously. Describing the objects and what they had learnt about them gave young people the leeway to start conversations at home that led to productive intergenerational discussions about sex-related matters. In this way, the project has the capacity to open up new channels of communication between parents and children outside the classroom. As one student reported:

> I even spoke to my mum about it … got home and was like, 'you'll never guess what I did at college.' … She was surprised … so I started talking to her about it and she was like 'oh, that's really interesting' and I was like yeah, it was [and] because it was nothing to do with me, it was like easy to talk about. She kept asking me loads of questions. (Anonymous, in interview conducted by Sarah Jones, University of Exeter)

In particular, the distancing achieved by using objects as a focus for group discussion facilitates debates about emotional and socially contentious topics which are especially difficult to confront directly in the classroom, such as relationships, power, gender, pleasure, identity, and social pressures (Graham 2015, p. 17; Brook, PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014, p. 5). These most pressing issues are precisely the subjects of the discussions that are naturally generated by consideration of historical objects.

The objects confront young people with alternative worlds, with different ways of approaching sex, and with sometimes radically different cultural attitudes from their own. They give young people prompts to re-examine their own assumptions and to question ideas that they may have previously accepted as inevitable or unchallengeable. The artefacts promote the development of new critical perspectives on modern relationships and sexual cultures, providing authoritative tools that enable young people to make independent and considered choices. As one teacher recognised:

> it enables you to have a critique of where we are … it enables us to recognise that the way we categorise relationships is actually quite transient … holding up that mirror to ourselves is quite educative. (Anonymous)

This helps young people to build skills in critical thinking and to develop the ability to re-examine contemporary models of sex and relationships which they are encountering from their peers, the media, and elsewhere. One of our favourite objects for use in these sessions is a beautiful Japanese carved ivory clamshell from the nineteenth century, which opens up to reveal a miniature engraving of a woman apparently reading a book with an illustration of an erect penis, while pulling up her skirts to reveal her genitals, including intri-

cately carved pubic hair. This object has sparked lively conversations among young people about the consumption of pornography, cultural variation in concepts of what is beautiful, and how notions of pleasure are gendered. Such conversations encouraged young people to understand their own world as one in which certain models of beauty or expectations of behaviour constrain individuals. In this way, young people have been able to contextualise and historicise their own feelings and potential anxieties around pornography, pleasure, and body image. Sexually explicit objects from the past such as this one also challenge the often-held assumption that the world has become more open and liberated in its discussion of sexual matters in recent decades. Participants often express surprise that depictions of sex have always existed in cultures around the world, and they are intrigued to discover objects that appear to indicate that sex was openly enjoyed and embraced in some past cultures. As this comment from a male participant aged 17 suggests, this can prompt a re-examination of assumptions:

> [The activity] made me wonder how liberal we are in our society today … maybe we're not as much as we thought we were. (Anonymous, 17)

The very existence of these historical artefacts, and especially their 'high' status as museum objects, can serve to reduce the stigma associated with the discussion of sex, and to empower young people to discuss topics which matter to them. In this case, it is the reassurance of recognising that people have been talking about, thinking about, and depicting sex for millennia that can break down barriers and enhance confidence. In our work, participants have reported a marked impact on their attitudes to talking about sex after they have participated in the object-focused sessions, suggesting they may feel more justified in talking openly about it, as well as being better equipped to do so. For instance, a male participant, aged 16, reflected:

> Why [do] we criticise sex so much when all we need to do is to look back and discover that people have been having a lot of fun for centuries. (Anonymous, 16)

Our work has shown that these artefacts, precisely because they are valued as 'artistic,' heritage, or cultural specimens which have been collected and stored within institutional establishments such as museums, offer a challenge to the notion that sex and discussion of it should be viewed as something inherently offensive, inappropriate, or in need of being censored. In particular, these objects are seen as something rather different from modern

pornographic images, and can help young people to critique contemporary images of sex and assess their cultural significance.

Where This Methodology Works

We have developed a range of resources to implement this powerful method for engaging young people through historical artefacts in a variety of settings (details and links for each project are included as we discuss them below). This includes the teaching of sexuality education lessons within schools. However, our approach is adaptable for different settings and contexts where informal sexuality education or work around healthy sexual development takes place. In addition to sexuality education, the methodology has been used in other subject lessons in schools (e.g. integrated into art, history, or drama classes or projects), out-of-school youth activities, programmes for disadvantaged youth, health, and social services, and heritage and museum outreach programmes.

Formal Sexuality Education in Schools

Our work in the area of formal sexuality education has taken place within the context of UK, and specifically English, secondary schools, and sixth form colleges (UK Key Stages 4 and 5, ages 14–18).[4] At the time of writing, 'Sex and Relationships Education' (SRE) is not part of the national curriculum in England and Wales except as part of the Science curriculum where teaching about biological reproduction and about HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections is a statutory requirement. However, the UK government's statutory guidance states that schools should take up sex education which supports young people through their 'physical, emotional, and moral development' as part of a programme of Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education, itself a non-statutory subject (DfE 2000). At the time of writing, there is substantial national pressure on the UK government to make PSHE a statutory subject (Graham 2015). There is therefore considerable debate about UK sexuality education provision, regarding the nature, types, or extent of teaching across schools in the UK, and much anxiety about what is and what is not discussed with pupils (Graham 2015; DfE 2015). For example, in 2013, a report of the government schools inspectorate found that SRE 'required improvement in over a third of schools,' and that secondary school

[4] A pilot teaching resource pack for UK Key Stages 4 and 5 (ages 14–18) is available for free download here: http://www.rsehub.org.uk/resources/sex-and-history-introductory-resource/

education placed too much emphasis on 'the mechanics' of reproduction, at the expense of emotion and relationships issues (Ofsted 2013, p. 4, 6).

These comments reflect broader international research into the nature of adolescent sexual development and the identification of a set of new goals for sexuality education (McKee et al. 2010). Such research calls for sexuality education worldwide to move away from a risk perspective, through which the aim is to protect young people from perceived dangers of adolescent sexuality (such as pregnancy, diseases, or abusive relationships) towards a positive attempt to encourage healthy sexual development (Allen 2007). Researchers have highlighted the need for sexuality education which focuses on the promotion of physical, mental, and social health as well as positive identity development (Lefkowitz and Vasilenko 2014).

Our project responds to these appeals for improvements to sex education both nationally and internationally. In the UK, we have worked with key voluntary agencies who seek to support teachers in addressing the emotional, social, and cultural learning around sex and relationships—that which is recommended, but not prescribed or supported, by government legislation. We have collaborated closely with one such agency, the Relationships and Sex Education Hub (RSE Hub), who provide advice and support to the South West region of England and has input into national debates about the improvement of sexuality education. We have worked with this agency on the development of pilot teaching resources, informed by and linked to national campaigns to improve sexuality education teaching. In developing the resources, we have also worked with and consulted a range of teachers, local education officers, health professionals, and sexual health charities to choose materials, to ensure that they are appropriate for target age groups, and to meet key governmental targets.[5] These collaborations have also ensured that our resources include appropriate advice to teachers on the safeguarding of participants, the setting of ground rules, and the provision of ongoing support.

In collaboration with the RSE Hub, we have produced a pilot teaching resource aimed at PSHE lessons in UK Key Stages 4 and 5, which translates into age groups 14–16 and 16–18. This includes suggested classroom activities based around two historical objects and specific learning outcomes and key themes, as well as guidance material and digital support. We are in the early stages of evaluating these pilot materials by trialling them in schools, after which we hope to develop a full-scale resource based on more objects

[5] In particular, we also consulted with the Eddystone Trust, a sexual health charity based in the south-west region of England. More information can be found here: http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/sexandhistory/sex-and-relationships-education/

and addressing wider themes within sexuality education. Although our teaching resources can be used in conjunction with a museum visit, as we discuss below, we have developed them so that they can also be useful for stand-alone lessons, by providing high-quality photographs of selected historical artefacts from museum collections. These can be printed for the class to consider, or introduced as part of the digital presentations and the high-quality videos provided. (To combat IT-related barriers, the classroom activities also work without these technologies.) An important observation during this project has been the way in which photographs of historical objects are effective in stimulating group discussion. Our use of photographs of objects in our work with young people today has greatly increased our ability to harness the power of this material for much wider impact.

Our particular way of designing the resource was developed to meet a UK setting, where teachers with limited or no training in sexuality education or PSHE are often required to direct sexuality education classes (Ofsted 2013, p. 4, 7). Our consultation work suggested that many teachers have anxieties at the prospect of talking with young people about sex, especially about non-biological themes such as relationships, gender, power, consent, or pornography (see also Blake 2013, p. 37). It was in this set of circumstances that we hoped the distancing technique which the objects provide would be particularly valuable. At the same time, we found it was not immediately obvious to such teachers that bringing images of sexually explicit historical objects into the classroom would help them navigate the difficulties of debating the sensitive, emotional, and personal aspects of sex and relationships, so one of our challenges has been to ensure the resource is as user-friendly and appealing to teachers as possible.

The resource leads teachers step by step through a set of activities which are designed to engage pupils with a particular historical object. Teachers are given guidance in setting up the class and furnished with particular suggested questions to ask. The provision of videos in which academics talk about the objects and the issues raised by them ensures that teachers are not expected to have prior knowledge or expertise in history or historical artefacts. The intention is that teachers find the resource a straightforward, structured, and simple way to teach sexuality education and that it helps them generate and manage the discussion.

We suggest that the teacher begins by showing the image of the object, without explaining what it is; they may prompt the class with questions such as 'What do you think this was used for?' or 'When might it have been made?,' but should allow some time for the pupils to explore the object themselves. The teacher is then advised to introduce historical information

about the objects gradually, to fuel the discussion, and, as necessary, to direct the conversations towards certain topics in order to fulfil stated learning outcomes.

Our pilot teaching resource speaks to several of the specific recommendations of the Healthy Sexual Development framework developed by international researchers in 2010, and which also match priorities identified for the improvement of sexuality education in the UK. This includes the need for young people to develop the tools to understand the issue of consent and control of one's own sexuality, and also the topic of mediated representations of sex in today's society (McKee et al. 2010; Brook, PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014). Our resource pack consists of suggested classroom activities based around two objects which can engender debates on these particular topics.

The first suggested activity, aimed at UK Key Stages 4 and 5 (14–18), is based around a metal chastity belt, purporting to be of medieval origin (in fact, it was probably made much later) (Fig. 2.1). We use it to address the recommendation that young people should develop an understanding of consent, agency, and control of their own sexuality and body (McKee et al. 2010, p. 16; Brook, PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014, pp. 9–10). After first allowing the class to puzzle over the object independently, the



Fig. 2.1 A metal chastity belt



Fig. 2.2 Chinese ivory figurine: couple embracing

historical information and videos included in the resource pack reveal that such chastity belts were often associated with the control of women during periods when their husbands were away. The teacher is provided with a series of questions that they can then use to structure discussion about the control of sexuality by husbands, parents, society, and so on. In this way, the chastity belt provides a route into productive discussions around consent, trust, sexual control, and power within and outside sexual relationships, and how these are often gendered. The fact that the belt is likely to have been made in the Victorian era as a Medieval 'fake' can facilitate discussion on why these sexual attitudes persist across time.

The second suggested activity within the resource, also aimed at UK Key Stages 4 and 5 (14–18), is based around a small nineteenth-century Chinese ivory figurine showing a semi-naked male and female couple embracing (Fig. 2.2). This object can be used to help young people develop skills in 'understanding' and 'critiquing … mediated representations of sexuality in verbal, visual, and performance media,' as recommended in the Healthy Sexual Development framework (McKee et al. 2010, p. 18). In the adaptation of this framework by UK academics and sexual health practitioners (including representatives from the RSE Hub, Brook, Durham University School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health, University of Westminster and University of Exeter,) this recommendation is adjusted to 'applying critical analysis to media representations of sex, sexual orientations, relationships, body image, gender and sexual expression.'[6] This corresponds to current guidance produced by key

[6] Retrieved 20 October 2015 from http://www.rsehub.org.uk/media/22180/15-domains-of-healthy-sexual-development-an-overview.pdf

UK agencies that emphasises the importance of addressing these individual topics as they relate to the impact of mediated images in giving young people the tools for negotiating contemporary challenges (Brook, PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014, pp. 10–11).

The suggested activity helps teachers to use the figurine to encourage discussions about intimacy and mutual pleasure between sexual partners, and about how this historical image compares to modern media representations of sexual activity in this regard. These male and female bodies from nineteenth-century China have little gender differentiation, and this can facilitate a discussion about body image, gendered expectations about attractiveness, and again how these relate to mediated representations today. The teacher's guidance also recommends highlighting the fact that the female figure appears to have bound feet and to show the provided video, or deliver the provided historical information, which describes this painful and now illegal practice. This information can be used to think about how specific standards of beauty and expectations about body modification vary across cultures and their visual representations of bodies and sexuality. Furthermore, discussions with the group about whether the object should be described as 'erotica' or 'pornography' or something else can encourage consideration of what constitutes the 'pornographic' today and what type of images we expect see in this genre. Engaging with debates about the historical context in which this object may have been created and used (as the resource explains, it may have been given by a parent to a young woman for educative purposes) encourages consideration of cultural attitudes towards the issue of who should be able to view sexually explicit images and the associated underlying assumptions and implications.

In addition to the discussion of specific topics in class, our resources also address a number of the recommendations of the 2010 Healthy Sexual Development framework about fundamental methodological approaches to sexuality education. First, the framework is based upon a multidisciplinary approach to understanding healthy sexual development (McKee et al. 2010, p. 15). In the UK context, researchers have called for an understanding of young people's 'sexual cultures,' and sexuality education based upon it, to draw on 'insights from different disciplines, but especially those which use methods and approaches that admit the complexity of culture in general and sexual culture in particular, are aware of the shifts and continuities in the way that culture, sex and young people have been viewed historically and make more of the potential for collaborations between academics, other practitioners and young people themselves' (Attwood and Smith 2011, pp. 240–1). Our format employs interdisciplinary research and practice and brings to

sexuality education the approaches and resources of academia, the museum and creative sectors (especially the humanities' insights into the history of human culture), other school subjects, and young people's own input, all of which provide a different dimension to understanding learning and development, sexuality, and the place of sex in society. Second, the framework suggests a 'holistic' approach which develops positive skills and understandings, as opposed to focusing only on preventing abuse and unwanted sexual encounters (McKee et al. 2010, pp. 15–16). Our methods are designed to help young people develop positive understandings of sexuality, for instance by exploring the topic of pleasure, as well as useful, transferable skills such as critical thinking, drawn from other school subjects such as history. Third, the framework suggests traditional pedagogy should be combined with learning through reflection and exploration (McKee et al. 2010, pp. 16–18). The format we have developed is designed to encourage independent thinking and learning by the class and builds on our findings that the objects—as new and intriguing images—are the best way to spark interest and enthusiasm for the session. Our approach is participatory and based around the curious investigation of intriguing objects and their possible meanings, rather than providing definitive answers about history or about sex.

Within Other Tertiary Education Subjects

We have also applied our methodology to the enrichment of learning in other contexts. In collaboration with museums, we have delivered workshops where handling actual museum objects, or viewing photographs of objects, were used as the basis for the development of creative outputs such as devised drama and dance performances, photography exhibitions, composed music and soundscapes, and film production.[7] These artistic creations were inspired by, and further developed, the discussion of and reflection on contemporary sexual issues stimulated by the workshops.

These artistic responses to objects have enriched work done in subjects such as ethics and philosophy, history, drama, or media arts. An example project involved work with a local college A Level drama class (16–18) who were staging the ancient Greek play *Lysistrata,* which enacts the story of a sex-strike by the women of Athens and Sparta as a protest against the war between their cities.[8] We arranged museum visits and workshops using photographs

[7] More information and examples of the creative work produced in this project can be found here: http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/sexandhistory/ An evaluation report of activities from 2011–2013 is available for download from this web page.

[8] This was a collaboration with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter, and Exeter College.

of objects. The class worked with ancient artefacts from Classical Greece, the time the play was first performed, as well as from other periods in history. For instance, we looked at images found on Greek pots depicting sexual encounters between men and women that academics have argued were created exclusively for the 'male gaze,' and which often show violence and degradation enacted on women by men (Richlin 1992). The group discussed the way in which these images call into question the extent of the empowerment and autonomy of the women in the play, especially over their own sexuality, ideas which are sometimes identified as feminist tropes by modern commentators. Through this engagement, students developed new interpretations of the sexual themes within the play and rethought their understanding of its connection with twenty-first-century debates about patriarchy, feminism, and expectations of gender roles around sexual initiative and political power.

In other projects, students wrote and performed powerful dance and drama pieces in response to sessions with various objects.[9] For instance, one group of young women devised and performed a play in response to their discussions about a small comical statuette of Priapus (a garden gnome with a giant phallus) which would have been on open display in a home in ancient Pompeii, where it originated; through the story of the relationship between an adolescent girl and her grandmother, they explored issues relating to intergenerational advice about sex, anxieties associated with sexual awakening, a young girl's fears about sexual violation, and sex education. Two young men also responded to images of sexual intercourse between younger and older males on the ancient Roman silver goblet known as 'the Warren Cup' by devising a moving dance about power play within homosexual relationships.

While the students in these activities were working towards qualifications in, for instance, creative or performing arts,[10] for their schools and colleges it was clear that working with us also fulfilled personal and social development requirements of the institution. There are no statutory requirements for sexuality education in tertiary education (ages 16–18) in the UK; however, many schools and colleges include personal development, including sexuality education, as part of their teaching policies. One music teacher we worked with told us:

> We have to deliver certain SRE targets in college and we use college tutorials … [but] it's hard. This provided a new way of meeting these requirements. (Rev Hammer, Exeter Academy of Music and Sound)

[9] This was part of a project in collaboration with RAMM, Exeter; Exeter College; Academy of Music and Sound, Exeter; West Exe College Technology; and Exeter Foyer, a homeless charity.

[10] For instance, the UK BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Performing Arts.

Out-of-School Youth Activities and Programmes, in Particular for Disadvantaged Youth

We have also applied the methodology as the basis of long-term, nurturing projects with young people, especially those experiencing difficulties in their lives. In this, we have worked in collaboration with museums, youth workers, young people's charities, and local authority sexual health and education sectors. This has reached a demographic of young people that the museums and heritage sector typically struggles to engage meaningfully.

A successful instance of this type of activity took place in collaboration with a dynamic arts company and a local museum, in which we created a long-term programme for young people in Plymouth, UK—a city which has low cultural engagement and a high level of economic deprivation.[11] This involved groups of young people aged 14–18 who were receiving support to gain some basic qualifications and re-access education, employment, or training; or those who regularly attended an LGBT support group; or who were learning English as a second language, including economic migrants and refugees. The young participants discussed historical objects and their relevance for their own lives in workshops with other young people, and with older people, using the objects as a focus for challenging intergenerational dialogue about relationships, sexuality, gender, and expectations. They then used activities such as dressing-up games, photographic assignments, choreographic tasks, and drama exercises to engage further with the ideas inspired by the exploration of the historical objects. Finally, they worked with professional artists to produce high-quality films based on the narratives and performances developed in the workshops.

The long-term evaluation of this project showed the particular value of our methodology for engaging at risk or disadvantaged young people, for developing their social confidence, and for enabling them to explore difficult issues in a safe environment. The distancing technique which the historical objects provide, as discussed above, proved especially valuable when working with these groups. In this context, the objects provided a 'psychological and emotional space' on to which participants could project their own 'fears, worries, hopes, and dreams' more safely (Malone 2013, p. 20). The feeling of recognition and familiarity which historical objects evoke about shared human experience was also of particular benefit for these young people,

[11] The 'Lust in Translation' project was organised with Effervescent arts' company; Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery; City College, Plymouth; Plymouth Youth Service, Age UK, Plymouth; Plymouth Befrienders Service and Groundwork South West.

who gained a sense of belonging or empowerment which they did not get through other pedagogic experiences (Malone 2013, pp. 20–21). Object-based working practices were also an advantage for participants who found communication through usual spoken language formalities challenging, including not only the group of young people with English as a Second Language, but also groups of young people who had recently experienced emotional and physical hardship or violence. Our exploratory and participatory approach also suited those participants who struggled with traditional educational requirements for 'right' answers (Malone 2013, pp. 9–10).

As in the case of our work in formal educational settings, the activities were perceived as supporting fundamental areas of personal and social development for the young participants of the project. As the evaluation report described:

> [the participants] have few opportunities to talk about sex in a holistic and sensitive way … the young people approached the subject in a more philosophical way; they were using higher levels of analysis than they would do in our standard activities about sexual health and relationships. (Malone 2013, p. 21)

The evaluation found that this project had enriched the lives of the participants, ameliorated some of the effects of structural disadvantages, and provided a sustained transformation in future opportunities and personal well-being. As the report describes:

> The participants' engagement with objects enabled them to make more sense of their own (sometimes chaotic or traumatic) lives and their wider communities and society. It enriched their own lives and ameliorated some of the effects of structural disadvantage … [the project] clearly demonstrated that the power of museum objects and collections lies in working collaboratively and creatively with people to help them make sense of what can seem a chaotic reality, of who they are and who they want to be, and to move forward in those plans through developing skills and making new connections. (Malone 2013, p. 3)

For instance, participants gained important skills in critical thinking and communication, as well as increased employability with technical skills in creative outputs. The Arts Council, UK, has showcased this particular project as a model for using the arts to enhance health and well-being (Malone 2013, p. 19).

Museums, Exhibitions, and Participation Programmes

We have also worked with museums on the reinterpretation of collections in exhibitions and as part of their youth-focused outreach programmes, as a way of engaging young people with our approach. One example has been the

curation of a major exhibition with a local city museum, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter.[12] This showcased many of the sexually related artefacts we have worked with in other settings, including the erotic mirror-box, the carved clamshell, the chastity belt, and couple figurine, as well as other materials from across time and place that displayed some of the vast variety of ways in which sex and sexuality have been approached by different cultures. This exhibition and its related participation programme were designed to promote public thought and debate about sex. Exhibition panels posed questions of visitors, challenging them to think about historical and contemporary values and attitudes towards such issues as censorship and display, the boundaries between childhood and adulthood, and pleasure and power relations. With the museum, we organised public talks and events for targeted groups in which we explored the sex and sexual representations we encountered in the galleries and the relevance of these for our lives today. The success of this exhibition in engaging our audience and stimulating their productive reflection on sexuality today was indicated by the feedback we captured from visitors. Feedback from those in the 14–25 age bracket[13] suggests this was another effective medium for provoking open discussion with young people around sex. Once again, feedback from the exhibition indicated that young people are inspired by the realisation (or confirmation) that sex has been a subject of interest in many past cultures, and that this empowers them. Furthermore, several young respondents in particular reflected on the value of the objects as educational material for them and their peers:

> Very interesting to see [sex] displayed, and hopefully it can become a more comfortable and educated topic, especially in young people. (Anonymous, 17)

> [I am] interested in the way artefacts have been used to provoke questions. I like that practices surrounding sex are viewed as constructed and that this has been developed over history. I am very excited about how to could be implemented in the curriculum. (Anonymous, 24)

This visitor feedback also suggested that children aged 13 and under engaged with the exhibition and its themes (the exhibition and supporting publicity included warnings about the sexual nature of its content). A lively debate between visitors on feedback cards indicated differences in public

[12] 'Intimate Worlds: Exploring Sexuality through the Wellcome Collection' was organised in conjunction with RAMM, Exeter, and Science Museum, London. It was curated by the authors with Tony Eccles at RAMM. More information can be found here: http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/sexandhistory/intimate-worlds-exhibition/. When the exhibition was on, the use of the schools-based sexuality education resource discussed above was enhanced by visits to this exhibition.

[13] With the caveat that in written feedback some visitors may not have given their age accurately.

opinion over whether younger children should be able to see such a display. These responses will be useful if and when we consider how the methodology might or should be applicable for work with younger children.

In other projects, we have involved young people as curators and designers of participatory programmes. We employed this model in a series of exhibitions we organised with another city museum in the UK, Royal Museum of Cornwall, Truro, working in collaboration with a local college and young women's charity.[14] It was intended that the youth-led format would allow, as far as possible, the young people to identify the sexually related issues that the project should explore. Allowing them to contribute to the selection of objects ensured that the young people were able to work with material which they saw as especially relevant to their own concerns and to those of their peer group. This project employed creative responses as a means of reinterpreting the objects, in order to deepen the engagement with the historical material. The resulting outputs, such as video installations, contemporary crafts, scrapbooks, photography, and art installations were displayed within the exhibitions. For instance, one 17-year-old female participant chose a 'Sowei mask,' originating from the culture of the Mende people of Sierra Leone. The mask was made to be worn by senior members of the all-female Sande Society during rite-of-passage ceremonies that signified a girl's transition to adulthood, and it features carved expressions of local ideals of feminine beauty and health. The student created a scrapbook in response to the object, in which she presented the results of oral histories created by interviewing members of her family across generations, exploring what it has meant to be a teenager throughout the twentieth century and today, and in particular the way girls prepare for social roles in our society, and changing ideals of feminine beauty and attractiveness.

The feedback from the participants in this project suggested that they felt the experience had enriched their understanding of their own ideas about sexuality, gender, relationships, and especially of their own development into adulthood. As one described:

> We found it inspirational. … The historical objects opened our minds to new ideas. It made us more mature in the way we thought about sex. We all discovered things about ourselves. (Anonymous, 17)

[14] The 'Revealing Collections' exhibitions were organised with Royal Museum of Cornwall, University College Falmouth, Truro College, and Platform 51, a young women's charity.

In addition, the exhibitions the young people curated, as well as the events they organised such as talks and gallery trails, acted as a catalyst for further debate by the general public, including other young people. The feedback collected from visitors to these exhibitions and associated events illustrates the ways in which these creative interpretations of the objects were able to inspire discussion and debate about contemporary attitudes to sexually related topics. One 16-year-old visitor recognised the relevance of the historical material for their own life and saw the exhibition as a tool for thinking through, in particular, sexual identity, attitudes to homosexuality, and the way in which young people learn about sex in our society:

> When you are gay everything is hush hush and taboo … [it is] reassuring, that there is something here that people can actually learn from and not have to go home and google stuff and then delete their history. … Often what you go to see in a museum … bears no relevance to anything in modern life … you want people to be able to learn things and take them away and apply them to their lives. (Anonymous, 16)

A third-party report of this project concluded that it improved the young participants' knowledge, confidence, and critical thinking skills around sex in our society, and broader skills, such as decision making. It also made an impact on future careers for some participants, for instance those who decided to pursue careers in the cultural sector. The Royal Cornwall Museum reported a change in approaches to working with young people and especially in the confidence of its staff in using its collections to tackle sensitive issues. Our work has, therefore, opened up opportunities for the further development of sexuality education in museum settings.

Future Plans and Developments

The work described here represents the initial stages of what we hope will be a long-term, continuously evolving project which develops a variety of applications of our core methodology with multiple partners across the world, applying it to new contexts within which we can further promote healthy sexual development through engagement with historical objects.

The sexuality education teaching resource currently exists only as a small-scale pilot resource drawing on just two key objects. In the short term, we plan to revise and develop the resource further on the basis of an evaluation of this pilot and to adapt our approach to a number of different models currently

adopted by schools in the UK and internationally. This includes the delivery of lessons in-house by the schools' own teachers. Although our methodology has been designed to be easy to use by those without historical expertise, in developing a full-scale set of resources for school teachers, we would want to follow best practice guidance and offer, or arrange for, teacher training which ensures that our users have at least basic competencies around delivering sexuality education (Brook, PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum 2014, p. 13). We also intend to develop our offerings to include bespoke programmes in which our facilitators would deliver sessions for schools, if possible in collaboration with an established supplier, such as Brook in the UK.

We have identified many objects with great potential for further school resources, which could provoke discussions of new themes and concerns, speak to particular audiences, and enable us to expand the age ranges that we can target (e.g. to reach younger school pupils under the age of 12). We are keen to harness the power of historical objects to address particularly difficult and sensitive topics such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or abusive relationships. The challenges of tackling such areas are not to be underestimated; historical objects from other cultures bring to the fore some of the tensions between cross-cultural tolerance and the risks associated with cultural relativism, and this is an issue of particular concern, for example, in objects that relate to the practice of FGM (Burrage 2015, pp. 16–17). Yet it is this sharp focus, combined with the historical context for discussion, which can help overcome some of the problems frequently faced in attempts to engender productive conversations about such topics in the classroom. The future development of our work will embrace these challenges, and we are determined to develop ways of using historical material, even when it depicts sexual situations that reflect gendered oppression, unequal power relationships, patriarchal structures, or relationships that we would view as abusive. We should not shy away from using, for example, ancient Greek images of homosexual activity, even though such depictions reveal the importance of age differentials in the past. Using such images in discussions regarding paedophilia, unequal power relations, or the ways in which relationships between individuals of different ages can frequently become abusive is challenging and requires careful handling, but is nonetheless important in the construction of an approach to sexuality education which seeks to equip young people for the difficult social challenges they face.

In particular, we are committed to expanding our work to include a much broader range of objects which help schools develop sexuality education programmes which value sexual and gender diversity. Our methodology can be effective in not marginalising LGBT experience as outside of the mainstream or

as an area of special interest, for example through highlighting the historically contingent nature of contemporary heterosexual privilege. A Greek pot showing sex between two male figures, or a painting of men dressed as women in an eighteenth-century 'molly-house' (tavern) provides a point of engagement for all pupils to think about issues of sexual and gender diversity and the politics of inclusion and exclusion. In this way, our project supports activities which seek both to equip all pupils' sexual development, whatever sexual identities they express, and to ensure that all pupils are made aware of the issues of sexual and gender diversity, recognise instances of heterosexual privilege, and question aspects of heterosexism (see Meyer 2009). These issues require well-facilitated discussion; but well-designed and well-delivered engagement with historical objects can provide an exemplary way to manage and confront such ideas.

We are planning to develop our work with museums into a more sustained and focused dialogue with school-based sexuality education work. We are developing long-term collaborations with museums in Europe and the USA on the creation of displays and engagement tools (trails, handling collections, and 'smart' reproductions of our objects) that would be used as part of school visits. We intend to develop partnerships with artists and specialists in technology and design in the development of innovative, interactive tools and mechanisms that enhance people's engagement with objects that may be too fragile or precious to touch, or that might benefit from virtual cues to bring the debates surrounding their meaning and purpose to life.

We have come to understand that the key strength of our approach, in every setting or context, lies precisely in the fact that it does not offer traditional sexuality education lessons, though it still is able to cover a wide range of topics relating to healthy sexual development. The objects' ability to create a historical distance, the context of creative activities inspired by the objects, or the setting of a school trip to a museum to see a collection greatly reduce the stigma and reluctance around talking with other young people and in front of adults that are often associated with sexuality education. As one young participant commented after a workshop: 'I think people spoke about things that they wouldn't normally talk about, without realising it.' The young people, teachers, youth workers, and health professionals we have worked with have frequently been surprised by how much young people open up about sex during our sessions. One young person we have worked with has suggested: 'it didn't feel like a sex ed thing.' Our work with historical objects has found that the most effective way to address sexuality education is precisely not to package it explicitly or exclusively as such, but to embed it within other learning, activities, or contexts.

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3

The Manufacture of Consensus: The Development of United Nations Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education

Ekua Yankah and Peter Aggleton

Over the last 20 years, a number of agencies have developed guidance on the form that sex and relationships education (as it is called in countries such as the UK) and sexuality education (as it is perhaps better known internationally) should take. Much of the impetus for this work has derived from the erroneous view that talking to young people about sex encourages them to commence sexual relations irresponsibly and early. One of the earliest reviews, commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the early 1990s, sought to engage with precisely these concerns. It was funded because at the time country-level resistance (particularly in Africa and Asia) to the introduction of sexuality education for young people in schools was in danger of stymieing efforts to arrest and turn back the growing HIV epidemic.

Within this context, Mariella Baldo et al. (1993) reviewed 19 studies focusing in on the sexual behaviour of high school and/or college students who have received sexual education. Of these studies, 15 had been conducted in the USA. One study compared the USA with other countries. The three remaining studies were conducted in Mexico, Thailand, and Denmark. Not one of these studies indicated that sexual education contributed to earlier or increased sexual activity among young people. Findings from six of them suggested that sexual education caused either a delay in the onset of sexual activity or a

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reduction in overall sexual activity. Sexually active young people in ten of the studies adopted safer sex practices after attending sexual education. The most effective school programmes promoted both a delay in the onset of sexual intercourse and protected sex among those young people who were sexually active.

This initial study was followed by a more comprehensive review also commissioned by WHO and undertaken by Anne Grunseit and Susan Kippax in 1993. This time, 52 published reports were examined. Of 47 studies evaluating identifiable interventions, 25 reported that HIV and sexuality education neither increased nor decreased sexual activity and attendant rates of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Seventeen studies reported that HIV and/or sexuality education delayed the onset of sexual activity, reduced the number of sexual partners, or reduced unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease (STD) rates (Grunseit et al. 1997). A later update was conducted for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). This time, no less than 68 published papers were identified, with the review findings once again providing good support for the efficacy of HIV and sexuality education in reducing unwanted outcomes of young people's sexual behaviour. Of 53 articles describing specific programmes or forms of intervention, 22 reported significant decreases in coital activity or its markers compared with controls, and 27 studies reported no effect (Grunseit 1997; Grunseit and Aggleton 1998).

In parallel, Douglas Kirby and colleagues in the USA were involved in work of a similar kind, conducting detailed analyses of the risk and protective factors associated with young people's sexual behaviour, as well as literature reviews and meta-evaluations of research on programmes designed to prevent teenage pregnancy and STIs, including HIV. These analyses sought to identify the characteristics of effective programmes, enabling the development of a 'blueprint' for the creation of new programmes of demonstrated effectiveness (Kantor et al. 2014). Two major reports—*No Easy Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy* (1997) and *Emerging Answers* 2007: *Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Disease* (Kirby 2007)—highlight the findings from Kirby's groundbreaking work and have been distributed over 700,000 times since their publication (Kantor et al. 2014). Between them, these reports identified 17 characteristics of effective sexuality education programmes (Table 3.1).

Summarising these findings, in 2007 Doug Kirby wrote,

> Our field continues to progress. The percentage of sex and STD/HIV education programs with positive effects on behavior continues to increase and the strength of their evidence has also increased. Moreover, there are now several programs

Table 3.1 Summary of the characteristics of effective programmes adapted from *Emerging Answers* 2007: *Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Disease* (Kirby 2007)

The process of developing the curriculum	The contents of the curriculum	Activities and teaching methodologies	The process of implementing the curriculum
Activities are designed using a logic model	Activities are focused on clear health goals	Ensure a safe social environment	Secure support from appropriate authorities
Activities are designed by a group of experts	Activities encourage specific types of behaviours that lead to health goals	Include multiple activities to change risk and protective factors	Employ strategies to recruit and retain participants
Activities address the needs and assets of the target group	Activities address risk and protective factors that affect and change sexual behaviour	Employ activities, methods, and messages appropriate to the target group	Train, supervise, and support teachers
Activities respect community values		Employ participatory teaching methods	Implement activities with fidelity
The programme is pilot-tested		Cover topics in a logical sequence	

> that have been evaluated multiple times, and the results suggest that when the original programs are implemented with fidelity in similar settings with similar populations of young people, their positive effects on behavior are also replicated […]. We also know more about which mediating factors (e.g., knowledge, attitudes, perceptions of peer norms, self-efficacy, intentions, etc.) are changed by the programs and in turn affect behaviour. (Kirby 2007, 6)

Given the weight of evidence, it might be supposed that debate about effects and effectiveness (i.e. about 'what works') in sexuality education would have been laid to rest. But this was not to be. The 'sex wars' (Correa et al. 2008) that raged first in the USA between 2001 and 2009 under George W. Bush's administration, and then internationally (where they were encouraged at least in part by a somewhat 'unholy alliance' between a then Republican US administration, fundamentalist Islam, and the Holy See), had a profound effect on available discourses about sex and sexuality. Influenced by religious and political narrow-mindedness, conservatives sought to question anything that hinted of any form of sexual freedom. Regardless of the scientific evidence, sexuality education that moved beyond the promotion of abstinence before marriage and fidelity within it was deemed morally suspect. As a result, no less than $1.5 billion came to be wasted on abstinence-only and abstinence-only-until-marriage education

programmes in US schools through programmes, which comprehensive reviews by Kirby (2002), Hauser (2004), and Santelli et al. (2007), later deemed to be totally ineffective.

At the same time, however, numerous developing country governments across Africa, Asia, and Latin America struggled with the issue of how best to protect young people from the growing threat of HIV. UNAIDS and its co-sponsors sought to promote risk reduction among both young people in general and groups at special risk of HIV, including gay and other men who have sex with men, sex workers and their clients, and people who inject drugs. But how could they achieve such a goal without explicit education about sex, sexuality, and relationships?

It was into this space that efforts to develop the first United Nations (UN) guidance on sexuality education stepped. The process of developing the *UN Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* started in December 2007 and lasted for a period of two years until the guidance's publication on World AIDS Day in December 2009. The Guidance sought to provide education and health authorities worldwide with the rationale for sexuality education (what is it and why should it be taught?) as well as an overview of the basic minimum package of age-appropriate topics and learning objectives that should be integrated in the curriculum (what does it include?).

Looking back in time, the development of this document can be described as a technical as well as a political process. The development of the *UN Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* was strongly influenced by three types of politics: the politics of silence, the politics of what might be described as the 'international arena', and the local politics surrounding the Guidance's scientific development. From start to finish, the development of the guidance was indeed a deeply *political* process.

The Politics of Silence

Since the very earliest days of the HIV epidemic, activists and stakeholders engaged in the HIV response have struggled with the development of effective educational programmes for children and young people. This has mainly been the result of a refusal to accept children and young people as sexual beings (Robinson 2013) alongside cultural and religious opposition to the provision of sexuality education in formal educational settings. Significantly, public denial of children and young people's sexuality closed the doors for open discussion about ways of protecting them from an STI.

This 'politics of silence' has much to do with public refusal to engage with and 'own' HIV and sexuality education. Since the start of the epidemic, HIV has been construed as a problem of 'others': of nations and people far beyond domestic boundaries, and of groups (sex workers, gay men, people who inject drugs) whose existence within a domestic frame of reference has been contested or denied (Treichler 1999; Patton 1990). Few teachers find it easy to educate young people about sexuality and relationships, about safer forms of sex, or indeed about serious illnesses such as cancer and AIDS. As a result, silence too often prevails, and reasons are found either not to undertake this kind of work (e.g. there is insufficient time, the curriculum is too crowded), or else it is left to outside 'experts', some of whom may be equally poorly equipped to deliver what is needed (Boler 2003).

At the institutional level, a similar silence has prevailed, with respect to sexuality education at least. Indeed, until 2009, no UN system agency dared to enter into or 'own' the technical area of sexuality education, although various agencies had hitherto been involved in population education or sexual and reproductive health education, pregnancy prevention, HIV-related education, and life skills-based HIV education. When they had done so, such as in the examples cited above, this was in a limited way: commissioning reviews of effects and effectiveness, for example, rather than offering explicit guidance on what needed to be talked about and done, where, when, and by whom.

This refusal to engage explicitly with sexuality is perhaps most evident in the area of life skills education in schools, an HIV prevention approach heavily supported by UN system agencies. While variations exist, most forms of life skills education for HIV prevention have focused on the acquisition of various (1) communication and interpersonal skills, (2) decision-making and critical-thinking skills, and (3) coping and self-management skills.

> While this marked a move away from a focus on generic life skills, it is open to question on what basis these particular HIV-related life skills were selected, and whether they represented priority learning needs, including the prevention of high-risk sexual contact, which is the most common means of HIV transmission among young people. Few of the skills exemplified focused on the specific behaviours required to prevent HIV infection, an approach which has been documented as a key characteristic of effective sexuality education programmes by Kirby and colleagues. The exemplified skills do not include the practical or psychosocial skills required for the correct and consistent use of condoms, for example. (Clarke et al. 2015)

Indeed, it is perhaps the very inexplicitness of life skills education, its obfuscatory character, and its refusal to engage directly with issues of sex, sexuality, and relationships that provides it with the greatest appeal to conservatives. If sexual life can be reduced to 'abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life' (WHO 1994 p. 1), then there need be no explicit mention of sex at all. Moreover, by refusing to acknowledge that children and young people are sexual beings who have the right to information about their bodies, and the right to learning about intimate relationships and ways of protecting themselves from harm, high-level UN system organisations were, for decades after the advent of HIV, complicit in a politics of silence that prevented an explicit focus on sexuality education for young people (Clarke et al. 2015).

The Politics of the International Arena

UNAIDS was launched in 1996 as a joint and co-sponsored programme, bringing together a range of UN system agencies in pursuit of a common agenda. While it took quite some time for a properly developed sharing of responsibilities to emerge (UNAIDS 2008), by late 2007 there existed a relatively clearly defined technical division of labour between UNAIDS' co-sponsors and the work of the agency's Secretariat.

Within this division of labour, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was assigned lead responsibility for HIV prevention education in the formal education sector with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the WHO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and others. For example, UNFPA partnered with UNESCO to provide HIV prevention education to young people in out-of-school settings, and ILO developed a Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. While formally integration, coordination, and impact were the name of the game, the reality on the ground often looked very different—particularly with respect to school education—as the result of UNESCO's often limited presence at country level.

In August 2008, senior staff in UNESCO discussed the idea of creating a global programme on sexuality education with colleagues from UNFPA at the International AIDS conference in Mexico. UNFPA reacted favourably and immediately pledged its support (both financial and logistical) for the development of a potential minimum standards document for sexuality education. Other agencies were not directly approached because they were known to be more equivocal in their support for such an enterprise.

What members in the UNESCO team were not aware of at the time was that UNFPA had been lending simultaneous support to an independent working group chaired by staff members of the Population Council for the development of a similar document called *It's All One Curriculum*. On learning of this, UNESCO contacted colleagues at the Population Council and asked them to join an international consultation scheduled in February 2009. Three members from the working group came, and courteous conversations were had. The first author of this chapter (EY) drew up a document that outlined the similarities and differences between the two documents. There were many important differences (Yankah 2016). The independent working group's document was aimed primarily at women aged 15 years and upwards and aimed to be more practical in nature, including ready-made exercises, for example. The UNESCO document on the other hand was designed for advocacy purposes, targeting education and health authorities. It was developed to address the needs and circumstances of all children, and young people in primary and secondary schools globally.

At around the same time, the UNESCO team became aware of two additional groups who had or were in the process of publishing other 'minimum standards' documents: the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) with its headquarters in London, and WHO's European office in cooperation with the German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA), based in Cologne. The work of the BZgA was supported by an expert group of European sexuality educators. To enhance cohesion, UNESCO and UNFPA were invited to become members of the European expert group. IPPF was already a member. As a result of the enlarged membership, the European expert group benefited from the experiences of developing the IPPF *Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education*, *It's All One Curriculum*, and the *UN Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*.

The three months before the publication of the *UN Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*, September until November 2009, involved intense e-mail deliberations chaired by Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director, and senior staff members at UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO. During this time, the document was restructured, facts were checked, language was refined, and detailed appendices were added. For political reasons, the document was split into two parts: Part I providing the rationale for sexuality education, and Part II focusing on age-appropriate topics and learning objectives. Part I carries the logos of UNESCO, UNAIDS, and three other supporting UN agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA, and WHO). Part II carries the logos of only UNESCO and UNAIDS. The most sensitive topics such as the recommendation to start age-appropriate sexuality education as early as five years and reference to masturbation are contained in Parts I and II, respectively.

The Politics of Guidance Development

The firm recommendation for UNESCO to develop a programme of work on sexuality education came from one person, Tania Boler, former leader of the Programme and Technical Development Team in UNESCO's Section on HIV and AIDS. Before working for UNESCO, Tania had been Senior Adviser for Education and HIV/AIDS at ActionAid International in London, from where she had founded and led the UK Working Group on Education and HIV/AIDS. Between 2004 and 2006, the UK Working Group developed a body of work on best practices in the field of HIV, and prior to Tania's departure to join UNESCO there had been discussion of utilising sex and relationships education as an approach to HIV education in schools.

At this time, other working groups, including the Inter-agency Task Team on Education and HIV convened by UNESCO, and a range of international non-governmental organisations and national government departments were having similar discussions, but no one had come forward to lay claim to this area. The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) in New York had been one of the first organisations to develop basic minimum standards for sex education in the mid-1990s. However, these guidelines were targeted to an audience based largely in the USA, and the use of the SIECUS Guidelines was sporadic at best, considering the restrictive political climate of the George W. Bush years (Santelli et al. 2006).

The Right Time for UNESCO

At the time when UNESCO first considered the development of a Global Sexuality Education programme in 2007, it would be fair to say that the Section on HIV and AIDS was looking to make its mark and develop an area of work for which it would be recognised by its UN colleagues, and more widely. Christopher Castle, Chief for the Section on HIV and AIDS, and Mark Richmond, Global Coordinator for HIV and AIDS, took a major risk by backing Tania's idea. However, at the same time, they knew that the rewards were potentially great. So it came about that within the space of about two months, UNESCO's Global Programme on Sexuality Education was established. Tania Boler left UNESCO in August of 2008, and after her departure, the first author of this chapter (EY) took over the helm, coordinating the development of work on the Guidance document.

A Global Advisory group of eight influential members in the field was established. The second author of this chapter (PA) was one of the members of this

group. The first Global Advisory group meeting took place in December 2007, establishing clear goals for the next two years of UNESCO's programme. In particular, Global Advisory group members suggested that UNESCO should focus on:

1. Developing guidelines for minimum standards for sexuality education.
2. Commissioning case studies of existing national sexuality education programmes in developing countries.
3. Commissioning a study on the cost and cost-effectiveness of sexuality education for HIV prevention.
4. Conducting a workshop activity on the challenges of scaling up sexuality education programmes.

A proposal was put together for the first task: namely the development of guidelines for minimum standards in sexuality education. Global Advisory group members were asked to disseminate a request for proposals in early 2008. Within weeks, Global Advisory group member Doug Kirby had signalled his interest in the first part of the work, documenting the evidence base for sexuality education. Nanette Ecker, former Director for International Education at SIECUS in New York, responded to the request for proposals on the development of topics and learning objectives. A third consultant, Peter Gordon from the UK, was hired to bring both pieces together.

An initial draft of the Guidance document was presented to the first author of this chapter (EY) and Christopher Castle in December 2008. This draft was sent out for consultation and review to members of the Global Advisory group and also to members of a global consultation group. A first technical consultation for the development of the Guidance document was held at the Hewlett Foundation headquarters near San Francisco in February 2009. The group present at this meeting included sexuality education experts from 11 countries as well as representatives from UNESCO, UNFPA, and the Population Council. In order to recognise and honour the work that had being undertaken in parallel processes, UNESCO invited two members from the International Sexuality and HIV Curriculum working group convened by the Population Council.

Using collated feedback from the global consultation meeting as well as electronic feedback from experts who were unable to attend the consultation meeting, UNESCO produced a second draft of the Guidance document informed by the outcomes of the consultation meeting in San Francisco. In June 2009, UNESCO and UNFPA decided that draft 2 was ready for sharing with a wider audience. The draft Guidance document was then presented

at the World Association for Sexual Health meeting in Sweden in June 2009 and at the International Sex and Relationships Education Conference in Birmingham in September 2009.

By September 2009, however, a media storm had halted the relatively smooth development process. In August 2009, a small religious fundamentalist media outlet in the USA picked up the news that two US experts had been involved in the development of a technical guidance document on sexuality education. The result was a highly critical article in a local newspaper in a Midwestern state in the USA. The journalist quoted content from the topics and learning objectives section of the Guidance document without referencing its proper context. Suddenly, UNESCO was accused of encouraging five-year-olds to masturbate. The use of the word 'masturbation' lay at the centre of the media storm. Within days other religious fundamentalist newspapers had picked up on it, and by September 2009 the story was headline news in the *International Herald Tribune* (later renamed the *International New York Times*). It was from this point onwards that an exceedingly wide range of individuals and groups started to take notice of the work UNESCO was engaged in. The majority of the reactions were positive. Other reactions were those of anger, in the form of hate mail from conservative groups in the USA, and extreme caution as some UN colleagues threatened to withdraw their support to UNESCO. There was a very real possibility that the Guidance might be canned.

Leadership from UNAIDS

A significant individual in preventing this outcome was Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, who came to the aid of UNESCO and UNESCO's Director General at what was a critical time. Prior to the media storm surrounding the Guidance document Michel Sidibé had accepted UNESCO's invitation to speak at the agency's headquarters on International Literacy Day. His visit to Paris was carefully planned. His intention was to get a full picture of the political battles concerning the Guidance document from behind the scenes. The day after Literacy Day, he first met with UNESCO's then Director General (Koichiro Matsuura) and members of the senior management team followed by a meeting with the Section on HIV and AIDS. In these meetings, he gained enough reassurance about the robustness of the Guidance document to decide that UNAIDS would be a key ally in the endeavour. Significantly, that same year UNAIDS had just published its *2009–2011 Outcomes Framework* which made specific mention of the importance of work with young people and sexuality education (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 2009–2011 UNAIDS Outcomes Framework (excerpt from p. 8)

We can empower young people to protect themselves from HIV:
By putting young people's leadership at the centre of national responses, providing rights-based sexual and reproductive health education and services and empowering young people to prevent sexual and other transmission of HIV infection among their peers. By ensuring access to HIV testing and prevention efforts with and for young people in the context of sexuality education. And by ensuring enabling legal environments, education and employment opportunities to reduce vulnerability to HIV

Through his visit to Paris, Michel Sidibé provided UNESCO's Director General with the necessary assurances and political support to continue work on the Guidance document. His next step was to facilitate a meeting between relevant heads of agencies (UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO) during the forthcoming UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board meeting in Geneva. At this meeting, he encouraged relevant heads of agencies to pledge their support to UNESCO so that finalisation of the Guidance document could be completed in time for World AIDS Day on 1 December 2009. The meeting with heads of agencies in Geneva was the decisive shift that pushed through the final development phase of the Guidance until its launch as planned on World AIDS Day.

Delivering the Goods

The process of editing the Guidance document started in September 2009 with the involvement of the heads of agencies from UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO. A senior member at UNAIDS was asked to coordinate input from UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO. The majority of the work took place by e-mail. E-mail messages were sent from UNAIDS, and responses were copied to UNESCO. Team members at UNESCO incorporated these changes into the draft version of the document as they came in.

The first significant change that occurred was that the document was renamed as Guidance (It had originally been called Guidelines). Colleagues at WHO assisted UNESCO in weighing up the options of producing a binding or non-binding document on member states. It was quickly decided that the use of the document should be voluntary and therefore non-binding for UNESCO's member states. Experts at WHO also provided other useful technical advice concerning language that had been successfully used in relevant international agreements. For example, with WHO and UNFPA support an Appendix detailing international conventions and agreements related to sexuality education was added.

Table 3.3 UN Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, Volume 1 (excerpt from p. 4)

This volume focuses on the 'why' and 'what' issues that require attention in strategies to introduce or strengthen sexuality education. Examples of 'how' these issues have been used in learning and teaching are presented in the list of resources, curricula and materials produced by many different organizations in the companion document on topics and learning objectives.

The second significant change that occurred was that UNESCO was advised to split the document into two separate volumes. Volume 1 was to provide the rationale for sexuality education. It responded to the questions such as 'Why should stakeholders be concerned about sexuality education?' and 'What is sexuality education?'. This part was endorsed by all four collaborating UN agencies. Volume 2, on the other hand, considered to be the more controversial volume among the two, responded to the question: 'How is sexuality education taught?' and contains age-appropriate topics and learning objectives contributing to comprehensive sexuality education (Table 3.3).

A third significant change that occurred was the addition of carefully chosen example boxes in Volume 1. Examples include Box 1, which was entitled 'Sexual activity has consequences: examples from Uganda', and Table 3.1 headed 'Common concerns about the provision of sexuality education'. Technical experts from all four collaborating agencies helped by sourcing examples and carefully crafting the language to describe the issues and activities. Colleagues from UNFPA were particularly involved in making the desired changes to Volume 2. By accommodating these changes, each agency was given a chance to 'own' a particular piece of the guidance document. The then Executive Director of UNFPA was particularly concerned about the cultural sensitivity of sexuality education in the Middle East and North Africa. She and her team assisted with refining much of the language in Volume 2 (Table 3.4).

The last three months prior to the publication of the Guidance was a period of guided compromise. Overall, the gains outweighed the losses, and the document was published with strong political backing only months after the media storm had first begun. The learning objective about masturbation that had caused so much uproar in the first place remained. But not all the compromises made were seen as successes. At the time of publication, several HIV and AIDS team members were highly disappointed that the Guidance document had been split into two parts. In hindsight, this was in fact a clever

Table 3.4 Sexual activity has consequences: examples from Uganda (excerpt p. 7)[a]

It is important to recognise that sexual intercourse has consequences that go beyond unintended pregnancy or exposure to STIs including HIV, as illustrated in the case of Uganda:

1. 'Ugandan boys and girls who have sex early are twice as likely not to complete secondary school as adolescents who have never had sex.' For many reasons, 'currently only 10 % of boys and 8 % of girls complete secondary school in Uganda' (Demographic and Health Survey Uganda, 2006).
2. In Uganda, thousands of boys are in jail for consensual sex with girls aged less than 18 years. Parents of many more have had to sell land and livestock to keep their sons out of jail.
3. Pregnancy for a 17 year old Ugandan girl may mean that she has to leave school forever or marry a man with other wives (17 % are in polygamous unions). About 50 % of adolescent girls in Uganda give birth attended only by a relative or traditional birth attendant or alone.

Source: Straight Talk Foundation Annual Report 2008 available on http://www.straight-talk.org.ug

Table 3.5 Key concept: 5—sexual behaviour, 5.1—sex, sexuality, and the sexual life cycle (excerpt, p. 26 Volume 2)[a]

Learning objectives for Level I (5–8 years)	Learning objectives for Level II (9–12 years)
Explain the concept of private parts of the body	Describe sexuality in relation to the human life cycle
Key ideas:	Key ideas:
Most children are curious about their bodies	Human beings are born with the capacity to enjoy their sexuality throughout life
It is natural to explore parts of one's own body, including the private parts	Many boys and girls begin to masturbate during puberty or sometimes earlier[6]
	Masturbation does not cause physical or emotional harm but should be done in private[6]
	It is important to talk and ask questions about sexuality with a trusted adult

Source: McCary J.L. 1978. *McCary's Human Sexuality*. 3rd Edition. New York: D. Van Nostrand and Company, pp. 150 & 262. Strong, B., DeVault, C. 1988. *Understanding Our Sexuality*. 2nd Edition. Eagan MN: West Publishing Company, pp. 179–80. Haas, A., and Haas, K. 1990. *Understanding Sexuality*. Times Mirror/Mosby College Publishing: St. Louis. p. 207. Francoeur, R.T., Noonan, R.J. (Editors). 2004. *The International Encyclopaedia of Sexuality*. Volume 5. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group

decision that alleviated the fears of collaborating agencies in the event of ensuing negative press. In the end, the negative press never came. The publication of the document went smoothly. And today the *UN Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (UNESCO et al 2009)* is one of the most downloaded documents from the UNESCO website (Table 3.5).

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have tried to show how the development of UN-endorsed international guidance in the field of sexuality education was as much a political as a technical process. Much of this politics was concerned about making sure that the interests of all UN agencies involved were adequately represented. Another political concern was the cultural acceptability of such a document in the most conservative regions of the world, where it was hoped that carefully worded guidance would have traction. By taking its place alongside UN conventions, technical guidelines, and technical working group reports, the Guidance provides sexuality education with status that it has never had before. While not all will agree with its contents, and while critics may debate some of the fine detail, for the first time ever sexuality education ended up being debated, discussed, and agreed upon by those working at the most senior levels of the UN system. The challenge now lies in ensuring the implementation of the Guidelines at country level—a process that most would judge to be a very much more difficult task.

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4

Sexuality Education in Ghana and Mozambique: An Examination of Colonising Assemblages Informing School-based Sexuality Education Initiatives

Esther Miedema and Georgina Yaa Oduro

Development does not start with goods, it starts with people and their education, organization, and discipline. Without these three, all resources lie latent, untapped potential. E.F. Schumacher, 1973[1]

[We] do not claim to represent ('map', 'let speak', 'speak for') the subaltern. We seek to register instead the way in which the knowledge we construct and impart is structured by the absence, difficulty or impossibility of representation of the subaltern. J. Beverly, 1998[2]

Similar to the field of policy-making more generally, there have been growing calls for school-based sexuality education in countries in the Global South to be grounded in evidence as to 'what works' (e.g. Aarø et al. 2006; Ross et al. 2006; UNESCO 2009). International aid agencies often cite the quality of

[1] Cited in USAID (2009), p. 2.
[2] Cited in Lyons (2004), p. 6.

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existing evidence bases as crucial to decisions regarding funding of Southern governments' school-based education initiatives, including those that engage with sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (McKleroy et al. 2006). Evidence of the 'efficacy' of sexuality education hereby is often defined in terms of its impact on individual attitudes, (reported) behaviour, and skills (Fonner et al. 2014). It is hereby assumed that changes in attitudes, skills, and reported behaviour will positively influence public health outcomes such as sexually transmitted infection prevalence rates, and thereby contribute to development efforts.

A growing body of scholarly work questions the linear relationship between these 'indicators' of behavioural change and health outcomes (e.g. Kippax and Stephenson 2005; Launiala 2009; Aboud and Singla 2012). Furthermore, as post- and anti-colonial authors such as Tabulawa (2003) and Shahjahan (2011) have argued, while aid agencies tend to justify their support for certain pedagogies and educational contents in 'scientific' and 'quality' terms, donor preferences are reflective of particular, and arguably Westernised, conceptions of the prerequisites and desired outcomes of education and 'development'. Building on the critique voiced by post- and anti-colonial and feminist scholars, this chapter seeks to analyse the colonial underpinnings of assemblages of knowledges–pedagogies–actors and how these operate in the design and delivery of secondary school-based sexuality education in two sub-Saharan African countries: Ghana and Mozambique. The notion of assemblage is thus used to refer to a 'coming together' of epistemologies, pedagogies, and actors and, specifically, to explain the relational co-production of subjects, practices, and contexts, as well as meanings of gender and sexuality (Duff 2014).

The two quotes given above highlight two key arguments we will make in this chapter. The first quote stems from the 1973 publication *Small is beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered* by British economist E.F. Schumacher. While the book has been hailed as challenging to what was seen as the twentieth century's obsession with the idea that 'bigger is better', we argue that the quote is illustrative of Western investment in education as a means to 'organise', 'discipline', and thereby capitalise on people, in particular the young. The second quote articulates a key difficulty facing feminist scholars, especially those from the West, that strive to engage with and (re) present 'the' (postcolonial) field (Lyons 2004). Similar to Tanya Lyons (2004), we do not claim to *represent* the subaltern, that is, the young Ghanaian and Mozambican women and men whose voices are largely unheard in the design and delivery of school-based sexuality education. Rather than seeking to address this 'gap' by attempting to represent young women and men involved in our study, we view our inquiry as an 'ethical engagement with epistemolo-

gies', highlighting whose knowledge is un/underrepresented (McCormack 2014: 11).

The chapter examines existing literature concerning the historical and socio-political contexts in which formal sexuality education was designed and delivered in these two countries. We identify the various actors that have been involved, and the bodies of knowledge they have drawn on, in the development and delivery of formal and informal sexuality education initiatives from 2008 until 2012. In addition, and building on recent qualitative research from the two countries, we analyse the epistemic and political assumptions that inform the goals and means of current secondary school-based sexuality education programmes offered in Ghana and Mozambique. In doing so, furthermore, we interrogate constructs of childhood and young people underpinning the programmes' goals and means. We argue that while these notions reflect hybridised constructions that build on Westernised and 'local' discourses of 'the child', they are nevertheless indicative of a focus on reproductive futurity (Edelman 2004; McCormack 2014).

To situate the discussion, the chapter begins by detailing the historical and socio-political contexts of sexuality education in Ghana and Mozambique. We then clarify the theoretical premises that inform our analysis and the methodological approach we used to gather and analyse the data. In the subsequent section, we examine the assemblages of knowledges–pedagogies–actors that underpin sexuality education in Ghana and Mozambique. We close the chapter by reflecting on a number of key implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Historical and Socio-political Context of Sexuality Education in Ghana and Mozambique

Historical Background and Overview of Education Systems in Ghana and Mozambique

The former Gold Coast, now Ghana, which is located in Western Africa, was the first sub-Saharan African state on the African continent to gain independence. After 113 years of colonisation, the country gained independence from the British in 1957 (Assimeng 1999). The arrival of European missionaries and settlers during the sixteenth century in what is now known as Ghana brought formalised and book-based education to the country. The few schools that were established were mainly attended by local elites such as mulatto

children from unions between Europeans and 'natives' and sons of local chiefs and wealthy traders (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 1975; Antwi 1992). The nineteenth century saw the increasing influence of Great Britain over the Ghanaian territories. The number of mission schools in the colony grew, the primary purpose of formal schooling being to evangelise the Indigenous population (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 1975; Antwi 1992). In addition, education was used to prepare an elite class, composed primarily of mulattos and children of wealthy farmers and merchants, who would be able to manage the colony and, in time, govern the country following independence.

Since independence, the educational system in Ghana has undergone a number of reforms, which has resulted in the current three-tier structure of basic-, secondary-, and tertiary-level education (Adu-Agyem and Osei-Poku 2012). The Ghanaian government has benefitted from donor support, including in the field of general education, health, and HIV- and AIDS-related education. The Multi-Donor Budget Support (MDBS) from 11 Development Partners[3] contribute financial resources directly to the Government's treasury to complement Ghana's domestically generated revenue. In 2010, it is estimated that MDBS donors provided just over US 400 million dollars to the state budget (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning n.d.). Regarding support for the Ghanaian education sector, the World Bank (2004) observes that Ghana is one of the highest recipients of education aid in sub-Saharan Africa, even though donor support for education has dropped from a high of 8.9% in 2005 to 2.5% in 2010 in relation to the total expenditure on education (Ministry of Education 2012; Macbeath 2010). It must be noted, however, that such aids always come with associated conditionalities.

Mozambique, which is located in South-eastern Africa, came into being in its current form following an Anglo-Portuguese agreement in May 1891, marking the beginning of a period of Portuguese colonial rule that lasted almost 83 years (Newitt 1995). During Portuguese rule, native Mozambicans and young Mozambican women, in particular, had extremely restricted access to formal education. In 1929, a decree on the organisation of colonial education came into force establishing a system of racially segregated schools. 'Native' Mozambican children were required to complete three years of 'rudimentary' education, which was largely provided in Catholic mission schools. Following this, they could move on to higher levels of education, which only very few actually did (Kruks and Wisner 1989). Whites and so-called *assimilados* (assimilated Mozambicans) attended governmental schools (Errante

[3] These being the African Development Bank, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, UK, and the World Bank.

2000). Emphasis was placed on 'Portugalisation' and 'Christianisation' of Mozambican children, combined with manual and domestic working skills for, respectively, boys and girls. At the time of independence in 1975, an estimated 86% of men and 93% of women were considered illiterate (Kruks and Wisner 1989).

Mozambique gained independence after almost ten years of armed struggle led by the then guerrilla movement *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Liberation Front of Mozambique, Frelimo) and the fall of the Salazar regime in Portugal (Newitt 1995). In 1983, a three-tiered national system of education similar to that in Ghana was put in place. Throughout its brief history, Mozambique's major donors have provided the government crucial (financial) support: at the time of data collection in 2010, Overseas Development Aid (ODA) represented 51.4% of the state budget[4] (Niño and Le Billon 2014). Given donor emphasis on providing budget support, public revenue in Mozambique is particularly exposed to changes in the architecture and inflows of aid (Niño and Le Billon 2014). The proportion of the national budget that was externally funded highlights the extent to which the work carried out by the Government, including the Ministry of Education, is dependent on foreign aid.

Sexuality Education in Ghana and Mozambique

Precolonial education in both Ghana and Mozambique was largely based on oral traditions, and young people were taught about, and initiated into, the community and its values by various members of the community, in particular elders (Ndege 2007; Adu-Agyem and Osei-Poku 2012). Apprenticeships and initiation rites formed important means of educating young people, the latter being crucial to marking the transition of childhood to adulthood. Initiation rituals were performed separately for girls and boys, and were geared to teaching them about appropriate (female/male) conduct and behaviour, and the duties associated with various social positions within the community (Ndege 2007). While emphasis was placed on different matters, both young women and men received sexuality education during their initiation. Initiation rites were commonly carried out by respected community leaders such as queen mothers, and young people's aunts and uncles, partly because in many communities it was (and is) considered taboo for biological parents

[4] It should be noted that, while still high, the share of ODA support to the state budget was considerably lower in 2012, namely 39.6% (Niño and Le Billon 2014).

to talk about SRHR-related issues with their children (Bukali de Graça 2002; Boakye 2010).

Rites for girls were often performed around the time of first menarche and were geared to marking a girl's readiness to procreate and marry (Adjaye 1999; Bukali de Graça 2002; Steegstra 2004). Rites in Ghana focused primarily on females; we can talk of the '*Bragoro*' rites among the *Akans* (largest ethnic group in Ghana making up about 49 % of the total population) and the '*Dipo*' rite among the *Krobos* (a smaller ethnic group in Ghana) (Assimeng 1999; Nukunya 1992). In certain ethnic groups in Mozambique, circumcision forms a crucial element of young men's rite of passage, while those for young women might be marked by tattoos, and extending the labia minora (Bukali de Graça 2002). As Arnfred (2007) notes, the extension of the labia minora was, and continues to be, regarded as an important element of a young woman's 'preparation for lovemaking' (p. 151). Referring to the work of Sylvia Tamale (2005) in Uganda, Arnfred clarifies that the practice of elongation of the labia is still very alive not only in more rural parts of Mozambique, but also in urbanised areas such as Kampala, Uganda's capital city. Crucial to the discussion here is that the practice is considered to enhance both male and female pleasure, and has 'expanded [women's] perception of themselves as active sexual beings' (Tamale 2005, cited in Arnfred 2007: 151).

With regard to the practice of initiation rites, but also the role of women and men within different communities more broadly, it is important to note that the gender binary that underpins mainstream feminist thinking does not necessarily capture situations in and across various African countries where social *positions* might be gendered, but where these positions may be taken up by either a woman or a man (Arnfred 2007: 144; Amediume Ife 1987; Chacha 2004; Tamale 2011). A masculine position such as a 'husband' need not necessarily be occupied by a man, for example. Building on her ethnographic work in a rural matrilineal setting in northern Mozambique, Arnfred elucidates how both food and sex are considered sites of female power (rather than subordination) and, therefore, that what is seen as 'tradition' is not necessarily 'adverse to female power in social relationships' (p. 141).

It is important to note that according to Ankomah (1997), colonialism, with its associated Western influence, imported religions, and formal education, led to the erosion of interest and value in the practice of initiation rites in Ghanaian communities. The integration of sexuality education in the formal curriculum led to the erosion of attention for, and the gradual silencing of,

sexuality education in Ghana outside school walls.[5] With increasing spread of HIV and AIDS via (heterosexual) sexual contact, HIV- and AIDS-related education in Ghana increasingly became the focus of attention, and, at least to begin with, within international development and national policy-making circles in particular (Awusabo-Asare et al. 2004; Epprecht 2013; Oduro 2010).

Contrary to Mozambique, Ghana has experienced relatively low HIV prevalence rates. National prevalence rates were at their highest in 2006 (at 3.6 %) and dropped to 1.9 % in 2010 and 1.5 % in 2012 (HIV Sentinel Survey 2013; Oduro and Otsin 2013). Bodies such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, United Nations (UN), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department for International Development, and Japan International Cooperation Agency have actively supported the government in the design and delivery of HIV- and AIDS-related education. Overall responsibility for HIV-/AIDS-related activities, including education, resides with the Ghana AIDS Commission. To address the spread and impact of the epidemic, education on HIV and AIDS and sexuality was integrated into the national curriculum and is currently taught within the framework of religious and moral education, social studies, biology, and 'Management in Living' at both junior and senior secondary schools levels. HIV/AIDS education is also promoted through extra-curricular activities that are taught by health workers and via HIV/AIDS and 'Virgin' clubs.

Mozambique is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that has been hit the hardest by HIV and AIDS. Similar to Ghana, most new HIV infections occur through heterosexual contact. In 2012, the overall prevalence rate was reported to be 11.1 % (UNAIDS 2013).[6] Part of the national response to the epidemic has been the infusion of what is commonly referred to as HIV- and AIDS-related education across the secondary school curriculum, and its more focused integration within specific subjects such as Moral and Civic Education (primary level education) and Biology (secondary level education). The infusion of this form of education across the curriculum means that, in principle, issues relating to HIV and AIDS, and SRHR more broadly, are

[5] It is also believed by some people that the erosion of value and attention to puberty rites, resulting from religious and Western influence, contributed to the gradual silencing of sexuality education in the Ghanaian socio-cultural space. This is because many Christian converts refused participation in the rites, and those outside the formal education system also missed out on the subject provided by the schools.

[6] This rate masks considerable variation: it being far higher among women and in certain regions. Data gathered for the 2009 National Prevalence Survey (INSIDA 2009) reveal that in the central province of Sofala, for example, 17.8 % of women and 12.6 % of men aged between 15 and 49 years were infected by HIV compared with national gender-specific prevalence rates of 13.1 % of females and 9.2 % of males within the same age bracket.

addressed in all secondary school disciplines and thus, by all teachers. In addition, the extra-curricular peer-led sexuality education programme *Geração Biz* (the 'busy generation') is delivered across all secondary schools.

Responsibility for the coordination of the Ministry's *overall* response to HIV and AIDS resides with the Department for School Health and HIV and AIDS. This Department is responsible for approving and monitoring sexuality education initiatives delivered by international and national non-governmental organisations. At the time of data collection, the Department was supported by an advisory body which was composed of representatives of the various Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) directorates and institutions and representatives of the MoEC's key partners in the field of HIV- and AIDS-related education: United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, Danish International Development Agency, and the Irish Embassy.

Theoretical Premises

Despite an increase in Southern-led development initiatives and South–South cooperation in more recent years, mainstream discourse of 'development' continues to be dominated by Western paradigms or, more to the point, white middle-class socio-economic norms and ideals (Syed and Ali 2011; MacDonald 2015). Development is hereby largely construed as something that is 'done' by (predominantly) Western experts, an apolitical process that will lead to the insertion of the individual into the economy. Those from the West are posited as liberated and modern, and as 'knowers' and doers. This conception of Western men and women implies that 'Third World' men and, particularly, women are behind and unfree. As Lyons (2004) has argued, 'Third World' women and men remain static and silent objects of development interventions and research.

Examining conceptions of development and international development aid, Tabulawa (2003) notes that the 1970s saw a shift from a conception of 'development' grounded in modernisation and human capital theories to notions of liberal democracy and the free market. Since the 1970s, Tabulawa (2003) argues, development programmes have been premised on the idea that socio-economic development can only take place within liberal democracies. In keeping with this idea, on the view of aid agencies, countries that are serious about development ought to democratise systems and policies.

School-based education, which is seen to constitute a fundamental means to create the democratic citizens of the future, is accorded a pivotal role in processes of democratisation (Baumann and Sunier 2004; Kamens and McNeely 2010). There is thus broad consensus within development circles that investing in young people in the Global South through education is crucial. As MacDonald (2015) argues, formal education is seen to allow young people to 'escape' their 'predicted future' as Third World women and men (p. 2).

Given the perceived centrality of well-educated healthy citizens in achieving socio-economic development, evidence as to what is believed to 'enable' young people to take responsible decisions regarding their (sexual) health has become guidelines in decisions regarding funding of sexuality education initiatives. New guidelines for the development of 'evidence-based' sexuality education are regularly produced by UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organisations, and shared through various 'knowledge platforms', such as the UNESCO HIV and Health Education Clearinghouse or World Bank Sourcebooks on HIV and AIDS and Education (see e.g. Beasley et al. 2008).

In their analysis of approaches to HIV- and AIDS-related education programmes, Miedema et al. (2011) note that programmes that might be understood as evidence-based tend to draw on a classical understanding of science as 'progress[ing] towards truth and accumulat[ing] truths as it goes' (Sismondo 2004: 6) and (thus) are able to provide young people trustworthy and, crucially, value-free information. Shahjahan (2011) critiques 'evidence-based' education by drawing on *anti*-colonial perspective. Anti-colonialism, the author states, interrogates the 'multiple incarnations of colonialism' across different spaces and times (p. 182). According to Shahjahan, advocates of evidence-based education promote a colonial discourse through a hierarchisation of knowledge and a 'monoculture of the mind', through which the world and the manifold ways of knowing the world are fashioned into 'sameness' (p. 189). The evidence-based movement thus builds on the assumption that there exists a standardised notion of ('real' hard) evidence and epistemology.

Colonialism is thus not conceived as a historical 'impulse', but as a range of practices that are marked by their intransience (Shahjahan 2011). The idea of intransience resonates with McCormack's (2014) conception of the colonial past as 'continually haunting the present' (p. 9). Like Shahjahan, McCormack engages with the normalising potential of education. McCormack hereby uses the concept of *pedagogy* (rather than 'education') to denote a colonial technology geared to imposing sexual, racial, gendered, and able-bodied norms 'through the desire for an imagined colonial futurity of heterosexual nationalism' (p. 18).

In analysing the colonial vestiges in school-based HIV- and AIDS-related education in Ghana and Mozambique, we build on Edelman's (2004) notion of 'reproductive futurity' to draw attention to this perceived centrality of, and investment in, 'the child' through education for 'the survival of the future' (McCormack 2014: 15). Young women and men are thus not seen as political actors in the present but predominantly as future citizens (De Los Angeles Torres and Rizzini 2013). For two key reasons, girls and young women commonly form a particular focus of attention within HIV- and AIDS-related education initiatives. The first argument relates to evidence showing that young women around the world are disproportionately affected by the epidemic, and, for obvious reasons, early or unwanted pregnancy generally impacts more strongly on girls' educational participation than on that of boys' (Hunt 2008; WHO 2013).

However, as Oliver et al. (2015) argue, vulnerability is not a pre-existing 'location'. Instead, girls in the Global South (but equally from Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities in the Global North) are placed in more vulnerable positions as a result of multiple interconnected historical, social, political, and economic factors. This chapter concurs with McCormack (2014) and Oliver et al. (2015) that it is crucial to examine the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and colonisation, given that, to paraphrase Oliver et al. (2015), the ways in which these issues overlap transform the dynamics of them all.

The second key reason for a focus on young women in sexuality education relates to evidence suggesting that educated young women have healthier and more highly educated offspring (see e.g. Seeberg et al. 2007). As MacDonald (2015) argues, the girl-child is regarded as holding particular neoliberal potential in that, when educated, she and her offspring can more readily be inserted into the economy. Given the tendency to conflate womanhood with motherhood, and motherhood with the well-being of families, the notion of 'reproductive futurity' is, arguably, particularly pertinent in relation to perceptions of the Third World girl-child. The notion of reproductive futurity is not only useful in the analysis of what might be defined as Western discourse of development and sexuality education, but also that of national policy-makers and educators. As Kesby et al. (2006) argue, the underpinnings of local and culturally specific understandings of childhood, including that of 'the girl-child', also need to be interrogated and theorised. Here, too, the analysis should be geared to examining the possible colonising underpinnings of these local understandings.

Building on the post- and anti-colonial and feminist scholarship outlined above, the chapter examines the normalising tendencies within and of sexuality education in Ghana and Mozambique. Additionally, this chapter will draw on

Miedema et al. (2011) notion of 'scientifically informed' rather than 'evidence-based' approaches to HIV- and AIDS-related education in that the former is believed to offer a more useful analytical tool to interrogate assumptions underpinning educational initiatives regarding scientific knowledge and research. The discussion of the findings will be structured around the following three key issues: (a) the stated goals and means of sexuality education, (b) notions of (scientific) knowledge underpinning sexuality education initiatives, and (c) the actors involved in the design and delivery of sexuality education. The analysis will pay particular attention to conceptions regarding young women's potential to become and produce 'good' democratic citizens.

Methods

Researching Sexuality, HIV, and AIDS in Ghana and Mozambique

The data discussed in this chapter were derived from three separate qualitative studies, all of which included a focus on secondary level school-based sexuality education. The data on Ghana emanate from two broader studies addressing gender relations, sexuality, and HIV- and AIDS-related education, and the ways in which young Ghanaian people understood and gave meaning to the HIV epidemic. The data regarding sexuality education in Mozambique were gathered within the framework of a study that was geared towards understanding perspectives of different sets of actors involved in the design, delivery, and uptake of school-based HIV- and AIDS-related education.

All studies were over similar periods of time—that is, six–seven months. The two pieces of research in Ghana were conducted in the Central and Greater Accra regions in 2008 and 2012, while the study in Mozambique was carried out in the capital city Maputo between 2010 and 2011. Appropriate ethical clearance was given for the different pieces of research, including from the Ghana Education Service and the Mozambican Ministry of Education and Culture. Data in Ghana were collected from secondary school-going and non-school-going young people (respectively, $n = 80$ and $n = 24$) between the ages of 14 and 19 years using creative, participatory, and interactive methods such as drawings, focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth individual interviews. Interviews were also held with School Health Education Programme (SHEP) officers ($n = 3$) and teachers of sexuality and HIV/AIDS education ($n = 3$) during a follow-up study in 2012. Data from Mozambique were gathered from staff members working for international agencies ($n = 9$),

central and municipal level policy-makers ($n = 8$), educators ($n = 9$), and young school-going people ($n = 18$) from three different public schools via in-depth interviews and FGDs.

Interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded following participant consent and transcribed ad verbatim, and cross-checked with participants for accuracy. All interviews, FGDs, and informal conversations held during the study in Mozambique were conducted in Portuguese, the official language of the country. The study in Ghana was carried out in English and the local language Fante. Translation of documents and interview transcripts was primarily done by the researchers. Data were analysed using both manual and computer assisted methods (Nvivo 8). The analyses concentrated on identifying and unpacking statements in participant narratives with regard to (a) the aims and role of sexuality education, and (b) the expected abilities of secondary school graduates. The analysis followed a systematic and iterative process, clustering statements according to thematic focus. On the basis of this analysis, a number of key themes were identified relating to the broad thematic areas stated above.

In the discussion of the data derived from interviews and FGDs, the date of the interview or FGD is stated. Pseudonyms are used when citing research participants. For reasons of etiquette, the title 'Sr.' (Mr) or 'Sra.' (Mrs) is used to refer to research participants from Mozambique. For reasons of confidentiality, no reference is made in the discussion of the data to the directorate or department to which policy-makers were connected.

Sexuality Education in Ghana and Mozambique: Examining Assemblages of Knowledges–Pedagogies–Actors

As mentioned earlier, education is accorded a central role in developmental processes. The following quotes and excerpts attest to this view. As Charles, a representative of a leading donor agency in Mozambique stated, for example: 'any sophisticated level of development starts with basic literacy and numeracy' (07/02/2011). Meanwhile, according to Feliciana, who similarly worked for a key funding body, education should enable a child to 'engage with complex forms of knowledge, […] to communicate, […] become independent. [Education should] make a difference in terms of the productivity of a future adult' (13/01/11).

Engaging with the purpose of education in 'a world with HIV and AIDS', Sr. Amade argued that:

> It is true that someone contaminated with the infection of HIV/AIDS can live a long time, but he has his weaknesses, that is an illness [whereby] there are days when he cannot go and work and […] the country needs healthy people in order to develop. So a well educated person, healthy, will develop the country (Maxaquene school, 15/12/10).

Additionally, the Ghanaian Minister of Education recently observed that education on HIV and AIDS continued to be crucial to the country's ability to attain the internationally agreed upon Millennium Development Goals (MoEC 2014).

The various points of view noted above resonate with the quote from Schumacher (1973) given at the beginning of this chapter, in that education, including that relating to HIV and AIDS, is perceived to be central to the two countries' ability to 'tap into' their human resources and develop into 'sophisticated' nations. The quotes are, furthermore, illustrative of growing tendencies to stress the need to prepare young people for 'the knowledge economy'. Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown spoke of 'a global skills race' in which nations are racing to build young people's basic literacy skills, but also (or especially) various forms of 'deep learning' such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication (Brown 2009, cited in Shahjahan 2011: 193). As authors such as Shahjahan (2011) have argued, however, this global skills race creates and perpetuates a vision of education as, first and foremost, serving the global economy (see also MacDonald 2015).

Participants spoke of the challenges in addressing the HIV epidemic and the ways in which the education sector could respond to these difficulties. A common view across participant groups was that traditional cultural beliefs and practices had to be tackled to curb the spread of the epidemic, but also needing the recognition of context and cultural sensitivities in such endeavours. A critical example of the former that emanated from participant accounts in Mozambique was that of 'women's inferiority syndrome … [whereby she] always submit[s] herself to the man' (Sr António, educator *KaPfumo* school, 22/10/10). This 'inferiority syndrome' was presented as something women had to shake off, evoking the idea it was women's 'responsibility' to bring about change. Drawing on the language of rights, Sr António argued that a young woman had to be taught that 'she has this right to know how to … negotiate with her partner … and to think about her own future' (ibid). Finally, one of the Ghanaian SHEP[7] officers stated: 'in our encounters with

[7] SHEP officers operate in the Ghana Education Service at the national, regional, and district levels. They are concerned about not only HIV/AIDS issues but also all health-related issues. And three district officers were involved in the study.

the teachers responsible for HIV/AIDS and sexuality issues, we encourage them to use different and alternative teaching methods such as role-plays and other negotiation skills to make the girls more assertive in their dealings with the boys/men' (SHEP 1, Kosikrom District, 03/06/2012).

Participants in both countries regarded 'modern' girls and women as the primary victims and culprits of the epidemic. Figure 4.1 below provides an example of a drawing of an HIV positive person made by a young person taking part in one of the Ghanaian studies. As is the case in the drawing presented here, illustrations of HIV positive persons made by participants tended to depict females. Illustrative of young people's view regarding women's role in the spread of the epidemic is the remark made by Bella, an 18-year-old street girl from Accra: 'modern girls don't stay with one lover but are involved

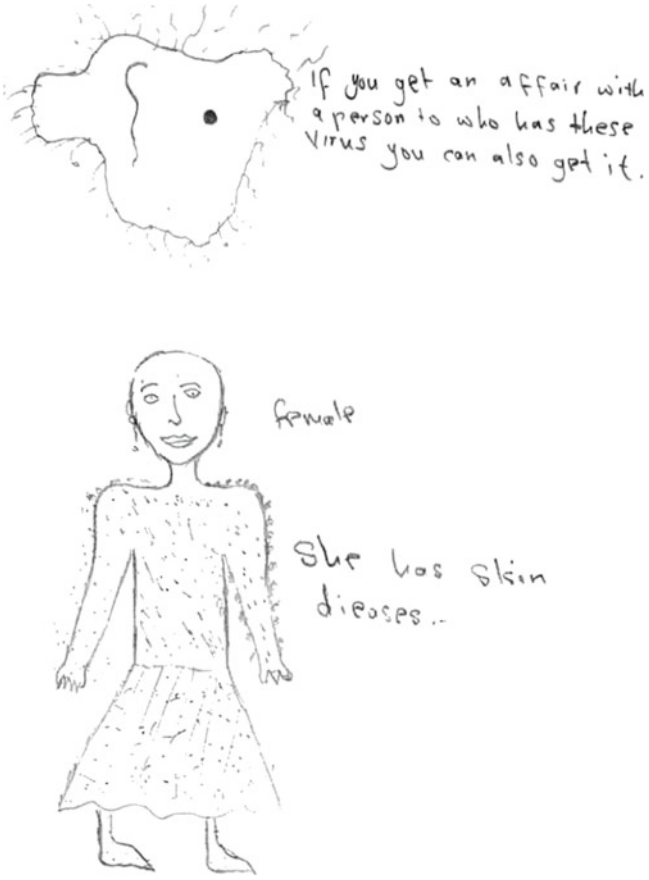


Fig. 4.1 Depiction of an HIV positive woman with the writing 'female, she has skin disease' (Ekutuase, Ghana, Anatu, 15 years, 27/03/2008)

in multiple relationships' (18/08/2008), while a young school-going man (Erico, 16 years, 02/07/2008) indicated that 'girls are to be blamed for the spread of HIV/AIDS […] because instead of avoiding sex by heading straight home after school, they end up in their boyfriends room'.

The onus of responsibility that is placed on girls to stem the epidemic and ensure progress was articulated in particularly forthright terms by one of the Mozambican educators taking part in the study. 'To educate a girl, is to educate a nation' Sra. Adelaide stated (Gandhi school, 26/10/10). She elaborated on this expression, which is frequently used in both countries and development circles more broadly, by indicating that 'in other words, girls have a responsibility to educate themselves to ensure the progress of the nation'. Thus, in thinking about 'her' future, a young woman was seen to ensure the health of others and the progress of their nation.

While traditional practices such as initiation rites were identified as potentially heightening infection risks (e.g. in view of reported use of unsterilised equipment to perform circumcisions), participants in Mozambique believed that these practices could also form valuable 'entry points' to further young people's education (Albertina, bilateral agency, 13/12/10). Voicing an opinion shared by other policy-makers as well as staff members of international agencies, Sr. Carlos argued that by drawing on 'scientific' knowledge, traditional leaders could be 'made aware' of the 'detrimental impact' of certain traditional practices and norms on the HIV epidemic (MoEC 02/12/2010). Following 'sensitisation' of traditional actors, participants suggested, a traditional practice could offer a concrete moment and venue for transmitting 'scientific' knowledge regarding HIV and AIDS to young people as well as educating them about 'modern' norms and values, such as gender equality and healthy decision-making, which in both contexts was defined in terms of the 'Abstinence, Being Faithful (to a faithful partner) and Condom use' (ABC) approach (Oduro 2010; Oduro and Otsin 2013; MoEC-INDE 2007). In Ghana, particular use has been made of 'folk media strategies' to provide HIV- and AIDS-related education to complement the education delivered through the formal system. Strategies include drumming and dancing, storytelling, and gong beating, which are combined with educational messages (see Panford et al. 2001).

Participants from both countries, furthermore, conceptualised the 'traditional' in terms of its particular educational value. An important example is the notion of monogamy, which in both contexts was varyingly construed as a modern and a traditional practice. Erico's remark above suggests participants believed 'modern' girls were not monogamous, suggesting 'traditional' girls were. The traditional girl is thus conceptualised as (closer to) the ideal of the

sexually innocent child, as opposed to her sexually precocious urban sister (see also Kesby et al. 2006). Very similar views were expressed by policy-makers, educators, and young people in Mozambique, and according to these participants, it was because of young 'modern' women's lack of sexual 'discipline' that they required particular guidance. Arguments as to the risk posed and faced by the rhetorical sexually loose young female (urbanite) can thus be understood to serve as a disciplinary technology, identifying young urban women as 'risky bodies that [need] to be guarded against' (Scott 2003: 9). Monogamy is hereby constituted as a traditional response to a modern problem (namely HIV and AIDS).

At other times, however, 'monogamy' seemed to be regarded as a particularly 'modern' value and practice. For example, Duarte (17 years), a young Mozambican man, contended that 'our country has a problem […] polygamy […] our fathers there in the province, they stay with three to five women', which in his view contributed to the spread of the epidemic (focus group *Maxaquene*, 25/10/10). According to Duarte, polygamy was 'natural' in 'the province', and by practising polygamy, these 'fathers' were 'valuing tradition'. Duarte observed, however, that given the high HIV prevalence rates in Mozambique, these fathers did need to learn to protect themselves and their wives, a view that was voiced widely across actor groups. Duarte's remarks suggest that contrary to the more traditional rural province, monogamy was believed to be characteristic of modern urban relationships. Monogamy was thus deemed central to understanding (and reducing) the spread of HIV, the notion itself varyingly construed and deployed as typically traditional or modern.

In terms of pedagogy, strong emphasis was placed on participatory and interactive learning, an international advisor to the MoEC arguing, for instance, that 'interactive learning methodologies' were critical to efforts to changed behaviour. 'People need to experience what they're learning about', this participant stated, 'and they have to internalize it. And so the approach of learning by doing, participation is critical' (Anne, bilateral agency, 13/10/2010). Similarly, in Ghana, there is a strong move from teacher-centred to learner-centred pedagogies, both for the benefits of students and to meet international trends. Unsurprisingly, such trends are often tied to financial aid given by donor countries with associated conditionalities, for as Thompson and Casely-Hayford (2008) argued from the Ghanaian context:

> the extent of donor support for technical and other educational reforms has raised questions over the scope of national ownership of the reforms, with some arguing that key portions of the reforms were externally imposed by donors,

> especially by the World Bank and the financing was unduly burdened by a host of arbitrary conditionalities. (Thompson and Casely-Hayford 2008: 15)

These views are illustrative of Tabulawa's argument (2003) as to the need to understand aid agencies' investment in education as a means of democratising Third World countries, and 'learner-centred pedagogies' as 'the appropriate pedagogy in the development and dissemination of democratic social relations' (p. 22). The discourse of learner-centred approaches is similarly reflected in Mozambican MoEC curricular documents which, for example, speak of the need for education about HIV and AIDS to 'privilege discussion and the active and collective participation of learners' (MoEC 2007: 31).

As Zohra Ahmed (2011) has argued, the emphasis that tends to be placed on inculcating *internal* reasoning (or self-governance) to change young people's behaviour through 'ABC' programmes may profoundly clash with education that takes place in schools more generally (as well as outside school walls), which relies on external pressure, using 'repetition, silence and behavioral discipline' (p. 129). Furthermore, regardless of whether monogamy was construed as typically modern or traditional, and whether the promotion of monogamy was geared to an *internalisation* of notions of well-being, risk, and rational decision-making and/or relied on external control, the analysis suggests that, as elsewhere, HIV- and AIDS-related education in Ghana and Mozambique is directed at making subjects 'governable and pliable to the desires of authority' (Reid-Hresko 2014: 768; see also Kesby et al. 2006). As highlighted earlier, particular attention was paid to young women and their role in stemming the epidemic. As MacDonald (2015) has argued, girls are constructed 'as potentially different (read: better) mothers, workers and community members than the women around them' (p. 13). These narratives, MacDonald argues, 'are not about the girl-child as she is', but instead what she can be, illuminating the investment in 'the girl-child' to guarantee 'the survival of the future' (McCormack 2014: 15).

Participant narratives from both countries suggest that in order to address the HIV epidemic, it was critical to forge new assemblages of formal and informal educators, and 'modern' and 'traditional' knowledges and pedagogies. Compared to precolonial times, when sexuality education was mainly imparted during initiation rites by a selected community member, the analysis shows that at present sexuality education in both countries is undertaken by a diverse range of actors and young people derive information from a variety of formal and informal sources (Oduro 2010; McLaughlin et al. 2012). Furthermore, as the analysis has elucidated, educators, policy-makers,

and international agency staff *preferred* choice of assemblages of knowledge, actors, and pedagogies appeared to depend on the extent to which these were seen to serve developmental goals. The analysis highlighted how both the 'modern' and the 'traditional' were strategically deployed and used as disciplinary measures. Throughout, however, a distinction was made between 'scientific' (read: 'accurate' and 'rational') from traditional knowledge. As Shahjahan (2011) has also argued, this indicates the existence of 'a hierarchy of knowledge [which is] used to systematize and rank groups of people around the world in terms of "intelligence" in order to legitimise domination'. Finally, the reproductive futurity of girls and young women was shown to form a particular focus of attention within participant narratives, with obstacles to development (and curbing the epidemic) formulated in strongly gendered terms.

Conclusions

As the growing corpus of post- and anti-colonial and feminist scholarship reveals, decisions as to the contents and means of education, and who to involve in educational processes and programmes, are never neutral (Arnot 2006; Assie-Lumumba 2012). Instead, conceptions of the role of formal education in developmental processes in the Global South are deeply political and reflective of particular conceptions of both the prerequisites as well as desired outcomes of 'development' (MacDonald 2015). This chapter has sought to highlight political underpinnings of school-based HIV- and AIDS-related education programmes in Ghana and Mozambique through an analysis of assemblages of knowledge-pedagogy-actors that shape the design and delivery of this form of education. The chapter concentrated on the perspectives offered by educators, policy-makers, and representatives of international aid agencies that are closely involved in the Ghanaian and Mozambican governments' efforts to develop and implement HIV- and AIDS-related education programmes through the national curriculum.

The analysis highlighted that discourses of 'scientific' knowledge and 'healthy' or responsible behaviour informed participant narratives, suggesting there was considerable consensus across participant groups regarding distinctions between scientific and non-scientific information (read: accurate and up-to-date versus inaccurate and outdated) and what constituted responsible decision-making (namely adhering to the ABC model). Additionally, while school-based HIV- and AIDS-related education forms a crucial part of the national responses to the epidemic, in both countries participants attached

particular value to 'traditional' forms of sexuality education such as initiation rites. An important theme within participant narratives related to the importance of modernising these traditional cultural practices, which could be achieved by utilising an existing traditional practice as a vehicle for the transmission of scientific knowledge. This approach to 'traditional' culture appears to be predicated on the belief that the 'curative' potential of tradition is optimised if and when it is subsumed—in a modified, *purified* form—in the formal, modern order (Latour 1993; Scott 1998). Arguably, this example attests to Shahjahan's (2011) arguments as to the colonial underpinnings of what is often referred to as 'evidence-based' education. According to Shahjahan, the separation that is made between 'accurate' and 'rational' knowledge from 'mythology' in definitions of evidence-based education sets up a hierarchy of knowledge, which is then used to 'systematise and rank groups of people around the world in terms of "intelligence" in order to legitimize domination' (2011: 189).

Throughout participant narratives, particular emphasis was placed on girls and young women as principal victims and culprits of the HIV epidemic. The innocent girl-child was hereby construed as representative of the idyllic female childhood and, when formally educated, as the 'possibility of the future' (Edelman 2004). The stress placed within participant accounts on the need to address young urban women's sexual 'promiscuity' suggests that there is an adherence to the perception of the girl-child's (and woman's) place within 'the customary socio-spatial hierarchy [as] under the guardianship of a responsible male elder', whereby the idea of an ideal female childhood needs to understood as grounded in a combination of Westernised notions of the sexuality innocent girl-child (and the woman as good mother and wife) and local discourses of children as having to become respectful members of their extended family and community (see also Miedema and Millei 2015). The assemblages of epistemologies/pedagogies/actors that shape the form and contents of HIV- and AIDS-related education in Ghana and Mozambique thus need to be understood as *jointly* producing what it means to be a 'good' girl and young woman.

This chapter began by highlighting the difficulties of 'speaking for' or representing the other, in this case young women and men in Mozambique and Ghana. It has highlighted the 'colonising' underpinnings of current assemblages of knowledges-pedagogies-actors informing HIV- and AIDS-related education in that they seek to 'speak for' young 'Third World' men and, particularly, women, and what they and their future ought to be. Citing Malidoma Some, an African Shaman healer, Shahjahan (2011) contends that 'while the indigenous world looks, the industrial world *overlooks*', possibly in an attempt to

'oversee' (p. 201, emphasis added). He proposes a 'slowing down' in the design and delivery of educational policies and programmes to allow those involved to identify what we may be overlooking in the education of young people.

McCormack (2014) similarly strives to theorise a space for change, and like Shahjahan engages with the potential of the act of looking, or to quote McCormack, 'embodied witnessing' (p. 9). According to McCormack, such witnessing, which is not reliant on language and narrative alone, bypasses the neoliberal workings of what she refers to as our 'therapeutic culture' (p. 30). The culture of narrating one's 'problems' and its focus on speech has contributed to the conception of the individual as both cause and solution to her/his supposed problems, without questioning the social structures that allow for, condone, and possibly create these 'problems'. As this chapter has elucidated, this conception of the individual underpins the approach to HIV- and AIDS-related education in both Mozambique and Ghana. Embodied witnessing, McCormack posits, is a collective process in which witnesses—that is, the 'listeners' rather than the individual 'narrator'—take responsibility for the indefinite trajectory of 'narrating unspoken and unknown histories' (2014: 31). Such 'slowing down', looking, and 'embodied witnessing' may allow for more ethical research, educational policy-making, and practice relating to sexuality, and HIV and AIDS. 'Slowing down' may offer the necessary space for the colonial vestiges in the design and delivery of school-based HIV- and AIDS-related education in the Global South to become more apparent, and 'unspoken and unknown histories' of young women and men to emerge.

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5

More than "Just Learning About the Organs": Embodied Story Telling as a Basis for Learning About Sex and Relationships

Kate Senior and Richard Chenhall

If successfully engaging young people in discussions about health and well-being is hard, successfully engaging young people in discussions about sex and relationships is *really* hard. Throw into the mix of young people from very diverse backgrounds, including remote Indigenous communities, where reluctance to talk to outsiders is legendary, and you have what seems to be an impossible project. Or the basis for the 'Our Lives' study,[1] which was a three-year study of sexual decision making, sexual risk and relationships carried out with young people from urban, rural and remote[2] communities in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia. This chapter will explore the development and application of two innovative research methods, body mapping and participatory community mapping, and their capacity to

[1] Our Lives: Culture, Context and Risk was a three-year study of sexual health and relationships carried out in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia. It was an Australian Research Council Linkage project and was jointly funded by the health departments of all the states and territories who were involved, as well as 20 other government and non-government partners.

[2] This study included one capital city, three regional towns, one urban setting on the outskirts of an urban area and two remote Aboriginal communities.

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engage young people in discussions about sexuality. It will also explore the potential of using these methods as a basis for educational engagement about sexuality and relationships with young people.

We begin by describing our previous ethnographic research with young people in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory of Australia as a means of positioning us as researchers in this story of an evolving methodology. Ethnographic research, which is grounded in long-term experience in communities and where researchers gradually learn about people's lives, expectations and experience through participating in everyday life, is an effective, if time-consuming, way to engage hard-to-reach groups, such as young people and to explore sensitive issues such as sexual health. In this type of research relationships are developed gradually; the researchers acquire a deep and nuanced understanding of the community and how people live within it and then gradually begin to ask questions (Senior and Chenhall, 2008, 2012). This had been our preferred way of engaging with young people for many years, and we have used it to explore complex health beliefs and behaviors, relationships and sexual health and drug use (Senior and Chenhall, 2008, 2013).

We will then explore the development and application of two participatory methods: body mapping and participatory community mapping as a response to the need to find methods which were less time-consuming and discuss the refinement of these methods so that they became a focus for embodied storytelling. Embodied storytelling encourages people to think deeply about the actual feelings and experiences of a person in a particular situation and to create a narrative based on these experiences (Chenhall et al. 2013). This emphasis on reflection and describing feelings and emotions produces rich and contextual information, which is very different from information gathered through surveys or through one-off interviews.

Our previous ethnographic work in remote communities, which focused on the lives and choices of young women, alerted us to the barriers of undertaking effective research with such populations. We knew that without mechanisms to build trust and interest among young people, that their responses to any questions would be designed to make us go away as soon as possible. The Our Lives project was designed around two periods of long-term ethnographic engagement in two remote communities in the Northern Territory, where researchers were gradually able to explore young people's lives and ideas in the context of their everyday lives. Both communities were more than 300 kilometers from the nearest urban center (in both cases the small town

of Katherine), had restricted services and opportunities for young people and were often entirely cut off for road transport during the wet season (from November to May).

In one of the study communities, author 1 was able to draw upon a 15-year relationship with the community and was able to revisit young people's stories at different points in their history, from pre-teen to young adult. In the other community, McMullen (2015) was able to observe and describe the behaviors of young women over an 18-month period. The following description describes the life of a 'poddy' girl. The word 'poddy' traditionally refers to a child without parents but also includes children whose parenting is characterized by neglect. This is an example of the deep insights that were possible through an extended period of participant observation:

> So this young girl stands near the streetlights at night. She does not yet go walking around at night with other girls her age or older by a year or two. However, informants tell me, the boys will have noticed her and her recent physical development and speculate about her availability. Older men have also noticed her. They know her and her family and know that she is "poddy" and so is vulnerable to anyone who shows an interest. This interest soon comes in the form of takeout food and smokes and occasional pieces of clothing or cosmetics and jewelry. This form of grooming which consists of luring the young girl with gifts, favors, promises, praise with the intent of gaining sexual favours is not unusual in the community and is cautiously welcomed by the young girl. When she accepts these initial gifts it is only a small step for the man to introduce grog and ganja to the mix. Sexual activity soon follows and so this young girl is initiated into adolescent life in the community. She knows little about contraception or protection from STIs and it will fortunate for her if she does not become pregnant. She is far too shy to approach her elders or the local clinic for information. She does not even think about approaching her parents for information as this could lead to a thrashing. (McMullen 2015)

Our ethnographic studies allowed us to be able to engage at various levels in the community to talk about the lives and choices of young people and how these may have changed over time. We obtained detailed stories from mothers, aunts and grandmothers about their own teenage experiences, and how they viewed the lives and choices of the young people in the community today.

Ethnographic research, which involves trying to fit in, participating in everyday life, gradually asking questions and eventually obtaining an understanding based on months, if not years of work, was something that we, as

anthropologists understood and felt comfortable with. We were also comfortable with the writing of detailed ethnographic accounts using thick description, which is described by Atkinson (2015:67) as "a commitment to the exploration of the multiple forms through which social life is enacted".

Our challenge for this project was to work with young people in a range of study sites, where opportunities for engagement were fleeting (often confined to several hours of a health class at school), but where we wanted young people to tell their stories from their own perspectives and for us to obtain a deep and nuanced understanding of how young people understood and talked about sex and relationships. We wanted to gather the very rich type of data that is collected through ethnographic methodologies, without the resources and time required of long-term participant observation. Our aim was to develop a methodology that supported participants to think about people and issues in the context of their everyday lives. This chapter will explore the methods which we developed for this project and the particular insights, and points of intervention and education that such methods provided, as well as how our short-term engagement was informed by the traditional ethnographic studies.

Two innovative participatory methods caught our attention as a suitable methodological approach to engage young people: body mapping, where people were encouraged to paint a life-sized body outline with feelings, thoughts and responses to situations; and risk mapping, which we later conceptualized as participatory community mapping as described by Power et al. (2007) where people were asked to minutely describe their environments and their and their peer's movements within these environments. Both techniques had been used previously in sexual health research and education. The body mapping technique had been used to explore people's responses to HIV/AIDS (Solomon 2007) and risk mapping had been used by Power and colleagues to explore places in the local environment where young people felt sexually vulnerable (Power et al. 2007).

Body mapping was first used by the organization Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative in their project entitled "Living with X: A body mapping journey in the time of HIV and AIDS". The body mapping process was designed to help people explore their feelings and experience while living with HIV and intended to support group discussion, but also as a therapeutic tool. Body mapping as outlined by REPSSI involved a number of stages where individuals worked through creating a multilayered body map that included a number of activities that supported participants to gradually draw a body map, incorporating feelings, emotions, support mechanisms and hopes and

aspirations for the future. In addition to supporting group dialogue on living with HIV and AIDS, it was designed for use as a therapeutic tool, which focuses on individual experience. As such, the emphasis is on the tool's use as a community development aid, rather than a research process. In our study, we wanted to extend the use of body mapping to utilize it primarily as a research instrument to understand young people's experiences and understandings of sexuality and relationships.

Risk mapping is a group participatory activity developed by Power and colleagues (2007: 232) to gain descriptive frameworks of young people's perceptions of risk. They explain that this participatory process allows young people to discuss context and take a guiding role in the research process. We were interested in developing a methodology that combined the detailed embodied experience with a group participatory approach, which combines elements of both these methods.

Young People's Experience of Sex Education

There is no mandated level of sex education provided in Australia, and sexuality education is the responsibility of state and territory governments and as such is regarded as being "somewhat ad hoc" in that inclusion of sex education in the curriculum is left up to schools to decide (Mitchell 2014: 385). Not all the young people in our study had experienced formal sex education. In many cases, only students who undertook health as an elective class had had any exposure. When they had, they commented that the emphasis was usually on the biology of sex and reproduction:

> All I got in sex-ed was the organs, like it had nothing to do with sex really—just the anatomy. (Lauren, Non-Indigenous female, Capital City)

Others talked about attempts to scare them into safe sex by showing them gruesome pictures of sexually transmitted diseases:

> One time, this bloke came into our class and showed us pictures of what you could catch. He showed us this one picture of this baby with gonorrhea in its eyes. I'm thinking "what's he showing that to us for, I'm not a baby". (Lizzie, Indigenous female, Capital City)

The need for a refocused sexuality education was a theme, which ran through all our discussions with young people (Helmer et al. 2015). In addition to the

technicalities of sex and safe sex, young people emphasized the need for education about relationships, emotions and breaking up, and the problems of negotiating safe sex. As a young woman in a remote community commented:

> We need information on relationships and how to deal with jealousy. I worry about all the girls at home, they are keeping it all inside, they need someone to listen to what they are going through. (Stacey, Indigenous female, NT remote community)

Methods

Embodied Storytelling

Keen to explore sexuality and relationships from an embodied "whole person" perspective, we equipped ourselves with large pieces of paper and canvas, paints and marker pens and set off to do our first round of body mapping in a remote Indigenous town. We were keen to replicate the REPSSI method, but in a group participatory context. We asked small groups of young people in schools to think about health issues that affected them and to explore the experience and feelings of these on the body maps, with the facilitator ready to steer the conversation toward sexual health.

The young people at the local school enjoyed the exercise and produced a series of often startling artworks. Sexual health, however, was not something that was at the top of their list when they were considering health and relationships in the community. Furthermore, the gatekeepers (in this case the principal and the teachers of the school) who were allowing the research to occur were very concerned about shaming[3] young people through directly framing the research as being "about sex", so our guidance had to be circumspect.

As a result, the body maps produced explored everything from the effects of mosquito bites through to crocodile attacks, alcohol abuse and fighting. In terms of piquing the interest of young people, body mapping was a hit, but in terms of finding anything about sexuality, it was an abject failure (removed for blind review). Disheartened, we decided to refine our methods.

Drawing on our previous ethnographic research (Senior and Chenhall 2008, 2012) and in collaboration with young people with whom we had

[3] Shame is concept with extremely complex meanings in Aboriginal contexts and can be understood to mean more than a passing experience of embarrassment. Shame is understood as a regulatory mechanism encouraging group conformity and is a sanction against attracting attention (removed for blind review).

already built relationships, we developed a series of hypothetical scenarios, so that instead of asking abstract questions about sex and relationships we could say of a body map "this is Rebecca, she and Dylan have had sex for the first time what is she thinking about or feeling now?"

We paid careful attention to making the stories realistic and getting the language right. A whole classroom of girls laughed at us when we described one of the male characters as "good looking"; "what you mean is that he is Hot!" they corrected us. We attempted to make the scenarios as open-ended as possible so that the groups could make decisions about how their lives would unfold as a result of the decisions that the characters made. The scenarios explored issues such as first sexual experiences, pregnancy, getting a sexually transmitted disease and domestic violence. Importantly, not all were negatively framed; for example, there was one scenario, which was just the story of a couple, who were thinking about having sex for the first time.

With the aid of the stories, the formerly generic young person (the empty body map) now had a name and a story. It allowed young people to discuss issues that they were encountering in their everyday life. These issues were grounded in their own beliefs, values and experiences, but did not require them to disclose any personal details about specific events as the discussion was through the hypothetical stories. As a group method, this approach encouraged participants to build on each other's stories and to think about and discuss the implications for the individual characters. This self-reflective and ongoing analysis that the young people were engaging was auto-ethnographical in nature (Chang 2008). Because the stories were hypothetical, the participants could contribute to the discussion without disclosing any personal information. This latter point is particularly important; at the time that this project began, the Northern Territory had just introduced mandatory reporting laws for sexual relationships under the age of 16 and under the age of 18 where the partners were more than two years apart in age. These laws were causing considerable disquiet in the community and among health and teaching professionals who considered that such an obligation to report would affect their ability to provide confidential care for young people (McMullen 2015).

The urban centers of Darwin, Alice Springs, Broome and Ceduna presented new problems for us: Away from discrete communities how could we find young people to involve in our study? Schools were the obvious answer, but working through schools caused another set of problems. The first being access. In addition to the institutional ethics clearances for this project, the project then had to be assessed by the Department of Education, and then negotiated on a case-by-case basis with each individual school. Some schools decided that the research was not appropriate for their students, while others embraced

the opportunity for students to engage in a topic that was often neglected. Parental consent was then necessary for individual students to participate in the exercise. We visited each school to talk to Principal and class teachers about the project and asked them for their recommendations of which classes should be involved. Notes were sent home to parents explaining the project and asking for their consent for their child to be involved. Students were then asked to provide their individual consent to be involved in the project.

Because of the scope of the project, it was necessary to involve a team of researchers. The Our Lives team, in addition to the Chief Investigators who are medical anthropologists (male and female), included a female nurse, a male doctor/policy advisor, a male Indigenous researcher, a female research assistant and a female anthropology student who had been employed as a nurse before undertaking a PhD. Male and female researchers attended all workshops, and we also ensured that a person who was qualified to answer health-related questions (the doctor or nurse) was also involved in the workshops.

Student's own interest in participating was often influenced by their previous experience of school-based sex education, which has been described to us as being "boring", "not relevant" and "just about the organs". We also had to accommodate the fact that a teacher always had to be present in the classroom with us. In most cases, the teacher took a welcome opportunity to sit unobtrusively in the back of the room and catch up on work, but occasionally they intervened. For example, in the middle of a very detailed discussion of a couple planning their first sexual experience, the teacher piped up: "abstinence is best", thus influencing the whole course of the conversation. There was nothing we could do about this, except record it in the interview notes so that we could account for the outside influences in our later analysis.

Students worked in self-selected groups of five to six people. Usually they were same sex groups,[4] but occasionally (and only in the urban schools) there were some mixed groups. Group approaches had some limitations, which especially involved the possibility of competition within the groups and the tendency to make accounts as sensational as possible. We countered this where we could with the results from our ethnographic work, which included individual interviews.

Students were always aware of the other groups working around them, and often the conversation was both within a group and between surrounding groups. In some cases interaction between groups mirrored the relationship between the characters. For example, in one body mapping session focusing on the characters Rebecca and Dylan (discussed below), one group of young

[4] The Indigenous males and females were usually segregated, reflecting the emphasis on keeping male and female business separate.

women also commented upon and analyzed the way that Dylan was being depicted by a group of boys at the same time as constructing their own narrative of Dylan: "*It must be much simpler to draw the boy, because they only think about sex*".

The Story of Rebecca and Dylan

Rebecca is a character in a very simple scenario, where the two characters, Rebecca and Dylan, meet at a party and have sex that night and then go home separately. The students (in this case a mixed group of two boys and four girls)



Fig. 5.1 Rebecca, painted by 2 boys and 4 girls (Capital City)

then let the story unfold about how Rebecca and Dylan are feeling the morning after (Fig. 5.1).

> (Girls) When she wakes up in the morning after having sex with Dylan, she would probably think "did I really do that?", but if she does it more often then she would think it was normal.
> (Boys) In the morning Dylan will not even remember it, because they met at a party, so he was probably drunk. If he does remember he will think "score!".
> (Girls) If Rebecca sleeps with lots of guys, people will call her a slut, if a boy did the same thing he is cool, this is not fair.
> At this point in the story, Rebecca misses a period and worries that she may be pregnant:
> (Girls) She is freakin out
> Rebecca is not pregnant, but she does have a sexually transmitted infection:
> (Girls) I would rather be pregnant than have gonorrhea. If they have to tell someone that they have gonorrhea, it would have to be someone very close to them.
> How would you feel about Rebecca?
> (Girls) if Rebecca was a friend, we would feel different about her because she slept with a random guy. But after a while the friendship would get better again.
> You could use Facebook to spread rumours about Rebecca (all agree).

At first, these responses from a mixed group of non-Indigenous students reveal a mixed response to Rebecca, with comments about the inherent double standard and the feeling that although Rebecca's friends may shun her at first, that they would forgive her in time. This is coupled, however, with the inevitability that Facebook could be used to spread rumors and jokes about Rebecca.

Analysis of the visual material adds complexity to the story. Rebecca is presented in provocative clothing. She has a very short skirt, bare midriff and her breasts and nipples are showing through her top. The words "worried" and "nervous" are painted above her. To these a boy in the group has added the words "sad" and "Ha Ha", which appear to indicate a lack of concern or a sense that she got what she deserved. Dylan is depicted as a minor stick figure near her right leg, as if he is a very minor player in the unfolding drama (although he is depicted with a big smile on his face). Finally, the words "slut", "dirty" and "no self-respect" are painted around Rebecca. The word "both" is added at the end of the exercise in an effort to address the double standard between the treatment of the male and female characters.

In another depiction of Rebecca, painted by a group of boys in a rural community, Rebecca is depicted as being entirely naked. She is depicted with full sleeve tattoos on her arms, and she has the word "thug" tattooed on her knuckles. The boys say, "Rebecca has tattoos because she is a rebel". Her sexually transmitted infection (STI) is depicted as a large brown stain that

threatened to engulf her entire pelvic and genital region. The boys describe it as "making her stink". She is also depicted with a large black bruise on her leg, which is considered to be a result of her sexual encounter. Other female body maps were also drawn as bruised and battered by boys' groups, including another depiction of Rebecca in which her entire body was covered in red bruises. In this case the boys commented, "You don't know how they did it".

The Story of Frank

In contrast to the depictions of Rebecca (and indeed many of the depictions of female characters, whether drawn by females or males who are drawn with

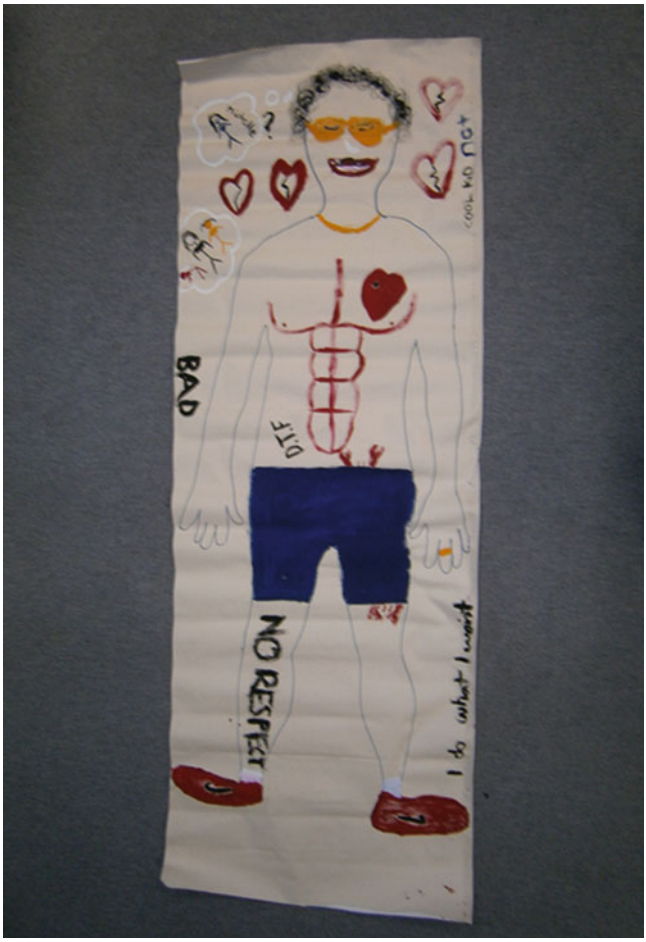


Fig. 5.2 Frank, painted by 1 female and 4 males, rural community

sad faces, minimal clothing and with their STI becoming the focal point of their bodies) are the depictions of the male characters in the scenarios, who are depicted as being muscular, smiling and confident. This is epitomized by the representation of Frank (Fig. 5.2), who portrays all these characteristics, even while he has a lobster-sized pubic louse climbing over the waistband of his pants. Frank, in his story, cheats on his current girlfriend (Michelle) and has multiple relationships. He has an STI "because he sleeps with a lot of girls", but this does not seem to cause him much concern. Frank, with his highly muscled torso and sunglasses, is surrounded by a cloud of broken hearts and tiny stick figure images of the girls that he has had sex with. Initially after some discussion, the lone girl in the group drew a sad mouth on Frank, saying:

> Maybe he was sad about cheating on Michelle.

The boys however change it to a smiling face, saying:

> No we should make it a laughing face, he is satisfied because he can get any girl that he wants.

The remainder of the writing that surrounds Frank's body is evidence of the dispute about his character which emerged through the discussion: at one point he has "cool kid" written above him, to which the words "not" has been added by the female in the group. The words "Bad" and "No respect" are countered by the defiant "I do what I want". It is of interest that in the example of Rebecca she has the words "no self-respect" painted on her, while Frank simply has "no respect". The statement about Rebecca is internally focused on her lack of care for herself. The statement about Frank is externally focused, expressing his lack of care or concern for others. It is clear from the portrayal of Frank that despite his evident STI he thinks highly of himself.

Toward the end of the discussion, one of the boys paints a little black dot on Frank's heart, saying: *Maybe he thinks a little bit about Michelle, she is the tiny spot on his heart.*

This particular body map provides a good example of how a conversation emerges within a group during the body mapping process and how multiple and divergent viewpoints can be expressed and contested.

Bodies in Place

Many of the young people in our study lived in environments which were characterized by high levels of violence and alcohol abuse. Following Brumbach et al. (2009) and Simpson et al. (2012), we wanted to explore aspects of the social environment in which young people made their decisions and to explore with young people the relationship between harsh and unpredictable environments and risk-taking behaviors. We based our mapping activity on the risk mapping method developed by Power et al. (2007) to explore sexual health and vulnerability in a South African community. Our "risk mapping" method, however, did not focus only on risk; it is better conceptualized as a community mapping activity. We were interested in how young people moved about their environment and the places and space that they used at different parts of the day. Groups were asked to draw maps of their local environment and mark the places where they liked to hang out, where they felt safe and the places they considered to be unsafe. As in the case of the body mapping exercises, the conversation that emerged during the process of mapmaking was also recorded. The following is an excerpt from a transcript of a discussion, which emerged out of a mapping exercise in a regional town in Western Australia:

> Interviewer: What's this street?
> This street? This is Anne Street-like the Bronx
> Interviewer: (pointing to the street marked on the map) is it all called the Bronx?
> Not all of it, this bit right in the corner where the yellow pole is, that is the Bronx, everyone hangs out there and drinks all night. That's the place where all the violence happens. They got a couple of people on that side of the street—yeah big murder investigations. If you are walking, most people will check out Anne Street before they go to the nightclub. It's a place to meet up, any which way in Broome.
> Interviewer: if it's so violent, why do you go there?
> Because it's the only place to feel alive and you know a lot of young people who would be hanging around. And you can meet with friends and family. It's a nice place to hang out. From my experience, when I was smaller, I used to walk out with my girls. We used to go out and mix and mingle and have a good time and there were hardly no fights. But now it's gone from extreme to proper extreme. (Tracey, Indigenous female, Broome)

Young people's discussions of the thrills and terrors of Anne Street provide a commentary on the nature of the social environment in which they make decisions and what behaviors they see as being normal and expected. The risk mapping exercise also provided them with a geographical space for the characters generated in the body mapping exercises; for example: "*Rebecca and Dylan would sneak off to have sex here in the bushes*", "*you can get free condoms here (a condom tree dispensary was marked on the map), but usually the little kids wreck them, so maybe they wouldn't bother*".

The risk mapping activities generated detailed stories of young people's perceptions and experiences of their everyday environment. Although the exercise asked people to describe both safe and unsafe aspects of their environment, the results tended to emphasize and perhaps sensationalize the unsafe aspects. The things that caused young people to feel unsafe could stem from rivalry and hostility with other youth. For example, some youth felt frightened to wear their school uniforms, which would identify them as outsiders to other youth when they traveled through the bus station. Other stories were more sensational, such as fears of pedophiles who grabbed young people near the school or murderers. The same themes were repeated in several groups, emphasizing how stories about violence became a focus of school mythmaking. These were never firsthand accounts, and details such as the person's name, the time and date as well as what actually happened were always poorly defined.

In general, in the urban communities, parties and other places where young people have the chance to congregate, especially at nighttime, such as the bus station, were considered to be unsafe.

> It's not safe here, because a lot of people get abducted. Every day people have fights at the shopping centre. (Tess, Non-Indigenous female, Capital City)

In much of the material from the larger urban centers (i.e. the largely non-Aboriginal sample), there was the sense that potentially violent or otherwise unsafe places were well known, avoidable or that threats could be reduced by taking some precautions such as not going out at night or simply changing out of their school uniforms to avoid confrontation with other youth.

In the regional centers and the remote communities, violence was less sensationalized and described as a part of everyday life (especially after dark). In these environments, alcohol-fueled fighting and assaults were commonplace. In the very remote communities, young people also talked about the threat to their well-being posed by sorcery, which could be considered to be a supernatural form of violence and which greatly adds to their sense that their lives are unpredictable. Sorcery can be used to cause illness or death and can be used as punishment for social

wrongdoing, which can include marrying or having a baby with a partner who is in an inappropriate kinship relationship (see Chenhall et al. 2013). In these environments, young people rarely felt safe, and places of safety were considered to be extremely limited.

> Girls bash you if you look at them the wrong way, or if you look at their boyfriend. But the girls are not afraid of that. They are afraid of men and boys who could rape them … for girls it is only safe in their own houses. (Cheyanne, Indigenous female, NT regional town)

In the West Australian sample, the young people described a particular part of their community, which they considered to be the focus of violent behavior:

> Everybody hangs out here in the street … they just hang around, that is the unsafe place (indicating location on the map) that's where all the violence happens. They got like a couple of people on that side of the street. Yeah, big murder investigations. (Indigenous females, Risk Mapping group, WA regional town)

The younger ones hangs out and when they get drunk, you know, they start everything, and then the older ones join in. (Indigenous females, risk mapping group, WA regional town)

When asked why people wanted to be in an area, which they considered to be violent, and where murders and rapes had been perpetrated, they answered:

> They know a lot of other young people hanging out there. And they could meet their friends and their family. It's just a nice place to hang out. They know it is violent and not safe, so they just go and check it out. Coz that's where all the other friends are hanging out. (Tammy, Indigenous female, WA regional town)

Embodied Narratives

A series of important themes arose from our analysis of the visual and verbal narratives produced through the mapping exercises (For a detailed discussion of these, see Chenhall et al. 2013). Young people were making decisions about sexuality and relationships in an extremely complex social environment. This complexity was exacerbated for some by limited knowledge about reproduction and contraception. Choosing partners from the same community and who were of the same age was considered a way to make safe sexual choices. Familiarity of partner and partners who share the same qualities have been

consistently found in other studies to influence the decision to practice safe sex (Fisher and Fisher 1996; Hammer et al. 1996; MacPhail and Campbell 2011).

Sexually transmitted diseases were highly stigmatized, and young people made great efforts to ensure that people who contracted STIs were portrayed as being "not like us"; for example, the depiction of Rebecca with tattoos was a conscious effort to make her seem as different as possible from the young people who were depicting her (Senior et al. 2014). This perception has significant implications for the young person's willingness to consider that they might have STIs and their decisions to seek treatment.

In many of the narratives, the double standard was acknowledged, and although young women pointed out that it was "not fair", it was usually described and depicted as being what was expected in young people's relationships. It was also sometimes reinforced by both female and male participants, as shown in the differences in the depictions of Rebecca and Frank in the images above.

Equally concerning was the perception that young men were difficult to pin down in relationships and that they would move on if the young women did not acquiesce to their wishes, which often included not using a condom (Senior et al. 2014). Young women also talked about their tolerance for violence in their relationships, again due to the fear that any attempts to address this would be the end of the relationship for them. Young women's stories about putting up with violence can be compared to the body maps produced by young men, in which young women are depicted as being bruised after their sexual experience.

Throughout the discussions, a level of vulnerability in relationships was clear. Young people, especially young women, who overstepped norms of behavior (which included having sex with people known to you of the same age as you) were vilified as being "dirty sluts". There was also the ever-present threat of being exposed on social media. Clearly, it is not just the technicalities of sex which young people need to learn about, but the complexities of negotiating relationships, the need to address stigma and double standards and the notion that violence is accepted and normal in relationships.

By combining body mapping with risk mapping, we were able to contextualize young people's values and beliefs around their stories within their familiar environments. Through this we were able to explore the relationship between place and sexual health (Dennis et al. 2009: 468)

We were able to ground the imagined characters and their experiences within young people's own perceptions of the places in which they lived, went to school and hung out. We were also able to explore how health services

fitted in to this picture and the difficulties caused by issues of both geographical access and stigma, which young people encountered when accessing the services. In Darwin, many young people knew that the sexual health service was located in a busy main street at the base of the Health Department, that it was surrounded by pubs and nightclubs and was an extremely busy and popular place for young people.

We were, for example, able to get a sense of how difficult it might be ("*at least four buses*") for Rebecca to go to the health clinic, and that when she got there she would have to disguise herself in a "*hoodie and glasses*", because the clinic was located in such a conspicuous area of town. Given the stigma we have described in having an STI, the potential dangers of being seen accessing such a service are a major deterrent for young people.

Discussion and Implications for Sex Education

In this study, we adapted the REPSSI body mapping approach to include a more group-oriented focus, utilizing hypothetical stories developed by young people alongside risk mapping. This integrative approach enabled a better understanding of the negotiated aspects of young peoples' beliefs, values and experiences associated with their sexual identities and behaviors in addition to contextualizing this information within their social environment.

The young people in this study voiced considerable discontent with the sex education that they had been previously exposed to. It appears that a focus on the technical aspects of sex, reproduction and safe sex did not meet the needs of young people who are negotiating relationships within extremely complex social determinants of sexual and reproductive health. Their comments emphasize that sexuality cannot be considered in some sort of biological vacuum, and their concerns rest more on how to negotiate and talk about sexuality, how to manage relationships and emotional upheavals and how to negotiate safe sex.

The results from our study also point to a need for concerted efforts to reduce the stigma associated with getting a sexually transmitted disease, to challenge double standards in relationships as well as the notion that violence in relationships is acceptable.

The combination of methods, which informed our understanding of attitudes toward sex and relationships, provided us with deep insights of the sort that normally would only be possible through ethnographic research. It is important to remember, however, that such methods cannot replace ethnographic research (Atkinson 2015). We did not produce the "thick description"

that is characteristic of ethnographic researchers, nor did it provide the researchers with firsthand experience of participants' everyday experiences. Furthermore, the young people were undertaking the activities associated with the project outside the context of their communities and families; therefore, the whole of community perspective usually obtained from ethnographic methods was not obtained (Fetterman 2010: 18).

For studies that either deal with secret, hidden or private activities, this method does provide an avenue for discussion and understanding. Importantly, this method allowed young people to tell their stories and to build on each other's stories in a way that protected them from personal disclosure. We were in some cases able to explore interactions between the sexes as they worked through body maps, as well as the group dynamics in the construction of a character and a story. This accommodated multiple and sometimes dissenting viewpoints.

We used participatory community mapping and body mapping to explore young people's sexual health, from the perspective of researchers, but the combination of methods also presents significant opportunities for the development of appropriate, accessible and entertaining sex education, where young people feel empowered and that their concerns are being addressed. In the process of painting their body maps or community maps, young people tell their stories. They also ask questions, and these questions provide opportunities to provide information in a non-threatening manner. For example, in one discussion of a scenario in a regional town in Western Australia about preventing pregnancy, a young woman commented:

> Well, she could just act clever and have a hot bath afterwards
> Other girls: Nah, that won't work. Miss, what could she do?

This prompted a discussion of the morning-after pill, how it worked and where in town you could access it.

As an educational tool, the ideas and attitudes that are discussed, such as the double standard and stigma and its consequences, can be raised and challenged and alternative ways to understand the situation can be discussed. For example, Jackson and Cram argue that in the area of the double standard, there is a need to go beyond recognizing individual attempts at resistance "to develop resistance that is both collective and organized" (2003: 125). Group activities such as the ones we have described, which encourage young people to think deeply about a situation and support each other in decision making, provide a good opportunity for young women to conceptualize and practice strategies to resist and subvert the double standards.

Conclusion

Louisa Allen argues that sexual health resources that are developed without reference to how young people articulate their needs for information are unlikely to be effective (Allen 2001 1:63). Sexuality within social relationships is a preoccupation of the young people in our study. This requires a reframing of sex education to encompass the dilemmas and concerns of young people within the context of their intimate social relationships and not reducing sex education to disembodied organs on flash cards or diseases in a textbook. Technical knowledge of sex and reproduction was often missing in our sample too, such as in the above example discussing pregnancy prevention, but such aspects acquire more value and relevance when they are grounded in stories which have meaning and relevance to young people, because they are created by young people themselves.

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6

Faith, Progressive Sexuality Education, and Queer Secularism: Unsettling Associations

Mary Lou Rasmussen

I am an advocate of sexuality education programs that are influenced by comprehensive approaches. I strongly believe that advocacy for comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is important, especially given the politics of sexuality education in the US context as well as internationally (Rose 2005). I also don't want to set up a binary that suggests that the world is neatly divided between those who support CSE and those who support abstinence-based approaches. Jessica Fields, in her book *Risky Lessons*, questions the perception that there are clear distinctions between these approaches, as based on extensive observation of sexuality education lessons in North Carolina schools. She notes

> the idea that sex is normal and natural prevailed in teachers' everyday classroom practice. The sharp distinction between abstinence-only and comprehensive policies did not correspond to a sharp divide between the classroom instruction about bodies that the two curricula provided. (2008: 104)

Fields' observations are an important reminder that sexuality education, *in practice*, may not appear as divided as it does in sexuality education debates. At the same time, Fields acknowledges that liberal visions for sexuality education (in which young people have conversations about sexuality, responsible decision-making, and the mechanics of reproduction) are "so taken-for-granted in

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today's secular public education that it is easy to forget that science supports an ideological system" (2008: 102). This naturalization of different versions of secular sexuality education interests me in this chapter. How did this set of positions become naturalized? And what are some of the consequences of this imagining of secular versions of sexuality education as simply reflecting modern reality? I consider how comprehensive approaches have been creatively adapted to engage young people in the USA who are religiously affiliated, also how they have been implicated in the production of religious–secular binaries.

The progressive sexuality education that I explore in this chapter happens within schools, in out-of-school programs, and at public events (specifically, I focus on a comedy festival act). I recognize that these places are incredibly distinct, with different audiences and purposes. But looking across these sites it is possible to see how particular sets of ideas, which I associate with secularism, produce and reference the "taken-for-granted" understandings that are apparent to Fields. The focus in this chapter is predominantly the US context, because this is where distinctions between abstinence and comprehensive approaches have been most pronounced and most contested. While these ideas have their roots in the USA they also have resonance beyond the USA, including Australia, where I live. I consider how comprehensive approaches interact with and sometimes frame relations between religiosity, sexuality education, and secularism, and I consider faith-based organizations' (FBOs) relationships with comprehensive approaches. I also draw on Nancy Lesko's *Feeling Abstinent? Feeling comprehensive?* (2010); her examination of the role of affect in structuring feelings toward these different approaches is placed alongside two ideas of Jasbir Puar's "sexual exceptionalism" and "queer secularism". I identify and trace some of the relations between queer secularism, abstinence versus comprehensive binaries, and their associated affects; I think about how these affective binaries are sustained via sexual exceptionalism and queer secularism.

Teen Birthrates, Religiosity, and Sexuality Education Provision in the USA

The research that I analyze below looks at how sexuality education in the USA influences adolescent birthrates. There is recognition within this research that sexuality education cannot be isolated from the broader social context, including issues such as religiosity, race, and ethnicity, social class, and state

policies on abortion. Whether one is for, or against teaching about religion in public school contexts, religion is always going to be a significant part of many young people's cultural contexts. The research below suggests the salience of religion as a contextual factor that needs to be addressed in the provision of sexuality education, whether it is framed within a comprehensive or abstinence-based approach.

The relationship between religiosity and teenage pregnancy in the US context is explored in a recent longitudinal study, which considers 24 states in the USA. Cavazos-Rehg et al. (2012) in their article *Associations Between Sexuality Education in Schools and Adolescent Birthrates* found a strong link between *religiosity and increased levels of teenage birth rates* (my emphasis). The authors maintain that the findings of the study "underscore the strong influence of religiosity and abortion policies on adolescent birthrates". They also make the caveat that this association is "above and beyond sexuality education":

> *Teaching more sexuality education* did not lower adolescent birthrates when accounting for state characteristics (i.e., higher religiosity, stricter abortion policies, and sociodemographic characteristics). (2012: 139) (my emphasis)

Despite their research finding that there is no relationship between more sexuality education and a decline in adolescent birthrates, Cavazos-Rehg et al. (2012) argue that all US states need to "embrace comprehensive sexuality education" (139). I would argue that these findings are not an endorsement of any style of sexuality education. It is most likely an argument for more research that can consider how sexuality education can specifically target young people who have higher levels of religiosity and live in states with restricted access to sexual and reproductive health services, including abortion.

In their study of demography and teen birth rates in the USA between 2000 and 2008, Zhou Yang and Laura Gaydos (2010) also note "the significant positive influence of religiosity on birth rates across age and race", and they state "*this effect could be independent of policy*" (521) (my emphasis). Akin to Cavazos-Rehg et al., Yang and Gaydos found a strong correlation between religiosity and birth rates. The variables that Yang and Gaydos took into account include Medicaid waivers, abstinence funding, parental consent, religiosity, demography, and socioeconomic status. The dependent variable was teen birth rate (518). They found that "religiosity had a significant influence on teen birth rates across age and race … conservative religious beliefs

strongly predict [increase in] teen birth rates" (520). So, Yang and Gaydos suggest, provisionally, that regardless of how conservative or progressive a state's policies might be regarding sexuality education, that conservative religiosity may counter this influence and therefore teen birth rates among religiously devout young people will not diminish.

Both these quantitative studies suggest that religion strongly influences teen birth rates *regardless of the type and amount of sexuality education provision experienced by young people*. If one accepts that religion is an important factor in each of these studies, and sexuality education as currently taught (comprehensive or abstinence based) does not necessarily impact adolescent birth rates, then what is an appropriate response? Indeed, Yang and Gaydos' (2010) conclusion is that "religiosity had a significant influence on teen birth rates … conservative religious beliefs strongly predict [an increase in] teen birth rates" (520). Somewhat contrary to the findings reported above, Kathrin Stranger-Hall and David Hall (2011), in recent quantitative research on abstinence-only (AO) education and teen pregnancy, trace a relationship between AO sexuality education and increases in teen pregnancy.

Following on from establishing this link, Stranger-Hall and Hall argue:

> An important first step towards lowering the high teen pregnancy rates would be states requiring that comprehensive sex education (with abstinence as a desired behavior) is taught in all public schools. Another important step would involve specialized teacher training. … As a further modification, "sex education" could be split into a coordinated social studies component (ethics, behavior and decision-making, including planning for the future) and a science component (human reproductive biology and biology of STDs, including pregnancy and STD prevention), each taught by trained teachers in their respective field. (2011: 9)

Stranger-Hall and Hall's suggestions for future directions accord with my own past understandings of how sexuality education can be enhanced—many might continue to concur with their recommendations. I see such suggestions as potentially limited in what they can achieve because of their failure to substantially engage issues related to religiosity and sexuality education. There is one mention in this article on the relationship between religiosity and teen pregnancy, which suggests that these are positively correlated, but the suggestions for future directions don't sufficiently address this issue. To my mind, ethics, sexual citizenship, and references to decision-making (all cited as

integral to the reduction of teen pregnancy rates) have become secular codes that theoretically may make space for discussions of religiosity, but generally tend not to be explicit about these connections.

How does progressive sexuality education address these links between religiosity and teen birth rates? How does sexuality education that is avowedly secular engage with religious communities? How do progressive approaches, that are predicated on science, reason, and an explicit absence of discourses related to morality, engage young people who are religious, committed to abstinence, and clearly sexually active? Is developing a pedagogical form of address to engage with these young people to use birth control even a possibility, given the social contexts in which they negotiate sexuality?

It is incumbent upon researchers in sexuality education to understand how religion and progressivism are mutually entangled—a progressive approach cannot nullify the influence of religion, and presumably the reverse is also true. Young people are engaging in abstinence-based sexuality education, declaring a strong religious affiliation and having sexual relations. Religious and progressive commentators who continue to argue the superiority of religious *or* secular approaches in terms of young people's sexual decision-making, freedom, and liberation may both miss important opportunities to engage young people in conversations about sexuality. What would sexuality education provision look like if researchers and practitioners assumed that secular *and* religious perspectives are intrinsic to the production of sexuality education?

I don't want to appear naïve about the politics that shape sexuality education provision in the USA. I recognize sexuality education provision in the US context is highly contextual. I also understand that religion may be left out of suggestions for future directions in sexuality education for myriad reasons: it may be seen as too controversial; as potentially running afoul of federal, state, and local statutes that preclude schools from offering religious instruction; as anathema to education about ethics and decision-making; and, as contrary to public health imperatives and to scientific education about sexuality.

Regardless of the location in which they are enacted—within and outside the USA, sexuality education research and programs (religious and secular) are often bound by a religious–secular binary at the outset and this shapes the politics, the philosophy, and aims and aspirations of researchers/practitioners/parents/young people. In order to try and demonstrate just how this binary can shape practice, I consider an article by Jesse Mills entitled *I Should Get Married Early: Culturally Appropriate Comprehensive Sex Education and the Racialization of Somali Masculinity* (2012).

Comprehensive Sexuality Education and the Somali Community in San Diego

Jesse Mills' study illustrates some of the misfires and misrecognitions that can occur when progressive ideas are enacted/perceived as regulatory. This is one example of how a progressive approach to sexuality education can produce a set of alignments that have the potential to reinforce religious conservatism, therefore minimizing the efficacy of a comprehensive approach.

Mills observes the day-to-day operations of Project Brotherhood, Responsibility, and Outreach (Project B.R.O.): a CSE program aimed largely at young Somali men recently arrived in San Diego, California. The education program takes a comprehensive approach, aiming:

> (1) to provide young men with the knowledge about sexuality they need for good decision-making; (2) to encourage respect for themselves and others; (3) to help young men understand the importance of self-responsibility, especially in the area of sexual behavior; (4) to help young men increase their level of meaningful communication with their parents; and (5) to prevent partner violence by encouraging healthy relationships. (2012: 11)

Mills sees this attempt by sexuality educators to reach out to the Somali community as informed by US racial stereotypes. He also observes the imperatives placed on health educators to stick to particular "scientific" scripts in the provision of sexual health education because they feel the need to rationalize funding and perpetuate their own employment as credible sexual health researchers/educators (9, 10).

Educators in this program embraced a message of abstinence (while seemingly, according to Mills, not engaging these same young men's strong cultural and religious commitment to abstinence). Explicit within the program was a focus on health experts depicted as the most authoritative figures that young men should consult in discussions of sexuality. This was apparent in Project B.R.O.'s investment "in replacing African authorities with the ideologies and institutions of abstinence and personal responsibility. This tension was clear in Project B.R.O.'s failed attempt to engage parents" (18). For Mills, this pedagogical assemblage may have had the unintended consequence of reinforcing a particularly patriarchal version of Somali Muslim masculinity.

This manifested in conversations between participants about staff attitudes that were seen as too liberal on the subject of homosexuality, hooking up, and having multiple partners (as long as you practiced safe sex), but critical of the

practice of men taking more than one wife. Mills argues that such logic did not shift the perspectives of the young men he spoke to. Rather, in response they were inclined to adopt homophobic beliefs, effectively enabling them to "claim Islam and mainstream normalcy within their own culture. That same homophobia, however, also substitutes individualistic heteronormativity for the collective community-formation characterized by homosocial intimacy" (2012: 28). In this study, young men recognized the power associated with the straight marriage bond, but at the same time they had to reckon with accompanying prohibitions associated with homosocial intimacy, also a part of this same individualistic heteronormativity.

Mills attributes educators' failures in the implementation of this CSE program to its underpinnings in:

> the broader structures of humanitarianism [that] rely on racist and sexist stereotypes that conform to prevailing social values as stakeholders may not have enough knowledge or critical perspective, or, more likely, may not feel in a position to disrupt the mainstream from which vital good will flows.

> The distorted threat of Somali sexuality allowed Project B.R.O. to come into being, yet the program's misplaced reliance on the culture of poverty ideology and easy shift to a more diffused multiculturalist framework secured its role of surveilling and disciplining abjected youth of color. (2012: 30)

The desirability and availability of funding for the implementation of CSE programs targeting minority youth (even if they happened to practice relatively low levels of unsafe sex), resulted in the implementation of a program that understood these young men through the lens of poverty and racialization. It also, reportedly, failed to engage with the role of religion and community and the changing attitudes of these young men's female peers. The secular underpinnings, implicit within many instantiations of the comprehensive approach, contribute to Project B.R.O.'s failure to apprehend the significance of religion in shaping young people's understandings of sexuality. It is evident that the program's architecture was embedded in secular understandings of sexual decision-making, abstinence, and sexual freedom that ensured that these young men and the workers in the program had agendas that were mutually unintelligible, if not antagonistic. It is also noteworthy that workers in this program didn't, *at least according to Mills*, conduct this critical appraisal themselves. Rather, Mills characterizes the workers as clinging to narratives that reinforce progressive ideas about sexuality, as well as reinforcing racial and class stereotypes about the young men they were paid to "help".

This analysis of Project B.R.O should not be read in isolation. In many ways, the approach being adopted by the workers in this program is entirely unremarkable, it reflects some taken-for-granted understandings about the intrinsic value of a comprehensive approach. My discussion of Mills suggests something of a gap between progressive approaches and faith-based communities in the USA. In the section below, distinctions between comprehensive and faith-based approaches are not straightforward.

Faith in Progressivism

In a review of comprehensive and abstinence-based approaches to sexuality education being utilized within FBOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) in the USA, David Landry, Laura Linberg, Alison Gemmell, Heather Boonstra, and Lawrence Finer demonstrate that faith is no predictor of the approach people might take toward sexuality education. These researchers are from the Guttmacher Institute, a progressive think tank on sexuality education.[1] My decision to point out these researchers institutional location is in part informed by a desire to construct them as credible in their assessment of FBOs. To this end, I am privileging evidence-based analyses of FBOs—a secular maneuver?

In analyzing the barriers to provision of comprehensive sexuality organization, Landry et al. (2011) note that CBOs are often funded under the auspices of public health initiatives and that this limits what they are able to achieve because they are "locked" into prevention programs and may not provide broader youth development or recreational activities. This is particularly significant in relation to the ideas I am exploring in this chapter because it speaks to the ways in which funding of sexuality education reinforces secular/religious binaries. If sexuality education garners support principally on the basis of its prophylactic effects, then funding programs that go beyond this logic may be difficult to justify.

In their analysis, Landry et al. (2011) suggest potential benefits associated in not being confined within a progressive approach, arguing "faith based-organizations are usually not solely driven by public health outcomes and may be better able to incorporate a variety of lesson plans and topics in a

[1] The Guttmacher Institute is a not-for-profit think tank in the USA that prides itself on its use of evidence "to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights through an interrelated program of research, policy analysis and public education designed to generate new ideas, encourage enlightened public debate and promote sound policy and program development". See http://www.guttmacher.org/about/index.html

comprehensive sexuality education program" (93). So FBOs may be more likely to vary progressive scripts and go beyond a focus on health imperatives (96).

The notion that CBOs are limited by a focus on health and risk prevention is an argument that has been made by numerous commentators (Allen 2004; Lottes 2013). Allen (2004) emphasizes the importance of thinking about pleasure and desire in sexuality education, going beyond a focus on the mechanics of sexuality education; a position she critically revisits in "Pleasure's Perils" (2012). Lottes' argues for operationalizing connections between discussions of sexual health and sexual rights, a discussion that she recognizes has to engage values and beliefs. While Lottes and Allen have been critical of the narrow focus of CSE, the critiques cited above have not engaged questions of how religion might play a role in complicating discussion of rights, pleasure, and desire in sexuality education.

Advocates of an abstinence-based approach do draw on progressive discourses to capture the imagination of Christian young people. For instance, "sex positive" sexuality education, a term often harnessed by supporters of the comprehensive approach (see Landry et al. 2011) has also been mobilized by Christian sex counselors. In *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century*, Jeffrey Moran argues that:

> In the long run, perhaps sexual "liberals" in SIECUS [Sexuality Education and Information Council of the US] and elsewhere should not worry too much. Abstinence education and the modern conservative movement have deep roots in American culture and are by no means immune to the cultural changes they claim to despise. For example, the LeHayes have tried to approach sexual expression more positively than the conservative tradition dictates, and Irvine cites evidence that other Christian sex counselors have angered some of their allies by attempting to make their presentations more explicit, more sensational. What happens when the first generation of abstinence educators looks into the blank faces of its students and realizes that what Christian conservatives had believed for so long to be the unspoiled innocence of youth is, in fact, nothing more than the crying ignorance of the American teenager? (Moran 2003: 288, 289)

Moran's *Teaching Sex* draws our attention to processes of secularization within progressive and conservative approaches, but somewhat confusingly, at least for this reader, he also affirms progressive approaches. While Moran doesn't perceive CSE as the antidote for the "ignorant American teenager", he does want to ease the concerns of liberals who worry about the proliferation of abstinence discourses in the USA. Maybe echoing Fields above, Moran does this by suggesting that progressive and conservative sexuality education

provision is not always as far apart as one might think. Moran perceives something of a blending of Christian conservatism and the liberalism of SIECUS.

Moran also softly mocks Christian conservatives for their misrecognition of ignorance as innocence. The assumption here from Moran is that young people who are the subject of abstinence-based approaches are essentially indistinguishable from their peers—essentially, he proposes that adults should perceive young Americans as ignorant on the subject of sexuality, not innocent. This analysis doesn't appear to entertain the notion that young people might be innocent and ignorant, devout and promiscuous.

In thinking through debates about abstinence, innocence, and ignorance, I have found the work of Charles Taylor quite instructive. He comes at debates about celibacy and abstinence from a slightly different angle. He suggests that such debates bring forth the ignorance of Christians and secularists alike, "what Vatican rule-makers and secularist ideologies unite in not being able to see, is that there are more ways of being a Catholic Christian that either have yet imagined. And yet this shouldn't be so hard to grasp" (Taylor 2007: 504). The importance of this insight (which is surely not new) is that attempts to see secularism and Christianity as separate flies in the face of the blending of these ideologies, historically and in the present, and the ways this impacts people's beliefs and practices.

Nancy Lesko also sees similarities between comprehensive and abstinence-based approaches to sexuality education. But for Lesko this similarity is apparent in their affective structures; both approaches are marked by feelings of certainty about their own truths, and by a belief that freedom can be achieved if people would only adhere to their particular version of truth, secular or religious. She argues:

> both CSE and AO supporters are nostalgic, viewing the current state of sex education as a loss, or compromise, and a far distance from a preferred education about sex, gender, marriage, and authority. (2010: 285)

In responding to this nostalgia, Lesko thinks about how sexual knowledge might be imagined otherwise:

> Memories and longings are not to be split off from science or psychology, but rather linked in liberal studies that resist final conclusions and wholeness and emphasize open inquiry (Weis and Carbondale-Medina 2000). These are possible orientations in doing sexuality education differently—moving away from instrumentalist messages to locate sexual knowledge within history, society, and individuals' lives and meanings. (Lesko 2010: 293) (my emphasis)

I share Lesko's desire to see sexuality education as moving away from instrumentalist messages. The open inquiry she suggests needs to apprehend not only politics, history, and society, but also the place of religion, spirituality, ethics, and belief in the production of individuals' lives and meanings.

Open inquiry is another idea associated with a progressive approach to sexuality education. This is because open inquiry is predicated on the assumption that young people (and their families) see the value in contestation of ideas related to sexuality. In their Pew Research report, *Religion in the Public Schools*, the authors suggest open inquiry may be untenable for religious groups who insist upon the teaching of biblical truths about religion (and I would argue sexuality) to young people, within and outside schools (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2007).

While some opponents of comprehensive approaches might balk at the idea of open inquiry, supporters of comprehensive approaches might resist any introduction of religion and belief in public instruction on sexuality education—including the open inquiry proposed by Lesko. This objection may be inspired by a strong belief that the space of public education is ideally defined by the absence of religion. I make this point in order to illustrate how the advocacy of open inquiry in sexuality education is a political position—just as arguing that religion has no place in public schools is a political position. Both positions can be justified and opposed via different interpretations of secularism in the US context.

Sexual Exceptionalism, Queer Secularism, and Sexuality Education, Within and Outside the Academy

I have found Puar's notions of sexual exceptionalism and queer secularism instructive in thinking about the underpinnings of progressive sexuality education. Puar sees queer sexual exceptionalism as "wedded to individualism and that rational liberal humanist subject" (2007: 22). She also associates this sexual exceptionalism with the idea that being queer is transgressive, but also aligned to

> liberal humanism's authorization of the fully self possessed speaking subject, untethered by hegemony or false consciousness … rationally choosing modern individualism over the ensnaring bonds of family. (2007: 22–23)

Notions of sexual freedom, rationality, modern individualism, and autonomy are, to my mind, intrinsic to the project of progressive sexuality education. This isn't to say that those outside this progressive project are somehow beyond reproach. It is recognition of how sexual exceptionalism is sustained by circuits of power and privilege infused by race, class, and citizenship (Puar 2007:13).

In a later writing, Puar interweaves sexual exceptionalism with the notion of queer secularism, describing the latter as structures of feeling and thought that "inhabits a space of refusal in relation to religiosity and the opportunities religious affiliations and attachments might allow" (2014: 207). These relations also obscure "the Christian basis upon which such a queer secular position relies, and which it foments" (2014: 207). This is particularly significant for Mills' analysis of how CSE engages with young Somali men, newly arrived in the USA, who identify as Muslim. Relations between secularism and Islam are quite differently inflected to relations between secularism and Christianity. Approaches to sexuality education that fail to register this difference are complicit in submerging these differences and potentially refusing to acknowledge and discuss what this might mean for pedagogies related to sexuality education.

Utilizing these ideas, I focus on how different formations of secularism are interwoven with imaginings of progressive sexuality education. These relations may be consciously held and explicitly elaborated. They may also shape thought and affects in such ways that particular ideas come to be taken for granted, and perceived as part of the normal structure of modern sexuality education.

Nancy Lesko, a researcher with whom I identify because she is strongly associated with progressive ideas in sexuality education, explicitly attends to the ways in which certain feelings associated with AO and CSE have become taken for granted. Lesko notes:

> From my location in the academy, abstinence approaches are generally associated with tradition, backwardness, and conservative religion-infused public policy, while comprehensive sex education is linked with modernity, scientific accuracy, and freedom to talk about and enact sexuality (Pigg 2005). (Lesko 2010: 281)

This analysis by Lesko focuses on how feelings toward AO and CSE direct us in specific ways, while also attending to the ways in which feelings about AO and CSE might touch. In her analysis of AO and CSE, Lesko worries about "ceding space to conservative religious advocates and undermining the tenuous support for CSE" (2010: 294). This anxiety, which have I shared, speaks to the power of secular discourses of sexuality education.

My focus takes a different slant; I am interested in tracing how secularisms continuously affirm CSE as modern, scientific, and associated with freedom. This tracing is intended to develop understanding about how the secular academy has arrived at a place where it construes abstinence approaches as traditional and backward and conservatively religious. It is recognition that approaching AO as associated with tradition, backwardness, and conservative religiosity is insufficient as a means of understanding the appeal of AO.

The production of specific types of sexuality education as backward, and others as modern has a range of effects beyond affirming the normative value of progressive approaches. One of these side effects is the production of a set of relations in which the "queer agential subject can only ever be fathomed outside the norming constriction of religion, conflating agency and resistance" (Puar 2007: 13). Religion is constructed as particularly egregious within this set of relations—with Islam [at least at this moment in time] potentially constructed as especially problematic (Puar 2014).

Puar's discussion of queer secularism focuses on the production of Muslims and Islam as backward (out of time), fundamentalist, non-white, and homophobic. She argues that these relations are "debatably avoidable to an extent for queers from other [religious] traditions such as Judeo-Christian" while also acknowledging that this formation of queer secularity is partially founded on "the denial of Christian fundamentalism as a state practice in the United States" (2007: 13). Ann Pellegrini, writing about the history of queer studies, which surely informs queer secularism, in the "Anglo-American mode", argues it "proceeds through a secular imaginary within which, religion, if it is to appear at all, must be made to appear as arch-conservative enemy of progress" (Pellegrini 2009: 208). In debates relating to progressive sexuality education predominantly white, Christian fundamentalist groups are constructed as simultaneously backward/highly organized, fringe/mainstream, lacking in power/at the center of power, authentic/disingenuous. Those associated with progressive and conservative camps might also jockey to be positioned on either side of these binaries, depending on the context in which they are located.

> Being a queer agential subject within these sets of relations often means being seen as resistant to religion. In making this point, Puar reverses Jakobsen and Pellegrini's formulation that,
>
> "Of course 'they' (those who are religious) hate 'us', 'we' are queer". (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2003, In Puar 2014: 205)
>
> And, Puar proposes her own formulation:
>
> "Of course 'they' (those who are queer) hate 'us', 'we' are religious".
>
> (Puar 2014: 205)

Puar suggests it is important to keep both these formulations in mind, drawing our attention to the ways in which perceived antinomies between the "we" who are queer are the "we" who are religious give force to one another through their repetition. This formulation of Puar's also helps explain why associating oneself with religion, or coming out as religious, it can sometimes be difficult to make oneself understood as sexually agentic, progressive, or modern.

Puar's comments about queer secularity in *Terrorist Assemblages* are written in relation to a photo of Poulumi Desai, an English multimedia artist who is holding a sign entitled "I Am a Homosexual Also" while dressed as a Muslim cleric. This image sutures together queer, Arab, and fundamentalist Muslim by "interrupting both conventional epistemological and ontological renderings of this body" (2007:13). The normativizing and sometimes violent racialization and secularization of queerness is apparent for Puar in Desai's production of the queer Arab cleric. This image evokes fundamentalist religion and homosexual identity claims, a very queer juxtaposition. This pairing might be troubling for the Muslim cleric and for the liberal queer. It draws our attention to the garb of fundamentalism and, potentially, to the limits of progressive sexuality. This performance of the Muslim cleric could also be imagined as a form of sexuality education that at once complicates and refuses secular religious binaries. Puar's discussion of queer secularity is part of a broader discussion in which she thinks about "the mechanics of queerness as a regulatory frame of biopolitics" (2007: 24). She sees queerness, in this regulatory frame, as automatically associating itself with transgression while simultaneously "erecting celebratory queer liberal subjects" complicit with "all sorts of other identity norms, such as nation, race, class, and gender, unwittingly lured onto the ascent toward whiteness" (2007: 24). Both CSE and AO are borne from and reproduce white histories and archaeologies of sexuality (Moran 2000)—histories that are implicated in the ways in which sexualities are racialized, and how they can be racialized differently (Barnard 2004). Expert knowledges within the field of sexuality education are also racialized because of the ways in which they are crafted out of secular understandings of sexuality that are inflected by liberalism (McKay 1999), rights discourses (Lottes 2013), and a focus on adolescent sexuality as normative (Tolman and McClelland 2011).

Such histories have also resulted in popular formations of progressive sexuality education that embrace ideas of the autonomous liberal subject who is a rational decision-maker, pleasure seeker, and knowledgeable risk taker. The character of Juno in the eponymous movie is one example of this conflation—she is, in many ways, a celebratory queer subject (white, working class, smart, beautiful, transgressive, pregnant but not maternal). Arguably, Juno complicates secular norms because she is a sexually agential teen who

can access abortion, but chooses instead to go ahead with her pregnancy, after seemingly little thought. Juno is queer, secular, and irrational. Somewhat akin to Desai, this is a juxtaposition that troubles familiar associations—there is an expectation that Juno, as a young sexually progressive woman, with ready access to abortion will do the rational thing and exercise her right to choose—an abortion.

These configurations of queer secularism resonate for me in conversations I have with peers that may involve religion, and pedagogies of sexuality education. The pertinence of these concepts in thinking about progressive norms in sexuality education was brought home while I was at a comedy gig, *Taxi's, Rainbows and Hatred*. In the show Tom Ballard (a young, white, gay, Australian comic) ruminates on everyday acts of homophobia that he experiences, focusing especially on the numerous small incidents of homophobia he has experienced in taxis. Ballard also berates homophobic Ugandans, Russians, and Irish Catholics. One lesson conveyed in the show is that being gay is normal in contemporary Australia [Ballard also makes the point that Australia is generally exceptional in its tolerance of gays and lesbians—when compared to places like Uganda and Russia—though also more intolerant in comparison to places like Ireland that have instituted reform regarding marriage equality]. The audience at the show appeared to connect with this representation of the celebratory queer liberal subject—this type of humor is familiar. Ballard, and his representation of Australia and Australian's like him (the audience—this author) are hailed as fellow liberal subjects; we are a part of the fabric of the comedy festivals cultural program.

Ballard relates two stories during the show involving taxi drivers characterized as religious and homophobic. In the first encounter, Ballard hails a taxi and the driver, recognizing him (by name) as a gay comic, suggests he pray and refuses to let him in the taxi, leaving him standing in the rain in the middle of the night in a regional town in New South Wales.[2] In the second encounter the driver, pointing to a drag queen outside the taxi and suggests to Ballard that all queers should be placed together, on an island, far away, so they can rot together.

Such incidences of everyday homophobia, while not equivalent, bear some resemblance to many incidences of everyday racism, sexism, and classism—affective responses to these different incidences are always inflected by the actors involved in these encounters, and by the formulations that

[2] I have no doubt that Ballard's experience with this taxi driver in Newcastle would have been very disturbing and my intention is not to minimize the gravity of and significance of such acts of homophobia.

contextualize these actions. The possibility to forge affiliations across difference via some recognition that everyday acts of discrimination have multiple configurations—and that these encounters have different histories, affects, and effects—is not explored in this lesson.

A general lesson of the show appeared to be that those backward religious types can be pretty homophobic, but such intolerance shouldn't stop you from choosing to be yourself in the face of everyday acts of homophobia. It is likely that this lesson is superfluous. The audience at the show of a well-known *gay* comedian is already on message. Going to the show might mimic many students' and teachers' encounters with progressive sexuality education. For many, an encounter with this style of sexuality education is unremarkable, as they are already on message.

For those who do not agree with the message, speaking back to this style of pedagogy can be a difficult task. This performance of sexual exceptionalism left me wondering about the shared pleasures to be found in characterizing certain types of people as backward—which isn't to say that homophobia is unproblematic. Progressive sexuality education, *when it is underpinned by sexual exceptionalism and/or queer secularism*, is not that far removed from Ballard's gig. It inadvertently, teaches young people lessons about who is like "us"—and, by virtue of curricular absences—who is not like "us"—the "us" being sexual progressives.

Progressive Sexuality Education and Freedom from Religion

Complex entanglements of sexuality, secularism, and Christianity in the USA are examined by Jakobsen and Pellegrini in *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance* (2004). Arguing against calls "for a stricter enforcement of the separation of church and state" (12), Jakobsen and Pellegrini point out that American secularism is not really that secular (13). Divisions between church and state are blurred by the public expressions of religiosity by political figures (every President must affirm their religiosity), by the celebration of religious holidays, and, by the affirmation afforded religious rituals—marriage being a prime example. Given this reading of the US context, Jakobsen and Pellegrini argue for

> more public space for secularism. … We want the freedom not to be religious and the freedom to be religious differently. And we want both these positions to count as the possible basis for moral claims and public policy. (2004: 12–13)

This take on secularism and religion is integral to thinking sexuality education otherwise. Such a style of thought might perceive marriage equality as not distinct from religious discourse, but something deeply infused with religious overtones, thereby refusing the characterization of queer and religion as necessarily separate.

Sexuality educators might engage young people in conversations about the value of marriage from diverse religious and secular perspectives—recognizing that both formations are interwoven with moral claims. Such an approach does not discount the important work of identifying and interrogating legal, economic, physical, and political violence experienced by "sexual others" (Puar 2007: 10) and by "religious others" within and outside the USA. This approach may not be perceived as distinct from Lesko's call for open inquiry. To my mind, what distinguishes this approach is its explicit engagement of religion, race, and culture as pertinent to public discussions of sexuality education—but not with a view to demonstrating, once again, how backward religious people are (see Ballard).

Apprehending the ways in which debates about "the political and the religious, the public and the private" (1–3) structure sexuality education also requires an examination of how specific notions of sexual freedom are conditioned by liberalism and poststructural feminism (Scott 2009). Freedom in sexuality education has been associated with the production of autonomous and agentic sexual subjects (Corngold 2013). To this end, Josh Corngold has endeavored to articulate a vision of sexuality education that promotes young people's minimalist autonomy, explicitly including cultural, religious, and ethnic attachments as part of his conception of autonomy. He writes:

> the conception of minimalist autonomy that I have begun to outline here is not so strong that it requires persons to foreswear close and enduring connections to faith, family, community, and tradition, neither is it so weak that it condones habitual deference or servility. To assert that someone could still count as an autonomous agent whose life decisions and aspirations are largely dictated or controlled by others is to depart grossly from the ordinary usage of the concept. An individual certainly need not abnegate all loyalties, allegiances, and interpersonal ties that bind in order to be considered autonomous. This person must, however, be willing and able, after duly considering various alternatives, to make key judgments and life decisions for him- or herself. (2013: 473)

At the heart of Corngold's approach is the autonomous individual, who can, ideally, with the help of schools, parents, and peers "sift through and critically examine discrepant messages to which they are exposed" (465). It is possible to see here a characterization of the sexuality educator's role as to encourage young people "to enact self-determined goals and interests" (Mahmood 2005: 10). Saba Mahmood perceives such ideas of autonomy and self-determination as central to liberal and progressive feminist thought.

Mahmood doesn't seek to diminish the transformative power of liberal and feminist discourses of autonomy (13), but she is critical of the imaginings of freedom that underpins such discourses. Drawing on liberal theorists distinctions between positive and negative freedom to illustrate the shape of freedom within this imaginary, she writes:

> In short, positive freedom may be best described as the capacity for self-mastery and self-government, and negative freedom as the absence of restraints of various kinds on one's ability to act as one wants. … *Liberalism's unique contribution is to link the notion of self-realization with individual autonomy.* (Mahmood 2005: 10–11) (my emphasis)

Feminism and liberalism, in this formulation, prioritize "the ability to autonomously 'choose' one's desires no matter how illiberal they may be" (Mahmood 2005: 12). Similarly, within the context of sexuality education there is a prioritization of the right of young people to make their own choices (Corngold 2013), even if those choices sometimes might not be perceived as wise or healthy choices (Whitehead 2005). In this imagining of sexual freedom, religion and belief can play a part in sexual decision-making, but they are only admissible when they are seen as compatible with the cultivation of autonomous decision-making, within the progressive-secular imaginary. This is because custom and tradition, and one might add religion and belief, are seen to impinge on sexual freedom, insofar as they may counter self-sovereignty. Within Corngold's vision for sexuality education, custom and tradition, and religion and belief are acceptable, as long as they are *not* perceived as contrary to self-sovereignty/autonomy.

Such conceptualizations of self-sovereignty are, Mahmood argues, apparent in the work of poststructural feminist critiques that have "highlighted the illusory character of the rationalist, self-authorizing, transcendental subject", which secures its authority by "performing a necessary exclusion of all that is bodily, feminine, emotional, and intersubjective (Butler 1999; Gatens 1996; Grosz 1994)" (2005: 13, 14). In the passage below, Mahmood teases out some of her concerns she has with how notions of autonomy and poststructural feminism have produced their own norms:

> the normative political subject of poststructuralist feminist theory often remains a liberatory one, whose agency is conceptualized on the binary model of subordination and subversion. In doing so this scholarship elides dimensions of human action whose ethical and political status does not map onto the logic of repression and resistance. … I will suggest that it is crucial to detach the notion of agency from the goals of progressive politics. (2005: 14)

The detachment of notions of agency from progressivism is crucial for Mahmood in her study of devout women in Egypt who are associated with the mosque movement. This maneuver enables her to differently conceptualize practices that might be otherwise read as submissive within a frame informed by feminist poststructuralism.

What would it mean to conceptualize sexuality education without recourse to the binary of subordination and subversion? How might Mahmood's work invite different understandings of sexual agency—that may not be predicated on notions of self-sovereignty? Circumventing the subordination/subversion binary, Mahmood argues:

> the meaning and sense of agency cannot be fixed in advance … what may appear to a be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency—but one that can be understood only from within the discourses and structure of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment. In this sense, agentival capacity is entailed not only in those acts that resist norms [regulatory queer secularism] but also in the multiple ways in which one *inhabits* norms. (2005: 15).

This detachment of agency from progressivism, articulated by Mahmood, can be instructive for how the sexually agentic subject is understood in the field of sexuality education. If one accepts Mahmood's insistence upon the detachment of progressivism from agency, what matters is not the resistance of norms. Such analysis involves attending to the multiple ways in which norms can be enacted.

Annamarie Jagose (2012) has provided an interesting illustration of this point in her rethinking of women who fake orgasm. Rather than conceptualizing these women as submissive, Jagose seeks to understand the conditions in which the fake orgasm is produced, recognizing that faking it is about much more than submission. Similarly, other sexual practices that may, at first glance appear to the sexuality educator/researcher as passivity or the refusal of self-sovereignty, might, on closer inspection, be instructive in reworking familiar understandings of sexual agency. In the field of sexuality education, such a move would require familiar conceptions equating progressivism with agency to come under scrutiny.

Conclusion

Sexual exceptionalism and queer secularism are useful concepts in attending to the binaries that underpin progressive discourses of sexuality education. The notion of queer secularism, as I deploy it here, gestures toward particular

associations between sexual freedom and autonomy, progressivism, and modernity relating to sexuality education in the USA and Australia. I have argued that these associations may be inherently damaging to how comprehensive sexual education is constructed and delivered, because they produce a sexuality education that is, in effect, often preaching to the converted. The foreclosure of religion and the normalization of progressivism are, at once, pleasurable and problematic, because they reinforce them and us binaries. Expanding the reach of comprehensive approaches might necessarily involve questioning attachments to some of the secular norms that sustain progressivism.

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7

The Cultural Politics of Sex Education in the Nordics

Stine H. Bang Svendsen

Although comprehensive sex education (CSE) continues to be contested politically along liberal–conservative political division in Anglo-American cultural contexts (Alldred and David 2007; Kendall 2012; Moran 2009), it enjoys almost universal backing from the political establishment in Northern Europe (Lewis and Knijn 2002). Along with gender equality, liberal sexual politics are firmly established in the region's nationalisms as a trademark that set them apart from the rest of the world (Bredström 2005; Hekma and Duyvendak 2011; Keskinen et al. 2009). The Netherlands and the Nordic countries in particular take great pride in their "free" approach to sexuality generally, and seem satisfied with their scientifically sound and sex-positive approach to sex education. As Rebecca M. Ferguson and colleagues put it: "The Netherlands is not flawless, but public health practitioners, sex educators, teachers, policy makers and others can turn to the Netherlands for an alternative perspective and inspiration to guide the development of positive, rights based approaches to adolescent sexuality and sexual health" (R.M. Ferguson et al. 2008, p. 104). The confidence that sex education in the region represents the best practice when it comes to teaching sexual health has developed over the latter part of

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the twentieth century, with Sweden as the primary beacon presented for the rest of the world to follow (Sherlock 2012; Zimmerman 2015).

The seeming political harmony in Northern European approaches to sex education is a relatively new phenomenon, however. The discourse shifted during the belated realization that most European countries are in fact multicultural societies, where religious and cultural concerns, beyond those voiced by the Protestant state religions, could influence policy (El-Tayeb 2012; Zimmerman 2015). In the last decade of the twentieth century, sexuality again became a primary "optic" through which the difference and foreignness of Muslims in Europe was understood (Puar 2007). It has also become an "'operative technology' in the disciplining of the Muslim Other" (Mepschen et al. 2010, p. 963; Puar 2007, p. xiii).

Wendy Brown explained that a discourse of tolerance has developed in the West that produces *intolerance* as that which is intolerable, and that intolerance has been selectively applied to non-Westerners in public discourse in the USA (Brown 2006). In the Nordic countries, representations of intolerance toward homosexuals shifted their addressee from the Christian religious right, to Muslims over the past decades (Gressgård and Jacobsen 2008). Sindre Bangstad has argued that moralism has been construed as an indisputably negative faculty of intolerant male Muslims in contemporary European sexual politics. What he calls "absolutist secularism, with its particular understanding of gender and sexuality" posits Muslims as "the embodiment of gendered alterity" (Bangstad 2011, p. 29).

According to Brown, gender and sexual politics in the West has been marked by both depoliticization and culturalization. The culturalization of politics is based on the assumption "that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it and then explains politics as a consequence of that essence" (Mamdami in Brown 2006, p. 20). Depoliticization furthermore "involves construing inequality, subordination, marginalization, and social conflict, which all require political analysis and political solutions, as personal and individual, on the one hand, and as natural, religious or cultural on the other" (ibid., p. 15).

This shift in the cultural politics of sexuality has made "culture" a more pressing concern for sex education. In several countries, the issue has been addressed by teaching about the sexual norms of "other cultures" in addition to the norms of "Western countries" in sex education (Honkasalo 2014; Røthing and Svendsen 2011). Sexuality has also gained increasing prominence in civic education for adult migrants and refugees (Bredström 2008). Most famously, tolerance of public displays of homosexuality has been proposed in Dutch citizenship tests (Butler 2009). What I will address as the "culturalization"

of gender equality and sexual freedom (Brown 2006) is an international phenomenon which is especially pronounced in the Nordic countries, which are my focus here, and in the Netherlands.

In this chapter, I argue that a discourse of sexual imperialism is reflected in Nordic sex education, and that this discourse builds on the epistemological foundations of the sex education project in Europe that were established in the first half of the twentieth century. Drawing a line from the early social hygienic movement, I argue that the strictly demarcated sexual health curriculum functions as a depoliticizing apparatus, through which a specific cultural notion of natural sex is produced as "objective" and based on scientific knowledge. I trace a distinction between "objective" and "subjective" sexual knowledges that correspond to the health–morality binary that Mary Lou Rasmussen has identified in sex education scholarship (Rasmussen 2010, 2012). She points out that the opposition that is construed between health and morality in sex education relies on a secular logic, through which religious and moral concerns are construed as illegitimate.

Rasmussen draws on Joan W. Scott in her critique of progressive CSE agendas. Scott seeks to undo the frequently conflated binaries of "modern/traditional, secular/religious, sexually liberated/sexually oppressed, gender equality/patriarchal hierarchy and West/East" (Scott 2011, p. 93). She argues that three perspectives are the key to understanding the secular frame for sexual politics that she names "sexularism." These are (1) the role of imperialism in the history of secularization, (2) the notion of individual agency that secularism invokes, and (3) the role of sexual difference in secular political organization (Scott 2011, p. 93). The problems with secular notions of individual agency in progressive CSE agendas have been fleshed out in Rasmussen's critique of the concept of "thick desire" (Fine 1988; Fine and McClelland 2006) and pleasure-oriented sex education agendas (Rasmussen 2012). In this chapter, I focus on the two other perspectives Scott highlights. I outline how the history of imperialism and the continuation of its epistemology are central to sex education as it is currently practiced in the Nordic countries. Second, I argue that the separation of sex from sexuality that persists in sex education in the region illustrates how heteronormative conceptualizations of gender and sexuality continue to frame sexual health education. Interrogating the health/morality binary from these perspectives highlights the significance of colonial knowledge formations to the division between health and morality. I draw on postcolonial critique and postcolonial feminism to illustrate how sex education employs discourses that are central in contemporary European racisms today, and argue that the health/morality binary is constitutive of the legitimization of these discourses.

My discussion focuses on sex education in the Nordic countries, and the examples I use are derived from the research in Norway, Finland, and Sweden. The issues I discuss are not unique to these contexts, however. The cultural politics of sexuality that I address in Nordic sex education is nested in a history and a contemporary discourse of sexuality that cuts across Europe, and has significant links to other Western countries. As David Theo Goldberg has explained, racism takes regional forms. In this chapter, I use the Nordic example to shed light on how "racial Europeanization," with its particular emphasis on Islamic Others, informs sex education (Goldberg 2009). Sexuality is central to the fierce and pervasive aversion toward Muslims in particular, and non-White immigrants in general, in Europe (El-Tayeb 2012; Mepschen et al. 2010). It is my hope that a critical engagement with the epistemology of Nordic sex education can contribute to a strategy for challenging rather than confirming sexualized racism in schools. This task prompts us to revisit investments in racial and cultural superiority, which have been part and parcel of European sex education throughout the twentieth century.

Sex Education as a Governing Tool

The early initiatives for sex education came from Progressives and Christian reformers in the USA and in Europe in the first two decades of the twentieth century, who voiced a social hygiene agenda where sex education figured alongside other measures to prevent prostitution, alcoholism, venereal disease, and illegitimacy (Zimmerman 2015). In the USA, and also in several European countries, the social hygiene movement had strong ties to the feminist movement, who argued that women's plight and responsibility for social hygiene and "civic housekeeping" should make them full citizens, with the right to vote.[1]

American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) was a central actor in the effort to spread sex education in the first half of the twentieth century, both in the USA and abroad. Jonathan Zimmerman writes that the ASHAs role in spreading sex education material lead to a widespread notion in other countries of the project as an "American import" (Zimmerman 2015). This notion would stick to the project in many contexts, even though its leading agitators on the global scene would shift from being Americans in the first half of the century, to Scandinavians in the latter half (Zimmerman 2015).

After World War II, Sweden emerged as the undisputed champion of CSE. This was in no small part to the national and international efforts of

[1] See Addams 1996.

the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education from 1933 onwards, led by the enigmatic reformer Elise Ottesen-Jensen (1886–1973), which in 1956 resulted in compulsory sexuality education in schools (Sherlock 2012). Just like the Americans before, the Scandinavian reformers actively spread sex education through international organizations such as the United Nations, and development aid work.

The social hygiene movement that the sex education agenda in early twentieth century Europe was championed by, was strongly inspired by modern science, and popularizations of modern biology. At the time, Charles Darwin's ideas of the evolution of species and sexual selection had been adopted and applied as a theory of society, most notably by Sir Francis Galton (1882–1911). Galton was convinced that human evolution would benefit from design in the same ways that animal breeding did (Challis 2013). Eugenics became the dominant racial epistemology of the early twentieth century, replacing the dominant physiognomy of the 1800s (Challis 2013). It was also the scientific backdrop that informed solutions to the sexual problems of this era, of which the declining birth rates in White populations were paramount (Carter 2001). The supremacy of the White races in general, and the Nordic race in particular, was intrinsic in this project.

Not surprisingly, the Nordic states embraced this scientific legitimization of Nordic racial superiority. Sweden established the State Institute for Racial Biology in 1922, which was an intellectual hub for the eugenic movement. Its chairman, Herman Lundborg (1868–1943), explained that the aims and goals of eugenics were to "the extent possible, to prevent hereditary degeneration to appear and spread, and to organize the societal conditions in such a way, so that successive generations will be as well-positioned as possible in the struggle for existence" (Rudling 2014).

The basic ideas of hereditary vices, degeneration, and the importance of the effort to improve the "stock of the nation" were considered common sense among the educated in Western countries in the first half of the twentieth century. It was in this scientific and political climate that sex education was designed as a governing tool. In a proposition to the League of Nations to further "biological education" in 1928, the British delegation argued that "A carefully devised scheme of biological training could not fail to stimulate the sense of individual responsibility in the exercise of the racial function" (Zimmerman 2015, p. 14). The primary concern of this educational initiative was to prevent sex outside marriage, both for the purpose of combating "degeneration" through venereal disease and the idea that sexual promiscuity was a part of men's biological makeup (Carter 2001).

While the Eugenics movement's direct influence on sex education in Europe is contested (Weeks 2014), it is beyond questioning that the notion of a superior White race and European bourgeois family organization was central to the formation of the modern science of sexuality, and hence to the educational projects based on it. Sex education was a twentieth -century addition to those instruments through which the state tried to "transform the sexual conduct of couples into a concerted economic and political behavior" to influence what Michel Foucault called "the political economy of population" (Foucault 1995, loc. 332). As Foucault notes, despite the very limited treatment of race in the *History of Sexuality*; "In time these measures would become anchorage points for the different varieties of racism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (Foucault 1995, loc. 332). Ann Laura Stoler's seminal work on race and the history of sexuality suggests that we should understand the Western history of sexuality in light of the politics of governance, medicine, and education in the colonial project (Stoler 1995). Sex education has been one of the governing tools colonizers have used to police and control colonized people, in both colonial and postcolonial relations (Adams and Pigg 2005). Sex education's civilizing mission has been carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Western state agencies, and missionaries as a form of development aid throughout the twentieth century (Zimmerman 2015).

During and in the wake of World War II, the racial sciences were discredited (Benedict 1983). The genocide that European eugenics rationalised, the Holocaust, would foreclose any mention of the discipline of eugenics. As Goldberg (2009) argues, in Europe after the Holocaust, even the term "race" was weeded out of academic and everyday discourse. Nevertheless, he points out:

> As diffuse as they are, racist implications linger, silenced but assumed, always already returned and haunting. Buried, but alive. Odorless traces but suffocating in the wake of their nevertheless denied diffusion. (Goldberg 2009: loc. 2128–2131)

One of the ways in which racial logics made its presence felt in the Nordic context was through the continuation of Eugenic political strategies such as forced sterilization of the traveler community and people with mental health problems that went on well into the 1970s.[2] The racializing representations of colonized people that Nordic people were accustomed to from missionaries and anthropologists would persist too (Gullestad 2007), and form a part

[2] The practice was initiated in the 1930s and would persist into the 1975 in Sweden, and 1977 in Norway.

of sex education curricula that continues to be taught in new forms, as I will address below. In recent years, scholars in critical race studies have argued that notions of racial superiority have lingered in the efforts of "developed countries" to offer their example for social progress to the rest of the world (Hübinette and Lundström 2011). The Scandinavian countries would continue to perceive themselves as unquestionable authorities in sexual politics. This perception is not only based on a perception of their own credentials in this field, but also affirmed by many progressives elsewhere in the West.

This historical backdrop is important for understanding scholarly debates about CSE in the Nordics today. It helps to highlight how the "scientific objectivity" and "reason" of European sex education is a social product that has gone through significant social changes. It also pinpoints how certain elements, notably the notion that European sexual culture is superior, have been sustained through these changes.

Nordic CSE and the Health/Morality Binary

CSE provision and scholarship in the Nordic countries has predominantly had a sexual health and sexual rights agenda. This has involved a sex education that includes knowledge about anatomy and sexual functions, reproduction, contraception, safer sex practices, and relationship competencies that enable young people to make independent decisions about sexuality (Kontula 2010; Sherlock 2015; Svendsen 2012). This knowledge has furthermore been construed as a right young people have. Sex education has typically been mainstreamed into curricula rather than singled out in programs. In these cases, CSE has been rooted in the discipline of biology, and biology teachers and health professionals have been responsible for the delivery (Sherlock 2015; Svendsen 2012). In addition, NGOs have offered substantial outside facilitation of sex education in the region. Typically, new directions in sex education content and pedagogies have been initiated by NGOs, and delivered to schools as supplementary programs (Bromseth and Wildow 2007; Svendsen 2012).

Moral and political concerns about sexual norms, practices, and identities have also been dealt with, but typically located within social science or ethics and religion curriculum. The significant inclusion of homosexuality in sex education has largely been done in these subjects, and has had little effect on the core sexual health curriculum. Similarly, cultural norms and differences that pertain to sexuality have been included in the social science part of sex education in Norway. Thus, the core sexual health curriculum is largely

taught independently of cultural and political issues. More significantly, the conception of "natural sex" and the pivotal position of reproductive sex practices in sex education do not seem to have been disturbed by either the acknowledgment of the significance of same sex practices and identities, or the acknowledgment of differing cultural conceptions of sexuality.

This situation produces a disciplinary distinction between knowledges about sexuality. On the one hand, there are the knowledges that are constituted as indisputable scientific facts through their inclusion in sexual health education in biology. On the other hand, there are knowledges that are constituted as cultural, political, and religious, situated in the social sciences and ethics curricula. The central pedagogical difference between these two parts of Nordic sex education is that sexual health is taught as a (scientific) fact, while questions of culture, sexual norms, identities, and religion have been largely treated as "topics for discussion" (Røthing 2008; Røthing and Svendsen 2009). Queer and feminist scholars in the region have been concerned with the problematic ethics of posing minority sexualities as a topic for classroom discussion, and implicitly also, peer judgment (Bromseth and Darj 2010; Bromseth and Wildow 2007; Røthing and Svendsen 2009). My concern here is that the separation of sexual health issues and sexual norms issues constitutes a distinction between what is cast as objective and subjective knowledges in sex education.

The disciplinary distinction between sexual health and sexual norms mirrors the relationship between sex and sexuality in the West, in which "sex" is strictly associated with reproductive sex, while "sexuality" denotes a larger culture and knowledge about sex. Writing about how the very concept of sex in the modern West grew out of the modern discourse about sexuality, Foucault wrote:

> we must not refer a history of sexuality to the agency of sex; but rather show how "sex" is historically subordinate to sexuality. We must not place sex on the side of reality and sexuality on that of confused ideas and illusions; sexuality is a very real historical formation; it is that which gave rise to the notion of sex, as a speculative element necessary to its operation. (Foucault 1995, loc. 2098)

The distinction between "biological sex" and culturally informed "sexuality" has been central to the production of reproductive sex as "natural" as opposed to "deviant" sexual practices, or "savage" sexual cultures. Vincanne Adams and Stacy Leigh Pigg note that:

> This analytic distinction between a biologically reproductive "sex" and a culturally constructed "sexuality" continues to hold currency in some sexuality

> literature, particularly when it is embedded in an often implicit separation between "the West" and "the rest." (Adams and Pigg 2005, p. 6)

In sex education, the distinction they problematize is central to privileging the epistemology of sexuality that has developed in the White European bourgeoisie in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries at the expense of alternative knowledge formations. As many feminist critics have noted over the years, the depictions of sex and reproduction in education has been heavily informed by gender stereotypes (Martin 1997; Myerson et al. 2007; Røthing and Svendsen 2009). Biological facts have been inscribed with gendered cultural meanings, through descriptions of cells and tissue as gendered agents (ibid). Textbooks that use this paradigm have likened the sperms journey to the egg cell after heterosexual intercourse without protection as a "race" where "the fastest and strongest" arrive to fertilize the egg (Røthing and Svendsen 2009). Notions of passive female bodies and active male bodies, and their biologically inherent relations to one another has thus been inscribed in the knowledges that are presented as pure fact in sex education. The gendered bodies that are described in this style of sex education derive their meanings from the modern Western notion of family, and present this social order as a product of nature. Furthermore, it has the effect that all non-reproductive sexual practices are rendered illegible; they seem superfluous to the purpose of "sex" and counter to supposedly inherent reproductive agency of gendered bodies (Bromseth 2009; Svendsen 2012). As several critics have pointed out, explaining same-sex desires, or the pleasure of oral sex and other non-reproductive sexual practices, is difficult within this framework (Bolander 2009, 2015; Bromseth and Wildow 2007). This biological discourse of sex in education illustrates the error of presenting "sex" as the agent that produces sexuality, rather than vice versa, precisely the position which Foucault lamented.

Postcolonial feminist critique has discussed and exposed how the concepts that the "objective" sexual health curriculum relies on, is based on a particular cultural understanding of gender and family. In the sexual health agenda in the Nordics, concepts of man, woman, sex, and reproduction are seen as self-explanatory and as naturally belonging to the same "objective" discourse of sex. Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues that the notion of "woman" as a unified category presupposes a male–female binary as the primary organizing principle of the social, which inscribes Western patriarchy as the principle of social organization (Mohanty 1988). Mohanty is concerned with extending this critique to Western feminists because she wants to address how they have failed to challenge this premise. The implication of this presumption is that other principles of social organization,

be they age, kinship, class, ethnicity, religion, or law, are presumed to be manifestations of male power, through which women are bereaved of agency. As Oyerunke Oyewumi has further specified, this universalization of the male–female binary, which is also pervasive in Nordic sex education, conceptually hinders theorization of societies in which gender categories have taken a more plural form. The effect of this universalization is that difference from the Western gender order is interpreted as a priori oppressive, rendering the non-Western woman "always, already oppressed." Implicit in the universalist category of "woman," Oyewumi argues, is the role of "wife" and "daughter," and "patriarchal husband"—all components of the nuclear family (Oyewumi 2002, p. 2).

Mohanty and Oyewumi offer tools for understanding how naturalization and universalization of a particular gender order are two sides of the same coin. To put it differently, naturalization is the means with which the European gender order posits itself as universal. The practice of the health/morality binary as a disciplinary divide between sexual health education and education in cultural and moral concerns efficiently separates the sexual health agenda from the queer, feminist, and postcolonial critique I have presented here.

The queer and feminist arguments I have outlined are not new to Nordic sex education, and the field has also been influenced by these agendas (Sherlock 2015). The model of mainstreaming a core sexual health agenda, which biology teachers and health professionals are responsible for insures that the conceptual basis that separates sex from sexuality and health from morality is kept intact despite the substantial efforts in the field to offer alternative messages. The continuation of this split is even evident in the queer and feminist norm critical approach to sex education in the region today. As one new norm critical program underlines: "This program focuses on the social aspects of sexuality. Therefore, we address sexuality and relationships without approaching the 'technicalities' (of sex) or personal feelings" (Svendsen 2015).[3]

It is striking that several of these queer and feminist programs do not address sexual practice at all, and are solely concerned with social norms and marginalization. While it is very valuable that norm critical sex education programs are developed, it is interesting that challenging the norms that the epistemology I have outlined here results in, seems to prompt a move away from the issue of human sexual practice.

[3] My translation from the Norwegian. See http://kfuk-kfum.no/aktiviteter/ressursmateriell/samtaleopplegg/samtaleopplegg-om-seksualitet-fra-risk

Culturalization of Sexual Politics

In Molly McGarry's terms, secularism can be meaningfully understood as naming "the product of a forward-moving modernity that swept magic from the world to make way for the capitalist market and the reign of reason" (McGarry 2008). Magic is here a code for unreason, especially religious beliefs. The secular ordering of knowledge as reasonable and unreasonable lends weight to sex education advocates who argue for the value of "scientific facts" in direct opposition to moral concerns in debates over sex education in the USA (Rasmussen 2010). Furthermore, secularism places religion in the private sphere (Rasmussen 2012). Rasmussen asserts that "there is a strong faith within secular sexuality education that if we can pull together medically accurate information, scientific reason and freedom from religion then 'we' can help young people to become more autonomous and liberated sexual subjects" (Rasmussen 2012, p. 478). Such advocates in the USA have also brought up the Swedish example, as a country where sex education is simply considered a "health issue," which does not pertain to moral issues (Zimmerman 2015).

One of the participants in Leslie Sherlock's research in Sweden, a sexuality researcher, explained the Swedish success noting that "since the medical exploration of sexuality, made sexuality be a part of people's health … there was also this belief in science and knowledge, that knowledge could actually change people into something better" (Sherlock 2012, p. 389). There are challenges to the "objective" sexual health agenda, even in Sweden. Sherlock writes that when participants in her study "discussed religious influences, the focus was not on Lutheranism," which is the dominant religion in the Nordic region, "but rather on non-Christian religions, and immigrant experiences were situated as being in conflict with sex education" (Sherlock 2012, p. 390). Sherlock highlights that the values and beliefs of immigrants in general, and Muslims in particular, is listed as a primary challenge to sex education in Sweden today.

Veronika Honkasalo's research on Finnish sex education illustrates how Islam and Western culture and science are presented in a dichotomy through the logics of culturalization (Honkasalo 2014). One of Honkasalo's informants, a health education teacher explains:

> Openness is important for us—I mean that the information we give is objective, that this is our custom, whereas in Muslim cultures and Islam they do not bring up the information in the same way or the children are not aware of the information, not before it is current for them when they grow up. What is specific

> with Finnish culture is that we are open and objective in relation to information on sexuality (Honkasalo 2014, p. 292).

The national exceptionalism that this teacher implies is typical for representations of a sexual culture that is used to positively distinguish the nation, while simultaneously placing it within a Western secular tradition (Røthing and Svendsen 2011). In this quote, objectivity and openness are understood as specifically Finnish (and Western), indicating that information influenced by religion, especially Islam, should be seen as subjective and close-minded. The problem that Honkasalo points out with her informant's standpoint above is that it also clearly posits her own culture of "openness and objectivity" as superior to the Muslim culture which she uses as her point of contrast (Honkasalo 2014).

In this way, the binaries of health/morality conflate with the binaries of Western/non-Western and secular/Muslim in CSE agendas in the Nordics. Sex education in the region draws on these binaries to portray Western sexuality as free, liberal, and developed in explicit contrast to "other cultures" or "Muslim countries" which students are implicitly taught are unfree, illiberal, and underdeveloped (Bredström 2005; Honkasalo 2014; Røthing and Svendsen 2011).

The politics of tolerance has been particularly evident in Nordic sex education which makes *homotolerance* a key objective (Røthing 2008; Røthing and Svendsen 2010). Tolerance toward homosexuality has become a learning requirement for students. As Åse Røthing has shown, students' failure to comply with homotolerance is interpreted by teachers in light of culture and race. In her research, White ethnic Norwegian boys' homonegativism was interpreted as a sign of immaturity, while similar attitudes among Muslim boys were interpreted as an effect of the "home culture." In this case, the White boy is expected to be able to "grow out of it," while the Muslim boy is implicitly expected to remain intolerant (Røthing 2008).

As the example from Røthing's research above suggests, culturalization locks the culturalized subject in a position of arrested development; the Muslim boy in question is not expected to "grow out of" his intolerance because it is presumed to be inherent in his culture. Røthing's example illustrates how "homonationalism" makes its presence felt in sex education. The concept of "homonationalism" was coined by Jasbir Puar to describe how the nation-state has been rapidly transformed from a burden to a promise for White gays and lesbians in the USA (her focus), as well as in several European countries (Puar 2007). She argues that the "historical and contemporaneous production of an emergent normativity, homonormativity, ties the recognition of

homosexual subject, both legally and representationally, to the national and transnational political agendas of U.S. imperialism" (Puar 2007, p. 9). Lisa Duggan furthermore described "the new homonormativity" that Puar saw as constitutive of homonationalism as:

> a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption. (Duggan 2003, p. 50)

Through homonormativity and homonationalism, lesbian and gay inclusions in sex education curricula have been possible without challenging the heteronormative naturalized conception of sex. The discussion of homosexuality in sex education is intertwined with the discussion of culture and sexuality, and both issues are firmly placed on the morality side of the health/morality binary.

The secular logic that posits religion as the antithesis of reason and good-quality sex education involves a politics of race that is too often overlooked in the European context. Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens have traced a "muslimification of racism" in the European context, through which Islamophobia has become central to the racist harassment that people of color experience, whether they are Muslim or not (Essed and Trienekens 2008). The racialization of Islamic faith that these scholars address raises the issue of the interlaced nature of race, sex, and religion.

When discourses about sexuality are pervasive in public culture, they make their presence felt in schools, within and outside sex education curricula. During observations in a multicultural middle school Oslo, I witnessed how the public discourse about Muslim sexualities was a frequent starting point for racist bullying (Svendsen 2014). The issues of genital cutting, including both circumcision and female genital mutilation, and arranged and forced marriages, were topics that were frequently brought up by White boys in this multicultural school context. In this case, the sexualized Islamophobia that circulates in Norwegian society overshadowed the teachers attempt to address racism critically in the classroom. Judging from research in the Nordic context, it seems sex educators, too, are at loss when trying to address cultural difference and sexuality without drawing on racist representations of Muslim sexual norms and attitudes. The moral panics over Muslim sexualities that have been raised repeatedly over the past decades in many European countries (Poynting and Morgan 2012) come to matter in education, and will also seep into everyday encounters outside the classroom. It seems like the topics of

race, religion, and sexuality invoke each other in ways that demand that educators who deal with any one of these topics to also address the others.

The current complicity with colonial and racist knowledge formations that exists within and outside sex education in the Nordics testifies to the continuation of an epistemology of sexual health that has constituted bourgeois European sexual culture as advanced in contrast to the sexual cultures of both Europeans in other social classes, and those of implicitly inferior other cultures. The distinction between sex and sexuality, health and morality, and objective and subjective knowledges helps to justify the continuation of an education that conveys the superiority of European sexual culture.

Feminism, Queer Critique, and the Potential for Non-Racist Sex Education

In an article on the pleasure discourse in progressive sex education literature, Louisa Allen pointed out that "Until now, the inclusion of a discourse of pleasure in sexuality education has been constituted as a 'progressive' and 'liberatory' undertaking." (Allen 2012). This "until now" illustrates how scholars who have not considered the racial and cultural politics of secularism in sex education, or even argued in the name of secularism against religious moralism, have been able to do so without having their progressive ethos questioned. Mathias Danbolt, among others, has pointed out that it is rather telling that issues of racism and imperialism appear as new to feminist and queer agendas, when colonial and racial politics have been constitutive of sexual politics throughout the modern era (Scott 2007; Stoler 1995). Danbolt suggests that the sense of surprise that can be traced among progressive scholars and activists over the fact that racial politics have entered the center stage of sexual politics, attests to the investments in color blindness in LGBT and feminist movements (Danbolt 2013, pp. 355–356). The same can be said about the sex education agendas that I address in this chapter. Nevertheless, the renewed fervor with which sexual liberation is recruited to Islamophobic and racist political agendas in Europe signals how politically acute the work of rethinking sex education agendas is (Mepschen et al. 2010). As I have shown in this chapter, this work requires both attention to sex education programs, and to the cultural politics they are nested in.

Heteronormativity was originally a concept that articulated the social work involved in producing straight gender and sexuality as self-evidently natural. The queer insistence on the imbrication of sexuality in material, political, and economic structures, summarized in the concept of "family," is a resource for forming a queer and anti-racist agenda for sex education in the Nordics today.

As Sedgwick noted in the 1990s, the "family" is also a system of blood relations and a patriotic formation (Epstein and Johnson 1998; Sedgwick 1994).

There has been a proliferation of scholarship using queer theory to dislocate questions of ethnicity and race from kinship imaginings (Danbolt 2013; Eng 2010; Haritaworn 2012; Petersen 2011; Reddy 2012). This has involved emphasis on the racialization of concepts of "home" and "family," and on the heteroimagery of concepts of "ethnic group" and "race." Queer of color critique has taken on the job of disarticulating the various connections that make the family a site for ethnic, racial, and national formation. It focuses on the ways in which "racist practice articulates itself generally as gender and sexual regulation, and that gender and sexual differences variegate racial formations." (R. A. Ferguson 2004, p. 4).

These theoretical developments suggest that there is potential for a queer anti-racist critique of sex education. In this chapter, I have shown how the distinction between sex and sexuality, and health and morality in sex education helps naturalize heteronormative concepts of gender and sexuality. Furthermore, I have illustrated how this naturalization is constitutive of a projection of cultural and religious policing of sexuality onto other cultures. As Puar and others have pointed out, the progressivism that is associated with liberal sexual politics in the West often obscures how minorities in Europe are demonized and policed in the name of sexual freedom (Puar 2007). By taking account of the role of sexuality in imperial knowledge formations that posit Europe as quintessentially modern, it is possible to see how this "new" sexual imperialism continues a long tradition. Currently, initiatives to challenge racism in contemporary Nordic sex education focus on challenging social norms that privilege certain lifestyles over others, and naturalize the continuation of marginalizing and discriminatory practices. My discussion here suggests that this effort should include a challenge to the separation of sexual health education from political, moral, and religious questions in sex education.

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8

Teaching Sexuality, Teaching Religion: Sexuality Education and Religion in Canada

Heather Shipley

Sexuality education continues to spark debate across numerous national contexts; opposition to education about sexuality frequently points to the vulnerability of youth and conflicts of morality for students, parents, and teachers. As the debates about sexuality education gain momentum within media and spark public controversy, the topics at the heart of the debates often connect to parallel flashpoints regarding religious identity, religion in public, and 'national values' (also tied to immigration, diversity, and us/them binaries). These two sets of public controversies are not isolated from one another, as witnessed when new sex education curricula are introduced (and subsequently protested by particular religious groups) and when religious freedom claims are in the headlines (and gender and sexual minorities groups voice their concerns about the limits and extensions of religious freedoms). However, the continued portrayal of sexuality and religion as inherently oppositional misses the nuance of both categories and ignores intersectional identities and the challenges of living at the intersections of religious and sexual diversities. Further, the assumption that religion is the 'location' of harm toward Lesbian,

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Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI)[1] communities ignores the prevalence of discrimination in non-religious or 'secular' spaces. This chapter highlights these debates within a Canadian context to explore the construction of both religious and sexually diverse identities as represented in recent debates about sexuality education, considering the ways these debates portray religion as inherently homophobic and anti-feminist based on particular conservative religious voices that have become dominant opponents to sexual diversity. As sexuality education, and curricula about sexuality, develop it is important to consider the future of education about sexuality as also the future of education about religion, secularity, and ideology.

Youthful experiences within educational institutions have been the source of much consternation and interest; recently, an increasing amount of research has focused on youth identities as expressed by youth themselves (Yip and Page 2013; Yip et al. 2011; Page et al. 2012; Regnerus 2007; Freitas 2008; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a; Young and Shipley 2015). While much concern has focused on youthful vulnerability within education environments, including the sexuality and sexual identities of their teachers (Rayside 2010), recent research on youth seeks to integrate voices of young people to flesh out the ways young people experience, identify, and challenge assumptions and to connect with young people's considerations about sexuality, sexuality education, and their experiences of this education (Taylor and Snowdon 2014a, b; Renold and Ringrose 2011; Shipley 2014; Young and Shipley 2014; Yip and Page 2013; Rasmussen 2004). Because youthful vulnerability (to exposure toward diversities of sexualities) is frequently cited as the reason this education should only occur at home, under the guidance of parents who also transmit moral and ethical values, it is critical to ask young people to reflect on these issues. While sexuality curricula will not be developed solely by what youth want to be taught—nor would any curricula—considering the experiences, insights, concerns, and responses of young people regarding gender and sexuality is a necessary component of the process.

Further, while sexuality education is the source of ongoing debates regarding young people (across the globe), it frequently appears as inherently problematic for 'religion,' broadly conceptualized. The relationship of religion to gender and sexuality is varied and complex, yet often it is very narrowly portrayed with particularly religious beliefs and positions becoming overgeneralized as 'the religious' view regarding gender and sexuality. The complex

[1] A note about terminology; I am using the acronym LGBTQI to refer to multiple spaces and experiences of sexual diversity, recognizing that there are other acronyms that are current or in use. When I refer to LGBT or other shortened formats, it is simply to acknowledge the way the scholar or policy I am citing refer to the sexual minority groups in their article and policy.

relationship of religion, secularity, and ideology as regards gender and sexuality will be explored here, specifically to challenge the notion that 'religion' is inherently exclusive and that 'secularity' is inherently inclusive. This chapter will focus on current debates about sexuality education and their connection to religion and secularity within the Canadian context.

Researching Lived Religion, Sexuality, and Identity

Pioneering work in the areas of gender and sexuality studies has sought to challenge normative assumptions and imposed standards on the categories of gender and sexuality (Foucault 1978; Butler 1993; Burn 1995; Weeks 2011; Halberstam 1998; Kinsman 1996, among others). In the last several decades a vast amount of work has been done to create new spaces for the experience of gender and sexuality outside traditional norms (Burn 1995), beyond the framework of male and hetero–normativity (Irigaray 1984), and with the goal of destabilizing the categories of gender and sexuality thus rendering them more representative of individual identity and lived experiences (Jagose 1996). Within feminist theoretical movements and grassroots activism, there have been numerous branches of critique, including the integration of intersectionality as determining double disadvantages for women who are also racial minorities (Crenshaw 1991), who are disadvantaged based on class (Crompton 1989), income (Johnson 2002), or disability (Parker et al. 2007) to name a few. And although the debates within any theoretical area cannot (perhaps should not) be resolved neatly, the perception of both gender and sexuality has significantly expanded as a result of the activism and theoretical critiques from feminism, markedly changing the understanding about these identity categories and influencing the way gender and sexuality are discussed, even outside academic dialogue (Ursic 2014; Shipley and Young 2014).[2]

Research on religious identity is not yet as advanced as the study of gender and sexuality; religion continues to possess a typically narrow perception within public dialogue, in part influenced by media coverage of particular religious individuals and groups (from conservative religious groups who oppose same-sex marriage or abortion to more violent representations, such as the

[2] Note here, I do not intend to imply that this equates to an inherently inclusive or welcoming experience for normative or alternative genders and sexualities; I mean only that our language has significantly developed in the last several decades, so that diversities of these identities are better known within the public imagination.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)/the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)).[3] However, religious identity is also diverse, nuanced, and rarely contained within normative or static boundaries (McGuire 2008; Beckford 2012; Beyer and Ramji 2013). As the field of religious studies continues to demonstrate, the category of religion is, at best, misunderstood.[4]

Although religion is often represented within narrow parameters in media (or legal discourse) these representations do not accurately portray the diversity of practice, ideology, and belief that is encompassed within and across traditions (McGuire 2008; Davie 1994; Beckford 2003, 2012; Woodhead 2013). Lived religious identities are nuanced and complex, rarely do individuals align within the tick boxes that are found on surveys or adhere rigidly to a set of practices and beliefs as set out within, that is, Christianity or Buddhism (Young and Shipley 2014; National Household Survey 2011; Beyer and Ramji 2013). And yet when 'religion' is discussed within public spaces (e.g., media or legal decisions), it is essentialized into a winnowed set of traits and beliefs (Hoover 2006; Knott et al. 2013; Shipley 2015a, b); within law, this often corresponds to particularities of belief and practice as expressed by individuals involved in the case itself (Beaman 2012; Berger 2008). Frequently, these essentialized portrayals are translated into much broader discourses as what religion 'looks like' (Knott et al. 2013; Beaman 2012).

As the grammar of religion develops (Shipley 2016b), it has been suggested that religious studies scholars can learn from gender and sexuality studies scholars when considering diversities of religious identities (Ursic 2014). As Elizabeth Ursic argues, rarely do individuals identify solely as Lutheran or Hindu in contemporary society; most people who identify within a religious framework bring together political, social, religious, and personal characteristics when describing and defining their religious/spiritual identities (2014, 29). Ursic suggests we would benefit from considering the use of trans and bi when discussing religious identities; using trans-religious to describe individuals who combine multiple traditions and bi-religious to describe participation in more than one tradition (2014, 31). Broadening the category and parameters of religious identity could then seek to capture the nuance with which religious/spiritual/ideological lives are lived, hopefully then transferring into a more accurate perception of 'religion' outside academia (Wallis 2014). As demonstrated by Ursic's own research, and mirrored in a Canadian data set (Shipley and Young 2014), research participants have expressive and reflective language for

[3] This is demonstrated most often in media generalizations regarding 'religion' in reporting, as argued by Hoover 2006; Knott et al. 2013, among others.

[4] There is a vast literature on the category of religion from a historical and theoretical perspective. It is outside the scope of this particular chapter, however there is a growing debate about the category itself and the lack of reflexivity within academia regarding 'religion,' see for example, Arnal and McCutcheon 2012.

discussing their gendered and sexual identities but yet often are unable to find comparable language to express the fluidity and nuance of religiosity (see also Young and Shipley 2015). Individuals often turn instead to expressing themselves as spiritual (but not religious), non-religious but ethical (or holding deep values), and so on, finding the language of 'religion' to be confining for their own identities (Shipley 2016b; Young and Shipley 2015).[5]

And while the academic literature regarding religious identities is currently undergoing significant development, a core issue that continues to be problematic is the assumption that 'religion' is always inherently opposed to sexual diversity, gender equality (or diversity), and to sexual orientation equality rights (Shipley 2016a; Wilcox 2009; see especially Hunt and Yip 2012). This assumed inherent clash often appears regarding legal controversies (i.e., same-sex marriage, discriminatory policies regarding either gender or sexual orientation, see Shipley 2016a), but is also regularly a subject of concern when it comes to teaching about gender or sexuality (CBC 2010a, b, c; The Sault Star 2011; Taylor and Peter 2011a, b; Rayside 2010). This assumed clash ignores the ways that religious groups and individuals argue in support of gender and sexuality equality (Young 2015a; Shipley 2016a),[6] and further ignores the individuals who live at the intersections of religious/spiritual and gender or sexual diversities (Yip and Page 2013; Wilcox 2009; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a; Cho et al. 2013).

The continued portrayal of religion as the 'natural' opponent to gender and sexual diversity has several important implications: individuals (including youth) who live at the intersections of these categories report that they repress or ignore one or the other identity trait depending on where they are and who they are with (Yip 2015), some stating that while they do not feel an internal tension in being both religious and queer, they find LGBTQI associations can be hostile toward religion or that religious groups can be unwelcoming toward LGBTQI individuals (Yip 2015; Young and Shipley 2014).

[5] It is clear that religious studies (particularly here, the study of religious identities) would benefit from the work that has been done within the fields of gender and sexuality studies, but it seems that the problem of 'non-religious' has not yet been resolved; increasingly, individuals identify as non-religious, which is often mistaken for anti-religious or hostile toward religion in some fashion (Halafoff forthcoming; Shipley 2016b, among others). This assumption misses the mark when it comes to the complex interweaving of ethics and values expressed by the 'nones' (a forthcoming edited collection on *Youth, Religion and Identity*, edited by P. Beyer, P. Gareau, and S. Bullivant, Brill Academic Press, considers this subject in detail). The subject of the rising 'nones' and the connections between religious and non-religious identities are outside the scope of this chapter, but a great deal of recent research demonstrates the similarities in expressions and values between those who identify as religious and those as non-religious.

[6] Notably in Canada, the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto first began marrying same-sex couples in the 1970s and spearheaded the campaign for marriage equality. See Shipley 2016a.

Second, the assumption that we can locate harm toward LGBTQI communities within religious spaces (as a 'religious' issue) ignores the widespread and pervasive experiences of discrimination based on gender and sexuality in non-religious or 'secular' spaces, including particularly schools (Taylor and Peter 2011a; Shipley 2014).

With a growing body of evidence to demonstrate that religiosity is more than an anti-feminist or anti-homosexual space and data that demonstrates discrimination toward LGBTQI communities is not relegated to religious beliefs or spaces, it is time to think more carefully about what continues to fuel discriminatory attitudes and to reflect on how sexuality education might serve to connect gender, sexuality, religion, and secularity and move forward inclusive experiences in schools.

Flashpoint: Youth and Education

As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, youthful expressions of their identities have increasingly become of interest within academia; integrating voices of young people to expand understanding about how young people articulate their own identities and how they respond to policies that effect their experiences, particularly within schools (Freitas 2008; Cherry et al. 2001; Collins-Mayo and Dandelion 2010; Regnerus 2007; Smith and Smith 2009; Young and Shipley 2014; Shipley and Young 2015; Yip and Page 2013). Education policy and curricula are often hotly debated topics, generating support and opposition from a wide spectrum of parties. Within the Canadian context, a recent debate in Ontario has focused on the introduction of a new sex education curriculum as part of the Health and Physical Education curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education; Sex Information and Education Council of Canada). A new sex education curriculum was introduced and put on hold in 2010 (CBC News 2010b, c, d), and has since been reintroduced (with additions) in 2015; it was implemented in September 2015 (The Star 2015a; The Globe and Mail 2015). The core focus of the controversy over the modifications has been the introduction of gender identity and sexual orientation within the curriculum in grade 3; the naming of specific body parts in grade 1; and with the 2015 modifications, the introduction of consent into the curriculum (The Star 2015b). I will elaborate on the controversy itself momentarily.

Education has been a site of contention for many years, with schools often seen as the place where 'good' citizens are formed (Gleason 1999). As a result, what is taught in schools (and therefore what 'kind' of citizens are being formed) is the source of frequent tension (albeit, not often related to math curricula) (Mckay 1997; Mckay and Bissell 2010; Maticka-Tyndale 2008;

Gleason 1999). In addition to debates about what is being taught, there have been controversies over who is doing the teaching—gay and lesbian educators in the 1980s and 1990s in particular were the source of concern and speculation (Rayside 2010); speculation and discrimination which continues today (CBC 2010a).

These debates—specifically regarding gender, sexuality, and religion—connect to broader national debates about tolerance, accommodation, religious freedom, and equality (Berger 2008; Beaman 2012; Bakht 2009). Although these broader debates can only be referenced in brief within the space of this chapter, it is important to recognize that the sites of contention regarding equality and freedom are experienced across age demographics and across institutional and public settings. The debate about the sex education curriculum in Ontario has garnered much public attention in part because it connects to broader questions about national values and diversity (Young 2015b; Shipley 2015; Cossman 2007, 2009).

Education policy in Canada is managed provincially; each province or territory creates and monitors education policy, which is to be compliant both with provincial human rights codes and federally with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Berger 2014). As such, each province's sex education curriculum has had its own trajectory, controversy, and current location; Québec removed its formal sex education from the curriculum, asking teachers instead to introduce the topics organically in other classes (Montreal Gazette 2015). Recently, it has been noted that this organic instruction has been tantamount to zero instruction regarding sex education, so Québec has announced it will reintroduce sex education as part of a mandatory curriculum (Montreal Gazette 2015). The province of Alberta was required to add sexual orientation to its human rights act and, after nearly a decade from first instruction, as it was poised to do so, it concurrently added education policy (to the human rights act) stating that any teacher who would be teaching on topics such as religion, human sexuality, or sexual orientation in class must first notify parents. Parents could then remove their children from these classes, without academic penalty (Young 2015). These are just two examples of the current location (and existence of controversy) regarding sex education in provinces outside Ontario; teaching about gender, gender identity, sexuality, and sexual orientation is not consistent or comprehensive across Canada.

Ontario's Health and Physical Education Curriculum was last updated in 1998 (Ontario Ministry of Education), a decade later the process of revising the curriculum began, which included a series of consultations with experts and surveys sent out to parents within the province (CBC 2010d). After two years of development, the new curriculum was introduced in April 2010 and was also put on hold in April 2010. I have discussed that debate at length

elsewhere (Shipley 2015a, b; Young and Shipley 2014). What was particularly interesting during the 2010 controversy was the way that a handful of individuals who opposed the curriculum became generalized as representing 'the religious' view regarding gender identity and sexual orientation (Shipley 2015a, b). When the curriculum was reintroduced in 2015 by the current Premier, Kathleen Wynne, media coverage became much more nuanced about the opposition, noting that it was only 'a few' specific groups who had been vocally opposed in 2010 (CBC 2015). It is difficult to know why the media coverage became more reflexive five years later, but what has reoccurred is the appearance of the same instigators of opposition in the current debate about sex education (CBC 2015; The Star 2015; The Globe and Mail 2015).

The initial debate regarding the curriculum in 2010 is notably short; it was proposed on April 20, 2010, and put on hold until April 23, 2010. The then Premier Dalton McGuinty stated that the proposed curriculum needed to be reviewed with the province's 'religious and multiculturally diverse' (CBC 2010c) composition in mind. Analysis of the media coverage of the controversy revealed that the opposition to the curriculum was generated from a small group of repeated voices; primarily, Charles McVety of Canada Christian College (Shipley 2015). The reintroduction of a new sex education curriculum, with additions to the original 2010 proposal, was met again with opposition from McVety. The major difference in the 2015 introduction has been that Premier Wynne has said that the curriculum is going ahead even with the protests; it was implemented in September 2015.[7] This has created space for more sustained opposition, and larger numbers of groups attending the protests outside provincial legislature (The Star 2015a, b; The Globe and Mail 2015; CBC 2015). Journalists have noted that when they ask individuals in the protests to explain what they oppose in the curriculum, many admit they have not read the curriculum itself (The Star 2015b) and instead they repeat incorrect information about the curriculum (specifically, they repeat incorrect details that McVety has commented on in many media outlets) (The Star 2015b; Power and Politics 2015).[8]

As already mentioned, debates about the conflict between religion and gender or sexual diversity are also seen outside education spheres; numerous legal

[7] Wynne was criticized for her 'lack' of qualification to implement education policies when the new sex education curriculum was introduced. She responded to the criticism in the legislature as such: "Is it that I'm a woman? Is it that I'm a mother? Is it that I have a master's of education? Is it that I was a school council chair? Is it that I was the minister of education?" (CBC 2015b).

[8] Furthermore, as was noted during one interview with a mother in Ottawa who had taken her children out of school in protest, was that while she repeated during the interview that she was opposed to her children being told about oral and anal sex (and this was why she was protesting), she was in fact discussing these topics while they were in the room (CBC 2015c).

cases in Canada have caught the public interest, where equality rights based on gender or sexual orientation are seen to be oppressed or opposed by religious freedom claims. Much of the consternation about the sex education curriculum—and the 'religions' that are protesting it—connects to these broader debates about religious diversity and religious freedom (Rayside 2010; The Star 2011). The most dominant voice in opposition to the curriculum has been Charles McVety, an evangelical Christian and self-identified conservative political activist. As this debate has been occurring, another debate about evangelical Christianity and sexual equality within education is also gathering steam, as Trinity Western University (an evangelical Christian university in Langley, BC) has sought to create a law school within their university—facing opposition based on their Community Covenant, which forbids same-sex sexual activity on campus (among other things).[9] Within both debates, although the opposition stems from specific religious groups—some members of the evangelical community, or in the case of the sex education curriculum, some members of the evangelical community and some Muslim groups, these voices are represented as 'religion' in broad strokes.

Both conservative Christianity and Islam are regularly framed as inherently oppressive when it comes to equality and freedoms based on gender or sexuality and also as under attack in secular society (Bramadat and Seljak 2008). And while clearly there are religious groups and individuals who oppose teaching about sexual diversity or gender identity in schools, what is critical for a discussion about the nuance of identity is the recognition that numerous religious groups and individuals also support inclusivity and teaching about diversity (Power and Politics 2015; OECTA); further, many individuals identify across religious and 'queer' categories, they are not mutually exclusive (Wilcox 2009; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a, b).

Unfortunately, the religious voices that are captured in these debates are often voices in opposition. As witnessed during the push for marriage equality in Canada, religion was primarily framed as that which be 'under threat' by same-sex marriage, not as that which had spearheaded the equality campaign or stood in support of marriage equality (Shipley 2016a). The same is true in debates about sexuality education; the Ontario Catholic English Teachers Association came out very strongly in favor of the new curriculum when it was announced (LifeSite News 2015). The current Premier, who is standing her ground that it move forward this fall, is a member of the United Church of Canada. And yet 'religion' continues to be framed as *the* opposition to sexuality and gender equality. In the next section, I will consider how sexuality

[9] For more, see Mathen and Plaxton 2014; Craig 2013.

education is also religious education and vice versa, in a bid to challenge the treatment of the categories as incompatible.

Teaching Sexuality, Teaching Religion

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I am interested in exploring how teaching about sexuality (and gender) is also teaching about religion, secularity, and ideology; and vice versa. Rather than considering these topics to be separate from one another, I want to consider the ways they are inextricably linked; how decisions about healthy sexuality and challenging sexual norms are also connected to our own personal expectations, values, and (for some) belief systems. Further, the assumption that 'being religious' is tantamount to being opposed to learning about sexuality or sexual diversity needs to be challenged, as demonstrated by research particularly among young people about sex education in their schools.

One frequent source of consternation when it comes to sexuality education and young people connects to youthful vulnerabilities regarding sex, sexuality, and education: teaching about sexual orientation or gender identity often becomes equated with advocacy (The Globe and Mail 2010; The Sault Star 2011; The Star 2011). Critics of the introduction of same-sex relationships and families within education argue that the introduction of these materials confuses young people (The Star 2011), when in fact the data shows that young people are not only aware of sexual diversity by the time it is introduced in the classroom (if it is taught) (McKay and Bissell 2010), but that young people who learn about sexual diversity and LGBTQI identities early on are more likely to be inclusive of diversities of sexualities (The Atlantic 2014); it does not 'make' anyone gay or lesbian to simply instruct them about sexual diversity.[10]

One of the misconceptions that exists about young people and sexuality is the idea that young people are becoming increasingly sexually active, and at younger ages, and that young people are increasingly engaging in casual sexual encounters (see e.g., Freitas 2008; for rebuttal see Maticka-Tyndale 2008). However, a review of reporting of sexual attitudes and behaviors in Canada has shown that the biggest changes in attitudes and behavior occurred in the 1950s and 1960s; young people's sexuality and sexual behaviors have not varied significantly since then (Maticka-Tyndale 2008). Further, Maticka-Tyndale asks why people assume that an increase in partners (at any age)

[10] And to play a devil's advocate, would the mere fact that instruction has been solely about heterosexual families and heterosexuality actually not eradicate the world of anything other than heterosexuality at this point?

means that the sex is more casual (2008). Youth respondents in a Canada-wide study also show that although the perception is that young people are engaging in frequent, casual sexual encounters, the majority of the respondents did not themselves engage in casual sex (Shipley and Young 2014).

The representation of young people's sexual behaviors does not connect to what young people express or how they interact regarding sexuality. Youth also express dissatisfaction at the over-sexualized expectations they feel are attached to being young (Shipley 2016b; Connell 2005; Ringrose et al. 2013) and to what they see as the hyper-sexualization of society (Shipley and Young 2014, 2015; Page 2014). What is clear, and what needs to be addressed, is that '[s]exual harassment and unwanted sexual comments are experienced by the majority of female and gay adolescents of varying ages and this is the most prevalent form of sexual abuse' (Maticka-Tyndale 2008, 87). LGBTQI and female youth experience the highest prevalence of sexual harassment, abuse, and violence. The 2015 Ontario sex education curriculum added teaching components about consent,[11] sexting, and online bullying.[12] Education experts, consulted on the curriculum, have stated that the modifications to the curriculum will assist in earlier identification of unwanted sexual contact (Mckay and Bissell 2010); factual transmission of information about healthy sexuality and healthy relationships; and will generate more positive and inclusive experiences for young people who might feel or appear gender or sexually 'normative' (Taylor and Peter 2011a; Naugler 2010; Fetner et al. 2012; Søndergaard 2012).

What is not explicit in the sex education curriculum in Ontario is that all these pushes toward inclusivity and healthy personal experiences are also driven by values and ideologies—ones that are borne in response to the pervasive experiences of harm and self-harm that continue to occur among young people (CBC 2014; The Chronicle Herald 2013; CBC 2011). Ideological perspectives about sexuality and sexuality education are also ideologies about personal health, healthy relationships, understanding consent and sexual relationships, and awareness and inclusivity toward gender and sexual diversity. As is demonstrated in media coverage regarding these topics, the dominant religious voices that are heard in these debates are voices that stand in opposition to the introduction of these topics in the classroom. And too often, opposition to changes in curriculum result in either a modification of the

[11] In tandem with the modifications to the sex education curriculum, particularly the addition of consent to the curriculum, Wynne has launched the "Who Will You Help?" sexual assault prevention campaign; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opPb2E3bkoo

[12] Two recent tragedies are evidenced in the suicides of Amanda Todd (CBC 2014) and Rehtaeh Parsons (The Chronicle Herald 2013).

curriculum (or completely halting the implementation) or further provisions to allow parents to remove their children from the classroom (the recent case of Alberta is a notable example of this, see Young 2015b). Ignoring the voices of religious groups and individuals who support the modifications to the sex education curriculum, and who believe that teaching about gender identity and sexual orientation are important, continues to perpetrate the notion that religion and sexuality diversity are always already in combat, without any room for more nuanced considerations about the intersections of religion, gender, and sexuality. It also permits the mistaken notion that the secular sphere is inherently inclusive, which is inaccurate. I will return to this momentarily.

As stated by Maticka-Tyndale:

> Unfortunately, our ability and commitment to working out ideological disagreements about the delivery of sexuality education and sexual health services has considerable room for improvement. All too often we respond to disagreements by allowing parents to restrict their children's access to education and services. This reinforces divisions between groups and detracts from the weaving of a cohesive social fabric by creating two classes of adolescents (and future adults): those who have had education and access to care and those who did not. Canada needs to lead the way in developing models of sexuality education and health care that respect and weave together diversities and differences whether they are differences in ethnicity, attitudes toward sexual orientation, or religion (Maticka-Tyndale 2008, 91–92).

Further, although the debates about religious freedom and sexual orientation (in schools and nationally) in Canada presuppose opposition from Muslim and evangelical Christian groups (CBC 2010b, c; Maclean's 2010; The Star 2010), research on Somali Muslim youth in Toronto showed that most of the young people in the study were accepting and supportive of instruction on sex and sexuality. Participants commented that the curriculum was important because it provided awareness of sexually transmitted diseases and sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and pregnancy prevention (Collet 2007). Further, they challenged the idea that learning about sex was the same as encouraging young people to have sex (Collet 2007, 146). One respondent stated that while his mother was uncomfortable with the sex education curriculum in his school, she deferred to his judgment as to whether he should stay in the class and he chose to continue with the course, feeling that the teaching was about taking precautions and being aware (Collet 2007, 147). As Collet concludes '[t]he foregoing case demonstrates that far from falling 'victim' to a secular–religious divide, the respondents featured here were very

much actors and co-creators in their identification processes' (2007, 150). Although the assumption is that the research group would oppose the sex education curriculum and integrated gym classes, these young people were able to integrate aspects of religious, cultural, and social life in ways that were not contradictory, but rather a sign of their own identity negotiation. These experiences '[do] not signify that these Somalis are, as a whole, fundamentally confused and culturally disoriented. Indeed, they may be at the forefront of creating new identity constructions' (Collet 2007, 148).

While it is rarely acknowledged that ideological and religious motivations might incline toward teaching about gender and sexual diversity, another important element to bring into the dialogue is that discrimination based on gender or sexual diversity is not relegated or restricted to religious spaces; it transcends the religious/secular 'divide.' In a Canada-wide survey regarding bi, trans, and homophobic attitudes in schools, Taylor and Peter found that 70 % of all participating students reported hearing expressions, such as 'that's so gay,' every day in school; 48 % reported hearing more explicit remarks, such as 'faggot, lezbo and dyke' on a daily basis; 10 % of LGBTQI students said they heard homophobic comments coming from teachers on a daily or weekly basis (2011a, 15–17). And, as Taylor and Peter discovered, homophobic disciplining was not necessarily condemned by teachers and parents, some parents who were 'so terrified of their kids turning out gay that they would rather see them unhappy than see them unheterosexual' (2011a, 11).

In a study of students involved in gay–straight alliances (GSAs) or other LGBTQI groups in school, students reported that the groups had limited ability to promote their association or be active within the schools, even though they were formally permitted to have these groups (Fetner et al. 2012). Students said that restrictive school policies limited the ability of these groups to be active within the school, and mostly the policies only provided them with a meeting space (Fetner et al. 2012, 196). Further for some members, involvement in a GSA or LGBTQI group at school created a previously unexperienced 'backlash, making visible some of the hostility to LGBTQ people that had previously been hidden' (Fetner et al. 2012, 197).

Ignoring the daily experience of gender and sexuality discrimination in non-religious spaces, focusing instead on religion as 'the problem' ignores and allows the continued experience of harm and harassment to sexual minority youth. The introduction of gender and sexual diversity within education curricula is an important, but only beginning, step. The continued experiences of discrimination in schools show that policy and official documentation can only do so much; schools in Canada are required to commit to equality rights provisions and non-discrimination policies as set out by the *Charter*

and provincial human rights codes. And yet homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and gender-negative comments are frequent experiences (Taylor and Peter 2011a, b; Shipley 2016b; Fetner et al. 2012). The ability for teachers to instruct young people on these sensitive topics also warrants attention. Some organizations offer workshops aimed at both teachers and students regarding healthy sexuality (e.g., Planned Parenthood Ottawa), but it is clear that a more formal system is required.

Future Challenges: Teaching Diversity, Experiencing Inclusion

While this chapter has focused on debates surrounding sexuality education in a Canada-specific case, and connected the debates about education to larger discourses about national values, the challenges faced in the implementation of sexuality education continue to be numerous. Ontario's new curriculum was implemented in September 2015, but very little detail has been provided as to what kind of training teachers have or will receive to instruct their classes on this sensitive material. Schools are required to commit to inclusivity policies and yet LGBTQI and female youth experience discriminations (both verbal and physical) on a regular basis. This discrimination has the ability to 'follow them home' via email, texting, and other forms of cyberbullying (Søndergaard 2012; Naugler 2010).

While much attention is paid to particular religious actors who vocally oppose sexuality education and teaching about gender and sexual diversity, this chapter has challenged the assumption that religion only ever opposes diversities of gender and sexuality. Further, it is evident that discrimination based on gender and sexuality transcends the religious–secular divide. The assumption that secular or non-religious spaces are inherently inclusive also needs to be challenged, with mounting evidence that discriminatory attitudes are found across religious and secular spaces. Developing thoughtful sexuality education, and recognizing that healthy sexuality and the recognition of sexual diversity are also religious and ideological values, is a beginning step in the larger challenge of creating inclusive spaces for young people. Teaching about sexuality is always also teaching about a number of other topics and categories, particularly religion, secularity, and ideology. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of sexuality education will facilitate the development of a more comprehensive strategy for creating curricula that reflect the intersections of

other aspects of identity when sexuality is foregrounded. Teacher education[13] is key as is closing the gap between policies about inclusion and the daily experiences of exclusion for gender and sexually diverse youth.

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9

A Radical Plurality: Re-thinking Cultural and Religious Diversity in Sexuality Education

Louisa Allen and Kathleen Quinlivan

How might sexuality education respond to cultural and religious diversity? Increasing cultural and religious plurality of nations means this question continues to engender debate within the field of sexuality education internationally. In Aotearoa, New Zealand,[1] where this chapter is written, it is a pressing concern as recent migration trends deliver greater cultural and religious diversity to our population (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2014). The issue of how to honour Maori indigenous knowledge within the *Health and Physical Education Curriculum*, where sexuality education sits, has been a historical question which remains unresolved (Tasker 2004). Increasing numbers of new immigrants from China, India and Afghanistan bring new complexity to 'the challenge' of addressing cultural diversity in sexuality classrooms. Alluding to the instrumental aims of sexuality education, the 'necessity' of this task has been fuelled by media attention to the

[1] Hereafter Aotearoa-NZ.

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so-called high Asian abortion rates (Simon-Kumar 2009) and increased prevalence of HIV/AIDs in some immigrant populations.

One way that cultural diversity is approached in sexuality education is via the *vision*, *principles* and *values* outlined in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education 2007). This document establishes the official policy relating to teaching and learning across all elements of the curriculum and directs schools in the design and review of their sexuality programmes. Delineated in this document is a vision 'for young people who will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Maori[2] and Pakeha[3] recognise each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring' (Ministry of Education 2007 p. 8). Similarly, 'Diversity, as found in our different cultures, languages and heritages' is identified as a core *value* schools must reflect in every aspect of curriculum, including sexuality education. It is stated that students will learn 'their own values and those of others' as well as 'Different kinds of values, such as moral, social, cultural, aesthetic, and economic values' (Ministry of Education 2007, p. 10). While religion is not explicitly named in this document, it is referenced in this values statement about 'morals'. It is also implicit in the concept of 'culture' where religion plays a prominent part in membership for many ethnic groups. Despite the space conceded to cultural diversity in educational policy, how these provisions are interpreted and applied within sexuality education is less certain.

In order to contribute to discussion around global assemblages of sexuality education and current debates concerning cultural and religious diversity in this field, this chapter seeks to conceptually reframe what is often presented as 'the problem of diversity' for classroom pedagogy. This contribution is largely philosophical, as our aim is to *think* the concept of cultural and religious diversity differently. Rather than posit how cultural and religious diversity might be addressed in sexuality education, we propose an ontological shift in *how this diversity* is understood. To undertake this work, we *think* of cultural and religious diversity *through* the work of feminist philosophers Sharon Todd (2010) and Karen Barad (2007). While their work emanates from distinct disciplinary traditions of quantum physics (Barad) and educational philosophy (Todd), we attempt to draw their ideas *into relation*. Specifically, we read the concepts of 'plurality' (Todd 2010; 2011a, b) and intra-activity (Barad 2003, 2007, 2012) into each other to experiment with what they might generate in terms of understanding cultural and religious diversity differently.

[2] Maori are the indigenous people of Aotearoa-NZ.

[3] In Aotearoa-NZ, Pakeha refers to non-Maori people of European descent.

Due to the theoretical density of these ideas, we offer our argument upfront. Todd (2010) writes of the way 'it can be seen that cultural diversity is frequently synonymous with a view of individuals as the aggregate of their cultural attributes' (p. 102). Our aim is to move away from a language of diversity that rests solely on a series of socially conceived attributes by which difference is marked (e.g. being Christian, Muslim, Pakeha or African). Instead, we gesture towards a notion of 'plurality', which Todd (2010) conceives as offering 'a central place to the uniqueness of persons as they come together in specific contexts' (p. 104). This uniqueness is not an essence born of a series of identity characteristics (i.e. being Muslim or Christian) which Todd sees as reducing a person to 'what' they are. Rather, it is a uniqueness that appears when human beings come *into relation* with each other, a moment in which '*who*' (not what) they are *is made*. Todd (2011a) conveys this notion of our coming into existence via plurality when she writes, 'Encounters are not simply about two people meeting, but a calling forth of our very existence in response to another, to others. Encounters with others are an indelible part of both making and living a life' (p. 510).

Reading Barad's notion of 'intra-activity' through the concept of plurality, we can see how Todd's idea of relating between humans might extend to the material world. Within Barad's 'new'[4] materialist (Coole and Frost 2010) account, the 'others' Todd refers to can comprise objects and other non-human matter. For Barad, existence—or what she calls *becoming*—entails an inextricable entanglement of human and non-human in which the non-human is seen to exert force. This means that matter—such as the clothes someone is wearing, the spatial arrangement of classrooms and material objects within them—have volition in the 'who' someone *becomes*. Subsequently, 'things' can be seen to take an active role in the making of what we understand as cultural and religious difference. They are not separate entities which humans activate as symbols of their difference. Instead, they form part of a process of intra-active becoming or the 'who' we are, that lies at the heart of Todd's notion of 'a radical plurality'. These ideas are explained in greater detail below. Here, we preface the argument that they might reconfigure our current ontological understandings of cultural and religious diversity as the aggregate of our discursively and biologically constituted differences.

As an entry point for these philosophical ideas, we provide some classroom observations and excerpts from an interview with a 13-year-old, female

[4] That these ideas are 'new' is contested. As Hoskins and Jones (2013) argue, perceptions of the world as an entangled continuity of the human–natural have always been part of traditional Maori thought in the Aotearoa-NZ context.

Muslim student (Carol) in Year 9 at a North Island secondary school. These were collected as part of a two-year *Australian Research Council Discovery Project Grant* on which the authors worked with Australian colleagues (Rasmussen et al. 2011). We do not offer these findings in the traditional empirical sense. That is, as data providing evidence of a reconfigured ontology of cultural and religious difference. Instead, this example acts as a way of hooking into (rather than representing) a reconfigured understanding of cultural and religious diversity. Given this purpose and the theoretical emphasis of our discussion, we do not delve into the study's methodological details (see instead Allen et al. 2013). What we provide is methodological information that gives discussion around Carol context. Subsequently, only a brief description of the study occurs next, followed by a more substantial consideration of the theoretical concepts underpinning our argument.

The extent to which cultural and religious diversities are engaged within sexuality education formed the focus of our larger project. Four schools participated—two in Melbourne, one in the North Island, and one in the South Island of Aotearoa-NZ. Carol attended Pacific High (pseudonym), a decile 4,[5] co-educational North Island secondary school that was ethnically and religiously diverse. Almost 40 % were students from the Pacific Islands, 16 % Maori, 16 % Pakeha, while the rest were of Asian, Middle-Eastern and African descent and representing a range of faiths (e.g. Christian, Catholic, Mormon and Muslim). When we met Carol, she stood out in the Year 9 health class of 25 students. She was the only student wearing the hijab with her school uniform and exhibiting Afghani physical features among a sea of Maori and Pacific faces. In her interview, Carol explained she was a refugee who had arrived with her family three years ago. For 6 weeks, the first author observed the sexuality education unit Carol was taught and found herself drawn to her as a figure epitomising difference. Not only because of Carol's perceived physical disparities in this class, but because she was the only female to persistently ask the teacher questions. This initial sense of Carol's difference was based on an understanding of *what* an individual represents, and not what Todd (2011b) calls '*who*' they are. We now examine this idea more fully and what we see as Todd's and Barad's contribution to re-thinking the ontology of cultural and religious difference.

[5] In Aotearoa-NZ, 'decile rankings' indicate the extent to which a school draws its students from low socioeconomic communities, with decile 1 schools containing the highest proportion of these students and decile 10 the lowest (verbatim Ministry of Education 2009).

Todd's Concept of Plurality

Todd (2010) references the work of Hannah Arendt and Adriana Cavarero in the development of her idea of 'plurality' as an alternate way of thinking about diversity. She launches this concept via a critique of intercultural education promoted by 'The Council of Europe' in its bid to achieve democratic education. Deconstructing the way 'diversity' is understood within this educational paradigm, she explains it is defined broadly in relation to social structures, identity categories and individual traits such as 'culture, gender, age, social situation, geographical origin, interests, beliefs, physical and intellectual characteristics, etc. There are differences between individuals and there are differences between groups' (Batelaan 2003, p. 2 cited in Todd 2010 p. 102). There is much however, which Todd (2010) finds problematic about this depiction;

> Diversity is thus rendered in terms of attributes or characteristics of differences. Diversity is shorthand for naming precisely those differences that need to be 'managed' since they create the conditions for conflicts to arise. Thus, what undergirds such articulations of cultural diversity is the assumption that diversity is a problem a source of social tension that needs to be remedied by intercultural education. (p. 102)

In this rendering, difference is a product of 'what' we are and a consequence of our alignment with recognisable cultural differences (e.g. being Afghani). Todd identifies the subject as tethered here to general categories of cultural difference while there is simultaneous recognition of personal difference. This thinking is evidenced in Batelaan's (2003) quote above where it is acknowledged that there are differences between individuals in groups, as well as differences between groups of individuals. For Todd though, while these differences might be perceived as personal/individual, they do not capture a sense of difference as encapsulated by the notion of 'uniqueness' (see below). As a consequence of this elision, 'the individual becomes a generalised figure read through her attributes' (Todd 2010, p. 103). This kind of ontology of difference is seen above when what draws the researcher to Carol is her difference. A difference based on her general categorisation as Muslim and Afghani, when the rest of the class is Maori or from the Pacific Islands. And, a sense of personal difference within the category Muslim women, when the researcher reads her avid questioning of the teacher through a generalised (westernised) category of Muslim women as passive and quiet. For Todd, this view of difference establishes these cultural and religious characteristics as a source of tension and conflict which necessitates management. Examples of this approach are international debates about

wearing the hijab in non-Muslim schools (Todd 2003). This is also an understanding of difference that encourages a misreading of the subject through a failure to take account of the contextual nature of being.

It is against this backdrop that Todd reconfigures 'difference' with the notion of 'uniqueness', an idea integral to the condition of 'plurality'. Instead of viewing what makes us diverse in terms of *what* individuals represent, Todd argues for an understanding based on *who* we are. This 'who' following Arendt and Cavarero, 'emerges in the context of a narrative relation that … cannot be reduced to social categorizations' (Todd 2010 p. 104). With the generalised individual above, difference is seen as something carried (via group or category membership) that reveals itself when we 'bump' up against others who exhibit other differences. *Uniqueness* however is not something we carry (like an essence), but it emerges in the 'in-between space with other human beings; it reveals itself in speech and action' (Todd 2010 p. 105). It is therefore always contextual and specific. For Todd, this uniqueness emerges predominantly via narrative relation revealing itself in speech and action, and coming 'to the fore where people are *with* others and neither for nor against them—that is, in sheer human togetherness' (Arendt 1959, p. 160). Difference (as uniqueness) is not ontologically prior to our human relating, as per a characteristic we hold that shows itself when we come into contact with others. Instead, *difference is made in the moment of our relating*, which means it is not an individual quality that can be known in advance. Drawing on Cavarero, Todd (2010) explains,

> One's uniqueness is not entirely known to oneself and therefore depends upon another to tell 'her' story back to her. Uniqueness, therefore, both emerges as a presence to which others respond, and requires that others return, as a gift, one's own sense of uniqueness. It is this back and forth narrative trajectory that is threatened when the one who speaks is seen to be merely an aggregate of her cultural background. (p. 107)

Todd contends that this conceptualisation leads to a better understanding of cultural conflict and contestation in education (Todd 2010). One that does not misread the subject of difference via generalised cultural categories and which attends to the context of difference's making.

Reading Barad Through Todd

The concept of 'plurality' for which uniqueness is a condition, reconfigures conventional understandings of difference's ontology. If, as a notion of uniqueness implies, what we have previously understood as difference comes into

being via relation with human others, how do we understand the mechanism for this becoming? Barad's (2007) work around intra-activity offers one way of conceptualising this process and extending its parameters beyond human relating. Situated within the field of new materialisms, Barad posits an understanding of the world which breaks down the conventional nature/culture divide. Knowledge, for Barad, is not simply accessed via discourse as socially constituted within language. This approach, as epitomised by the 'linguistic turn', does not take account of the liveliness of matter and its forcefulness in knowledge's production. As Jackson and Mazzei (2012) explain, 'For Karen Barad, the new material is grounded in an ontoepistemology, or *knowing in being*, that presents a shaking up of the privileging of the discursive in postmodern thought without a re-centering of the material that preceded the linguistic turn' (p. 119). This means that practices of knowing and being are not separable as encapsulated in the famous Cartesian phrase, 'I think, therefore I am'. Subjects cannot stand outside the world they know, they can only know the world because *they are of it*.

> There is an important sense in which practices of knowing cannot fully be claimed as human practices, not simply because we use nonhuman elements in our practices but because knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part. *Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated.* (Jackson and Mazzei 2012 p. 121)

From this perspective, the conventional distinction between human and non-human disintegrates as each side of the divide melds into a metaphysical understanding of human and non-human as matter (what Barad calls phenomena). In this conceptualisation, things and people do not remain distinct and separate entities which *inter*mingle, but instead *come into being* via their relation. Barad explains this process utilising the physics term, *intra-activity* 'referring to relationships between multiple bodies (both human and non-human) that are understood *not* to have clear or distinct boundaries from one another; rather, they are always affecting or being affected by each other in an interdependent and mutual relationship as a condition for their existence' (Barad 2007 p. 152). The process of intra-activity has resonances with Todd's conceptualisation of 'uniqueness', proposing a way to draw its mechanisms into sharper relief. In addition, it suggests such relating can involve the material world which *gets caught up* in the ontological moment of the making of difference (that Todd calls our uniqueness).

For Todd, our being (difference) is not the product of an individual coming in contact with another individual as captured by the notion of *inter*-activity or *inter*cultural education. Instead, difference is made in the moment of our

relating with another—a phenomenon Barad would extend to include non-human phenomena and characterise as intra-activity. Both Todd and Barad describe this moment as one of 'openness' between humans (and non-humans for Barad), invoking an ethics and orientation to social justice. Such openness is a feature of this relating which breaks down discursive and material boundaries and involves 'the ongoing practice of being open and alive to each meeting, each intra-action, so that we might use our ability to respond, our responsibility, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly' (Barad 2007 p. x). With reference to Arendt (1959), Todd sees this radical openness as manifesting as sheer human togetherness, whereby people are *with* others and neither for nor against them (p. 160). What *becomes* (as uniqueness) is a consequence of intra-action contingent upon the phenomena (humans–non-humans) that are relating. For Barad, via an understanding of matter and things as having force, that intra-relating is always entangled with the material world. This way of thinking has implications for understanding cultural and religious diversity, not simply as something that occurs in the moment of humans relating, but as a uniqueness that is inextricably *material-discursive (naturalsocial)*.

Carol

To offer another opening into these theoretical ideas with relevance for rethinking cultural and religious diversity in sexuality education, we now turn to a discussion of Carol. We explore two small moments, one from classroom observation and one from an individual interview, in which we perceive Carol's cultural and religious differences surfacing. After describing these moments, we interpret them, first, as *inter*-action and, then, enfold this reading into an *intra*-active understanding. By using this format, we aim to show how the emergence of Carol's 'difference' might be understood to occur in ontologically different ways.

[Field diary observations] There is an air of excitement in the classroom. Today the lesson is going to be different because it will be taught by peer educators from an external sexuality education provider. This group specialises in culturally appropriate sexuality education that matches the dominant student ethnicity (Pacific Islands). In accordance with Pacific cultural protocols (i.e. that talk about sexuality occurs in separate gender groups) we have been divided by gender into different classes, and I am sitting with the girls. The lesson has opened with a currently popular song by Bruno Mars ('Just the way you are'), sung by the two female sexuality educators, one of whom is playing the guitar. She has just put the guitar down

and asked us to introduce ourselves and include our favourite food as part of that introduction (to break the ice). The introductions begin

Student: *My name is Lita, I am Samoan and my favourite food is chocolate.*

Student: *I'm Kelly and my culture is Samoan, and my favourite food is fish and chips.*

Student: *My name is Christine, I'm from Britain and my favourite food is grapes.*

Sexuality Educator: *Enice*

Student: *My name is Carli. I am from India and my favourite food is ice-cream.*

Student: *My name is Sina and I am Indian and my favourite food is burgers.*

Student: *My name is Carol I'm from Afghanistan, and my favourite food is, I don't really have one.*

Sexuality Educator: *Pick one, anyone*

Carol: *Afghan biscuits*

[Introductions continue]

[Following this lesson, Carol undertakes an individual interview where the following moment transpires]

Louisa: *Could sexuality education offer any other things that would be about your culture or religion that you wanted to know more about or have recognised or even mentioned?*

Carol: *Well, I mean, that's a hard thing to say, because New Zealand isn't an Islamic country. It seems very Christian-based or something-based and our school is mainstream. … It's not really faith-based … because even if they [the teachers] did mention it … or they say it out of context that's just going to give misunderstandings. Imagine if there wasn't actually a Muslim [teaching it] who knew the same thing and they said something else. It would just be like … difficult.*

Reading these moments as evidence of cultural and religious differences that emerge between subjects as they *inter*-act, requires an interpretative approach. Within such a paradigm, the scene above assumes participants 'can voice coherent narratives that represent the self in the very telling of their experiences' (Jackson and Mazzei 2012 p. ix). Subsequently, Carol's words offer insights into her sense of cultural difference which manifest in the classroom observation in relation to favourite foods. An Afghani presence in Aotearoa-NZ is recent, meaning this community's customs, ways of life and even foods are not well known by other sectors of the population. What most people in Aotearoa-NZ know about Afghanis is reducible to media

coverage of the war in Afghanistan and is saturated with images of violence, poverty and 'terrorism'. As the only Afghani in this class, Carol is positioned as 'exotically' different from indigenous Maori and Aotearoa-NZ born (as well as immigrant) Pasifika and Pakeha students. It is unlikely her classmates have heard of her favourite food and, if she names it, her appearance/sense of difference will be magnified. Given this, instead of naming her actual favourite food and risking her peers' ignorance and alienation, Carol says, 'Afghan biscuits'. This choice cleverly references her actual cultural origins and is one that other students are likely to be familiar with. Interestingly, Afghan biscuits are a traditional Aotearoa-NZ recipe, with no known connection to Afghanistan, something Carol may or may not have known.

In an *inter*-active account of the interview above, the researcher marks Carol's religious and cultural difference by asking whether she feels these differences are attended to in sexuality education. This line of questioning discursively constitutes Carol as 'other' positioning her as Muslim and Afghani and distinguishing her from the rest of the class, who are not. The researcher assumes Aotearoa-NZ's secular educational foundations and the fact that Christianity is the prevailing school faith mean that Carol's cultural and religious needs will not be met. Rather than unconditionally taking up this positioning as 'other', Carol's response reconfigures her difference. Her answer implies she does not expect, nor want, her Muslim faith to be represented or catered for within sexuality education. Her reasoning is she fears its (and, by association, her own) misrecognition in this representation, especially if those who teach it are not Muslim, or not the same kind of Muslim she is. In an unexpected turn, Carol does not mark, nor embrace her difference in the way this line of questioning encourages.

An interpretive approach to these research moments limits what we can know about Carol's difference to human voices, interpersonal interactions and her discursive constitution in this context. In this account, Carol's difference manifests as a series of identity characteristics; being Afghani and Muslim, which lend themselves to specific curriculum needs. Difference is understood as something Carol bears as a distinct individual which reveals itself against other distinct individuals (her classmates) who hold their own differences. Her classmates disclose their difference in naming their cultural identity as 'Samoan', 'Indian' and 'British' and against a schooling culture that is predominately Christian with secular foundations, attributes Carol does not share. In Barad's (2007) words, this form of 'Difference relies on an ontological separateness between identified categories, positions or identities, most often in an asymmetrical relation to each other (pp. 86–87).

How then does an *intra*-active reading of this material give rise to thinking an alternative ontology of difference? What happens when we understand what occurs between Carol and her classmates not as a scene of *inter-connections* between distinct entities, but as an entangled engagement of material and discursive phenomena that includes humans and non-humans? Jackson and Mazzei (2012) invoke such a reading this way:

> The implication for how we think data differently, given this entangled state, is to move away from thinking the interview and what is 'told' discursively, toward a thinking of the interview and what is 'told' as discursive, as material, as discursive *and* material, as material–discursive, and as constituted *between* the discursive and the material in a posthumanist becoming (p. 126)

To undertake this approach necessitates a flattening of the research scene and rearrangement of what counts as actors within it. Carol and her classmates are no longer distinct and separate entities standing out (as higher status) from the material conditions of the classroom in which they relate. While Carol is still identifiable as Afghani and Muslim, her physical and discursive borders (along with those of her classmates) are considered porous. Carol's difference as Afghani and Muslim is not carried by her and displayed via contact with others. Rather, this difference is made in the moment of intra-action with her classmates. This ontology of difference is not hers alone, but *becomes* and is contingent upon others in her classroom as well as the material features of schooling which are seen to have volition. Difference, in this case, is made via the entanglement of her corporeality (skin, facial features, voice) materiality (hijab, Afghan biscuits, classroom architecture) in intra-action with the humanness of her classmates (and their skin, facial features, voice, etc.). In this instance, it is not that the hijab is a symbol used to mark cultural difference, but that the hijab as a material entity becomes a material force in the making of cultural difference. *The difference that becomes* engenders a uniqueness as proposed by Todd (2010) which is contextual, specific and not Carol's alone because it is made in intra-action with others.

Closing Thoughts

So what is opened up by this way of thinking difference with Todd (2010) and Barad (2007)? Might we understand that there is no 'other' but rather that we are entanglements of selves—our borders become porous, so that our difference is a consequence of those human and non-humans whom we encounter.

This is not to deny that there is Afghani or Muslim identity (or any other type of cultural and religious identity for that matter), but how this difference plays out is a consequence of relational *intra-active becomings*. What this understanding of difference allows is a recognition of cultural and religious identity that is not essentialised as a distinct set of attributes, but which recognises the material and non-human in a non-essentialising way. The 'other' and its denigration become redundant in such an understanding, because *who* we are is a consequence of our relations with others. One individual does not pre-exist the next in any moment, *who* we are in terms of culture and religion is contingent upon our intra-relations with others.

This uniqueness as Todd (2010) calls it, as the condition for plurality, offers ethical possibilities in its refusal of difference as individually born and contained. An ontology of difference as seen as an aggregate of cultural characteristics, which an individual (and groups collectively) bear, invites conflict. It is also an ontological understanding which pre-supposes difference in advance and presumes to know what it wants. For example, when the researcher assumed Carol's culture and religion made her different from her classmates and these characteristics lent themselves to a sexuality education that addressed Carol as Muslim and Afghani. Instead, in the kind of plural context imagined via the work of Todd and Barad, there is a never-ending series of human–non-human enfoldings, the uniqueness of which cannot be known in advance.....

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10

Learning from the Learners: How Research with Young People Can Provide Models of Good Pedagogic Practice in Sexuality Education in South Africa

Rob Pattman and Deevia Bhana

In our experiences of doing interviews and ethnographic research with young people in South Africa and elsewhere about their interests, concerns, aspirations, and relations, sexuality often emerges as a key theme. The frequency with which it is introduced by the young people in this kind of research highlights, we argue, the material and symbolic importance which versions of sexuality hold for them in their everyday lives. Much of this research has been school based, and what we aim to do in this chapter is to reflect on our research with learners, as school students are called in South Africa, and how sexuality is introduced, spoken about, and given meaning and significance by them.

It is often assumed that learning in schools is a process which takes place in classrooms and involves children as learners. But a great deal of sexual and gendered learning goes on in schools, both in and outside of the classroom, which is usually neither recognised nor named in formal curricula and educational discourses, and that access to this depends on us (as adult researchers)

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researching young people in ways which position them as authorities and experts (Pattman and Kehily 2005).

When exploring young people's sexuality education in schools, our chapter focuses on sexuality, as it is introduced by the young people in our research, and how it is connected with broad activities and relationships in which they engage and participate which are not necessarily defined as sexual. We reflect on *what* we learn from the learners about sexuality as it emerges in their accounts about their lives and identifications as young people in and out of school. What do we learn about *intersectionality* through the sorts of connections they make between sexuality and gender, race, age, and so on (as sources of identification and dimensions of power)? We reflect, too, on *how* we learn this and the kinds of relations we establish with the young people in the research which enable them to engage with sexuality in ways which are pertinent to them.

This kind of qualitative research with young people carries implications, we argue, for developing forms of sexuality education, as advocated in the *Life Orientation* curriculum, 2003, which encompasses sexuality education in South Africa.

Engaging with Young People and Sexuality in Research in the Context of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Until the late 1990s and early 2000s, little research had been conducted on the topic of young people and sexuality in either South Africa or other African countries 'because it was deemed too private to make investigation either appropriate or feasible' (HEAIDS Report 2010: 27). This was, and still is, reinforced by cultural taboos concerning adults and young people talking about sexuality and by adult constructions of children, in many predominantly Christian countries, as non-sexual beings, through idealisations of youthful 'innocence' (and ignorance) in relation to sexuality. Indeed, one of the main contributions that more recent research with young people on the topic of sexuality has made in Southern Africa is that young people are themselves sexual beings, a view which informs and is reinforced by further research (e.g. Wood et al. 2007; Shefer and Foster 2009; Bhana and Pattman 2009, 2011; Jewkes and Morrell 2012; Msibi 2012).

Sexuality, as these studies have attested, is not something that becomes meaningful and significant only as we approach adulthood, even if it has been constructed in South Africa (Bhana 2007), as in many other societies

(Epstein and Johnson 1998; Kehily 2002), as a marker of adulthood by adults wishing 'innocence' on children and imagining them as asexual.

This research in Southern Africa has been motivated mainly by the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as other social issues and concerns, such as sexual harassment and gender-based violence, and has attempted to explore the meanings and significance which young people, in particular communities and social contexts, attach to gender and sexuality and how these affect and influence their lives.

Such research has engaged with young people as sexual beings and provided insights on how they deploy gender and sexuality as categories, and the inequalities which frame these, though the research findings, as they are written up and presented, often do not address processes of knowledge production and identity construction as they occur in the research (Pattman 2015). In this chapter, we advocate an analytic approach which focuses on the dynamics of interview research with young people, and engages with how themes emerge, and are debated and contested by the different participants, how these connect with the identifications and relations they make in the interviews, and how these are tied by the participants with versions of gender and sexuality. We try to demonstrate this approach by presenting and analysing data from our research with young people, and situating what they say and how they say it, in the context of research encounters.

Our interest in the relational dynamics of research encounters is influenced by the work of feminist writers who have raised concerns about power and self-reflexivity in research (Coleman and Ringrose 2012). Such research demonstrates that relations of power are constructed in the very process of doing research, and that these are particularly acute when they are hidden. This is when the researchers seek to minimise their influence by constructing apparent conditions of objectivity and relate to those they are researching as 'mere objects there for the researcher to do research "on"' (Stanley and Wise 1983: 164).

Given that adults are often defined as figures of authority in relation to children, it is relatively easy for both adults and children to slip into these kinds of relations when the researchers are adults and the researched children and to take these for granted, particularly in school-based research.

How do adult researchers invert these kinds of generational power relations? How do they engage with the learners as authorities about their social worlds, as they (the learners) construct them? This presents a particular challenge when the adult researchers are interested in exploring the significance and meanings which sexuality holds for the learners, given that sexuality, as discussed above, is so often taken as a marker of adulthood (Kehily 2012; Renold et al. 2015; Egan 2013).

These questions are raised in *participatory* forms of research which seek to engage with young people as potential authorities by encouraging them to *produce knowledge* concerning their lives as young men and women and, at the same time, critically reflect on themselves and their relationships through their participation in various kinds of research activities such as drawing, role play, and photo voice (see Stuart and Smith 2011; Mitchell 2015; Boonzaier and Zway 2015, for examples of this kind of research with young people in South Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS, sexual violence and abuse).

This kind of research blurs the boundaries between research and pedagogy. Further, it resonates, we argue, with concerns which inform learner-centred forms of sexuality education, as articulated in the *Life Orientation* curriculum, 2003, which frames sexuality education as it is taught in South Africa. *Life Orientation* educational initiatives were introduced by United Nation's Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and other non-governmental organisations, in sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1990s in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and in response to the perceived failure of didactic teaching approaches in sexuality education in schools to stem the tide of infection. Such approaches took the form of information giving about the 'terrifying facts' of HIV/AIDS in ways which tended to problematise young people and sexuality and/or involved preaching against young people (and especially young women) having sex and idealisations of pre-marital abstinence. In contrast, arguments for developing *Life Orientation* initiatives drew on pedagogic concerns to engage with the agency of young men and women as sexual beings, and to encourage dialogue and critical reflection on the significance and meanings which they attach to gender and sexuality in their lives generally and the kinds of relations they develop.

In this chapter, we take examples from our own research in South Africa with young people aged between 16 and 17 years in which sexuality is raised as a matter of interest or concern by the young people themselves, and, reflecting on the dynamics of the research encounters, we discuss how this research may contribute to developing learner-centred forms of sexuality education.

Learning from the Learners About Gender and Sexuality in Interview and Ethnographic Studies

Our interests in learning from the learners about gender and sexuality developed through our engagement in qualitative research projects in the early 2000s: a UNICEF-funded interview study, which Rob coordinated with

Fatuma Chege, with learners, mainly in their teens, in schools in sub-Saharan African (Pattman and Chege 2003; Pattman 2005) and an ethnographic study which Deevia conducted with 6- to 8-year-old children in primary schools near Durban (Bhana 2013).

Research Focus and Approaches

The rationale of the UNICEF study was to generate findings which could be used to produce appropriate and relevant resources for *Life Orientation* programmes which were being introduced in schools in sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, learners were interviewed in groups on the theme *growing up as boys and girls*.

They were asked about their relations with and attitudes towards people of the same and opposite sex, parents and teachers, interests and leisure pursuits, pleasures and fears, future projections and role models, and views about HIV/AIDS. But within these broad themes, they were encouraged to raise and pursue issues that they deemed significant to them. They were also asked to reflect on how they experienced the interview. (In developing this kind of interview approach, we draw on Frosh et al.'s school-based interview study on 'young masculinities' with boys and girls in London; Frosh et al. 2002; Pattman 2015). The interviewers—women and men from their early 20s to 50s—were trained to be self-reflexive, approachable, and to pick up and explore issues the young people raised. Some of the interviewers engaged the young people in dance and clapping and short ritualistic games prior to conducting the interviews, and this seemed to be very effective in helping them feel at ease with each other.

Deevia was interested in children's views and experiences of schooling in the playground and in class, and pursued her research through conversations she had with them in conjunction with participant observation mainly in the playgrounds, but also in class where she sat with them in groups (Bhana 2013). The kinds of questions she posed were aimed at generating conversations with the children about themselves and their everyday lives in school, and, while relating to her interests in gender and play, were largely spontaneous and dependent on the context. Her conversations in the playground were shaped by the constant movement of children from one person or activity to another, like 'bumblebees' (Thorne 1993: 15) and resonated with these rhythms, breaking when they went away and continuing when they came back to her. Relating to them in these ways provoked interest in her among the children and seemed to create a dynamic where they wanted to engage in these kinds of reflective conversations (Mayeza 2015).

In both studies, gender and sexuality emerged as key themes which pointed, as we argue and elaborate below, not only to the significance these held for the young people participating in the studies, but also to the kinds of relations they and the researchers established which made it possible for them to raise and talk about sexuality with the adult researchers.

What We Took as Research Findings

What sorts of findings did the UNICEF study generate which might be of relevance in *Life Orientation*? At first, it was assumed the findings would comprise *what* young people said in the interviews, and specifically *what* they said about gender and sexuality, which would be coded thematically. But it became clear that by focusing only on this, the data was being constructed in an abstract way which conveyed nothing about how it emerged and the kinds of emotions which the young people expressed, nor about the relational dynamics which were established in the process of conducting the interviews.

Yet many of the young people commented at some length on these aspects when asked how they experienced the interviews. Some said that they imagined that the interviewers would ask questions about their knowledge of HIV/AIDS, as if this was being tested, and expressed surprise and pleasure at being able to take the interview in directions they wished and being listened to and questioned by interested adults. Reflecting these kinds of relational dynamics, participants raised issues which they claimed were usually too 'sensitive' to discuss with adults, such as boyfriends and girlfriends, HIV/AIDS, and use of condoms.

In the UNICEF project, the ways young people introduced and engaged with gender and sexuality were taken as key findings, and the interviews came to be understood as particular social contexts which created opportunities for reflexive and emotionally engaged conversations to take place about gender and sexuality, as experienced by the interviewees. The researchers learnt about the connections they made between sexuality and 'sensitivity' and their relations with adults (which were disrupted, unexpectedly for many of them, by the learner-centred, informal approaches the interviewers adopted). They also learnt about how particular connections were made by the interviewees between sex and gender through the often implicit ways, such as laughter, in which they invoked sex. Sexuality was introduced by the young people, themselves, most notably when they were discussing their relations with contemporaries of the opposite sex. In fact, questioning young people about their relations with contemporaries of the opposite sex often provoked laughter and

some embarrassment, especially among girls, as if cross-gender relationships were synonymous with heterosexual relations (an association reinforced by the rarity of narratives told by young people about cross-gender friendships) and these were considered naughty.

In Deevia's study, sexuality also emerged in hetero-sexualised forms in the kinds of relationships the young people she observed established in play and class (e.g. in writing love letters and playing games such as kiss chase where groups of boys or girls chased and kissed the other; Thorne 1993) and in reflective conversations she had with them about their relations with contemporaries of the opposite sex. As in the UNICEF study, Deevia's analytic focus in these conversations was not just on *what* the young participants said about gender and sexuality but how they constructed, connected, and communicated their passions, excitements, and desires, which varied considerably according to context. When asked if they had friends of the opposite sex, boys tended to be adamant that they did not, as if the very question violated their sense of being boys. Yet some of these same boys wrote 'love' letters to girls they imagined as possible girlfriends. Girls spoke more with Deevia about particular boys they liked and what they liked about them, though also, sought assurances from Deevia, when reflecting on these and love letters they sent boys, not to divulge this information to others for fear of damaging their 'reputations'.

Significantly, Deevia was often asked by the children in her study if she had a boyfriend and if she 'did the French kiss'. In posing such questions, they showed their familiarity with hetero-normative discourses and their ability to draw on these in sexualising Deevia in relation to gender, as a possible girlfriend in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship. Interestingly, they did not ask if she had a husband, even though she was asked about her children. We suggest that this was because 'husband–wife' did not carry the sexual connotations which 'girlfriend–boyfriend' had for them.[1]

Not only does this provide insights into the kind of relationship she was establishing with them, one which allowed and enabled them to pose such a question to an adult in the school, but also indicates that the children were sexual beings and that they attached considerable significance to this, in the ways they positioned adults, and, as it emerged especially in their conversations about play, in their self-reflections.

[1] In an observational study which focused on teacher–learner interactions in a pre-primary school in England in the 1980s, Valerie Walkerdine, 1981, also observed examples of learners, as young as three to four, sexualising teachers. This, however, was only something which boys did to women teachers, took the form of sexual objectification, and was intended to undermine the authority of the teacher, even if this was dismissed by the teacher as simply boys being 'silly'. The notion that the boys were just being silly not only served to legitimate the teacher's sense of authority, but also reflected and contributed to the assumption that children (of this age) were not sexual beings.

We learnt from the learners in these interviews and ethnographic studies about the meanings and significance gender and sexuality held for them through the ways they positioned themselves and related to each other and to the adult researchers in play, interviews, and 'bumble bee' conversations. In the next section, we focus on more recent interview research with Grade 11 (16- to 17-year-old) learners in public schools in Durban in which we have collaborated. Again, sexuality has emerged as a key theme in the interviews, and we develop an analytic approach which engages how sexuality is presented and discussed by various participants and the dynamics of the research encounter.

Taking Interviews as Ethnographic Encounters and Learning, *First Hand*, About Gender, Sexuality, and the Operation of Power in Group Interviews with 16- to 17-Year-Old Learners

In this research project, sexuality featured prominently in the interviews in participants' narratives and discussions about their lives, in and out of school, thus providing strong support for the contention that schools are not simply academic places involved in the emotionally detached pursuit of knowledge (Paechter 2006). As Epstein and Johnson (1998) and many others (Allen 2005; Renold et al. 2015; Bhana 2016) have illustrated, schools are sexual and gendered domains (Epstein and Johnson 1998) where sexuality is everywhere and nowhere (Allen 2014).

As in the UNICEF study, we wanted to explore their social worlds by asking broad questions about their interests and leisure time activities, reflections on being learners, and relations with boys and girls and adults in and out of school, and our approach was to encourage our interviewees to set the agenda and respond to issues *they* raised and encourage them to reflect and elaborate upon these. Sexuality did not emerge in the interviews in response to specific questions we asked about sexuality but in reflective discussions precipitated by these broad questions usually in relation to gender. How sexuality emerged, and how it was invoked and connected with gender by our interviewees differed considerably between the (15) groups, participating in our study. Below, we compare two group interviews conducted with learners attending a formerly Indian school.[2] One of the groups, comprised two black women, three

[2] Under apartheid in South Africa, people were divided into different racial categories, namely white, black, Indian, and coloured, and these were institutionalised in the separate provision, according to these

Indian women, and two Indian men learners, and was facilitated by Deevia, and the other, comprised six black women learners, and was facilitated by Rob.

In these group interviews, gender, sexuality, age, and race were raised by the participants and we see not only how they construct these, making particular kinds of symbolic connections between them, but also how they draw on these as key resources as they position and present themselves as girls and boys in the interviews. In this sense, we reflect on the interviews as ethnographic encounters in which we witness how our participants interact and perform gender.

Race- and Gender-Mixed Interview

How Gender and Sexuality Emerged

In this interview, sexuality emerged early on in a way that focused on girls, when Deevia asked them what they liked or disliked about school, and some of the girls complained about girls in the more junior years in high school (Grades 7, 8, and 9, ages 13–15) applying make-up in the school toilets.

Neila (female)	It's the grade 8 and 9's—I don't know what's wrong with the grade 8's, I really don't know! They are so small, and they, I really don't know! I think that when they are in Grade 7, they think that 'Oh, I own the world'. Come to high school, they think, 'Oh, I'm so big'. Grade 8. (laughter), Big? Please!
Meru (female)	When you go in the toilets … break time … you see them applying the eye shadow, the foundations and what not … why make yourself beautiful in school?
Col (male)	You tell me, at one stage you were there in the toilets putting mascara and make-up and all.
Meru	No, no, no I, I was putting make-up and mascara and all? Me! No, never, no, no, no!
Lungi	And there's these 3 girls, I think they're from grade, grade 9, they're using a lot of make-up
John (male)	But that's the fashion now.
Lungi	What, but there is no fashion in school. You come here to learn. You have discipline.
John	What about your braids? That is fashion isn't it?
Lungi	Hey, hey, hey.

racial categories, of living spaces, schools, and jobs. The formal de-racialisation of schools in the post-apartheid era has resulted in the formation of racially diverse learner populations mainly in the formerly white and formerly Indian schools. At Gandhi, the formerly Indian school in our study, 85% of the learners were Indian and 15% were black. Some black leaners in formerly Indian schools, like Gandhi, protested that, because they were black, it was often assumed by Indian learners and teachers that they were poor and lived in the shack accommodation in the schools' catchment area.

Constructing Some Girls as Other in Relation to Sexuality

The young women spoke about these girls in the third person as 'they' or 'them', as a different category, and also in emotionally engaged ways which ridiculed them and evoked laughter in the group, especially among the girls. This played on the discrepancy between the shared motivations the girls in the interview attributed to them—their desire to enhance their status, to 'look big' through putting on make-up—and how 'small' they looked. They also spoke in quite moralistic ways (as teacher figures) about what they saw as the inappropriateness with these girls' fixation with putting on make-up in the school context. This was constructed as a place of 'learning' and 'discipline', as if the two were connected and undermined by putting on 'make-up'.

Significantly, it was girls in this group who criticised the girls in the junior grades. The two boys, Col and John, who contributed to this discussion, indeed, challenged Meru and Lungi by suggesting that they also used make-up and styled their hair. The emotional denials Meru and Lungi made: 'Me, no, never, no, no, no'; 'Hey, hey, hey' indicated just how *invested* they seemed to be in constructing the girls they described in the lower grades who put on make-up in the toilets as Other, and identify implicitly, in contrast, as good, mature, and independent girls.

Negotiating Their Gender Identities in Relation to Sexuality in the Interview

Why were they so invested in positioning themselves in this way? Insights into this began to emerge in Meru and Nelia's responses to the question which Deevia put: 'what's the problem with girls coming to school with make-up?

> Meru It makes them look cheap. They're giving the school a bad name. The time you come into the bus you're wearing this tie and this make-up on your face … they gonna say the whole school is like that.
>
> Neila I think the girls that are putting make-up and all, they want is to be noticed by boys now that they're in high school and tend to have feelings for boys.

Putting on make-up for school was read as something which girls might do to make themselves sexually attractive to boys and, in this context, was constructed as making them 'look cheap' and giving the school 'a bad name', as if the 'reputation' of the school was being compromised by the sexual 'reputation' of these girls.

We suggest that these girls' investments in Othering junior grade girls who put on make-up in the school toilet were motivated, in part, by fears about

their own susceptibility, as girls, to being sexualised in derogatory ways, with the Other providing a fantasy structure—'a peg' on to which they project and hang both fears and desires (on the psychodynamics of Othering, see Frosh et al. 2002). This threat, embedded in popular discourses in which gender is implicitly connected with hetero-sexuality in ways which position men as subjects and women as objects of desire (Jackson and Scott 2010; Hollway 1989), was exemplified in criticisms two of the boys made about girls and dress in the passage below. These criticisms were precipitated by Meru who, while blaming particular girls for being overly and inappropriately sexual, paused and changed tack and began to question the selective naming and shaming of girls, not boys, in relation to sexuality.

Meru She [girls who put on make-up] can be the best looking girl, but, you find out she's been with half my friends [having sexual relationships] and got like a really bad reputation, she's named as a slut (3) But have you thought of that? It only happens to girls. If a boy has many girlfriends, nothing happens to him.

Col You can't say boys are pigs, if a girl is dressing up with short skirts and all, they are attracting the boy.

Lungi I wear my short skirt for my own satisfaction, if you tell me, if you go to the beach, you're going to wear a long skirt? Sorry! No ways! Are you gonna tell me that if you [looking at Col] go to the beach you're gonna wear long pants? If I go to the beach and wear a hot panty and bikini bra and nobody gonna rape me, coz I'm attracting boys. No, no ways. Boys must control themselves! (group laughter)

Col Girls with short skirts, get raped more easily

Lungi Excuse me, excuse me! [tone of exasperation] Listen to me. I'm wearing my short skirt right, you come to me, I ignore you. That means I'm showing you that I'm not interested in you.

John Wearing short skirts, tells a lot about the girl, wearing short skirts, bikini If you see a girl with a short skirt, I think, maybe, she's looking for a guy.

Neila Don't judge girls right, coz of how they dress.

Col You'll be paying a big price for so little material on your body. And you said girls, some girls are like bicycles, everybody tends to ride them. If a girl is dressing like that, what do you expect?

The focus in this passage is again on girls and sexuality though this shifts to boys and their constructions of girls and sexuality, as the girls challenge connections boys make between girls' appearances and, notably, their dress and a desire to sexually attract boys. Lungi was particularly passionate in her criticisms presenting herself as a young woman who liked wearing short skirts and bikinis,

and critiqued the way in which the presumption that girls did so in order to attract men was being invoked to legitimate sexual harassment and rape and regulate and control women like her. Unlike Lungi, Meru and Neila did not refer to themselves, but spoke in more detached ways about the double sexual standard and 'judging girls' by virtue of their dress. That the boys in this passage were making moral judgements about the girls who wore short skirts was very clear in Col's objectification of 'girls', modified as 'some girls' as bicycles which 'everybody tends to ride'. Significantly, he refers here to what 'you said', in this case Meru, when she seemed to blame girls with 'bad reputations', just before raising concerns about the operation of double sexual standards.

In this strange juxtaposition, Meru, we suggest, reflects ambivalences that some of the girls experienced in relation to sexuality and how they position themselves—at one moment Othering certain girls, and at another critiquing the very fact that girls are subject to such forms of moral evaluation and scrutiny. Meru's ambivalence in the extract above contrasts strikingly with Lungi's certainty and outrage which she displays towards Col by mocking him and boys more generally for blaming girls for arousing male desire. Her response is to assert herself as an independent being whose movements and dress should not be tied to or restricted by male desire, and as a sexual woman who derives pleasure from wearing clothes which signify this. Meru performs gender very differently in relation to sexuality in the interview, raising concerns about double sexual standards but not as they affect herself, and presenting *other* girls as the ones who may be (unfairly) constructed as overly sexual.

Interview with Black Girls

How Gender and Sexuality Emerged

Again sexuality and gender emerged early, in response to Rob's question about what they liked or disliked about school. In response to this, Lungi (who also participated in the previous interview) mentioned being one of the few black learners in her class and being treated with contempt by the other children: '*the others they treat you like, "who the hell?", in class*'. When Rob enquired who the 'others' were, they turned out to be Indian learners, and their marginalisation by them, and notably by Indian girls, framed another animated and emotionally charged interview.

Constructing Some Girls as Other in Relation to Sexuality

In this interview, the learners provided rich examples of forms of marginalisation they experienced as black girls at their school, which included being

told by Indian girls not to touch the cakes they were selling, how black learners were always assumed to be responsible for crimes committed at school, how Indian not black learners were applauded when they gave presentations in English lessons, and how Indian learners undermined black teachers by mispronouncing Zulu words when asked to be quiet. When examples such as these were elaborated, it was never just one person talking; rather, they all joined in. Clearly, the stories they were telling were common cultural ones which seemed to symbolise common experiences of marginalisation.

Though Indian boys were implicated in their accounts of racism and were presented as the main perpetrators undermining the authority of black teachers, the black girls' opposition to racism was mainly directed at Indian girls, and this seemed to be fuelled by anxieties about being constructed as less sexually attractive than them, as we see in the following extract:

Samantha	Girls are more racist than boys.
Rob	Are they?
Fortunate	Boys are better
Fortunate= Ronda= Bongiwe	Boys are better!
Lungi	you know one boy from our class he will talk to you, he will touch you and he will even take what you are eating and eat it. But the girls! They are racist.
Bongiwe	One boy in class, after English, we were walking. Instead of him asking me, 'Please can I pass' he swears me and I swear him back. He swear and I pushed him away.
Rob	A boy or girl?
Bongiwe	A boy.
Rob	Okay.
Bongiwe	I didn't want to swear him back but I had to.
Lungi	the boys are not racist at all.
Rob	Why do you think that is?
Lungi	I don't know.
Bongiwe	The girls, they think they have everything, they wear make-up, their long hair, and we got short hair.
Lungi	The African hair, Oh no! they don't like it, and the only thing wonderful about them is they got nice hair, you know. And I said oh God! There's nothing wonderful about you! [loud, angry tone]

Though Bongiwe provides what appears to be (in the context of the discussion) an example of an Indian boys' racist behaviour, Lungi immediately

affirms 'the boys are not racist at all', and Bongiwe does not contradict this but implicates Indian girls for being racist for constructing themselves as more attractive than black girls. While they provided examples of Indian boys' racism, their constructions of them as 'better' served to accentuate the racism they attributed to the Indian girls. This suggests they attached much importance to being *heterosexually* attractive and felt particularly troubled by the Indian girls being positioned as more attractive than them. Lungi denies this, claiming '*there is nothing wonderful about you*', but her loud, angry tone suggested that she cared a great deal about this.

Negotiating Their Gender Identities in Relation to Sexuality and Race in the Interview

The black girls' sense of marginalisation and exclusion around their identities as black heterosexual young women was made very explicit when they spoke about how much they longed to go to the school dance (emphasising this through repetition), but could not go because no Indian boy would ask them out, and there were not enough black boys of their age to act as potential partners.

Bongiwe	Like now we will be having a dance. So now we don't have partners and we scared to ask them, a boy, because they won't go. They won't go. I'm sure.
Rob	the Indian boys?
All	Yes.
Lungi	Like you black and he's Indian, he won't go. Like we want to go. We really want to go, but we don't have partners. The problem is that we don't have partners.
Mapopo	It's not like we don't want to go to the dance. We do want to go but we don't have the right partner. There is African boys here but not enough for us.
Bongiwe	But it's like nothing's impossible, it's possible an Indian asks me out.
Rob	And it's not possible for you to ask an Indian boy out?
Lungi	How! Please! Who do you think you are? [incredulous tone at being asked such a question]. (Interview extracts from Pattman and Bhana 2009)

The dance was constructed by these girls as a celebration from which they were excluded, a celebration of heterosexual attraction, and especially female

heterosexual attraction, with attendance depending on having a partner of the opposite sex, and in the case of girls, being propositioned by a boy. In contrast to the previous passage where the black girls criticised Indian girls for taking pride in their hair and subordinating them sexually, no criticisms were levelled at the Indian boys even though the implication was that it was the Indian boys' antipathy to having them as partners which prevented them from going to the dance.

Constructions of Gender and Sexuality in the Two Interviews

In both the interviews, gender and sexuality were given much prominence and connected by the participants in ways which presumed heteronormativity (Butler 1990). The participants in both interviews (even the gender-mixed one) tended to focus on girls and (hetero) sexuality, as if the connections they drew between gender and sexuality were less seamless for girls than boys. This was particularly evident in constructions of *inappropriately* sexual girls in the gender-mixed interview, and how this framed 'doing gender' as a problem and concern for girls to which some of the girls contributed by distancing themselves from junior girls who put on make-up in the school, yet also challenged by questioning double sexual standards for boys and girls.

In the interview with the black girls, sexuality and gender also emerged as key themes but, in contrast to the previous interview, these were interlinked and intertwined, in their accounts, with race. This points, we suggest, to the dynamics which are produced in the research encounters and how these make possible or impossible certain kinds of narratives. Of course, it is disingenuous to claim that race was only introduced by the girls themselves in the interview with the black girls; the profile of race was, at least, raised by the mono-racial interview format. But this seemed to make it possible for these girls to talk critically, and with emotion, about experiences of marginalisation which they articulated in relation to their identifications as (hetero) sexual young people. The interview with the black girls showed how sexuality was a source of anxiety and consternation for them but a source, also, of pleasure. Heterosexuality was significant for these girls in complex ways, associated with desire and pleasure as well as marginalisation and racism, a medium through which they asserted themselves and derived a sense of self-esteem and also a medium through which they were subordinated.

Concluding Comments: What Implications Can We Draw from Our Research for Developing Forms of *Life Orientation*?

We have reported on research with young people which engages with their agency and reflects on the dynamics of the research encounters and the processes of identity construction and knowledge production within these. Such research, we argue, can be seen as a participatory pedagogic activity which may carry implications for developing learner-centred forms of sexuality education (as advocated in the official *Life Orientation* curriculum in South Africa), and we conclude by elaborating on this. The need to think creatively about how participatory forms of qualitative research can contribute in this way to *Life Orientation* is reinforced by research with learners in public high schools in South Africa, which indicates that *Life Orientation* is taught (ironically) in moralistic ways which undermine young people's agency and problematise sexuality, especially young women's sexuality (e.g. Shefer et al. 2015) and same sex desire and orientations. (Francis, 2017).

Rather than 'wishing innocence' on children, and constructing them as pre sexual, as many opponents of sex education in schools (and especially participatory and learner-centred forms of sex education) have imagined them as being, our research highlights the importance boys and girls, even as young as six and seven, attach to sexuality in their lives, as witnessed in the frequency it is raised in conversations. But characterising them as sexual beings does not mean explaining their emotions and behaviour, as they relate to sexuality, as the outcome of fixed biological urges. On the contrary, our research raises questions about how boys and girls construct sexuality, and how they 'sexualise' each other as they negotiate their (gendered) identities in everyday social interactions and practices. This resonates with *Life Orientation*, 2003, as it is formulated, in South Africa as 'the study of self in relation to others and to society'.

Our research points to the importance of taking schools as important sites and contexts in which processes of identity construction go on with gender and sexuality much to the fore (with children of all ages), though these are rarely addressed in *Life Orientation*. This, no doubt, relates to the embarrassment many teachers feel talking about sexuality (and especially in conversational ways) with children (Iyer and Aggleton 2014; Bhana 2016). But this also reflects a tendency, we suggest, to construct work in opposition to play or leisure, as institutionalised in common constructions of classrooms and playgrounds. In these, classrooms are seen as working spaces and playgrounds, in contrast, as areas where no teaching or learning goes on, where children can

simply 'be' themselves (Mayeza 2015). In this way, processes of knowledge production and identity work in relation to gender and sexuality in everyday social interactions and practices in schools may, ironically, be rendered invisible in certain teacher appropriations of *Life Orientation*.

A major concern in *Life Orientation*, as it is framed in the national curriculum description, is to engage with forms of 'discrimination and unequal power relations'. In our research, we draw attention to the operation of power in relation to the ways boys and girls construct their (gendered) identities in their everyday lives in school as well as in research encounters (Allen 2005). Such conversations in our research have tended to focus on sexuality as introduced by the young people themselves, without taking for granted gendered and sexual norms as they articulate them, but posing questions and creating contexts where different girls and boys have spoken about their pleasures and costs of these for them.

But how does power operate in *Life Orientation* classes? Can women and men from different and diverse backgrounds engage in reflexive discussions about gender and sexuality? These are important questions to pose in view of the symbolic construction of the class as a formal space tied with teacher authority, and also in recognition of power dynamics which mediate gender and race.

Can and should *Life Orientation* programmes open up spaces for black learners to speak about *their* experiences of 'diversity' in a racially mixed formerly Indian school, by dividing them, as we did in our research, into mono-racial (as well as multi-racial groups). One of the problems with this is that it might sit uneasily with rhetorical commitments of racially mixed schools to 'embracing diversity' and may contribute to forms of polarisation based around race.

A similar question about splitting people into same-sex groups, in *Life Orientation*, to encourage them to talk about issues such as sexual harassment is likely to be considered much less contentious. Indeed, some researchers partaking in the UNICEF study conducted same-sex group interviews because they found that girls and boys were more fluent in these, especially when discussing issues relating to sexuality, though they combined these with mixed interviews in which the same boys and girls who had been interviewed separately participated. In one version of this, the participants were asked to reflect in single-sex groups on the advantages and disadvantages of being members of the opposite sex, and it was noticeable in the mixed plenary session which followed that girls and boys related to each other in empathetic ways which often challenged gender polarities, not least the construction of boys as subjects and girls as objects of desire (See Pattman 2006: 102–105).

Another way in which *Life Orientation* can engage with 'diverse' students, which blurs the boundaries between research and teaching, is to train learners

to be researchers and to work together in small 'diverse' groups interviewing and learning about each other and their constructions and experiences of home and school, their identifications and relations. Engaging in such research may transform the classroom context so that it seems less detached from other school spaces in which identity work goes on informally through talk and play and hanging about. It may also offer opportunities for participants to learn from each other and open possibilities for forging new identifications and ways of connecting gender and sexuality which challenge polarisations based on gender and race.

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Part II

Sexualities Education in Schools

Sara I. McClelland and Michelle Fine

Introduction: Sexualities in Schools/Pub(l)ic Dis'plays

> We have been raised to fear the yes within ourselves, our deepest cravings. ——Audre Lorde (1993, p. 342)

> You never reach the Body-without-Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit. … But you're already on it, scurrying like a vermin, groping like a blind person, or running like a lunatic; desert traveler and nomad of the steppes. On it we sleep, live our waking lives, fight—fight and are fought—seek our place, experience untold happiness and fabulous defeats; on it we penetrate and are penetrated; on it we love. ——Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 150)

Somewhere between Audre Lorde's cravings and Deleuze and Guattari's evacuated and distributed bundles of skin and organs, this section seeks to open a space to interrogate the pedagogies and politics of sexuality education within schools: a space fraught with desire and constraint, excess and containment, denial and yearning.

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To begin our journey, we open with a provocation: asking that readers release bodies, sexualities, and schools from the conceptual boxes in which they have been contained and re-imagine all three as hinged assemblages. Fluids and fantasies, words and images, relationships and tweets, circulating within and beyond classrooms, where organs, desires, silences, naughty giggles, racial and gender formations intersect. By (dis)assembling and hinging, we begin to understand the lively jazz of what is taught, learned, witnessed, affectively charged, embodied, enacted, muted, and resisted by students and educators. Across the chapters included in this section, we enter those spaces we call schools, around the topics we call sexualities, to peek beneath the sheets to learn about how secrets are formed, shame is built piece by piece, subjectivities are cobbled and reassembled, and how transgressions are planned and carried out.

Despite rumors and moral panics to the contrary, sex ed is not, nor has it ever been, confined to a teacher standing in front of a room of students, talking about sex.

The chapters in this section pierce the cellophane of cultural anxieties about young sexualities, always gendered and racialized, always imagined as desiring and dangerous, (dis)abled and excessive (McClelland and Fine 2008a, b). On the naughty/innocent axis, many of the authors help us see how young children are engaging always, already, and riskily with/in their bodies even as adults insist on their innocence; how black girls and women are taking up, resisting, and queering the tropes that are layered onto their cultural forms; how immigrant and undocumented young people refuse the yardsticks of who deserves citizenship, belonging, who measures up; and we accompany activist social movements as they press with intensity at the borders of bodies, media, and schools, even as governmentality stitches together the lips of educators, conscripting what can and cannot be taught.

With a wide swath of writers and topics, situated in a sexuality food court of pedagogical spaces, we intentionally stretch the conception of where pub(l)ic education takes place, in schools, of course, but also prisons, preschools, in social media, and at home. We invited scholars from around the globe who would shed light on not only what was happening "inside schools," but who would focus on varied ages, multiple sexualities, and complexly racialized bodies to interrogate how sexuality circulates through schools in official and unspoken, affective and curricular circuits.

Most importantly, we engaged with scholars who would provoke insights from bodies and transgressions, rather than rehearse what is normative, silenced, and negotiated in compulsive tropes about adolescent sexualities. We intend these chapters to be imagined as a set of provocations, an experience that helps one *imagine more* (Dewey 1934) and avoid the anesthetic or deadening experience which drains the reader of imagination and hope for what could be.

Sexuality education occurs officially and predominantly in school-based settings where students and educators are subjected to the whims of State, ideology, testing, and local moral panics, mediated by sexuality education's discourses and practices of "child," "gendered," "(hetero)sexual," "normal," "healthy," and "citizen." These chapters stretch to render visible the membranes where parents, administrators, social movements, governments, and expert commentators sculpt school-based sexuality education.

In this section, we aimed to push on the idea of what school settings could invite—to encourage the praxis of teaching and produce a set of curricula that could push on the boundaries of sex education in schools. We asked each chapter author to theorize and also include a "lesson plan" for a sexuality education curriculum. Both on their own and in collective form, these curricula stretch the sexual imaginary for what might/could happen within educational spaces.

While some have argued that schools are too closed off, irrelevant, colonized by moral panics and overtaken by the speed and accessibility of the Internet, too regulated, and too confining, we want to press nevertheless for the centrality and sensuality of schools in the work of public education of community life. Schools, and public schools in particular, are exactly where we must imagine what should be taught to everyone. In a time of State shrinkage and neoliberalism, public schools (and the few remaining public libraries) remain critical and deeply political spaces where all are [presumably] welcome. Schools survive as one of the only places where theorists, advocates, educators, critics, scholars, parents, and taxpayers must contend with existential and material questions, "What do we think everyone needs to learn about sex and sexualities? What is in the service of the public good? What can/must be said, and what will be silenced? And then where do desire and que(e)ries go when censorship prevails and pedagogical spaces are sealed off?"

In the spirit of assemblage, there are many ways to organize the chapters, but we offer three analytics for thinking about sexuality education and the chapters included in this section:

Refusing Innocence

Kerry H. Robinson and Cristyn Davies in Chap. 11 trace the deep ideological investments in childhood innocence and instead challenge us to consider the many ways that children are actively engaged in constructing themselves as gendered and sexual subjects from early ages.

Karin A. Martin and Lacey Bobier in Chap. 12 explore the ways that US preschools structure informal everyday interactions and they develop a

thoughtful critique of the "danger-only" approaches that inform contemporary approaches to childhood sexuality.

Desire in the Folds of Injustice

Jennifer C. Nash in Chap. 13 takes us to the expansive public spaces of popular culture and teaches us not only to be better (and more complicated) readers of popular culture, but to critically expand our sense of black sexual possibilities and black sexual freedoms by refusing the binary of "good" and "bad" representations of black female bodies.

Jessica Fields and Signy Toquinto in Chap. 14 take us to jails and prisons and show us the many ways that sexuality educators have an important role to play in addressing the profound injustices marking imprisoned people's lives, and to notice the wisdom and resources in the women behind, and then leaving, the bar.

Marisa Ragonese, Christin Bowman, and Deborah L. Tolman in Chap. 15 move us to the virtual classroom provided by social media and illustrate the possibilities of inter-generational feminist activism centered around critical readings of contemporary visual culture.

Leigh Patel and Lauren P. Saenz in Chap. 16 move us to pedagogical, curricular, and assessment practices inside schools that shape and narrow how definitions of "legitimate" are constructed so that they never fit the bodies of undocumented youth and, indeed, render this construction process invisible.

Daring to Teach the (Un)sayable

Laina Bay Cheng in Chap. 17 argues that US school-based sexuality education, confined by neoliberal "best practices," fuels the rhetoric of sexual risk for students. As a result, the opportunity to engage youth in critical analysis of the interplay between sexual well-being and social conditions is too often overlooked, but holds enormous promise.

Annette Brömdal, Mary Lou Rasmussen, Fida Sanjakdar, Louisa Allen, and Kathleen Quinlivan in Chap. 18 focus on the pedagogical potential of conversations about intersex issues as a way to explore the potential of breaking binaries, learning about "embarrassing bodies," and how power accrues in some bodies and not others.

Kathleen Quinlivan traces the power of neoliberal racialized and sexualized rhetorics in Australian and New Zealand schools and in particular the effects of these discourses on herself as a researcher as well as the Māori and Pasifika students in these schools.

These chapters together provoke and set up three challenges for us all to address. First, they challenge us to refuse the trappings of innocence, and they remind us that innocence and protection are always a trap. Second, they urge us to remember that desire lives in the folds of injustice, and dances in the subaltern crevices of oppression, even when that desire may be difficult to see. Third, they insist that we never stop teaching the unsayable, for it is that which cannot be said that must be said (or you may as well stop teaching all together). Our joy has been bringing these voices together to form a chorus that can sing a jazz of the forbidden, strange, and delicious from the rooftops.

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11

Sexuality Education in Early Childhood

Kerry H. Robinson and Cristyn Davies

Based on qualitative research conducted with Australian children (aged 3–11), their parents, and teachers, this chapter explores the complex regulatory relationship between childhood and sexuality, which impacts on the sexuality education of children. Sexuality education in schooling in many Western countries, for example, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the USA, and Canada, has often been shrouded in controversy, encountering resistance from some members of the community. The focus of this controversy is generally around what information should be included in sexuality education curricula; whose role it is to impart this information to young people—parents/guardians and/or schools; and at what age is it appropriate to begin talking to young people about sexuality (Allen 2004; Davies and Robinson 2010; Levine 2002; Robinson 2013). The controversial nature of sexuality education intensifies when younger children are involved. This is largely related to the belief that sexuality education is irrelevant and inappropriate for children, as sexuality is viewed as 'adult knowledge'.

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The discourse of childhood innocence is central to this perspective and to the maintenance of the dualistic relationship between adult/child (Bhana 2008, 2009; Bond Stockton 2009; Davies and Robinson 2010; Egan and Hawkes 2010; Faulkner 2011; Renold 2005; Robinson 2008, 2012, 2013). Consequently, the discourse of childhood innocence has been utilized to strictly regulate children's sexuality education both within schooling and in the family home. The relationship between childhood and sexuality in contemporary times has generally been considered potentially dangerous to children—first, in terms of their vulnerability to exploitation by some adults; and, second, in regard to disrupting childhood innocence and the perceived consequences this may have on children's emotional development. This has resulted in strict regulatory practices imposed and self-imposed on both teachers and parents. Consequently, the child is generally perceived to be in need of protection from sexuality, including knowledge about sexuality. This chapter, however, highlights that children are actively engaged in constructing themselves as gendered and sexual subjects from early ages through the discourses that they have available to them—for example, through the media, popular culture, family, schooling, and peers. Children also engage in regulating the gendered behaviors of other children (and adults) and, in doing so, also send strong messages about normative gendered and sexual subjectivities. Children's understandings of relationships, intimacy, and sexuality are generally constituted through their understandings of normative gendered relations.

Childhood is a critical period in which the child is interpellated as a particular kind of 'future' citizen subject. Incorporating a post-developmentalist framework and drawing on Michel Foucault's (Foucault 1972, 1980) theory of power/knowledge, this chapter highlights how censorship and moral panic, reinforced through discourses of childhood innocence, operate in communities, families, schooling, and within children's peer groups, not just to regulate children's sexuality education, but also to define and regulate heteronormative childhoods (and adulthoods) (Davies 2008, 2012; McClelland and Hunter 2013; Robinson 2008). We argue that regulating children's access to knowledge and knowledge production operates to inscribe children as 'vulnerable' subjects. Building strong ethical and respectful relationships and sexuality literacy early in life is foundational to children's understandings of sexual citizenship and to their health and well-being. The chapter concludes with a suggested lesson plan aimed at building children's critical awareness, understandings, and skills around ethical relationships.

The Research Context

The discussion in this chapter is based on two research projects. The first was a pilot research project (2008–2010) which involved interviews and focus groups with children aged 3–5, interviews and focus groups with their parents, and interviews with early childhood educators. This research was funded by a university research grant and broadly explored the socio-cultural discourses around young children's access to knowledge of sexuality. More specifically, it was an investigation of children's knowledge of sexuality and relationships, parents' perceptions of and approaches to young children's sexuality and relationships education, and early childhood educators' perceptions of and approaches to children's knowledge of sexuality.

The second research project involved primary school children aged 5–11, their parents and educators, and was funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant (2011–2013). The broad focus of this research was on building respectful and ethical relationships early in life, particularly ethical relationships associated with gender and sexuality. As part of this study, the following areas were explored: children's understandings of respect; how parents and educators approached educating children about respect; socio-cultural and educational discourses operating around children's access to sexual knowledge; parents' approaches to speaking with their children about sexual knowledge and relationships; educators' perspectives and practices around teaching sexuality education to primary school children; and children's understandings of sexuality and relationships. The research involved surveys, interviews and focus groups with parents and interviews with primary school educators and interviews and focus groups with children about these issues.

In both research projects, participants came from diverse cultural, ethnic, geographical, socio-economic, and class backgrounds. Participants were recruited from early childhood settings, primary schools, parent/family/teacher organizations, social networking sites, snowballing, and also in the second project, through a recruitment organization. Parents consented to their children's participation in both research projects, and relevant educational and governing bodies granted ethics approval in both. Discussions with children in both projects were initiated through the use of images found in magazines, post-cards, newspapers, and children's storybooks. This approach was used to begin conversations similar to a storytelling activity that young children experience in their daily lives. The same images were also used with parents in both projects to ascertain their perspectives of popular cultural and media constructions of gendered and sexual relationships in young people. In addition, parents were asked how they thought their children would interpret the images.

We undertook a Foucauldian discourse analysis of the transcripts of interviews and focus groups with research participants in both research projects. Discourse analysis provides a linguistic approach to an understanding of the relationship between language, knowledge, ideology, and power (Lupton 1992). Discourses are historically and culturally formulated modes through which we understand knowledge, power, and subjectivity. According to Foucault (Foucault 1972), discourses are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak; therefore, discourses are key elements that constitute knowledge. As Stephen Ball (1990, p. 2) points out: 'discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power'. Subjectivity, that is the 'self', is constituted within discourses drawn upon in communications with others and produce our conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions; our sense of self and how we relate to the world; as well as the ways in which we are gendered, racialized, classed, sexualized, constituted as children and adults, and so on.

When undertaking a discourse analysis of interview and focus group transcripts, adults' and children's positioning in discourse/s becomes a focus of investigation. The various discourses (knowledge) that children and adults take up constitute who they are and become the lens through which they view themselves, others, and the world in which they live. These discourses are perpetuated through the language children, adolescents, and adults use in their daily interactions with others, through the texts they read, and visually through images they encounter, all of which portray very powerful ideas about people, objects, and events. Children, like adolescents and adults, can have different belief systems based on their socio-cultural family backgrounds, age, and experiences. The interviews and focus group texts are analyzed for the discourses each individual takes up as their own and for the socio-cultural and political relations of power inherent in these discourses. The discursive locations of individual subjects are dependent on negotiating relations of power, as well as the personal investments one perceives they have in taking up one discourse rather than another (Hollway 1984; Robinson and Jones Díaz 2006). Discourses officially sanctioned by social institutions (e.g. family, education, the law, medicine, government, media, religious groups) and supported by influential and authoritative individuals, groups, and peers wield greater power than other representations or perspectives.

When quotes from children, parents, and educators are utilized in this discussion, pseudonyms are used to maintain confidentiality.

Childhood, Childhood Innocence, and Sexuality

Childhood has predominantly been viewed as a natural and biologically fixed period of human development. However, in more recent times, this dominant reading of childhood has been critiqued for the failure to acknowledge the heterogeneity of childhood and how it varies across history, geographical locations, political, and economic contexts (Gittins 1998; James and Prout 1990). A child's cultural background, class, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, family relations, age, ability, and so on inflect experiences of childhood. Foundational to socio-cultural constructions of childhood is the way that it is constituted as being 'naturally' in opposition to what it means to be an adult. Within this context, meanings of childhood are constituted and defined by adults, for adults, determining how a child should behave, what a child should know, and how and when they should come to know it. Central to this social construction of childhood and to the adult/child binary is the mutually reinforcing discourse of childhood innocence, which has become the ultimate signifier of the child and a defining boundary between the adult and the child.

Childhood innocence is equated with purity, naivety, selflessness, irrationality, and a state of unknowingness or unworldliness and being untroubled by the world's political events. Childhood innocence (or the 'innocent body' more broadly) has also been racialized in that it has been equated with the 'white' child—'whiteness' being the signifier of virtue and purity. Childhood innocence has also been 'classed' in its association with upper- and middle-class morality (Bhana 2008, 2009; Bond Stockton 2009; Faulkner 2011; Fine and McClelland 2006; Robinson 2013). Children of color, and those from non-Christian and working-class family backgrounds, frequently lose their childhood status as innocent, which is often linked to the perception of these young people as deviant, uncontrollable, disobedient, streetwise, and disorderly. Representations of these young people have also historically been sexualized—the 'promiscuous' child and the *knowing child*—one who has knowledge beyond its years. Robinson (2013, p. 42) argues that childhood innocence, a largely manufactured concept rather than inherent in the child, 'plays a critical social function in defining and regulating differences between the adult and the child'.

Childhood innocence has been central to the regulation of children's access to certain knowledge, especially knowledge of sexuality (Bhana 2008, 2009). This regulation of what has become known as 'adult-only' knowledge stems primarily from many adults' perceptions and fears about children's potential loss of innocence and how this might impact on their emotional develop-

ment. Many adults view children's knowledge of sexuality as developmentally inappropriate. This was a typical discourse expressed by many parents in the research on which this chapter is based. One mother of three children aged nine, six, and five responded in the following way to the question of whether it was important for primary school (elementary school) children to receive sexuality education: 'Not until they are at least 11; I think we need to keep our children innocent for as long as we can'. A father of a 10-year-old girl reinforced this perspective:

> I FIRMLY believe that it is too early for children to be given sexuality education. Let's let them have a childhood full of imagination without bogging them down with fears of sexuality, discrimination and gender specific language.

There is a strong and pervasive social insistence on maintaining, prolonging, and protecting childhood innocence, particularly children's sexual innocence, which is supported by broad cultural, legal, and political practices (Robinson 2013).

Children's sexual subjectivities have been historically constituted through a range of competing and contradictory discourses, which continue to impact the way that children are viewed, regulated, and treated as sexual subjects. These discourses include: 'children are asexual and innocent'; 'children's and young people's sexuality is dangerous to society and needs to be regulated'; children's sexuality is normal and critical for the development of a creative and vibrant society'; 'sexuality is dangerous to the moral development of the child'; 'sexuality is dangerous to children who are vulnerable to sexual abuses and exploitation by adults and older children and therefore need to be protected'; and 'children are naturally heterosexual subjects' (Robinson 2013). The emotional capital associated with childhood is especially obvious in the moral panics that arise when cultural norms associated with childhood and childhood innocence are perceived to have been contravened. It is these discourses of childhood sexual subjectivity, individually or in combination, that are utilized to manifest this panic. Nicholas Rose (1999: 123) points out: 'childhood is the most intensively governed sector of personal existence'. This is particularly the case in the context of children's access to knowledge of sexuality, which creates anxieties that have permeated all aspects of children's early education. It has also resulted in a social fixation with keeping children's sexuality under control and their curiosity about sexual knowledge at a distance.

Parents in our research identified a range of knowledge associated with sexuality that was considered to be developmentally inappropriate for children. This was often influenced by religious values and cultural backgrounds. For many parents, this knowledge was that which was perceived to be outside the

boundaries of heteronormative frameworks and normative sexual practices—for example, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) relationships and sexuality, 'graphic' and 'explicit' information about intimacy, sexual intercourse, vaginal births, sexual desire and eroticism, 'kinky and adventurous' sexual behavior, sexually transmitted infections, contraception, and abortion. It is important to point out that attitudes toward children's sexuality education and what that encompasses can differ across countries and across parents/guardians, who are not a homogeneous group. However, many parents/guardians do share similar conservative values around children's sexuality education, regardless of socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religiosity. Conservative attitudes toward children's sexuality education in countries like the UK, the USA, Australia, and South Africa are contrasted against more liberal attitudes in some Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. Comparative research between the USA and Europe conducted by Judith Levine (2002) indicates that in countries that have more liberal and open approaches to sexuality and sexuality education, it does not lead to social problems as perceived by many social and political conservatives.

Children, Sexuality Education, and Moral Panic

Since the 1970s, schools in developed countries have taken an increasingly active role in sex education. As we have outlined in the introduction to this chapter, this role has continued to be strictly regulated and fraught with political tensions (Connell and Elliott 2009; Corteen and Scratton 1997; Elliott 2010; Haydon 2002; Mayo 2006; Robinson 2013; Robinson and Davies 2008). Sinikka Elliott (2010, p. 194) argues that the debates around sexuality education 'are about far more than the sex education curriculum—they are fueled by and reproduce deep anxieties about childhood, sexuality, gender, marriage, and the institution of the family'. Traditionally, sexuality education was considered to be the role of parents, reinforced by the perspective that sexuality was a private matter more appropriately handled by the family. However, with increases in teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV and AIDS, governments increasingly viewed the introduction of sex education in schools for adolescents as an important economic and health initiative to try and counteract these social problems.

Sex education in schools has narrowly focused on human biology, scientific explanations of the mechanics of heterosexual sex and reproduction, and the risks associated with being sexually active, with some programs encouraging abstinence as a serious choice and discouraging young people from engag-

ing in sexual activity outside of marriage (Davies and Burns 2014; Elliott 2010; Fine and McClelland 2006; Levine 2002). Discourses of desire, gendered relationships, contraception, sexual ethics and negotiating consensual intimate relationships, and sexual identity and orientation, issues that young people consider important and relevant to their lives, continue to be either absent from many sexuality education curricula, or are only briefly addressed (Fine 1988). Political, conservative, and religious discourses have significantly influenced what is included in sexuality education curricula in primary/elementary schools, how it is taught, and at what age.

Many parents and educators perceive that sexuality education is only relevant to young people who are approaching puberty and the reproductive years (Davies and Burns 2014; Davies and Robinson 2010; Robinson 2013; Robinson and Davies 2014). In Australian research undertaken by Robinson and Jones Diaz (2006), early childhood educators generally viewed parents/guardians as the most appropriate educators of younger children about relationships and sexuality. Many perceived that sexuality education was much more relevant to high school teachers than to either early childhood educators or primary school teachers. Young children's questions of a sexual nature were often dismissed, and conversations quickly diverted to other topics. As a matter of procedure, parents were generally informed about their children asking questions of a sexual nature, so that they could address these issues with children at home.

One area related to sexuality education, which is viewed by many parents and educators to be relevant to children in early childhood education, is child protection strategies—for example, the 'You Can Say No' campaigns introduced in the 1990s in Australia, and the current Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum for young children in South Australia (Services 2008). However, child protection discourses have impacted significantly on children's early education around sexuality and relationships in both schools and the home. Early childhood educators fear the potential repercussions from parents, management bodies, and the broader community of addressing issues with children that have a sexuality focus, or could be misconstrued as such. This concern has been intensified through community fears around children's vulnerability to sexual abuse, resulting in a high level of public surveillance of services and professionals who work directly with children. Consequently, early childhood educators engage in self-regulating practices, fearing any possible breach of the socio-cultural boundaries that operate around children and sexuality knowledge. This is especially the case with male early childhood educators whose gender, sexuality, and motives for working with children are already viewed with suspicion (King 1997; Silin 1995, 1997).

The teaching philosophy of child-centered learning highlights the centrality of including 'the family' in children's early education. Consequently, there has been a strong argument that children need to learn about the diverse range of family relationships and family structures that children live in and will encounter among their peers, including same-sex and gender-diverse families (Davies and Robinson 2010). The relevance of same-sex families, if addressed, is restricted to acknowledging that some children have 'two mummies' or 'two daddies'. However, discussions of this kind have often led to widespread moral panic in the community. The *Play School* saga in Australia, which stemmed from a brief segment of less than a minute in this long-running children's television program, is one such example of moral panic. The segment featured a child with her two mothers and her friend visiting the zoo. The glimpse of the two children with the two mothers, and the inference of a same-sex relationship, resulted in a complaint from a conservative politician, which was fuelled extensively by the responses of some journalists. Similar moral panics have arisen in Australia around the use of early childhood educational resources that focus on same-sex families, and also around educational research exploring children's gendered and sexual subjectivities (Davies 2008; Robinson 2008, 2013; Taylor 2007, 2010). Moral panic, among other consequences, operates to restrict and regulate children's access to sexual knowledge, shutting down many informal conversations and formal sexuality education at school (Robinson 2013).

Sex education is generally not a compulsory component of young people's schooling in primary or secondary education in Australia. The exception is the Australian state of Victoria, in which the Victorian Department of Education policy guidelines state that sex education is compulsory for school public students from Prep to Year 10.[1] In the Australian National Curriculum version 7.4,[2] relationships and sexuality education is a focus area wherein relationships education is to take place between Foundation and Year 2, and relationships and sexuality education takes place from Years 3 to 10. The Australian National Curriculum sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes

[1] See State Government Victoria, Department of Education and Training: Victoria http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/social/physed/pages/about.aspx, accessed 12 April 2015. The Department states that: 'In Victoria, it is compulsory for government schools to provide sexuality education within the Health and Physical Education domain, including assessment and reporting against the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. The most effective sexuality education programs also take a whole-school learning approach.' This site also stipulates: 'Catholic and independent schools are welcome to use the Department's policies, training and resources. The majority of Catholic and independent schools have chosen to assess and report student achievement against the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.'

[2] See Australian Curriculum, Health and Physical Education content structure overview: http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/health-and-physical-education/content-structure, accessed 12 April, 2015.

from Kindergarten to Year 12 for schools in all states and territories. It is currently under development by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. The ways in which these curriculum documents and other Australian state/territory curriculums have been implemented varies according to teacher's perceived time constraints, exclusion from the curriculum, a lack of support in teacher training/resources, or by school management/policy, and teacher fear of adverse community reaction (Smith et al. 2010). Some parents and educators in our studies point out that they completed school with minimal information or without receiving any sexuality education at all. The fact that many young people also receive limited sexuality education at home has meant that many young people have minimal access to comprehensive critical information relevant to their health and well-being as gendered and sexual subjects. For many young people, the Internet has become the main source of sexuality education (Albury 2014; Robinson et al. 2014).

In our research, many parents/guardians, teachers, and young people point out the importance of the inclusion of comprehensive sexuality education in schooling, the need for it to begin early and to continue throughout one's schooling, and the need for it to be taught in partnership between schools and families. Comprehensive sexuality education encompasses information about: relationships and sexuality relevant to diverse sexualities; building children's and young people's understandings of respectful and ethical gendered and sexual relationships; building their sexual literacy; and developing children's and young people's sexual citizenship (Robinson 2012, 2013).

Parents' Perspectives of Children's Sexuality Education

Many parents in this research found conversations about sexuality, reproduction, and intimate relationships difficult to have with their children due to embarrassment, a lack of confidence, and feeling inadequate about their knowledge and skills about the issues. Many parents hoped to approach sexuality education in an open and honest manner with their children, contrasting, for many, with their own childhood experiences around sexuality education. However, due to the difficulties many had around approaching these issues, parents often reverted to their own learning experiences and to the approaches used by their parents, often those involving avoidances and perpetuating misinformation. A common question raised by parents was, what age is 'too young' to address sexual matters with my children? Some parents stated that they believed they needed to start this education early, particularly if they had girls, due to the over emphasis on sexuality in the media and

popular culture. However, some parents experienced further anxiety about educating their young children, as they feared being judged by others as 'bad' parents for introducing this information 'too early'. They were anxious about getting the balance 'right' between protecting 'childhood innocence' and educating their children so they can be more critically aware and informed in order to help protect themselves. This was particularly the concern of mothers, who continue to be the main purveyors of knowledge of sexuality to children in families. One mother of three children, a boy nine, and two girls six and five, stated:

> A kindy child at school informed his class on the ins and outs of sex. So I had to have this conversation way too early thanks to another parent.

The majority of parents in our research suggested that they waited for their children to ask questions about sexuality and relationship matters, rather than initiating these discussions with their children. A mother of one daughter commented: 'I think when children ask that is the time to discuss otherwise the child may not be ready'. In some cases, even when children asked questions, parents were too embarrassed to give an informed answer. There is often an assumption that if children do not ask about issues then they are not part of children's everyday concerns and are therefore considered irrelevant to the child (Surtees 2005). Our research demonstrates that children learn taboos early in relation to certain kinds of knowledge, especially around sexuality. Consequently, silence is not necessarily an indication of irrelevance, but rather can be a reflection of children's perceptions that the issues are too embarrassing to discuss with parents.

The parents in this research were positioned in a range of competing discourses about children's sexuality education. For those parents who were supportive of children's early sexuality education, the following discourses prevailed: sexuality education is especially important for girls because of the changes in their bodies around puberty (e.g. menstruation), the ways in which girls are sexualized in the media and popular culture, their vulnerabilities to sexual abuse from boys and men and to teenage pregnancy; sexuality education is important for developing children's responsibility, for counteracting risk-taking behaviors, and teaching children to stay safe; sexuality education is important to counteract misinformation from other children picked up in schoolyard conversations; sexuality education is important for teaching respect for one's self and others; sexuality is important for the development of children's sexual subjectivity and health and well-being; sexuality education at school is important because many parents don't know how to talk with their

children about the issues; and sexuality education at school provides a means through which parents can begin to address these issues at home.

Many parents were particularly concerned about the impact that the sexualization of advertising and media was having on their children, especially their daughters. The fact that this was perceived to be everywhere and something parents could not control or hide meant that providing their children with critical skills literacy skills in sexuality was considered important. The following comment by a mother of three children typified this view:

> I think it's critical that my kids have an understanding of sex and sexuality particularly for my daughters who are constantly bombarded with messages about women and beauty and the importance of being 'sexually desirable'. I want them to be able to view this information in an appropriate framework. (A single mother of three children, two girls aged 6 and 8, and a boy aged 9)

For some parents, sexuality was perceived to be a significant part of children's developing identities. Providing children with accurate information about sexuality early in their lives was considered to be critical in building their agency and contributing to and maintaining their health and well-being. A mother of an 8-year-old boy argued:

> Sexuality is such a huge (and fraught) part of our lives that it is important that kids get age-appropriate, accurate information. I believe the building of their sexuality starts early, and incorrect, unhelpful or scary information can impact on their developing sexuality negatively (self-hate, fear of expressing their sexuality etc.). I believe children having a good working knowledge of sexuality, protects them from sexual predators and risky behaviours that can develop through ignorance. I'm including knowledge of safe relationships as part of sexuality.

For those parents who were not supportive of young children's sexuality education, the discourse of childhood innocence was foremost in their arguments. A mother of two boys, ages seven and nine, stated: 'We should not scare them with the harsh realities of adult life'. This perspective reflects the constitution of sexuality as adults' knowledge and something to be feared. Further, a father of a 7-year-old boy commented:

> I believe it's too early for a child to be given sexual education as a primary student as curiosity at an early stage might lead to bigger problems. I believe they are not mature enough to grasp all aspects of sex as most of them would have virtually no feelings of lust, love or care towards the preferred partner.

This father's comments reflect a common misconception that, if children or young people are given sexual information, it will encourage them to engage in sexual practices prematurely. In these comments, children are also primarily viewed as being developmentally incapable of understandings or experiencing feelings such as desire, love, or caring for another in a way that adults do. A mother of an 11-year-old boy reiterated this point:

> I think they are too young for this. Year 7 is a good time. They are not interested in boys; they are still children.

The following discussion provides a brief glimpse of children's practices, knowledge, and understandings of love, marriage, and relationships. The discussion provides a contrasting view to those held by some parents, indicating that many young children are actively constituting themselves as gendered and sexual subjects from the discourses they have available to them in families, schooling, peers, the media, and other areas of their lives.

Children's Knowledge of Sexuality and Relationships

Children's sexual knowledge is often piecemeal and fragmented, reflecting the way that they receive information from parents, peers, schooling, popular culture, and the media. This knowledge can also reflect the stereotypes, misconceptions, and misinformation about sexuality that adults often perpetuate to protect and maintain children's 'innocence'. Children construct knowledge from the limited information they have available to them. A good example that we have used before of how children construct knowledge around issues that they are given little information about is shown in the following discussion with two 4-year-old girls (Davies and Robinson 2010):

Researcher	What is happening in this picture?
Belinda	Getting married
Researcher	Can kids get married?
Rita	No way.
Researcher	Why not?
Rita	Because they won't get children.
Belinda	They are children.
Belinda	Children can't get married, yeah because the Dad has the stuff that makes the kids.
Sophie	I know what it is called: sperm.

Belinda And the wife has the egg.
Sophie When the sperm meets the egg that turns it to an egg; the egg hatches and then the baby comes out.

Children's knowledge of human sexuality is often framed through their educational and everyday experiences observing animals, in this case, chickens. Rather than correcting children's knowledge, some parents actively support children's misinformation under the guise that it is humorous and 'cute'. As we have argued elsewhere (Davies and Robinson 2010), this would not happen in regards to children's understandings of literacy, numeracy, or other important information. The child who is considered to have 'too much' information can be viewed as inappropriate, naughty, badly parented, or as being 'at risk' of having been sexually abused.

Children are actively engaged in developing sexual and gendered subjectivities and understandings of different kinds of relationships—familial, peer, institutional, and so on. Subjectivity (i.e. the self) is constituted within discourses that we draw upon in our communications with others and produces our conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions, our sense of self and how we relate to the world. Subjectivity is also constituted through the ways in which we are gendered, racialized, classed, sexualized, geographically located, and able bodied. Subjectivities are constituted through discourses, which are historically and culturally formulated modes through which we understand knowledge, power, and the self. We understand sexuality as a historically and culturally contingent category of subjectivity and a complex signifying system founded on individual and institutional relations of power (Davies and Robinson 2010). It encompasses much more than sexual practice, and describes a complex ideological position into which one is interpellated, based partly on the culture's mapping of bodies and desires and partly on one's response to that interpellation (Davies and Robinson 2010; Somerville 2000). Despite dominant discourses of childhood that position sexuality and sexual knowledge as irrelevant, or a 'danger' to young children, from an early age, children are expected to negotiate a complex signifying system of relations wherein gender and sexuality (alongside race, ethnicity, age, size, socioeconomic status, class, ability, and location) are key categories through which both power and knowledge are played out and negotiated. These discourses are so dominant that children often mobilize this rhetoric to regulate their peers. For example, children who transgress gender norms are often the targets of some children's regulatory practices (Blaise 2009, 2010; Davies and Robinson 2010, 2013).

Children's knowledge and understanding of gender, sexuality, and relationships has an impact on how they learn to develop a skill set to negotiate respectful relationships early in life. Sexuality and access to sexual knowledge is relevant to children's awareness and understanding of their bodies and desires, impacting on their health and well-being (Davies and Robinson 2010). Children are located within a signifying system in which most socio-cultural and political practices attempt to constitute them as future heterosexual citizens whose performance of gender is normative. Within this system, heterosexuality, which is in part constituted through discourses of normative gender, is taken for granted and largely invisibilized. In this context, different expressions of both gender and sexuality become both visible, and can simultaneously draw attention to the value-laden, socio-cultural construction of heteronormative gender.

In our research, we found that children's understandings of love and intimate relationships were constructed through heteronormative markers such as marriage (Blaise 2005; Davies and Robinson 2010; Renold 2005; Robinson 2005; Robinson and Davies 2015). This perspective may be different for children in countries and states where same-sex marriage is legal, openly celebrated, and represented in the media and popular culture. Same-sex marriage is not legal in Australia, although this is increasingly being more openly challenged. Some children point out that they love and would like to marry their same-sex best friend. However, children learn that this is not socially acceptable, with other children quickly regulating such perspectives, pointing out its impossibility and sometimes referring to its illegality to reinforce the point (Davies and Robinson 2010). Interestingly, the picture of a same-sex family—two men and a baby—used with children (and their parents and teachers) to open discussions around relationships, was rarely viewed as such. The men were most frequently read as brothers, or a father and a baby-sitter, with the mother perceived to be absent, often preparing the dinner in the next room.

Six-year-old Ella's understanding of what it means to be in love is quickly understood through the discourse of marriage:

Researcher	What does it mean to be in love?
Ella	That you like someone and you really like them.
Researcher	Yeah. What else?
Ella	That they like each other and they want to marry.

For many young children in our research, marriage was the ultimate rite of passage through which love within an intimate relationship was the logical conclusion. Further, marriage signified the right for the two people in that union to touch and kiss each other. Mobilizing this perceived right, children frequently engaged in mock weddings or proclaimed that they were going to marry one of their peers, in order to be able to kiss the child that they liked. Children's knowledge of marriage and intimate relationships was solidified by their gendered experiences in wedding ceremonies, with young girls in the role of flower girl, and young boys in the role of page boy. A flower girl is traditionally a young girl who carries flowers or scatters them in front of a bride at a wedding, and a page boy is traditionally a ring bearer, who walks down the aisle with the flower girl and delivers the rings to the groom. Young children also considered marriage as the initial point of the procedure of reproduction and constructing a family. Li, a 5-year-old girl, shared her observations of an image of a girl and boy in a mock wedding scenario:

Li	They're gonna get married and go on a honeymoon.
Researcher	What else happens when you get married? What happens when you get back from the honeymoon?
Li	A baby starts to grow.

For Li, the 'honeymoon' was considered to be the time and place during which the conception of a baby occurred; it was the second step after the wedding that was pivotal to the construction of family (Robinson and Davies 2015). Similarly, Oliver, a 5-year-old boy, also reiterated the dominant association between discourses of marriage and reproduction:

Researcher	Why do you think grownups get married?
Oliver	To have kids.

Just as marriage is configured as the logical conclusion to being in love, it also serves as the rite of passage that many children understand as 'necessary' to the process of having children. This discourse is so powerful that it can take precedence over and eclipse children's own experiences of their conception and birth outside marriage (Robinson and Davies 2010). Children take up, resist, dispute, or transform enculturating influences or normalizing discourses, and are active agents in the constitution of their subjectivities. Children in our research expressed learning about marriage from relationships they observed in their daily lives, and from peers, children's literature, popular culture, and television programs.

Children were able to distinguish between 'special' relationships and friendships, and many children interviewed were able to describe their understanding and experience of loving one or more of their peers, through discourses of love, romance, and desire usually reserved for older adolescents and adults. Tom, a boy aged 8 years, commented about 'falling in love' with his peer, Emma, at school:

Researcher	Do you think that you love Emma?
Tom	Yes I do.
Researcher	How do you know? How do you know that you love Emma?
Tom	She's—I don't know. I don't really know.
Researcher	Does it make you feel different from other people?
Tom	Yeah. When I wasn't with her, I felt like I have nothing else to do in my life except football.
Researcher	Except football?
Tom	Yeah, but then I met Emma and now my heart is stitched back up for some reason.

Tom is a little lost for words to describe his feelings for his school peer, Emma, but is very clear that he loves her. While his life was previously consumed with football, Tom speaks about Emma as if there was an absence in his life, which she fulfills, to the extent that he describes his heart as having been repaired with her in his life. Children in our research were very familiar with the discourses of (heteronormative) romantic love through which to understand, or make sense of, their own feelings and desires. While children's feelings for each other are often dismissed as 'cute' or humorous, children in this research articulated strong feelings of love and desire, and relationships that were significant for them. Children's understandings of being in love and their desire were frequently based on the physical appearance of their peers, similar likes and interests, as well as diverse likes and interests that were most frequently gendered. So too were they concerned about how long they had known the person; the amount of time they spent together during recess and lunch at school; whether that person made them feel good, happy, and special through compliments and other kind acts; and if they were able to effectively communicate with each other. Children also pointed out that love could also be one way, and that sometimes the attentions they showed others were not returned. Children frequently expressed strong, often moralistic, ideas about intimate relationships and what they understood as appropriate or inappropriate behavior. Some children indicated that while there were appropriate places to kiss—generally in private, and preferably the bedroom—there were also inappropriate places to kiss such as the workplace or other places visible in the public domain.

Children shared their experiences in which they learned about love and relationships at school, though this information and knowledge was generally shared through the hidden curriculum—that is, on the playground, or conversations that took place outside of children's daily lessons. The hidden curriculum refers to the unwritten, unofficial, and frequently unintended lessons, values, and perspectives that students learn in school (Giroux and Purpel 1983). The curriculum is described as 'hidden' because it is usually unacknowledged or unexamined by students, educators, and the wider community and may uphold the status quo. Tom, an 8-year-old boy, shared his thoughts about love, gleaned from school:

Tom	Love is when two—a girl and a boy meet and share their feelings about each other.
Researcher	How do you know that? Where did you get that information from?
Tom	I just learned it from school.
Researcher	Most of your information comes from what you learn from school?
Tom	No, my friends. When Miss talks about love—her boyfriend or something. [And] my friends talking, so, I pick it up.

Tom's understanding of love is articulated through heterosexual relations—a factor he adds to clarify his initial description of 'two' [people] coming together. For Tom, love also involves good communication, as these people come together to 'share their feelings about each other'. Significantly, Tom's information and knowledge about love, comes from school, but not through the formal curriculum, but rather, it is information shared in conversation with his peers, or informal conversation with his classroom teacher, who has referred to her own heterosexual relationship. Tom, like other children, explained the way that information about intimate relationships circulates informally within the school environment.

Similarly, Melanie, an 8-year-old girl, whose interview took place with her father present, outlines her thoughts about intimate relationships, love, and shares her perspective about learning this information at school as part of the formal curriculum. The formal school curriculum refers to the courses, lessons, and learning activities students participate in, as well as the knowledge and skills educators intentionally teach to students:

Researcher	So do you ever learn these things at school?
Melanie	No.
Researcher	No. Do you think that you should?
Melanie	Yes.
Researcher	Why do you think that?
Melanie	Well actually kind of yes and kind of no. Yes because it's a thing that we need to know pretty much, and no because some children find it pretty disturbing.
Researcher	Right, okay. So …
Melanie's father	Disturbing or embarrassing?
Melanie	A mixture of both.
Melanie's father	Mixture of both.
Researcher	A mixture of both. So how do you know that they're embarrassed by it?
Melanie	It's just that sometimes children just don't like to talk about it, even if they have done it before, they just don't talk about it at all.
Researcher	Do you get embarrassed by it?
Melanie	No.

While Melanie would like to learn about sexuality education as part of the school curriculum, she articulates the taboo that many children have already learnt about discussing sexuality. Her comment that even if children have discussed sexuality before, it is still difficult and 'disturbing' for them to speak about it again because of the socio-cultural and political force of this taboo, especially at school in a classroom setting. Melanie's father's interjection in the discussion introduces the concept of embarrassment as an issue for some children, but not her. Melanie, like other children in this research, also expressed that children should learn about same-sex relationships and family diversity, because as Melanie stated: 'It's that it [same-sex relationships] can happen and it's not a bad thing if it does happen'.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered an overview of the way that dominant discourses of childhood, innocence, and sexuality perpetuate and reinforce the belief that sexuality education is either irrelevant or inappropriate to children. However, this research demonstrates children's understandings of sexuality are largely framed through discourses of heteronormative gendered relationships, and that love, desire, and relationships are very much part of their daily interactions with peers. Children are often building their own knowledge around

sexuality from the bits and pieces of information they get from others. Much of this knowledge is based on misinformation and stereotypes that they can carry through into their adolescence and early adulthood. What this research also highlighted is that one can get through childhood and adolescence without any comprehensive sexuality education in the home or in schools. The taboos around sexuality are learnt early and the conversations that parents often plan to have with their children when they get older are already jeopardized as a result. Sexuality education in the early years is important: for building children's literacy around sexuality; to increase their confidence to explore different ways of expressing their gender and sexuality; to challenge peer pressure; to take responsibility for their decisions and actions; to develop critical thinking essential for decision-making; and to develop awareness of ethical relationships in life. These are all key elements of developing sexual citizenship and assuring young people have the greatest chance of maintaining their health and well-being as sexual subjects.

Lesson Plan

Teaching Ethical Relationships to Young Children

Age Group Children aged 5–8 years. This method and approach can also be used with younger children in early childhood settings.

Lesson Focus

This lesson focuses on building knowledge and understandings of ethical and respectful relationships early in children's lives. Given the prevalence of bullying, harassment, and violence experienced on the basis of gender and/or sexuality and in intimate relationships in adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood, early intervention is required so that children are equipped with the skill sets, knowledge, and understandings required to maintain their health and well-being, and that of others around them.

Objectives

1. To develop knowledge and understanding about respect and ethical relationships;
2. To develop children's skills around critical reflection in relation to ethical relationships of a gendered and sexual nature;
3. To develop children's gender and sexual literacy.

Method

Activity 1

Respect (A whole group conversation)

1. What does respect mean?
2. Tell me about a time that you were respectful to someone?
3. Tell me about a time you were disrespectful to someone?
4. Why do you think people are disrespectful to others?
5. To be respectful, what do we need to do and think about?

Activity 2

Select five different images from popular culture (e.g. media advertising in newspapers, magazine, television, and online), and children's literature (fairy tales etc.) that depict images of gendered and intimate relationships. For example, a picture of two men or two women and a baby, a romantic relationship between characters in a fairy tale, a picture of children kissing (often found in greeting card shops), and children in mock weddings (often found in greeting card shops).

Depending on the age of the children, the size of the group, and how many educational professionals are available, either keep children in a whole group or break them into different groups of about four or five children. If broken into groups, give each group a copy of the five pictures and ask the children to think about what is happening in each of the pictures. If there are a few educational professionals working with the groups, they can show the children the pictures and ask the children what they think is happening in the pictures.

If working with the whole group, the teacher can show each of the pictures and ask the children what they think is happening in the pictures.

The children's answers will direct the conversation but have some general questions planned that can help direct the conversation into areas you want children to discuss and think about.

Example
Children's mock wedding photo

Sample Questions

1. What do you think is happening in the picture?
2. Can children get married? Why not?
3. Why do people get married?
4. Can two men get married? Why not?
5. Can two women get married? Why not?
6. Where did you get your information about marriage?
7. Does anyone here want to get married? Why? Why not?
8. How can two people who love each other show respect for each other?

Activity 3

Whole Group Activity Critical reflection

Scenario 1 Two boys chase a girl that they like. When they catch her, she falls down. The two boys sit on her and begin to kiss her. The young girl is obviously upset, struggles to get away, but the two boys are stronger than her. The boys get up and run away. The girl tells her mother when she gets home. Her mother is angry and tells the teacher of the two boys about the incident.

Issues to discuss:

1. Why did the boys do that to the girl? How do you think they feel?
2. How do you think the girl feels about what the boys did?
3. How do you think you might feel in this situation?
4. Who is the more powerful in this situation? The boys or the girl?
5. What does consent mean?
6. What might be a better way to show someone that you like them?

Scenario 2 Two girls chase a boy that they like. When they catch him he falls down. The two girls sit on him and begin to kiss him. The young boy is obviously upset, struggles to get away, but the two girls are stronger than him. The girls get up and run away. The boy tells his mother when he gets home. His mother is angry and tells the teacher of the two girls about the incident.

1. What different issues arise in this scenario compared to the previous scenario?
2. How do you think the boy feels about what the girls did?
3. How is power operating in this situation? Is it different from the first scenario?
4. How do you think the teacher should handle this situation?

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12

Preschool Sexuality Education?!

Karin A. Martin and Lacey Bobier

Sexuality education in early childhood, whether delivered by parents or preschools, is often not offered via a formal, planned conversation or program. Rather, sexuality education is more often delivered via everyday socialization as parents, caregivers, and teachers answer questions, manage behavior, or encounter teachable moments. In other words, young children are already getting sexual education; it is just that adults often do not think of it as such. However, ignoring a child's behavior, answering or dodging a child's question about a sexual topic, or turning off (or not) the television in response to sexual material are all sexual education for preschoolers. The question becomes how might we more consciously deliver thoughtful messages about sexuality to young children in constructive ways in preschool.

This chapter will address this question through an examination of three aspects of sexuality education in early child care and education. First, it will critically examine formal sexuality education for preschoolers. Second, and more importantly, the chapter will review what we know from the small body of research that examines sexuality in child care and preschool. Third, the

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chapter will examine the hidden curriculums of gender and heteronormativity that shape sexuality education in preschools and child care centers. Finally, we imagine what lessons in sexuality education might look like as we draw from what we know about current practices and research. Throughout, we suggest that children already receive sexuality education through informal everyday interactions in preschool. Strengthening this informal system of education and not allowing "danger-only" approaches to define preschool sexuality education are key to its improvement.

Before turning to these areas, however, we must acknowledge two factors that shape the research on early childhood sexuality. First, in the USA, preschool and child care are provided in a hodge-podge of settings: expensive private preschools; large national chains and for-profit child care centers; smaller religious preschools; public preschool programs that function as part of a public school system; small group, in-home preschools; and everything in between. This patchwork of early child care and education[1] offer a diverse group of contexts in which sexuality education is delivered.

Second and more importantly, researchers know little about early childhood sexuality and sex education in preschool, especially when compared to adolescence. The key obstacle to sexuality education and sexuality research with young children is the cultural discourse of children as asexual. Through the image of the romantic child from the eighteenth century, children are constructed as pure and innocent and inherently without sexuality. Knowledge about sexuality in children makes them "knowing," not innocent, and either dangerous or damaged (Higennot 1998; Robinson 2013). Research on children and sexuality is complicated by methodological and political issues grounded in these discourses. Parents and institutional review boards limit what research can be done, as childhood sexuality is both developmentally and politically sensitive in the USA.

Nonetheless, investigating early childhood sexuality and possibilities for sexuality education are important because children live in a world saturated with sexuality. Even young children are likely to encounter a variety of sexual information and behavior (from the mundane to the abusive) through interactions with their family, peers, communities, and the media (APA 2007; Martin and Kazyak 2009). Children need tools to navigate these waters. Early childhood sexuality education can offer a language for understanding a sexually saturated culture; for reporting abuse; and for developing a foundation for a lifelong positive experience with one's own sexuality.

[1] Because of the patchwork nature of caring for and educating children, I use the terms child care, preschool, and early child care and education interchangeably throughout the chapter.

Sex Education Curriculums for Preschoolers?

SIECUS Guidelines

There are virtually no preschool sexuality education curriculums as such. However, the Sexuality and Information Education Council of the United State (SIECUS) provides "Right from the Start Guidelines for Sexuality Issues: Birth to Five Years" (Early Childhood Education Task Force 1998). These SIECUS guidelines for early childhood sexuality education place sexual development within the context of six key concepts including: human development; relationships; personal skills; behaviors; health; and society and culture. Together, these concepts cover topics such as friendships, feelings, communication, body appreciation, sexual curiosity, self-pleasuring, sexual abuse prevention, gender roles, diversity, and equity. Though some of these subjects appear more directly related to sexuality than others, the guiding belief is that sexuality is framed by all other aspects of human development, and thus must be understood in relation to them (e.g. problem solving and relationships). Concerning sexuality more directly, the SIECUS guidelines details key messages to communicate to children (and how caregivers can implement them) in reference to: how the body works, where babies come from, the five senses, body appreciation, love and affection, masturbation and self-pleasuring, sexual curiosity, hygiene, sexual abuse prevention, and gender roles. Again, these guidelines aim to avoid stigmatization of sexuality and relate it to all other components of childhood experience. Guidelines may erase the separation between general body experiences and "sexual" body experiences, thus locating all embodied experiences on a continuum. For instance, early childhood education is intertwined with learning body management (i.e. learning about oneself as an embodied being) and gendered bodily comportment (Martin 1998). Furthermore, in lessons on friendship and relationships, setting boundaries, and other areas sexuality can be included to, again, highlight the idea of a continuum rather than distinction.

SIECUS explains that, though parents are the primary educators of children, child care centers must construct and maintain policies that are used to guide reactions to children's questions and behaviors as well as the information given by and actions of the caregivers. These policies and their underlying values must be communicated with the parents. While caregivers should respond to children's questions, information should be incorporated into everyday interactions and framed by positive messages so as to underscore the normality and healthfulness concerning bodies and sexuality. Guidelines are delineated by age; the categories are separated by infancy, preschool children, and older preschool children. All messages are to support a sense of diverse experiences so as not to limit children's understanding or growth.

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

While SIECUS provides these broad guidelines, the other primary type of sexuality education curriculum for young children focuses much more specifically on child sexual abuse prevention. Child sexual abuse prevention curriculums date back to the late 1970s, and they proliferated throughout the 1980s. Child sexual abuse prevention is composed of a multitude of programs and strategies that are designed to educate children about child sexual abuse. Prevention efforts aimed at children include teaching the concepts of good and bad touch; personal boundaries (both the child's and others'); what "bad secrets" are; the child's ability to assert him/herself by saying no to unwanted touching; and refraining from being the perpetrator of such unwanted touching (PCAR and NSVRC 2011). These curricula also variously warn children against someone touching or asking to touch the child's genitals, someone trying to draw the child into a car, lure the child with rewards, and taking pictures of the child's genitalia (Deblinger et al. 2010). Some programs, as suggested by the SIECUS guidelines, recommend teaching accurate anatomical names for genitalia as a strategy for prevention (PCAR and NSVRC 2011). These programs suggest proper names will help children be able to communicate better about unwanted touching, presumably from adults.

Many different messages and types of information about abuse prevention are taught to children through the use of picture books, stories, videos, teddy bears, "the underwear rule" (children should not be touched by others and should not touch others anyplace that is normally covered by underwear), and other developmentally appropriate visuals and interactives (Bobier and Martin 2016). Research finds that programs are most effective when they are developmentally appropriate (McLeod and Wright 1996; Hulsey 1997). Developmentally appropriate typically means in small groups, with opportunities for children to ask questions, in short periods, with information and/or involvement opportunities provided to parents, and props and interactive activities for engaging young children (McLeod and Wright 1996).

The effectiveness of child sexual abuse prevention programs has been measured in terms of how much information the child gains and retains (Gilbert 1988; de Young 1988). One early study on the good touch/bad touch strategy found that children (elementary school age and younger) found the concepts difficult to grasp and retain (deYoung 1988). Other research suggests programs are most effective when there are a few simple concepts, appropriate length and style, and a balance between negative and positive messages about touch and feelings (McLeod and Wright 1996). Research on the effectiveness of various strategies of sexual abuse prevention in early childhood is hindered by the same problems that plague all research on early childhood sexuality.

It is difficult to get access to children and parents about these issues because of reasonable developmental and human subjects concerns as well as because of excessive concerns, often based in the assumption of protecting the asexuality of children. The idealized notion of children as asexual implies that sex education is irrelevant at this age. At the same time, the concern that introducing the topic of sexuality results in children's heightened engagement with it suggests that children already have latent sexual potential that can be triggered. This paradox makes research and intervention into problems like child sexual abuse difficult. Similarly, Angelides (2004) suggests that "Rigorous attempts to expose the reality and dynamics of child sexual abuse have been aided, if not in part made possible, by equally rigorous attempts to conceal, repress, or ignore the reality and dynamics of child sexuality" (p. 142). This desexualization of childhood results in disempowerment.

Much of the preschool sexuality education that exists as formal curricula is based in child sexual abuse prevention, rather than relying on an approach that draws on the breadth of "healthy sexuality" (such as that described by SIECUS). It is therefore helpful to consider how we can improve education and move away from a purely sexual abuse/sexual danger approach.

First, we might question whether such programs should be aimed at sexual abuse prevention. In other words, can very young children employ these lessons, especially in adult–child interactions where there are large power differentials? While adults can educate children to seek assistance to end abuse, and teach children that abuse is not their fault, we cannot expect children to prevent it. Adults are responsible for child sexual abuse prevention.

Second, with their focus on sexual abuse prevention, it is important that such programs balance positive aspects of bodies, touch, feelings, and relationships. Children should not leave these programs only with a view of these as dangerous, confusing, or bad. In fact, teaching general information about bodies, feelings, and relationships, much as in the SIECUS model, may give children the tools, language, and foundation to understand the difficult concepts of child sexual abuse as well.

Third, rather than focusing on good touch/bad touch, SIECUS recommends that caregivers present sexual abuse prevention within the context of appropriate relationships and individual comfort. By highlighting the situation, rather than the action, children are better able to understand the difference between interactions with doctors or other adults, and do not associate a sense of "badness" with genitalia and sexual behaviors.

Fourth, we need to better understand what calls for "developmentally appropriate" sexuality education mean. They meld together both the idea that young children do not have the capacity to process certain kinds of information or to

focus for long periods of time while sitting and the idea that young children should not learn about bodies and sexuality because they are "asexual." We need more research on how to best communicate information about sexuality to children in ways they can understand it. Martin and Torres' (2014) research suggests that what is commonly understood as developmentally appropriate may not always work. Children in their study misunderstood pictures meant to inform in developmentally appropriate ways. For example, a picture that shows a pregnant woman's belly with a cut away to see an upside down smiling baby inside was understood to be a window that the baby was looking out of. Children sometimes could not cognitively understand the representation. Another example from Martin and Torres' study, however, suggests the ways in which concerns about what is "developmentally appropriate" are about both cognitive ability and "protecting" children from sexuality. Also misunderstood frequently in Martin and Torres' study was a picture meant to describe that babies come from both parents, from egg and sperm. The picture showed a man and a woman each holding the side of a construction paper cut-out of a heart. Scissors and paper were on the table. The text said, "part of you came from Mommy and part of you from Daddy." The children who read this book asked questions like "what are the scissor for?" or "why did they need paper?" This kind of "developmentally appropriate" material obfuscates and confuses children rather than teaches them. In thinking about preschool sexuality education, we must think carefully about what scholars, teachers, and parents mean by "developmentally appropriate."

In sum, formal sexuality education in the preschool setting is different from K–12 education in that it is virtually non-existent. To the extent it does exist, it focuses on child sexual abuse prevention. But the potential for building sexuality education curricula beyond abuse prevention is enormous and necessary. As we see below, preschool teachers report managing much sexual (or sexual-like) behavior among their students, likely even more than teachers of older children (Davies et al. 2000). While there may not be much formal sexual education in preschool, there is much informal sexual education. Preschool teachers and early child care providers need tools, like those suggested by SIECUS, for providing such education. Re-thinking preschool sex education means reinventing practices and curricula to integrate everyday "sexual" events into pedagogical practices of preschool.

Teachable Moments: Sexuality in Preschool and Child Care

Most children also learn about sexuality in early child care and education settings not through formal curriculums but in micro, local, and informal interactions. Most of this learning happens, as it does with parents, through everyday

interactions that happen spontaneously between children and between children and adults. A small body of research examines sexuality in child care and preschool and caregivers' responses to it. This body of research offers some insight into what and how young children learn about sexuality. Much of this research focuses on children's behavior rather than knowledge and attitudes. The narrow focus on behavior circumvents our understanding of the meaning of such behaviors for children. For brevity's sake, we refer throughout this chapter to children's "sexual behavior." However, a more accurate term might be "sexual-like behavior." Such labeling is filtered through the lenses of adults, who designate what is and is not considered to be sexual. While there is much evidence that some "sexual behavior" in children is common and developmentally expected, "the intentions and motivations for these behaviors may or may not be related to sexual gratification or sexual stimulation" (Chaffin et al. 2008, p. 200). In other words, actions and behaviors which adults may understand as sexual may not have the same meanings or uses for young children. A large research literature suggests that children's sexual-like behaviors may be related to a range of things from play to anxiety to imitation to curiosity. So, as we discuss children's sexual behavior in early child care and education settings and the opportunities for children's sexuality education to emerge from these, we recognize that adults and children may understand and experience these behaviors differently.

The existing research about children's sexual behaviors in early child care and education settings suggests that such behaviors are different than in the home. Evidence for this comes from studies comparing parents' and teachers' ratings on the Child Sexual Behavior Inventory (a check list of "sexual" behaviors and their frequency) that find low correlation (Friedrich and Trane 2002). Furthermore, the environment for learning about sexuality is different in preschools than in the home, primarily because child care centers and preschools provide extensive peer contact for young children (Hornor 2004). While children surely have some peer contact at home with siblings, cousins, and neighbors, these are limited compared to daily encounters with multiple unrelated peers in child care or preschool. Also, research examining children's sexual education at home focuses nearly exclusively on adult–child interactions (Martin 2009; Martin and Luke 2010; Martin and Torres 2014). Greater access to peers likely changes the kinds of sexual information and behavior that children encounter. It may also change the quantity. With the exception of one study (Larsson and Svedin 2002), preschool teachers are more likely than parents to report that sexual behavior is fairly common among young children (de Graaf and Rademakers 2006; Lopez Sanchez et al. 2002; Phipps-Yonas et al. 1993). Because such activities are, to a certain extent, normalized for teachers, parents and teachers are likely to have different ideas as to what

is and is not sexual. Lack of exposure to these relatively common behaviors may contribute to parents' strong reactions to these occurrences. These reactions often draw on the logic of the asexuality of children, thus marking these behaviors as deviant. Considering these events to be exceptional may allow adults to maintain a false sense of the asexuality of childhood. The reactions of peers, teachers, and parents to children's sexual behavior are then a conduit for learning about the meanings of those sorts of behaviors.

Little of the research about sexuality in child care and preschool has been conducted in the USA, but the research from northern European countries suggests that preschool may provide a unique setting for sexuality education as sexual behavior among children *is* commonly reported. A study from the UK asked preschool teachers what kinds of sexual behaviors they had observed. Teachers reported that the behavior they most commonly observed was "a child simulating intercourse with another child" (Davies et al. 2000, p. 1334). A study from Sweden also found that the "most common game" was to "explore other children" and the second most common were "games simulating sexual activity" (Lindblad et al. 1995). Teachers and caregivers in these studies generally understood children's sexual behaviors as ordinary. In another Swedish study, the majority of parents (88 %) and even more teachers (97 %) believed sexual curiosity and play was normal in children (Larsson and Svedin 2002). These teachers reported that "sexual play should be allowed as long as the children do not harm themselves or others in play" (Larsson and Svedin 2002, p. 261).

Despite this general acceptance of sexual behavior among teachers and caregivers in the northern European studies, there remained concern among teachers about children's sexuality and how to manage it, intervene in it, and to teach children from it. These teachers and caregivers were generally concerned about sexual behaviors that were relatively uncommon (e.g. unclothed oral–genital or genital–genital contact). Their concerns revealed their fear that children involved in these behaviors may have seen something "inappropriate" or been subject to sexual abuse (Davies et al. 2000, p. 1338). Again, this suggests that sexual behavior in children typically signals (sometimes accurately and sometimes not) danger to adults. Finally, it is important to note that culture plays a role. It is unclear if these many findings from Northern European countries translate to the US context (Sandnabba et al. 2003). We know that the research on parents' sexuality education and understanding of childhood sexuality suggest somewhat different approaches and understandings across these cultures (Larsson 2000; Schalet 2011).

Research from the US context is more mixed. Some studies from the 1990s in the USA find more ambivalence and uncertainty among teachers and caregivers who are described as "confused about what happens among youngsters

in their care as well as about how, if at all, they should intervene" (Phipps-Yonas et al. 1993, p. 5). More recently, Martin (2014) finds that while parents often responded to sexual behavior among children in child care using a sexual abuse frame (taking children to the doctor, calling licensing, calling police), child care providers typically responded to those same behaviors the same way that they would to any other type of "misbehavior" (biting, hitting, etc.). That is, "providers stopped the behavior if they saw children involved in it, told them 'that type of play was not allowed,' either sent the children to the director or reported the incident to the director, and wrote an 'incident report' with a copy for parents or talked with the parents about the incident" (Martin 2014, p. 1643). These routine practices, along with increased supervision, managed all "inappropriate" behaviors in child care whether they were sexual or not.

However, Martin (2014) also finds two aspects of child care providers' responses that are unique to sexual misbehavior. First, providers emphasized privacy when talking about bodies with young children. "Second, on a few occasions, parents' angry reactions to an incident caused providers to see a behavior as unusual misbehavior. In these cases they sometimes offered explanations to parents that 'this doesn't usually happen here' or apologies to parents." (p. 1643). Providers rarely apologized for a child hitting or biting. In this way, sexual misbehavior was different from other sorts of misbehavior. It required teachers to account for its most extreme forms.

As the above review of the research may begin to suggest, despite generally responding to sexual behavior and talk among children as if it is ordinary, caregivers and teachers in preschool still classify a wide range of the behavior as misbehavior and, more importantly, struggle with determining if/when some behavior is concerning or harmful, and struggle with navigating parents' reactions to their management of such behavior (Martin 2014; Davies et al. 2000). All of these issues have implications for what children are likely learning about sexuality in preschool and child care.

Hidden Curriculums: Gender and Heteronormativity

Alongside formal curriculums and teachable moments, "hidden curriculums" permeate all schooling, and that is especially true for sexuality in preschool. Hidden curriculums are covert, implicit lessons schools teach, often about social status and for the purpose of social control (Giroux and Purpel 1983; Jackson 1968). Gender is routinely a hidden curriculum in schools and, in preschool, gender is an embodied hidden curriculum (Martin 1998). That is, children

are taught how girls and boys are supposed to behave physically, how they are supposed to use their bodies. We hypothesize that informal sexual education in early child care and education settings is likely gendered. We know that parents' sexual socialization of young children is gendered (Martin and Luke 2010). In particular, mothers discuss certain topics with daughters and no topics are reserved only for discussion with sons. Topics that mothers discuss with girls include relationships, the workings of reproductive bodies, and moral issues around sexuality. The subjects mothers address to girls indicate that a sexual double standard, wherein female sexuality is linked to relationships and morality, may already be at play in early childhood. The research suggests that "[e]arly childhood gender socialization produces differences in boys' and girls' daily social worlds (e.g. play, media consumption) that combine with a view of young children as primarily asexual, and with a cultural double standard about sexuality for men and women" (p. 62). These social phenomena together begin to construct gendered sexuality in early childhood as children begin to learn of the different expectations for love, marriage, and bodies that are imposed upon girls and boys (Martin and Luke 2010).

We hypothesize that the same sorts of gendered meanings of sexuality may also be conveyed in the hidden curriculums of gender. While we need much more research to investigate the intersection of a hidden curriculum of gender and informal sexuality education in preschool and child care, some research is suggestive. First, there is a vast body of research on the role of (pre)schools in constructing gender in many ways that cannot be reviewed here (see, for just a few examples, Best 1983; Jordan and Cowan 1995; Martin 1998; Thorne 1993). More specifically, however, we can see some indications of messages like those that parents provide being delivered in preschools. For example, Martin (1998) finds that girls are already being disciplined (Foucault 1979) to be more modest—to sit like a lady, to keep one's skirt down, not to reveal one's underwear. Similarly, other work with early elementary school-aged children also provides some evidence that informal sexual education at school is also gendered (Best 1983; Holford et al. 2013). Sexuality and gender are deeply intertwined, and thus education about one also conveys something about the other. Given that heteronormativity relies on particular scripts for men and women. Sexuality is, thus, read through one's femininity or masculinity (or lack thereof). Thus, when girls are taught to be modest and vigilant in monitoring their bodies, this may also communicate that women are less sexual than men (more modest) and that their bodies and sexuality must be surveilled and controlled. Such messages early on may contribute to the compromised sexual subjectivity (a feeling of control over and ability to experience pleasure in one's body and sexuality) observed in/demonstrated by adolescent girls and women.

Further, with regard to sexuality, gendered messages are woven together with heteronormative ones. To be a girl is to be encouraged to engage with discourses and play about love, marriage, and babies. Heteronormativity pervades early childhood sexuality education; it permeates most of the information supplied by parents (Martin 2009) and the media (Martin and Kazyak 2009). Heteronormativity is the bundle of ways in which heterosexuality is taken for granted as normal, ordinary, mundane, expected, and unremarkable. Heteronormativity includes the assumption that all children are (will be) heterosexual. Thus, talk with children about romantic and adult relationships often includes references to romantic love and marriage that signify heterosexuality only and a particular gender relation within that (Martin 2009). Heteronormativity is also deeply embedded in discussions about families, pregnancy, and birth whether these discussions include directly sexual/reproductive topics or not (Martin and Torres 2014).

While most of this research comes from parents (Martin 2009; Martin and Luke 2010; Geasler et al. 1995), there is reason to think that early child care and education settings are also ripe with these gendered and heteronormative discourses. These discourses are part of the informal set of interactions (hidden curriculums) that compromise sexual education in preschool. Again, we need much more research, but anecdotes and our own hours of observations in preschools suggest that heteronormativity is also part and parcel of many day-to-day interactions in preschool and deliver information about sexuality to children. These discourses of gender and heteronormativity are part of what sexuality education looks like for preschoolers. For example, some preschools have "prop boxes" that they rotate through classrooms for kids to use to engage in dramatic and pretend play. These boxes are often gendered and heteronormative. We have seen wedding prop boxes, princess/knight prop boxes, and new baby prop boxes. None of these would require a gendered, heteronormative play, but as children and teachers draw from (rather than challenge) wider cultural discourses, they most often reflect, enhance, and deepen heteronormative and gender normative themes. Preschools also teach heteronormativity through other lessons. We know of one preschool that taught that the letters "Q" and "U" always go together by holding a pretend wedding to celebrate the "marriage" of "Q" and "U" where the boys were one letter and the girls the other. Valentine's Day coloring pages of a "girl" heart (distinguished by eyelashes, a bow, and heels on its stick legs) and a "boy" heart (with a bowtie and boots) holding hands also make love heteronormative, as do the many, many other cultural artifacts (books, posters, stories, songs, and phrases like "moms and dads") that make their way into preschool classrooms. These artifacts are part of the daily sexual education practices of preschools and child care.

Finally, early child care and education settings engage with gendered and heteronormative notions of romantic love by drawing on media as well. This is particularly true as preschools make use of children's popular culture. Ask any teacher of 3- and 4-year-old girls about how much the mass Disney princess culture infuses their classrooms, and they will regale you with descriptions of 3-year-old girls branded with princesses and pink. While some preschools (especially those with particular methods like Montessori and Waldorf) may restrict such popular culture from parts of the preschool, many, many more find themselves engaging it as children wear shirts, bring toys (or schools provide toys from community donations), carry backpacks, have Halloween costumes, and much more that are part of this gendered mass children's culture. Some preschools, especially for "special" occasions, and in lower quality centers, frequently watch videos. Children, if they have not already been exposed to these at home, learn from them in preschool. In many of these G-rated films, hetero-romantic love drives the plot or is occasionally a secondary plot. In these films, hetero-romantic love relationships are portrayed as powerful and exceptional, even magical and transformative (Martin and Kazyak 2009). These heterosexual relationships marketed to children are not ordinary, but are marked as special as they are accompanied by soaring music, romantic, gazing eye contact, and images of sparks, swirls, and fireworks. All other relationships, including friends and family, are depicted as less exceptional, less exciting, and less important than romantic ones. These movies also have much sexual content depicted through what Martin and Kazyak (2009) call "heterosexiness." A gendered sexuality is depicted through the differences between men and women's bodies, the sexual allure of wiggly, skinny, skin-revealing women (especially in musical numbers), and the male gaze. These films are littered with sexual jokes and innuendos, as well as tantalizing sequences in which feminine bodies are portrayed as desirable, used to gain male attention, and eagerly consumed by men (Martin and Kazyak 2009). We do not have much research on what children take away from these movies nor what preschool teachers do to help children process these images. (In our observation, they usually simply ask children if they liked the movie or what they liked as these movies are shown as "break" from preschool and are not understood as something to be processed.)

Lesson Plan

So how might we imagine teaching a sexuality education curriculum to children in early child care and education settings? While there is not a robust literature to instruct us, the literature cited earlier lends some guidance. First, SIECUS can provide guidance and topics. It suggests children in preschool

should begin to learn the basic, developmentally appropriate information about how the body works, where babies come from, hygiene, sexual abuse prevention, gender roles, and to learn to appreciate their own bodies and to understand love and affection. This gives all educators a wide variety of topics to begin with. Second, the research on developmentally appropriate sexual abuse prevention emphasizes that early learning curricula should be interactive with lots of opportunities to ask questions, visual or play-like, short, and involve parents. Third, we also know that much early learning about sexuality is incorporated into day-to-day teachable moments. Structuring lessons that mimic other sorts of learning that children do in preschool and that draw on familiar routines will also make it easier to deliver content and allow children to engage in the topics with the same comfort and ease that they do with other topics. Fourth, the above review suggests that any introduction of sexuality into the curriculum will cause great anxiety for parents. Educators must work with parents to reveal the ways in which such material is already there and being learned without any adult guidance and what is to be gained for a long-term, healthy, bodily sense of well-being from such an introduction. We propose the following lesson plan based on these four premises.

We suggest using "circle time" an ordinary event in many preschools—to conduct sexuality education lessons. Circle time typically has a routine—an open and closing song, a daily story, or calendar. Embedded in circle time is often a short lesson—about friendship or dinosaurs or weather or many, many other things. These lessons are sometimes facilitated with a book, picture, story, music, or some other artifact. Teachers use these artifacts to get children talking, answering questions, asking questions, and developing their verbal and social confidence. This same structure can work for sexuality education.

Teachers might structure a series of lessons over several weeks around a series of words (e.g. kiss, love, marriage, boys, and girls). For example, getting young children to talk about the word love or the word kiss can facilitate beginning conversations that lay the ground work for many of the topics that SIECUS recommends. For example, the teacher presents the word "kiss" and asks what it means. She would then show a picture of a mother kissing a baby and then ask for more discussion. She might ask if this is the only kind of kiss there is. She might show a picture of adults kissing or ask who else gives kisses beside parents and children. She might ask the children if they ever do not like to be kissed. The discussion could then be developed into one about affection, boundaries, good touch/bad touch, and how and when we like affection and when it is wanted and unwanted. Depending on children's responses, the group might also discuss if boys and girls their age kiss (cooties and other games teachers may or may not be aware of; Holford et al. 2013; Thorne 1993), if boys can kiss boys and girls kiss girls; what other

ways people show affection (hugging, holding hands, snuggling, etc.). Young children already talk about these things and make meaning out of kissing (see Holford et al. 2013; Thorne 1993). Of course, our fourth premise above applies—much adult/parent education and buy-in would be required to make such a program successful, and beginning a program with kissing might be too much. A similar lesson might be conducted about "love" or "marriage." These words might allow a lesson to develop ideas about differences between children and adults (Robinson 2013), different kinds of love and affection (parent–child, for your pet, for your friend, romantic love), who can marry, who loves romantically. Children might then be sent to draw pictures of love.

Some lessons might take on what gay and straight mean directly. The wonderful documentary film, *It's Elementary!: Talking About Gay Issues in School*, provides some terrific examples of how elementary school teachers, including with children in the first and second grades, explored the meaning of "gay" and having gay and lesbian parents with young children in the 1990s. This documentary reveals the enormous amount of (mis)information that young children already have (mostly from the media) about what it means to be gay, and how schools can improve on their knowledge. While 4- and 5-year-olds are still quite a bit younger than elementary school-aged children, and brainstorming on paper or through a "word web" would likely not be developmentally appropriate as it was in the older *It's Elementary!* schools, preschool teachers could certainly choose to read from the many story books available that address gay and lesbian families for preschoolers (e.g. *And Tango Makes Three*, *Asha's Mums, King and King)*. Stories, as a part of circle time, are a routine way for preschoolers to learn and engage with all sorts of issues.

Regardless of which topics a lesson includes, it is important in all of these that children feel safe to ask questions, to be curious, to wonder, and say what they know. For preschools and child care centers, engagement with parents around these issues, including invitations for parents to participate, materials for parents to follow up with at home, and teachers willing to talk and answer questions will be essential to make such lessons possible. Finally, the more these lessons can be linked to "teachable moments" that happen in the course of a day of preschool or child care (e.g. kids kissing each other, someone announcing a marriage), the better—for it is from these routine daily occurrences that children learn most.

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13

Pleasurable Blackness

Jennifer C. Nash

I write this chapter in a moment where to speak about race and representation is to be required to have a position on Nicki Minaj's (2014) *Anaconda* video. This isn't a surprise. Nearly every year, a visual spectacle featuring black women's bodies circulates, and popular media and scholarly texts debate: Is it good or bad? Is it racist, sexist, and/or both? Does it produce space for black women's agency and pleasure, or does it foreclose possibilities for black women's agency and pleasure? Is the artist a feminist or not? Of course, these questions circulate around representations of female bodies in general—we can think about similar debates that circled around Madonna, Lady Gaga, and Brittney Spears, for example—but they circulate with more intensity around images of black female flesh, where the stakes of objectification (and agency) seem particularly fraught. Indeed, the practice of critiquing dominant representation and its imagined violence is seen as synonymous with critiquing racism and sexism itself. To detest a cultural product like *Anaconda* (or, as in the case of bell hooks, to assert that one is "bored" by it) is to offer a statement about one's politics around race and sexuality.

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This chapter argues for the importance of developing new strategies for describing, naming, and analyzing black female sexualities that transcend familiar debates about "good" or "bad" images of black female flesh. We urgently need new conversations that can consider the complex meanings embedded in popular images of black female bodies, and the ways in which these images open up space for black women's play, performance, humor, and, crucially, pleasure. This chapter, then, is informed by Celine Parreñas Shimizu's concept of the "bind of representation" (Shimizu 2007, p. 16). Shimizu develops this idea to move beyond the agency/constraint debates, and to consider how minoritarian subjects are both constrained and potentially liberated by representation. She argues that Asian-American women (the subjects at the center of her analysis) cannot be "imaged outside of perverse sexuality or non-normative sexuality. … Therefore, they must use that sexuality in order to create new morphologies in representation and in history" (Shimizu 2007, p. 26). In this chapter, I advocate a practice of sex(uality) education that underscores how black female bodies *put their sexuality to work* in visual culture, in ways that might be unnerving, innovative, unsettling, exciting, arousing, troubling, or all of these at once. In so doing, I suggest we abandon our cultural preoccupation with "good" or "bad," "feminist" or "unfeminist," and "objectifying" or "liberating," and instead ask: How do popular images put familiar ideas of black sexuality to work, and at times, play with or subvert those familiar ideas? How do we make sense of black female bodies performing "excess flesh" (Fleetwood 2011, p. 105)? What are the "hidden transcripts of desire" embedded in popular culture that, while shaped by the grammar of white supremacy and patriarchy, still provide a lexicon for black female subjects to name and claim desires (McClelland and Fine 2008, p. 84). My hope is that this shift away from normative engagements with visual culture not only teaches us to be better (and more complicated) readers of popular culture, but also shapes—and expands—our sense of black sexual possibilities, and black sexual freedoms. I hope that a move away from reproducing the good/bad debates around black female sexuality makes space for theorizing, imagining, and inciting multiple forms of black female pleasures.

My embrace of a politics of pleasure does not mean that I think objectification and degradation are absent from popular images. Popular culture is relentless in its reliance on stereotypes that can be hollow, tedious, violent, and humiliating. Instead, I am interested in how these admittedly limited stereotypes can also liberate sexual imaginations, and function as spaces in and through which black women name and articulate longings, pleasures, and desires. In other words, normative assessments of visual culture simply fail to do justice to the meanings embedded in any image, or to the myriad ways

spectators engage with the image. These simplistic conversations also elide both complex black spectatorship (we might find pleasures in what objectifies) and complex black authorship (black cultural producers deploy the same strategies of play and performance that non-black producers do). Part of the way racism and sexism operate is by refusing to black cultural producers the capacity to be humorous, playful, ironic, campy, and flirtatious, and by refusing to black spectators the capacity to engage in complex interpretative work. Finally, I argue that this narrow conversation translates into limited theories of black sexuality which center on critiques of objectification, celebrations of black self-representation, and/or circulations of respectable politics that treat "speaking sex" itself as dangerous. My intervention aspires to expand scholarly responses to representations of black female flesh in the hopes of making space for black sexual subjectivities in all of their complexities.

This chapter moves in a few directions. First, I describe scholarly work that has provided a critical vocabulary for naming the violence of the dominant visual field, and that has cataloged the host of ways that visual culture wounds black women, objectifying, degrading, humiliating. This critical vocabulary has also permeated the lives of students who often learn about bodies, sex, sexuality, and flesh through the frameworks of violence. Indeed, students are often taught to decode popular representations, to make visible the ways that violent stereotypes are entrenched through popular culture. I will emphasize that this scholarship has foregrounded the violence of visual culture and the ongoing importance of the past—particularly slavery and the Hottentot Venus' display—in shaping the visual logics of the present, yet it has always treated black female sexuality as necessarily under siege, and it has presumed that freedom comes through black women rejecting dominant culture. In other words, I argue that much of this body of work has recreated the debates that we see played out around cultural products like *Anaconda*, presuming that the answer to the question "is *Anaconda* racist and/or sexist?" is an emphatic "yes."

In the second portion of the chapter, I turn to new scholarship that has emphasized black women's sexual pleasures, and treated visual culture as a space where black women make visible their own complex longings and pleasures. Drawing on work by scholars like Amber Jamilla Musser, Lisa Thompson, LaMonda Horton Stallings, Mireille Miller-Young, and Ariane Cruz, I examine the host of ways that scholars treat dominant visual culture as a space where black women can pleasurably enact stereotype and garner pleasure from hyperbolic conceptions of black female sexuality. I will also describe new ways of thinking about pleasure which move beyond structure/agency debates and instead center *ambivalent* pleasures, pleasures which contain and encompass experiences of objectification and degradation, and that recognize that pleasure and violence are bound up in each other.

Finally, I will turn toward the particular context of the classroom, and ask: How might educators develop pedagogical strategies that allow us to teach *against* a "medial literacy" approach where students learn to identify and expose the workings of racial–sexual stereotypes? What are the other kinds of tools we can help students hone that will allow them to engage with visual culture beyond identifying what is "bad"? How can we develop and hone pedagogical tools that encourage students to imagine black women as complex sexual subjects? Following Louisa Allen, Mary Lou Rasmussen, and Kathleen Quinlivan's lead that "making space in the curriculum" for pleasure "is not enough" (Allen et al. 2013, p. 2), my aim is to generate a teaching praxis centered on what Stallings terms the "uncensoring of Black women" (Stallings 2007, p. 1). Some of this "uncensoring," I argue, might come from un-privileging representation and considering the host of ways that black women have always made their longings and desires known and knowable (particularly through music). If black women can speak freely about sex and sexuality in music, for example, why do similar sexual performances staged visually engender so much anxiety?

Yet I do not want to simply abandon visual culture, and so I also emphasize how visual culture can be a site of play and pleasure for black women, and examine how this play and pleasure can be inhabited in different ways. I am particularly drawn to visual culture because of its pedagogical functions; it allows subjects access to "information"—and sometimes "misinformation"—about one's own bodies (and even pleasures) and the bodies and pleasures of others. It is crucial to harness visual culture's capacity to provide what Ann Laura Stoler terms an "education of desire" (Stoler 1995), its capacity to allow subjects to visualize bodies and pleasures (and bodies *in* pleasure). I end the chapter with teaching strategies that offer educators tools for developing complicated conversations about visual culture and for working "against the grain." Crucially, I construe educators broadly since sex and sexuality education unfold both inside and outside of the classroom, and educators include teachers, mentors, siblings, kin, friends, and families. The pedagogical strategies that I emphasize include: *putting one's body on the line*, *theorizing selfies*, *approaching images of spectacular black female flesh with an attention to humor and irony, and comparing visual and sonic spaces for naming and claiming black women's desires.*

Images that Wound

Scholarship on representations of black women's bodies has been structured by a paradox: black women's sexuality is treated as both invisible and hypervisible. On the one hand, black women have been famously described by

Hortense Spillers as the "beached whales of the sexual universe, unvoiced, misseen, not doing, awaiting their verb" (Spillers 2003, p. 153). This entrenched sexual silence has been captured by other scholars who have documented black women's "culture of dissemblance" (Hine 1988, p. 915), "politics of silence" (Higginbotham 1992, p. 262), and "politics of respectability" (Higginbotham 1994, p. 187). This work has treated black women's pleasures and desires as invisible, as strategically unnamed, as "unvoiced," as *un*represented. Evelynn Hammonds notes, "It should not surprise us that black women are silent about sexuality. The imposed production of silence an the removal of any alternatives to the production of silence reflect the deployment of power against racialized subjects" (Hammonds 1997, p. 177). While scholars have traced the structural rationales for this silence, they have often reproduced it, forever tethering black women to absence, voids, and voicelessness. As Stallings notes, "the historically politicized quiet has made it very difficult to fully discuss Black women's sexual desires beyond the presentation of their existence, even as critics have been able to delve into the issues of representation and stereotypes" (Stallings, p. 4). Moreover, this work has made visibility seem like a solution rather than a problem—in other words, producing cultural space for visualizing black female longings and desires counters the profound silence that marks black women's sexual subjectivity. In so doing, this work has often failed to heed Hammonds' important warning:

> An appeal to the visual is not uncomplicated or innocent. As theorists, we have to ask how vision is structured, and, following that, we have to explore how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and speak in the world. … [V]isibility in and of itself does not erase a history of silence nor does it challenge the structure of power and domination, symbolic and material, that determines what can and cannot be seen. The goal should be to develop a "politics of articulation." This politics would build on the interrogation of what makes it possible for black women to speak and act. (Hammonds, p. 180)

Hammonds reminds scholars not to treat visibility as a panacea and, instead, to focus our attention on discursive space for naming black women's complicated and multiple longings and pleasures.

Other scholars, however, have noted the host of ways in which black female flesh is always already "overexposed," always already visible (Hobson 2005, p. 1). In a visual economy structured by ideologies of black feminine excess, black female bodies are public sites on which notions of deviance, alterity, and inhumanity are regularly and easily scripted. Visual culture objectifies, assaults,

humiliates, degrades, and it does so in familiar ways that tether contemporary representations of black women to historical displays of black female flesh.

In particular, black feminist scholarship has long exposed the ways in which black female bodies are reduced to stereotypes and fictions by dominant visual culture. Patricia Hill Collins uses the term "controlling images" to describe an ideologically consistent set of visual practices which insist on black women's sexual deviance, and train viewers to re-imagine black women's alterity. The term "controlling images" captures how visual culture is deployed to "make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear too be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life" (Collins 1990, p. 69). For Collins, representations of deviant black maternity (e.g. the mammy, the welfare queen) and of deviant black hypersexuality (e.g. the jezebel, the hoochie, the video ho) present black female sexuality as uncontrollable, even as they point to different sites of sexual excess. Controlling images endeavor to make "natural, normal, and inevitable" a dominant racial order, offering instruction on the hierarchy that undergirds daily life, and providing viewers a clear analytic framework for interpreting black female flesh. They are also pedagogical as they tether conceptions of racial difference to sexuality, presuming that black women's "difference" is a dangerous sexual deviance. For Collins, these images are imagined to work on all viewers in similar ways, and these myriad and heterogeneous images are thought to be embedded with a singular meaning—black women's sexual subordination. In other words, Collins' work on "controlling images" assumes a homogeneous spectator, and presumes that the labor of black feminism is to cultivate a set of media literacy skills that enable spectators to decode and disengage from "controlling images," finding ideological and political solace in work produced by black women.

Of course, implicit in Collins' idea of "controlling images" is a theory of history: contemporary images are rooted in the politics and logics of the past, and continue to subordinate black women in consistent ways. Indeed, many scholars connect contemporary "displays" of black female bodies to one particular display: the display of the Hottentot Venus. At the dawning of the nineteenth century, European audiences were fascinated by Saartjie Baartman, the so-called Hottentot Venus, a Khoikhoi woman who was an object of display at exhibitions in London and Paris.

Recent feminist interest in Baartman can be traced to Sander Gilman's canonical article "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," which documents the nineteenth-century European preoccupation with Baartman's flesh. Gilman reveals the host of ways that Baartman's body—particularly her buttocks and her genitalia—was imagined as *the* site of

racial–sexual difference. Indeed, Baartman's exhibitors required her to wear costumes that emphasized her buttocks "in order to render her strange and sexual" (Crais and Scully 2010, p. 73). In what is perhaps the most famous image of Baartman, a French comic from 1814 entitled *Les Curieux en extase ou les cordons de souliers* (The Curious in Ecstasy or Shoelaces) depicts Baartman standing on a small pedestal while two British soldiers gaze at her genitalia and buttocks. One of the soldiers proclaims, "What roast beef!" T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting notes that in the comic, Baartman "becomes, all at once, roast beef, a strange beauty, [and] an amusing freak of nature" (Sharpley-Whiting 1999, p. 21). The comic is regularly interpreted as providing evidence of a European "fascination with the buttocks" in an era where, according to Gilman, the buttocks were "a displacement for the genitalia.… When the Victorians saw the female black, they saw her in terms of her buttocks and saw represented by the buttocks all the anomalies of her genitalia" (Gilman 1985, p. 219).

The fascination with Baartman captivated nineteenth-century scientists as well, as scientists sought to trace connections among Baartman's body, the Hottentot physiology, and animals. In 1815, Baartman was observed by professors from the Museum d'Historie Naturelle who sought to document her body's peculiarities for their "scientific" textbooks, and ultimately placed her image alongside pictures of monkeys in their treatises. Scientific interest in Baartman's continued even after her death, when Georges Cuvier and Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilarie petitioned to "retain [her] corpse on the grounds that it was a singular specimen of humanity and therefore of special scientific interest" (Qureshi 2004, p. 242). When the request was approved, Cuvier conducted an autopsy, produced a plaster mold of Baartman's body, and dissected her genitalia. Sharpley-Whiting notes that as Cuvier explored Baartman's body, "the mystery of the dark continent" was also "unfold[ing]," as his violent exploration of her body was an attempt to explore Africa (Sharpley-Whiting, p. 29). Her preserved genitalia were displayed in Paris at the Musee de l'Homme until 1974, when mounting criticism forced the museum to place her skeleton and body cast into storage.

Gilman's work is crucial not only for its rediscovery of Baartman, but for its claim that Baartman's body became the quintessential Hottentot body, and the Hottentot body became the quintessential African body, such that "in the course of the nineteenth century, the female Hottentot comes to represent the black female *in nuce*" (Gilman, p. 206). In other words, Baartman became a symbol of a symbol—the primary metaphor for imagined racial and sexual difference. If Baartman's body was treated as *the* location of cultural and scientific "black" difference, as *the* symbol of racial–sexual difference, it has only

become re-symbolized in our contemporary era. Curiously, Baartman's body has also become a symbol for black feminists who use Baartman's story as the quintessential example of the violence of the visual field, and the quintessential example of black women's overexposure. In some ways, this return to Baartman is unsurprising. Black feminist scholarship has studiously and importantly recovered black women's histories and narratives, and in returning to the Hottentot Venus story, scholars have asked: How do we make sense of a history of violence, trauma, and humiliation? (see Crais and Scully 2010; Fausto-Sterling 2002; Hobson 2005; Sharpley-Whiting 1999; Willis 2010). How do these histories of vulnerability, exposure, and degradation continue to shape the present? Is there any space for speaking of pleasure in Baartman's own history, or is it necessarily always a story about pain, violence, trauma, and degradation?

If this body of work has insisted on the Hottentot Venus' overexposure, it has also connected her display to the visual practices that circulate in our contemporary moment. These scholars argue that contemporary practices of "overexposure" were perfected on the Hottentot Venus' flesh, that Baartman's body became a kind of laboratory in which racial–sexual ideologies were rehearsed and refined. For example, Collins interprets Baartman's exhibition as a kind of racialized pornography, one where Baartman's flesh was "reduced to … sexual parts" (Collins, p. 137). She then uses Baartman's history as a critical data point in crafting a theory of contemporary pornography, taking as a point of departure the idea that racism, rather than sexism, organizes the pornographic visual field, and uncovering that black women's bodies are "key pillar[s] on which contemporary pornography itself rests" (Collins, p. 136).

Other scholars advance similar claims about the intimate relationship between the visual logics of the past and the present. Judith Wilson treats "the Hottentot Venus and Josephine Baker [as] … twin poles of visual theory about the black female body" (Wilson 1992, p. 24), and scholars have described a host of figures—"from the Hottentot Venus to Josephine Baker to Millie Jackson, Pam Grier, and Serena Williams in her cat suit"—as intimately connected to the ideologies of black feminine sexual excess that developed in and through the Hottentot Venus' display (Fleetwood, p. 109). This work reveals that black female bodies continue to be *Hottentot-ed* in a visual economy fueled by a longing to see black women's difference. Ultimately, this work emphasizes that "The presentation of the unfeminine black female body as grotesque links back to the spectacle of the Hottentot Venus, whose body is presented … in terms of hypersexuality, or excessive femininity through the emphasis on her supposedly prominent buttocks" (Hobson, p. 13).

While the "controlling images" work has offered a way of theorizing history and its connections to the present moment, it has also entrenched three analytical shortcomings. First, it presumes that racial and sexual logics operate in the same way across time and space, without regard for the different visual practices through which black female flesh is made visible—Baartman's exhibition in a circus-like space, versus, seeing, for example, Nicki Minaj on a computer screen. In other words, this reading practice treats racial and sexual logics as trans-historical, static, and unchanging. Second, this story offers a very thin account of Baartman's own life despite its investment in recovering her own story. Baartman's story is offered only as evidence of violence, injury, and harm, with little attention to her own potentially complex experiences of display, travel, and exhibition. Indeed, black feminist re-tellings of the Hottentot Venus story studiously avoid the complexity of Baartman, including debates as to how Baartman's body was interpreted differently in London and Paris, questions as to whether Baartman was even interpreted as black, and debates as to Baartman's own pleasures in exposure, display, travel, and financial gain. Indeed, scholarly work suggesting that "blackness" had different meanings for British and French audiences who viewed Baartman's body reveals that Baartman might not even have been interpreted *as black* by all European audiences, thus rupturing the idea that her body was consistently asked to perform ideas of black women's difference (Magubane 2001). I offer this *not* to suggest that Baartman's display was unracialized, or that she "enjoyed" the conditions of her exhibition, but instead to flag my own investment in considering the multiple kinds of pleasures that attach even to humiliation and degradation. I also pose these questions to suggest that historical and cultural context matters when we engage visual culture, and to presume that Baartman was understood as "black woman," and that "black woman" meant precisely what it means to us now (which is its own elision—even now, we have varied, geographically, racially, sexually, and culturally contingent understandings of both blackness and womanhood) is an elision. That these elisions happen in the context of a theoretical tradition that seeks to recover black women's voices and experiences is particularly ironic. In other words, it is ironic that the very theoretical tradition that aspires to recover Baartman necessarily does so in the service of telling a particular story about her body: one focused on injury. An injury-focused account that forecloses pleasure and ambivalence necessarily jettisons complexity. Finally, this account necessarily neglects the ways in which black women play with, enact, or render humor or ironic the preoccupation with, for example, the spectacle of black female buttocks. If the buttocks have become the symbol for black femininity, how do black women play with, interrupt, and inhabit the idea of black feminine

excess? Where is the space for an attention to humor, irony, and complex self-fashioning? To circle back to *Anaconda*, how do we understand moments when black female performers stage the idea of black women's sexual excess, and use the myth of excess as a strategy for articulating black women's longings and pleasures?

Pleasurable Interventions

If a body of black feminist scholarship has developed around foregrounding the relationship between dominant representation and injury (in my other research, I call this the "archive of pain"),[1] there has recently emerged a cohort of scholars invested in theorizing black pleasures with a new attention to the host of ways black women experience sexual freedom under conditions of white dominance and patriarchy, with an attention to representation as a space of play, humor, and irony, and with an investment in uncoupling black female flesh from woundedness. In other words, Stallings' call for a "radical Black female sexual subjectivity" has been echoed by other scholars, including Amber Jamilla Musser, Mireille Miller-Young, Ariane Cruz, Lisa Thompson, and Siobhan Brooks, all of whom have produced robust and complex theories that account for pleasure—and specifically *black pleasures*—in new ways. These accounts of black pleasures underscore the ways in which blackness itself acts as a technology of pleasure even as it is also a form of domination, and the ways in which ideas of black feminine sexual alterity can animate and inform black women's pleasures. In other words, they make visible the "binds of representation" that Shimizu describes, carefully theorizing how woundedness and desire are bound up. Importantly, this embrace of black pleasures is a far departure from the feminist sex-positivity (and pro-sex movements) of earlier epochs which celebrated agency, often at the complete expense of structure, championing sexual freedom. In other words, sex-positive work's exclusive investment in agency often neglects the place of pain, trauma, and violence in pleasure; agency and pleasure, then, are treated as spaces *outside* of pleasure, rather than as constitutive of pleasure. Moreover, sex-positive work tends to treat pleasure as an ethical *good*, one that is diametrically opposed to violence; we know when pleasure is present because violence is absent. Importantly, the recent scholarship that I celebrate theorizes pleasure in much more complex ways, recognizing that pleasure is a position of ambivalence,

[1] See Jennifer C. Nash, *The Black Body in Ecstasy: Reading Race, Reading Pornography* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

that it can electrify and wound simultaneously, that it can excite and harm, that it can arouse and injure. Pleasure, then, is never outside of the logics of a white-dominated patriarchy and, in fact, traffics in the stereotypes produced by that regime to electrify flesh. For example, Darieck Scott, Kathryn Bond Stockton, and Nguyen Tan Hoang draw on queer theory and carefully trace the "bottom pleasures" that circulate around racialized abjection and humiliation; in so doing, all three examine pleasures in racial marginalization itself. Sexual pleasure is not seen as separate from other kinds of pleasures (including political pleasures), and is never purely outside of structural violence, inequity, or humiliation, including racism. Scott encapsulates this complex conception of pleasure when he deploys the term "black power" to describe the "transformation of the elements of humiliation and pain, and the like, into a form of pleasure, the *taking* of pleasure out of the maw of humiliation and pain" (Scott 2010, p. 163). In so doing, he treats racialization itself—in all of its "humiliation and pain"—into a locus of erotic delight.

If pleasure is theorized as embedded in pain and humiliation (and vice versa), this new cohort of scholars also performs rigorous close-readings of popular culture that capture the complex set of meanings contained in popular performance. For example, Uri McMillan's work returns to Nicki Minaj, and reads her *not* for questions around her agency or objectification. Instead, McMillan treats her "ever-expanding oeuvre" as a "vibrant form of black performance art, centered on her body as art object and herself as representation" (McMillan 2014, p. 80). McMillan develops the term "Nicki-aesthetics" to describe Minaj's "self-conscious, playful, and performative" self-fashioning, her "quirky, affected, and often unorthodox performances," and the "sophisticated, albeit ambiguous, aesthetic choices" that mark her self-representation (McMillan, p. 80). In so doing, McMillan reads Minaj as involved in complex self-making, and as *producing* an aesthetic that is multi-faceted, distinctive, "playful," at times funny and ironic, and completely "unorthodox." What strikes me about McMillan's readings of "Nicki-aesthetics" is how different it is from debates about whether *Anaconda* is "good" or "bad"; McMillan's work affords Minaj tremendous complexity, treating her not as an objectified body simply reproducing "controlling images," but as the producer of a set of distinctive "nicki-aesthetics." In other words, McMillan's work presumes Minaj's status as a cultural producer rather than a victorious agent, a subordinated object, or a duped subject whose imagination is colonized and thus shaped by false consciousness, and thus makes room to explore the variety of historically and technologically contingent meanings embedded in Minaj's performances.

In my own work on representations of black women in pornography (Nash 2014), I develop the concept of ecstasy to describe the varied and fraught

pleasures black women can take in viewing or participating in the production of pornography. I develop this concept to describe the kinds of violence, humiliation, pain, and ambivalence that can mark "pleasure," yet I emphasize that these forms of violence do not undercut or diminish the possibilities (or experiences) of pleasure. This conception of pleasure, I argue, is central for developing a more nuanced understanding of visual culture because it underscores that what gets under our skin and excites us might also shame us, that racial fictions can feel good even as they disgust, that racial fantasies can both humiliate and arouse (and after all, this is how they maintain their power—by enlisting our sexual imaginations in their labor).

Taken together, this cohort of scholars theorizes pleasures in new ways, with a renewed investment in severing pleasure from agency (or with critiquing the notion that sexual pleasure always stands for agency) and with an interest in considering pleasure's intimate relationship with ambivalence. In treating pleasure, desire, and arousal as spaces that are neither outside of power (indeed, their charge might come through their intimate engagement with power), they re-theorize pleasure away from autonomy and agency and, instead, tether it to uncertainty.

Teaching Sex

In her now canonical essay "Thinking Sex," Gayle Rubin reminds readers:

> Most people find it difficult to grasp that whatever they like to do sexually will be thoroughly repulsive to someone else, and that whatever repels them sexually will be the most treasure delight of someone, somewhere. One need not like or perform a particular sex act in order to recognize that someone else will, and that this difference does not indicate a lack of good taste, mental health, or intelligence in either party. Most people mistake their sexual preferences for a universal system that will or should work for everyone. (Rubin 2011, p. 154)

Rubin calls her reader to task for the ways in which we let our own bodies overwhelm our theoretical and political perceptions of what might be pleasurable or desirable for other bodies.

If Rubin urges us to consider how our bodies shape our politics, her piece also urges us to put our bodies on the line in the ways we talk about sex and sexuality. Of course, appeals to the body—and to naming the body—are appeals to vulnerability, which is frightening in a moment where education is increasingly structured by logics of assessment, learning goals, normalization,

and depersonalization (See Fabricant and Fine 2012). But I argue that in the context of "teaching sex," putting one's body on the line in certain ways is crucial for students to understand and to theorize the complex affects that visual culture engenders. In other words, part of my call for "teaching sex" is to push students to name how images *make them feel*—including affects of disgust, repulsion, and attraction, affects which have long been constructed as non-academic. We tend to de-intellectualize comments like "that woman is so beautiful" or "that disgusts me," but both index a complex set of affects produced *by visual culture*, affects that are worth taking up rather than simply avoiding. In other words, representation works on our bodies by engendering what Laura Mulvey called "visual pleasure," and it's crucial to recognize, acknowledge, and name that pleasure in the space of the classroom (Mulvey 1992; Allen et al. 2013). Ultimately, my contention is that part of the reason discourses about black female representation have remained mired in good/bad debates is because we—feminist scholars—all too rarely name what these images do to us: do they make us laugh? Do they make us excited? Do they make us insecure?

Putting our bodies on the line is particularly crucial in light of recent conversations and debates about "triggering" and "trigger warnings" which often presume the virtue of sanitized classrooms that ensure student "safety" by offering warnings about material that might potentially "trigger" or traumatize. Of course, "triggering" material is tethered to the sexual; material on race, racism, and the persistence of state-sanctioned racial violence, for example, is rarely discussed within the auspices of "trigger warnings" despite the kinds of trauma that spectacular and quotidian racial violence inflicts on racially marked bodies. In other words, sexuality is reproduced as exceptional terrain (and sexual trauma is reproduced as exceptional trauma). My own contention is that scholarship which puts our bodies on the line necessarily challenges the rhetoric of "safe spaces"; talking about sex and sexuality is a risky endeavor, and we should not hide the risk of it—or the benefits of that risk—from our students. A practice of putting our bodies on the line might feel uncomfortable because it insists on the humanity of the instructor, and destabilizes the instructor's power, but it is a practice that, I argue, ultimately captures the work that visual culture performs—it works on our flesh.

In other words, I invite us to treat *all* images as what Linda Williams has termed a "body genre," a term that she uses to specifically describe melodrama, horror, and pornography, genres which seek to illicit very specific—and physical—reactions from the viewer: tears, screams, and ejaculate (Williams 1991). My own interest is in how all genres are "body genres," they work on us to produce an array of feelings—excitement, laughter, boredom, ambivalence—

and while they might not labor on our bodies in the sense of willing a certain physical response, they certainly produce affective, erotic, libidinal, and sexual responses. My suggestion, then, is that as educators we call upon our students—and reflexively engage ourselves—to discuss the ways in which images work on and through us, engage us intellectually, aesthetically, and erotically. In some ways, this is a call to enact what Bianca Williams terms "radical honesty" by treating visual culture as something that does precisely what it promises to do—works on our bodies (Williams 2014, conference).

If images work on our bodies, they also instruct us about bodies, and I argue that it is crucial to shift from thinking about the good or bad of images to considering images as pedagogy. Of course, the instructive value of images depends on who or what is in the images; images of black bodies, for example, in a visual field where blackness is constructed as a "problem" are often called upon to perform certain kinds of meaning-making labor, to instruct viewers on the meanings of blackness. But I also want to emphasize that images are critical spaces in and through which we learn about bodies, as images are one of the few cultural spaces that allow us to bear witness to bodies that are not our own. This is particularly true of sexualized images, which often provide spectators with their first views of the bodies and pleasures of other bodies. This practice of bearing witness can be unsettling, it can make us giggle, it can be a relief; but, I contend, it is always a kind of education—one that is too rarely received in a moment where bodies and pleasures continue to be largely invisible.

In conclusion, this chapter offers lesson strategies. In so doing, I break from the promise of offering a "lesson plan," in part because I am not invested in prescriptive teaching programs. Instead, I offer some principles that guide my own teaching on race, sexuality, and representation, and that, I hope, offer tools and strategies for others seeking to teach their students that sexuality and politics are linked, that "desiring differently" is a *political* question as much as it is a subjective question. Making space to desire—particularly for minoritarian subjects whose desires have long been pathologized is to make a political claim. Indeed, I think it is crucial for educators to emphasize—and for students to hear—that desires have *always* been politicized, and they continue to be. The right to have sexual wants, in whatever form those wants are articulated, sensed, and felt, is a question of freedom.

First, I would encourage educators to make use of the "selfie" as a visual strategy that might complicate conversations about visual culture. The selfie has transformed the visual archive, providing endless opportunities for subjects to represent themselves. My aim in considering the "selfie" is *not* to fetishize self-representation as inherently "resistant." Rather, I am interested in the "selfie" as a product of visual culture which makes authorship in all of its complexity apparent, which reveals the stakes that subjects have in their own

reproduction and representation, and the host of ways that subjects reproduce themselves comically, ironically, stereotypically, playfully, and even beautifully. I would urge students to ask how these practices of self-representation—particularly of black female bodies—change our conceptions around visual culture more broadly by foregrounding the role of the creator (and the subject of the photograph) in the production of the scene itself. How do we understand strategies of self-representation in ways that do not romanticize self-authorship or presume that modes of representing the self will transgress or upset dominant visual culture (indeed, what is so striking about the "selfie" is how often photographed subjects enact—or re-enact—familiar scenes). Thus, I would encourage educators to make use of websites like selfiecity.net as rich visual archives that contain and house myriad images of bodies engaged in self-fashioning, to encourage students to engage with these websites as rich archives of visual information, and to consider producing their own images. This rich archive can provide a point of departure for educators and students to think collaboratively about the relationship between subjects—particularly black female subjects—and racial fictions and fantasies. How do we understand, for example, self-authored images that perform or enact ideas of black feminine sexual excess? Can we cultivate ways of understanding these strategies of self-representation that consider how bodies mobilize stereotype, put it to work, in the service of unleashing sexual imaginations?

Second, I would urge a curriculum that centers humor and irony in visual culture studies, recognizing the host of ways that humor works on the body (both the bodies of spectators and the bodies of cultural producers themselves). In a moment where feminism is attached to certain kinds of affective performances—including outrage and disgust—what does it mean to name the fact that images also work on us by making us laugh? If, to return to *Anaconda*, one recognizes the host of ways that Minaj takes up Sir Mix-a-Lot's original "Baby Got Back," laying claim to his phallic imagery in ways that are ironic, playful, and sometimes irreverent, how does it change one's reading of the video's sexual(ized) imagery? What might it mean to allow space for the video to be read as both comical and sexy, and to understand humor as one of the many ways that visual culture works on our flesh? Of course, humor is complicated terrain, and laughing at the pain of others—or not seeing the pain of others because it is constructed as humorous—is a crucial technology of patriarchal control. Yet, I want to emphasize that much of popular culture aims to *entertain*, and laughter is often one of the forms of pleasure that dominant culture seeks to elicit. In emphasizing humor, my contention is that laughing at (or *with*) visual culture liberates us from the good/bad debates, by revealing yet another way that visual culture works on us corporeally: it elicits our laughter. In considering laughter, we can begin to ask questions

like: What *precisely* seems funny in a particular image or cultural text? Is our laughter a sign of discomfort, surprise, shyness? Is it a sign of an encounter with something unexpected?

Finally, perhaps ironically, I urge instructors to move away from visual culture toward sonic culture, and to push students to consider why music has been such a critical space for the articulation of complex black sexual subjectivities in ways that the visual has not been (or cannot be). What are the kinds of permission that sonic space has offered black women to insist on complex sexual subjectivities, and how might similar claims be laid to the visual? I can imagine listening to songs like Janet Jackson's "Anytime, Anyplace" where she sings, "I can feel your hand moving up my thighs/Skirt around my waist/Wall against my face/I can feel your lips" or Missy Elliott's "Work It" where she sings "go downtown and eat it like a vulture/see my hips and my tips, don't ya" making clear her desires for oral sex. In both of these songs, black female cultural producers name and claim a set of longings that would simply be prohibited in visual culture (one need only juxtapose Jackson's songs of desire from the *janet.* album with her infamous "wardrobe malfunction" where her bared breast was the subject of a national scandal—one that ultimately jeopardized her career while leaving Justin Timberlake unscathed). My hope is that considering the sexual freedoms the sonic register has provided will allow students to return to the visual again, carefully probing why images of black female pleasure generate so much anxiety when we are surrounded by sounds of black desire.

Taken together, these three pedagogical strategies move us toward the "politics of articulation" Hammonds calls for. Tricia Rose ends her exploration of black female cultural production by arguing that "the sustained and multidirectional erasures/distortions of black female sexual subjectivity in America culture call for the creation and support of more black female-narrated and controlled, sexually empowering and, if so desired, sexually explicit materials" (Rose 2001, p. 320). Rose's call for "sexually explicit materials" is a provocative one, one which moves educators in new ways—away from shielding students and toward fiercely unleashing their sexual imaginations. The idea is not to be prescriptive about what bodies *should* desire, but instead to insist that bodies *do* desire, and that to name and articulate those longings is a political act.

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14

Sexuality Education in the Context of Mass Incarceration: Interruptions and Entanglements

Jessica Fields and Signy Toquinto

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Despite the "cultural authority" that abstinence-only education has achieved in the last 30 years (Fine and McClelland 2006, p. 299), a feminist, queer, and anti-racist vision of sexuality education has found a voice in many universities, academic journals, and advocacy organizations (Marsh and Fields 2014). As the contributions to this volume attest, ongoing concerns about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies, anti-gay violence, gendered sexual assault, and the possibility of liberation have inspired innovative thinking about sexuality education. Over the last 30 years, sexuality education research, curricula, and programming have emerged to interrupt constraining models of abstinence-only education and to advocate gender, racial, and sexual justice in the lives of young people.

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These same years of innovative thinking have been marked for many in the United States by widening economic inequalities, starved social welfare systems, disparities in health care and outcomes, and a punitive War on Drugs. One striking manifestation of the stark divide between the advantaged and disadvantaged is the mass incarceration of people of color and poor people. The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. According to The Sentencing Project, over 700 of every 100,000 people (about 0.7%) in this country are in prison or jail (2014). In 2012, approximately 1 of every 35 US adults (about 3%) was court-involved—in jail, or prison, or on probation or parole. Over half of the men and women in prisons and jails are Black or Latina (Bonczar 2003). One in three Black men and one in six Latino men can expect to go to prison in their lifetimes; one of every seventeen white men can expect the same (The Sentencing Project 2013). While men are six times as likely as women to serve time in jail or prison, over the last 30 years the rate of increase in incarceration rates for women has been more than one-and-a-half times that for men (Bonczar 2003; The Sentencing Project 2012). Transgender people, particularly transgender people of color, face considerable social and economic discrimination and are disproportionately arrested, convicted, and incarcerated (Tarzwell 2006). About one in six transgender people have been incarcerated at some point in their lives, and nearly half of Black transgender people have been incarcerated (Grant et al. 2011).

Communities' disenfranchisement in the face of mass incarceration reflects a broader vulnerability to a host of social and sexual inequities, including violence and coercion, HIV and other STIs, and unintended pregnancies. Imprisoned and court-involved cisgender and transgender women and men typically live in areas of concentrated poverty, lack formal education and work histories, and have neither affordable nor safe housing (Covington and Bloom 2007; Freudenberg 2002; Haywood et al. 2000; The Sylvia Rivera Law Project 2007). Many are addicted to or using drugs, and many contend with serious mental illness (Kantor 2003; McClelland et al. 2002). Violence and discrimination often continue during their incarceration at the hands of jail deputies and others (Beck et al. 2013; Human Rights Watch 1996). These histories and experiences contribute to the likelihood of criminal behavior, court involvement, and poor sexual and reproductive health. They also render sexuality education and other efforts to interrupt these entrenched conditions all the more important.

Sexuality education has long aimed to prevent poor health outcomes and promote social and moral well-being (Luker 2006; Moran 2000). And, as state-sponsored sexuality education has focused on those whose health, morality, or intimate relationship seem to require some intervention, it has often affirmed oppressive ideas about the sexual lives of youth, women, people of

color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) people (Fields 2008; García 2012). As we noted at the opening of this chapter (and as other chapters in this volume suggest), contemporary feminist, queer, and anti-racist researchers and advocates have resisted the pull of this history, claiming instead that sexuality education which emphasizes agency, desire, and pleasure has the potential to address and perhaps even reverse social inequities and injustices (Fine 1988; Fine and McClelland 2006).

Surely, then, sexuality educators have an important role to play in addressing the profound injustices marking imprisoned people's lives. Having been pushed out of school and other social institutions offering care and education, people caught up in the US carceral system do not have reliable access to any version of sexuality education—let alone one marked by a commitment to sexual and reproductive justice. They receive sexual and reproductive health care and education while under state surveillance; only once they become involved with the courts are they likely to receive sexual and reproductive health education and care. The question becomes, what meaningful and efficacious teaching and learning are possible within the context of racialized and gendered mass incarceration? Below we explore the possibilities for interrupting the inequalities and injustices that thread through sexuality education available to those most affected by mass incarceration, focusing throughout on the tensions between education and punishment, intervention and liberation. While sexuality education gained through jails, prisons, and street outreach is an opportunity to learn and to support agentic claims to one's own sexuality, this teaching and learning is always encumbered with the demands of the carceral institution.

Sites and Experiences of Incarceration and Vulnerability

We approach incarceration as a broad experience of court involvement that spans multiple settings and institutions—prisons, jails, parole, probation, and the streets. People in state and federal prisons have been convicted of felonies and are serving sentences of more than one year. In contrast, jails are city and county facilities with prisoner stays typically less than a year and as brief as 24 hours. Jailed people are either awaiting trial or sentencing (often without the resources to make bail) or serving shorter terms for misdemeanor offenses. Someone on parole has been released from jail or prison before the completion of their original sentence. Their freedom is contingent upon meeting the conditions of parole; these conditions often include reporting

to a parole officer. Probation is a sentence in lieu of a prison or jail time: as long as someone adheres to the terms of probation (e.g. abstaining from drug use or maintaining employment), they can avoid a jail or prison term. Many people chronically entangled with the criminal justice system are released to probation or parole to live on the streets—either homeless or unstably housed. Frequent arrests mean that many court-involved people "repeatedly [go] in and out of the court system, [spend] nights in jail or in court pens at enormous expense, and [come] back out only to face the same situation, with no lasting change or benefit to these people or their surrounding community" (The Urban Justice Center 2003, p. 3).

Just as the geography of mass incarceration extends across these sites and environments, health risk and vulnerability travel across prison, jail, release, and street involvement (Cloud et al. 2014). While one in ten Americans contends with a diagnosable substance use disorder, seven in ten people in jail and half those in prison contend with substance abuse (Fazel et al. 2006; Karberg and James 2005). Rates of mental illness are two to four times higher in prisons than in the community at large (Prins 2014). Violence, injuries, and suicides are common occurrences inside jails and prisons. And, while these sites, like the United States more broadly, have seen a decrease in HIV infections in recent years, HIV infection remains two to seven times as prevalent among incarcerated women and men in the United States as it is in the United States in general (Spaulding et al. 2009).

The entanglement of vulnerability, intimacy, and risk in incarcerated women's lives leaves them particularly susceptible to poor health. Court-involved cisgender and transgender women endure systemic and interpersonal violence and discrimination—for example, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at the hands of corrections officers and other incarcerated persons (Arkles 2009). Many women face long-term (and even permanent) separations from their families when their children are placed into the foster care system (Hines et al. 2004). Pregnant incarcerated women are subject to the continued practice of shackling during childbirth and have experienced a long history of abusive sterilization practices (Daane 2003; Richie 1996, 2002). The rate of HIV and STI infection among women in jail or prison exceeds that of men (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2011; Maruschak 2005, 2012). Women whose partners share a history of incarceration are more likely to report histories of STIs and coerced sex (Kim et al. 2002). All women's lower earning power and lowered economic status increases their vulnerability to HIV, limits their access to health care and education, and makes it difficult for them to leave relationships that compromise their well-being (Wingood and DiClemente 2000). Women at risk for HIV infection have high prevalence rates of intimate partner violence (Cohen et al. 2000); this history of abuse suggests that these women may have

limited ability to negotiate sexual concerns with their partners (Gómez and Marín 1996; Melendez et al. 2003).

Heteronormative expectations compel the separation of women and men prisoners—the assumptions being that women and men would become sexual partners if not separated and that separation from the desired pool of heterosexual partners represents a significant punishment. Ironically, sex segregation allows for, and even facilitates, same-sex interactions and partnerships—even as sex segregation also pathologizes these relationships as perverse responses to deprivation. And, the same heteronormative expectations that compel sex segregation also render healthy and freely chosen LGBTQI genders and sexualities invisible to many sexuality and HIV educators, care providers, and corrections officers—even those committed to advocating for prisoners' rights (Richie 2005; Zierler and Krieger 1997).

The condemnation and prohibition of sex between people in prisons and jails suggest "queer sexuality, not sexual violence, is the problem that [detention] administrators care about eliminating" (Arkles 2009, p. 536). This implication has acute consequences for LGBTQI prisoners, who are frequently cast as the perpetrators and thus face, on the one hand, disproportionate discipline and isolation and, on the other, little help when they themselves are the victims of sexual violence (Tarzwell 2006, p. 179). Transgender and gender-nonconforming people also face repudiation of their gender identities, denial of health care to which they are entitled, verbal abuse, and physical and sexual violence within prisons and jails. Most facilities make gender classifications based on genitalia—not gender identity—and some facilities segregate transgender individuals into solitary confinement or protected status simply because they are transgender (Just Detention International 2013). Transgender people, convicted sex offenders, former gang members, and others share and, not surprisingly, meet harm in this ostensibly protected space.

Sexual violence and vulnerability extend across the landscape and logic of mass incarceration. If overcrowding, extended periods of solitary confinement, and sexual victimization at the hands of other prisoners or prison staff characterize jails and prisons (Cloud et al. 2014), the street can offer respite from imprisonment and surveillance. On the streets, court-involved people may be able to reunite with family or community and find opportunities for personal autonomy. However, the street is often a site of vulnerability, violence, and marginalization. In the first two weeks following release from jail or prison, court-involved people are particularly vulnerable to homelessness and death (Weiser et al. 2009). Those who remain on the street often participate in sex work, robbery, or petty theft; some sell or use illicit drugs. These strategies may allow for survival, but they may also make it difficult to achieve economic and social stability, cope with mental illness and substance use,

and secure sexual and reproductive health. And, given the increasing criminalization of poverty and homelessness, life on the street frequently results in subsequent incarceration.

Sexuality Education's Entanglement with Punishment and Control

Such criminalization is one product of the 1980s War on Drugs. The focus of criminal justice efforts moved decisively from rehabilitation to punishment and resulted in the mass incarceration of people of color and the poor. The reproductive lives of women—African American and Black women, in particular—have been subject to acute surveillance. Women were, and continue to be, incarcerated for exposing their infants and fetuses to drugs, including crack; many lost access to children placed in foster care (Roberts 1999 [1997]; Freudenberg 2002; Toquinto forthcoming). Imprisoned women were, and continue to be, routinely and forcibly separated from their children, cast as bad parents, and then encouraged or required to attend classes promoting parenting skills and contraceptive use (Thompson and Harm 2000; Loper and Tuerk 2011). Some were coerced into abusive sterilizations (Johnson 2013; Justice Now 2012; Roberts 1999 [1997]).

Mass incarceration has also disrupted father/child relationships; one in forty American children has a parent—most often a father—in prison; one in fifteen African American or Black children have an incarcerated parent (Schenwar 2014, p. 12; Tierney 2012). Men, too, have been targeted for parenting classes inside correctional facilities and as conditions of parole (Jarvis et al. 2004). Despite these educational efforts, however, child welfare policies make it nearly impossible for mothers and fathers to regain custody of their children even following release (Roberts 1999 [1997]).

Alternatives to incarceration, including pretrial diversion and alternative sentencing, often include requirements that one complete sexuality education courses, broadly defined. For example, men charged with domestic violence are often sentenced to complete batterer intervention programs rather than jail or prison sentences. Such programs aim to address men's violence against women and to transform men into egalitarian, empathetic intimate partners (Healey et al. 1998). Integral to the criminal justice system's management of an enormous volume of convicted offenders, alternative forms of punishment maintain the system's focus on disciplining, educating, and treating individual people, rather than addressing wider social, economic, and political condi-

tions of harm (Lamble 2013). Batterer intervention programs fail to address the norms and practices of masculinity that promote violence perpetrated by men against women (Mason-Schrock and Padavic 2007). This persistent commitment to addressing social problems by rehabilitating people threatens to obscure systemic patterns of inequality and discrimination and to perpetuate systems of oppression and abuse.

The entanglement of control and punishment may make it impossible for prison- and jail-based sexuality education to escape conditions of distrust, reach beyond rehabilitation, and enact systemic change. Mass incarceration casts prisoners and court-involved communities as manipulative, poor decision-makers, bad parents, unloving and unloved intimate partners, hypersexual, and unable to control their sexual impulses. Educators inclined to trust prisoners may instead distrust jails and prisons as punitive and oppressive institutions at odds with educators' aims of promoting well-being and liberation. Students may distrust educators as representatives of carceral institutions and state violence; and students who have adopted a self-protective stance may struggle to trust one another inside the classroom. However, in the midst of this distrust exist multiple opportunities for intervention and care. And, some of society's most vulnerable people are caught up in the criminal justice system. In prisons and jails and on the streets, sexuality education may address and interrupt social inequalities and provide a refuge from an otherwise unyielding regime.

We explore selected examples of sexuality education across carceral settings below. We have not assembled these examples because they collectively represent the breadth of sexuality education available to court-involved people. Instead, each example provides an opportunity to consider sexuality education's potential to interrupt the conditions of mass incarceration.

HIV/AIDS Education For and By Women in Prison: Interrupting the Required Compliance

HIV/AIDS infection and incidence rates are disproportionately high among incarcerated people, and during the early years of the HIV epidemic, prisons and jails were widely considered "breeding grounds" for HIV/AIDS (Hammett 2006, p. 974). Correctional facilities have responded by imposing mandatory HIV testing and segregating HIV-positive imprisoned people (Hammett 2006). Testing allows people to learn their HIV status and, as necessary, receive needed care; however, non-consensual testing and routine

breaches of confidentiality for HIV-positive people who are in prison or jail also perpetuate the abuse and disrespect of the imprisoned. Correctional facilities enforce abstinence policies, allowing no sex, no drug use, and no programs or services that, in promoting harm reduction, might seem to condone either (Dubik-Unruh 1999; Hammett et al. 1998). Only recently have condoms been made available in Vermont, Mississippi, and California state prisons and in five city jail systems (Kantor 2006; Lucas et al. 2014).

The AIDS Counseling and Education Program (ACE) at New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Facility represents an alternative, compassionate peer-led response to HIV/AIDS. This education program offered for and by prisoners has its roots in participatory, liberatory pedagogy (Freire 2000 [1970]). ACE grew out of an effort to make literacy instruction more relevant to women's lives by organizing instruction around the subject of AIDS (Boudin 1993). The content's relevance and resonance allowed the course to empower prisoners, promote health, and reduce harm among women prisoners (Fine et al. 2004).

The initial course's success inspired the 1988 founding of ACE—a peer HIV/AIDS education effort that now exists independent of literacy instruction. Other founders drew on histories of political activism, fears of infection, concern for family members, and a commitment to bringing their skills to a peer-based HIV education effort (Clark and Boudin 1990). Other prisoners quickly learned of the program and wanted to be involved, and local and state prison administration offered support. Tensions emerged quickly, however, between the promise of addressing the needs of, on the one hand, people living with HIV/AIDS and contending with the risk of infection and, on the other, those charged with maintaining the punitive conditions of incarceration (Boudin 1993; Boudin et al. 1999; Clark and Boudin 1990).

Peer education appears to be as effective in stemming unhealthy behaviors as those led by professional staff (Devilly et al. 2005). Their impact exceeds conventional prevention education goals, however. Peer education programs have the potential to resist systemic violence enacted inside prisons. Prisoners become responsible for teaching and learning with other prisoners, claiming some control over the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and authority. Such claims do not come easy: with minimal resources and autonomy, even trained and supported prisoners may struggle to assume the role of sexuality educator (Ender and Newton 2000; Maheady 1998). However, the appeal of peer instructor programs to prisoners and the empowerment and fulfillment some educators achieve suggest peer sexuality education may have a central role to play in not only promoting sexual health and well-being but also resisting the dehumanizing effects of incarceration.

Not surprisingly, tensions abound: between prisons as infantilizing and prisons as spaces for growth and between the responsibility and authority afforded peer educators and the deference and compliance expected of prisoners. Peer HIV/AIDS and sexuality education programs interrupt the conditions of incarceration: the logic of imprisonment and deprivation breaks momentarily as prisoners assume the mantle and authority of "educator"; prison-based programming exceeds the constraints established by a commitment to punishment and control. Nevertheless, the carceral logic remains in place; no education is allowed that is perceived to exceed the carceral system's aims, and mass incarceration can survive the interruption.

Nevertheless, prisons "contain cracks and openings for change" (Boudin 1993, p. 229). The same feminist, queer, and post-structural understandings of institutions and interactions that have sparked a rethinking of school-based sexuality education similarly support efforts to consider mass incarceration and the containment of prisoners as never absolute, always negotiated, and vulnerable to interruptions. ACE calls on educators to simultaneously cultivate students' imagination for what could be (in the spirit of Maxine Greene (2000)), while also standing in awe of the carceral setting's capacity to assert and enforce its vision of what will be.

Claiming Space for Gender Nonconformity and Educating Jail Staff

Historically, the high turnover in US jails (as compared with federal and state prisons) has meant that fewer rehabilitative and service programs are available to prisoners. However, in recent years, public health educators and advocates have increasingly argued jails represent a "tremendous opportunity" to provide HIV/AIDS education, reproductive health care, sexuality education, and other programming and services to which prisoners may not routinely have access outside of jail (Nijhawan et al. 2009).

For gender nonconforming and transgender people, however, the care jails offer is compromised by the harassment and violence they encounter while incarcerated in correctional facilities organized around a binary logic of "female" and "male" bodies (Arkles 2009; The Sylvia Rivera Law Project 2007; Tarzwell 2006). In an ostensible attempt to increase safety, most correctional facilities house transgender people in solitary confinement and protective custody housing (The American Jail Association 2015; Arkles 2009; The Sylvia

Rivera Law Project 2007). Sometimes, solitary confinement provides relief from violence; however, the psychological violence of isolation is associated with extended incarceration, increased surveillance, and reduced opportunities for people to build alliances and solidarity (Arkles 2009). The segregation of imprisoned transgender people severs the social networks they might find or develop in jail. It thus also isolates them from care and resources available to others inside the jail.

Challenging the logic of solitary confinement requires sexuality education for not only prisoners but also correctional staff. The 2003 passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) required nearly all lock-up facilities to comply with new federal regulations aimed to prevent sexual abuse and harassment (The American Jail Association 2015). PREA mandated education and training for correctional staff and administrators (http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/node/1912). Training topics include sexual violence, needs of gender-nonconforming prisoners, and the sexual cultures of prisons and jails. The instruction enlists correctional staff in efforts to recognize sexual and gender diversity, prevent sexual violence, and foster LGBTQI safety. Such mandated training casts those holding formal power as a body of learners and interrupts their claims to authority and knowledge.

Despite PREA, most US facilities remain poorly equipped to ensure the safety of LGBTQI prisoners, and most continue to segregate and isolate transgender and gender-nonconforming prisoners (The American Jail Association 2015). Non-governmental and community-based organizations have deployed their own efforts to insist correctional staff address the gendered and sexual violence of jailing. The Prisoner Advisory Committee of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project in New York counters the effects of segregation by documenting the daily realities and conditions of confinement, recommending policy change, and developing educational programming beyond what PREA requires (The Sylvia Rivera Law Project 2007). The Advisory Committee recently helped create a new transgender women's housing unit at Rikers Jail (Mathias 2014), similar to a special jail unit for gay male and transgender women in Los Angeles (Dolovich 2012). Consistently, prisoners and advocates are educating correctional staff. Though they cannot entirely reverse the broad harms of a punitive carceral system, such efforts promise to interrupt segregation, reduce sexual assault, and foster a supportive community for people while imprisoned (Dolovich 2012).

Resistance and Reimagining Outside Correctional Facilities

Street-outreach programs operate outside the criminal justice system to provide vulnerable communities peer outreach, education, and access to hormone therapy, reproductive health care, and other services (Alexander 1997; Jenness 1993; St. James Infirmary 2014). Ironically, sexuality education within jails and prisons provides court-involved persons with the knowledge—and sometimes tools—to practice safer sex. Yet, the criminal justice system frequently punishes those who adopt the recently advocated behavior once they are released from correctional facilities. For example, "Condoms as Evidence" policies cast sex workers' possession of condoms or condom wrappers as evidence of intent to practice sex work. The arrest of these sex workers—usually homeless and unstably housed people of color—is thus justified (Human Rights Watch 2012; St. James Infirmary 2010). Street outreach can counter these efforts.

Outreach workers interrupt the logics of incarceration by, on the one hand, touching the lives of those still caught in the carceral system and, on the other, positioning themselves outside the system, on the streets where court-involved people live, congregate, and work (Valentine and Wright-De Agüero 1996). For these workers, education is a tool of activism—an opportunity to create and model equity while challenging structures of oppression and striving for mutually humanizing interactions (Freire 2000 [1970]). Outside the surveillance and control of correctional facilities, people on the street can "reimagine themselves as agents who make choices, take responsibility, create change for themselves or others, … and design a future not over determined by the past" (Fine et al. 2004, p. 101). Reimagining can take many forms. The change may lie in knowing how to better ensure their health and safety inside correctional facilities if they are locked up again (Wenger 2014). Alternatively, instruction may mean discussing healthy relationships and strategies for reducing harm suffered in intimate partner violence. Other times, at needle exchange sites, in drop-in centers, or on street corners, people receive an education in safer injection, overdose prevention, and HIV/Hepatitis C/STI prevention.

Indeed, outreach spaces create the possibilities for educational exchange of immediately applicable information (Valentine and Wright-De Agüero 1996, p. 67). Volunteers, case managers, re-entry workers, and peers work in homeless drop-in centers, street corners, residential hotels, and mobile outreach vans to provide safer sex education and materials (condoms and lube) to sex

workers and sometimes *johns*. A rapid HIV-test becomes an opportunity to discuss strategies to reduce the risk of violence. A visit to a residential hotel means the chance to suggest using female condoms (FC2) as an alternative to unprotected sex.

In these brief moments, the guiding principle is supporting every individual as "the authority and expert of the issues that concern them" (Koyama 2001). Learners engage and negotiate the information and resources they desire, define and communicate their needs, and make decisions that outreach workers strive to recognize and respect. Education and authority are co-constructed and learner-centered as community members—including court-involved people—participate in and help create the programs designed to serve them. As with prison-based ACE, peer education and community involvement counteract educational models with top-down agendas that perpetuate revictimization and stigmatization (Bolton and Singer 1992). On the streets, tensions among control, punishment, empowerment, and learning may be eased.

Pedagogical Models: Identifying Opportunities and Responding to Life Conditions

Below we offer two models of HIV and sexuality education, drawn from our work with people moving through the courts and incarceration. We do not offer lesson *plans*. Instead, we offer models of sexuality education we have developed and implemented in carceral contexts where planning is difficult, adaptability is invaluable, and the goal of interrupting the conditions of mass incarceration—even momentarily—shapes our most ambitious efforts.

Jail-Based Collaboration: Participatory Sexuality Research and Education

Jailed Women and HIV Education was a participatory action research project that aimed to understand the many ways incarcerated women experience HIV/AIDS risk and infection and identify the obstacles that incarcerated women confront when trying to implement HIV/AIDS prevention strategies (Fields et al. 2008). The workshops were a collaboration among researchers from San Francisco State University, health educators from the Forensic AIDS Project of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, and women incarcerated in San Francisco County Jail.

The project approached HIV/AIDS through a focus on sexuality, incarceration, and vulnerability. With training from the university partners, incarcerated women interviewed one another about HIV risk and prevention and worked with researchers to analyze the information they had gathered. They also acquired skills and knowledge that prepared them to act as peer health educators, both in jail and after their release. Some women who first became involved in the project while incarcerated joined the team after their release as paid project staff. The team sought opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women to voice their understandings and experiences of HIV/AIDS, well-being, and safety and to work together to promote health and justice in the lives of incarcerated women, their families, and their communities.

When they began this work, team members expected to develop and distribute a participatory HIV-prevention curriculum for use with jailed women. As the project progressed, the most valuable aspect of the project proved to be its participatory nature. An established curriculum of lessons and learning objectives threatened to undermine the participation central to the project's success. The team stepped back from the idea of a curriculum and instead developed a pedagogical model that educators and researchers could use in jails with incarcerated women. The resulting cyclical model elicited the incarcerated women's participation and, in doing so, allowed the team to learn with them about HIV, risk, resilience, and education in their lives. The learning process, as opposed to the learning outcome, proved to be the most empowering and life-changing opportunity we facilitated (Fig. 14.1).

In the first session, health educators on the team led a discussion of HIV-prevention strategies. The session concluded with the collaborators together

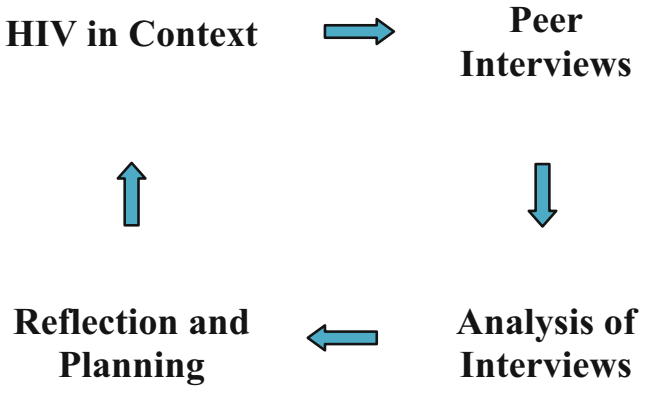


Fig. 14.1 Jailed Women and HIV Education's participatory workshop cycle

identifying obstacles to women acting on these lessons. Questions raised in this discussion informed an interview guide that the entire team constructed collaboratively. In the second session, outside researchers trained women to implement the interview guide. Incarcerated researchers then interviewed one another in pairs, audio recording their conversations. The session concluded with a discussion of the women's experiences talking and listening in the interviews.

The following week, researchers reviewed the interviews and identified one to three transcripts to transcribe and bring into the third workshop. During that session, outside researchers facilitated the incarcerated researchers' open coding of the excerpts, in which they examined transcripts and field notes broadly for themes, patterns, and categories. This analysis contributed to the team's emerging and comprehensive understanding of HIV-negative and HIV-positive incarcerated women's experiences with HIV and AIDS, including the obstacles that incarcerated women confront when trying to implement protection strategies. These analyses generated new questions and observations for discussion in the fourth workshop session. The outcomes of that discussion guided the structure and content of the next cycle of sessions, when the series began anew. For example, when interviews about discussing safer sex with partners revealed that women stayed in relationships they considered bad for them, the next series of workshops focused on women's decisions to stay in unhealthy relationships and obstacles to their leaving those relationships.

This model embraces sexuality education as an opportunity to discuss desire and healthy relationships and to explore the compulsory heterosexuality, sexual and physical abuse, and poverty that inform the sexual lives of incarcerated women of color. An iterative pedagogical practice affords incarcerated women greater power to determine the course and quality of their time in the workshops than in other moments of their incarceration or in conventional research and educational settings. Critics of participatory research and education are justifiably concerned about unequal power relationships, competing priorities, and (under)privileged positionalities. As a research team, incarcerated and outside co-researchers in this project sought meaningful collaboration and shared success, knowledge, and opportunity while remaining mindful of the structural constraints that threaten to undermine our collaboration.

Sexuality Education on the Street: The Opportunities Afforded by Harm Reduction

The street-outreach education model is an expansive and adaptive method aimed to reach vulnerable communities who are marginalized or displaced and often do not have the access to other supportive educational programs. At the

core of the street-outreach educational philosophy are learner-centered and learner-developed curricula, peer educators, respectful and non-judgmental alliances, and harm reduction principles. There is no single curriculum for street-outreach sexuality education; curriculum is developed and defined with the learners themselves.

The Women's Community Clinic's Outreach Program promotes the health, rights, and dignity of cisgender and transgender homeless and unstably housed women in San Francisco. Its participant-centered education and harm reduction principles are evident in its longstanding evening street outreach known as "The Condom Ladies." The clinic also offers "L-ternship," a peer education-based workforce development, and "Ladies Night," a weekly drop-in program. The community of participants are cisgender and transgender women of color of a diverse age range, most of whom have participated or currently participate in street-based sex work. Most are currently using illicit and licit substances or in recovery and homeless or unstably-housed. All are vulnerable to excessive surveillance and policing, and the majority are court-involved—that is, previously incarcerated, on parole or probation, or with warrants for their arrest.

The outreach program's success rests in part on its approach to sexuality education. Most often, people initiate contact with street-outreach workers for assistance with peripheral needs—for example, obtaining clean syringes or condoms. This contact affords workers opportunities to inquire about their health, safety, sexual behaviors, housing, and well-being and offer support, education, referrals, and safer sex/drug-use supplies. To address these needs, the clinic collaborates with a consortium of supportive educational programs, including needle exchange, overdose prevention and naloxone training, violence prevention and safety, reproductive health care, health care for sex workers, affordable housing, case management, and tenant's rights. The street-outreach educational model recognizes that the "realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination and other social inequalities affect both people's vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with harmful behaviors" (Harm Reduction Coalition 2014).

Learner-centeredness and harm reduction are the underlying principles. Learning is successful when it acknowledges the contexts of people's lives, and the understanding of and sensitivity to, psychosocial, economic, and cultural factors and when the learner is regarded as the expert on their issues, experiences, motivations, and feelings (Harm Reduction Coalition 2014). Learning is enhanced within a climate in which the learner is affirmed as an agent making choices about their lives and where learners have access to a spectrum of sexuality education, practices, and strategies. Harm reduction emerged at the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis as a philosophy aimed to establish quality of life and well-being, as the criteria for successful interventions and to

reduce an individual's harmful behaviors and the structural harms vulnerable communities are often faced with. Canadian activist and scholar Susan Boyd asserts, "[H]arm reduction is not a panacea, it is unreasonable to believe that it will eradicate all social oppressions. Yet, harm reduction initiatives can provide a shift in policy and practice that bring social factors to the foreground. It can also pave the way for compassionate and human-rights models of care" (2007). Harm reduction and learner-centeredness in the context of street-outreach provide an alternative and resistance to carceral punishment as an arm of sexuality education for vulnerable communities and challenge us to collectively reimagine a safer, healthier, more just society.

Conclusion

The destructive forces of confinement and punishment have important implications for sexuality education for court-involved people. Sexuality education can interrupt inequality and injustice, but these interruptions must always negotiate the suffering and oppression wrought by court involvement. The correctional setting may offer a critical opportunity to provide sexuality education for hidden and marginalized populations; however, relying on imprisonment to reach hidden and vulnerable communities threatens to affirm the value of incarceration. While jail and prisons may provide safety nets for those in need of sites of sexuality education and health services, they remain inherently harmful institutions.

Peer HIV/AIDS and sexuality education programs, such as Bedford Hills' ACE, advance momentary allowances for the imprisoned to assume authority as educators and resist top-down learning and the dehumanizing impact of incarceration. These programs also must contend with the tensions within an infantilizing regime. Efforts to re-educate jail and prison staff through PREA-mandated efforts as well as community-based efforts of groups like The Sylvia Rivera Law Project and the Prisoner Advisory promise meaningful change as they interrupt the pull of solitary confinement and claim spaces for imprisoned LGBTQI people. Nevertheless, once again, the structures and systems responsible for isolation, surveillance and brutal policing remain in place. Outside jails and prisons, on the streets, on parole or probation, or in alternative sentencing practices, court-involved people may find both relief from the starkest conditions of incarceration and educational opportunities that affirm their personhood. However, their bodies remain vulnerable to the disciplining power of the carceral system. Within the conditions of mass incarceration, the resources people gain while incarcerated are opportunities for empowerment

and occasions for exclusion: yes, people may have new or renewed access to benefits, but they may also find themselves on a path to failure—a failure to take advantage of an opportunity, a failure to succeed despite resources being available, a failure to achieve the sexual lives others want for them.

The swift expansion of mass incarceration in recent years and the dominant systems that subjugate vulnerable communities are unlikely to yield. Sexuality education, prisoner advocacy programs, and supportive social services are thus all the more important. These programs have the potential to be restorative and transformative, but they remain constrained by their dependence on correctional facilities. Developing and strengthening community-based responses to sexual and social health inequities and committing to decarceration efforts offer the greatest hope for interrupting recidivism and fostering solidarity and resistance. We must consider and implement alternatives in which liberatory education imagines a new future no longer mediated by incarceration.

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15

Sex Education, Youth, and Advocacy: Sexual Literacy, Critical Media, and Intergenerational Sex Education(s)

Marisa Ragonese, Christin P. Bowman, and Deborah L. Tolman

In 2013, two high school age members of the intergenerational feminist activist group Sexualization Protest: Action, Resistance, Knowledge (SPARK; www.sparkmovement.com) showcased the tacit messages delivered to teen girls in the USA through mainstream media in an innovative and high-impact way: They decided to see what it would be like if, for a month, they followed all of the beauty, health, and relationship/flirting advice disseminated to girls via *Teen Vogue* and *Seventeen Magazine*. As directed, they went on restrictive diets, "bumped and flattered" boys in the school hallways, and stealthily exercised while brushing their teeth and sitting at their school desks. Then, they documented their experiences through blogs on SPARK's Facebook page. They concluded that these magazines gave them a lot of contradictory advice that is confusing and hurts girls: accept your body but spend all of your time trying to trim it down; be yourself but suppress the personality qualities and habits

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that are annoying to boys. Consequently, being at peace with oneself—as the girls were also advised to do by the magazines—became one more impossible task in the service of crafting a "positive" image through very self-abnegating and disempowering practices. Ultimately, the girls illustrated that between all of the secret squats and the constant hunger, peace was impossible. But, through articulation of and public interaction with some of the material practices of femininity that sustain the tacit power relations between boys and girls (Holland et al. 1998), and by holding the media responsible for the simulacra of the ideal woman, these girls exposed and reworked damaging cultural messages. They created their own representations of healthy girls in action, illustrating to other girls that *critiquing*, rather than *following*, the advice of mainstream media may bring a girl closer to authentic and embodied peace. By instigating and hosting this important conversation, the girls were participating in a new form of online sex education that is activist-oriented, accessible to young people, and wide in scope: youth-led and adult-supported public engagement with and critiques of normative constructions of sexuality, gender, and power.

As these SPARK members learned and showcased, girls (and boys) are constantly being educated about sexuality and gender, whether or not these messages are explicit (Fields 2012). *Teen Vogue* and *Seventeen Magazine* presented a narrow (heterosexual, middle class) perspective on gender, sexuality, and power that was unspoken, yet loud and clear: it is girls' responsibility to get boys to like them and they can accomplish this by perfecting their appearances and building up boys' egos. Perhaps these magazines never intended to give a lesson on gender and power. But when sexuality and relationships are the topic, gender and power are always already part of the lesson. In an impressive and effective repositioning, the SPARK girls made those lessons explicit and critiqued them for the world to see. These young activists taught a counter-lesson in sexuality that they rooted in a critique and creative protest of systems of power and gender. Their work provides education scholars and practitioners a blueprint for imagining how sex education can and does happen online, and how an intergenerational, youth-fueled critical lens can forefront the sexist social contexts in which young people must navigate their sexualities, as well as the identities and material practices they engage, eschew, and/or challenge in order to do so (also see Renold 2005). This turn in sex education is a productive and promising one, particularly because it occurs via the Internet; almost all teenagers use the Internet on a daily basis, and teenagers turn to Internet media for information about sexual health (Lenhart 2015; Simon and Daneback 2013), making it a necessary and ripe site of sex education that occurs beyond the boundaries of traditional, classroom-based sex education.

Background

Sex education in US classrooms traditionally focuses on puberty and basic reproductive anatomy (Future of Sex Education Initiative 2012). Although for years, researchers, activists, and educators have advocated for and created curricula that include relevant information about sex and sexuality in US classrooms (e.g. Fine and McClelland 2006), particularly since the founding of Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) in 1964, religious and conservative groups have also advocated to limit sex education to abstinence-only programs, winning many moral and ethical battles for control of sex education in public schools, resulting in widespread deployment of sex education grounded in the central tenet of abstaining from sexual activity until marriage (Fine and McClelland 2006). Abstinence-only until marriage (AOUM) programs teach young people that, until (heterosexual) marriage, no sexual options exist other than abstinence, and these programs do not include any instruction on contraception other than to highlight the "likelihood" of contraception failure (Santelli et al. 2006). From 1998 to 2009, sex education in US classrooms was often limited to these scientifically inaccurate and ineffective AOUM programs intended to discourage adolescent sex (Kohler et al. 2008). In contrast, sexuality education programs that are considered "comprehensive" (though they may themselves differ widely) offer "age-appropriate" (McClelland and Hunter 2013) and medically accurate information about sexual decision-making and relationships, disease and pregnancy prevention, abstinence, and contraception. However, from 1998 to 2009, federal funding for sex education was funneled into AOUM programs (Schalet et al. 2014), resulting in only 14% of schools offering comprehensive sex education in the USA.

In 2010, eligibility for funds was opened to schools willing to adopt one of 35 evidence-based comprehensive interventions that have been determined to reduce rates of sexually transmitted infection (STI) contraction, sexual risk taking, and teen pregnancy (Schalet et al. 2014). Finding even these programs lacking in crucial information about healthy sexuality, reformers of sex education have advocated for the inclusion of subjectivity, desire, gender, power, and pleasure in curriculum materials (Allen 2007a, b; Allen et al. 2013; Bay-Cheng 2003; Carmody 2005; Kiely 2005; McClelland and Fine 2014): a "pleasurable pedagogy" (Allen 2007b).

However, direct and intergenerational discussions about negotiating power, seeking pleasure, and embodied desire are still "missing" from most sex education classrooms (Allen et al. 2013; Fine 1988; Fine and McClelland 2006; Tolman 2002). In the case of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT)

students, such information is even scarcer (Bay-Cheng 2003; Formby et al. 2010; Pingel et al. 2013; Smith et al. 2011). Though evidence-based programs are known to reduce unwanted pregnancies and STI rates, by leaving out critical dimensions of sexuality such as pleasure and gendered power relations, they may still provide young people with a parochial moral education grounded in "hidden" values (Lamb 2013). Rather than providing young people with the tools they need to recognize and navigate the complexities of sexuality, gender, and power (Fields 2012) and to practice sexuality that is safe and comfortable to them, sex education often focuses on the dangers of sex both medically (e.g. pregnancy and STIs) and interpersonally (e.g. girls' responsibility for keeping boys' "unstoppable" libidos at bay; Fields 2008; Hirst 2013). These risk narratives socialize students to adopt narrow constructions of heterosexuality and to abstain from sex, rather than appreciating both the risks and pleasures of sexuality, and learning to critique and rework the world around them (APA 2007; Fine 1988; Fields 2008; Hirst 2013; Lamb 2010; Martin and Kazyak 2009). If, for example, girls are represented as sexual gatekeepers to boys' unrelenting sex drives (e.g. girls being taught how to say "no" and boys being taught how to respect girls' boundaries), or sex is represented as typically dangerous and/or simplistic (e.g. typically risky, heterosexual, within marriage), then sex education programs continue, in essence, to reinforce hegemonic power structures by failing to engage and question stereotyped beliefs about how boys and girls do and ought to behave with each other.

Additionally, though a large body of research demonstrates that young people's sexual decision-making does not happen in a vacuum (e.g. Pleck et al. 1993; Santana et al. 2006), the vital critical thinking and analytical skills necessary to navigate unequal and power-laden messages and contexts are generally deprioritized if not deliberately sidelined (Allen et al. 2013; Brown et al. 2014b; Marin and Halpern 2011). AOUM programs, for instance, may intentionally lead young people away from deconstructing dominant power relations (Allen et al. 2013), instead conveying (implicit) messages about gender that are depoliticized but deeply rooted in conservative values of traditional heterosexuality.

Meanwhile, a vast and varied political and cultural "curriculum" about sex, sexuality, power, and pleasure persists through prolific media messaging, particularly via the Internet. Despite a persistent and multi-faceted "digital divide" (Van Dijk and Jan 2005) mirroring wider trends of inequality based on class, race, and gender (Pascoe 2011), today's young people are "digital natives" (Prensky 2001)—that is, they have grown up using the Internet, and its lexicon and practices are part of how they communicate. As digital natives, they have often already developed some skills for discerning between reliable

and unreliable information (Simon and Daneback 2013). But being digital natives does not mean that young people have an innate ability to critically analyze the media they consume. The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media is known as *media literacy* (Livingstone 2004), and it is a skill that must be taught, honed, and utilized. Adults at SPARK, for example, work with girls to develop these skills and apply them in activist contexts to educate their peers.

Furthermore, young people constantly navigate multiple competing messages about sex and sexuality that they receive from school-based education, parents, peers, and the media. While schools may teach young people to abstain from sexual activity, health clinics pass out condoms, and peers whisper to one another about pleasure and desire. While parents may blush and avoid frank and honest conversations about sexuality, young people are exposed to pervasive sexual messaging through advertisements, magazines, and other media. While AOUM advocates wring their hands over the idea of discussing sexual orientation in schools, lesbian comediennes Ellen DeGeneres and Wanda Sykes are cultural icons, former Disney child star Miley Cyrus identifies as sexually fluid, and young people come out as queer and start Gay–Straight Alliances at school—all while "dyke," "faggot," and "slut" continue to be some of the most common and feared epithets among young people (Kosciw et al. 2012), since maintaining sexual norms remains salient to the social currency systems of young people (Chambers et al. 2004; Renold 2005; Rawlings and Russell 2013).

The media representations of sex, gender, and sexuality are also replete with competing messages. Women are portrayed as sexually liberated, modern, and independent on the one hand, and bound by the mandates of femininity on the other (Gill and Sharff 2013). Internet blogs and Facebook posts often begin with "trigger warnings" meant to protect people from unwanted information, while utterly unavoidable sexually explicit material is splashed across billboards and played out in movies. Even the recent public outpouring of support of (and criticism about) Caitlyn Jenner's gender transition unveiled on the cover of *Vanity Fair* brought about complicated and competing responses: support for her right to self-determination is entangled with support for (and critique of) traditional femininity.

It is in this complex milieu, saturated with multiple competing and increasingly complicated messages about sexuality, that young people—and all people—are situated and circulate their own messages and information about sex and sexuality. With schools being so limited in the topics covered in sex education and young people spending so much time online, perhaps the Internet has become the main place in which young people are exposed to and interact with the cultural values of adults and their peers. School-based

sex education programs thus exist in parallel, and sometimes in opposition, to this online "cultural curriculum." From the perspective of young people, then, have schools become a sort of alternate reality that is often (literally) disconnected from the online world in which today's young people spend much of their time? Young people, after all, eagerly seek practical and culturally relevant information about negotiating gender norms, sexuality, pleasure, and relationships (Allen et al. 2014), but if schools cannot or do not provide this information, then young people seek that information online. It is, therefore, crucial that educators and adults acknowledge the importance of the Internet to young people and work with young people to develop the media literacy skills they need to critically consume the information they access there. And because the messages young people receive online and elsewhere are conflicting and contentious—and often grounded in hegemonic gender norms—critical media education must also incorporate discussions about how sexuality is related to systems of power, and offer young people opportunities to speak back.

We do not mean to imply that implementing this sort of critical education in schools is always easy or even possible. Teachers have been fired for failing to comply with restrictive standards for school-based sex education (McClelland and Frost 2014), and so, educators in both comprehensive and AOUM schools may fear for their jobs and reputations when discussing gender, sexuality, and power in their classrooms. However, when schools do address issues of gender and power, students benefit greatly. A recent study found that sex education programs that explicitly teach about gender and power (e.g. norms of masculinity and femininity, gender inequality in society, unequal power in sexual relationships, gender and power dynamics of contraceptive use) are associated with significantly lower rates of unintended pregnancy and STIs (Haberland 2015). Moreover, some schools have begun to explicitly teach about pleasure and desire (e.g. Hirst 2013; Lamb et al. 2013), signifying important progress toward addressing these "missing" discourses in schools (Fine 1988).

However, following young people out of classrooms and the confines of narrowly defined sex education may be a necessary (Futch 2013) and strategic shift for sex educators and researchers who work with young people. Sex education can be incorporated into classrooms outside of the health or biological sciences (more on this below), and crucially, it can meet young people where they are—online (Lenhart 2015). In the remainder of this chapter, we review the terrain of media-driven sex education that has developed in response to policy limitations, teen demand, and adolescent creativity. These resources mobilize various forms of media and can be incorporated into classrooms, as well as other youth

spaces (especially spaces with an Internet connection). We conclude with a workshop that focuses on critical engagement with online media, encouraging young people to use media literacy skills to produce and disseminate messages about sex and sexuality within their online spaces. We argue that young people's ability to produce and circulate their own *critical* messages about sexuality represents the most advanced form of media literacy learning and, more importantly, constitutes truly grassroots media activism capable of representing the many experiences of young people.

Media Messages

Because mainstream media is awash with sex-related information and is easily accessed by young people through portable devices, including smartphones and tablets (Brown and Witherspoon 2002; Fields 2012), Internet media (including pornography) are arguably the most frequent sources of information about sex for adolescents (Jones and Biddlecom 2011; Simon and Daneback 2013). Young people turn to the media more than their parents or schools for information about sexuality (as cited in Brown et al. 2014a; Kaiser Family Foundation/Seventeen Magazine 2004). This does not mean that young people wish to avoid conversations about sex with adults; teens want to talk to their parents about sex but tend to not feel comfortable doing it (Kantor 2013). This discomfort may help explain why so many young people turn to the media for information about sex and sexuality, and do so increasingly as they move through puberty, when the sexual content of media becomes relevant to them (Brown et al. 2014a). In fact, media is so prominent and influential in teens' lives that researchers have described media as the new peer group, or "super peer," particularly for girls (Brown et al. 2005). Additionally, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of sexual health websites are accessed by about a quarter of all teens for information regarding sex, sexuality, pregnancy, and STIs (Lenhart et al. 2005). Young people thus live much of their lives enmeshed with Internet media in particular (Bolton et al. 2013)—a vibrant venue for them to understand and develop their genders and sexualities (Boyd 2013; Fields 2012).

However, in mainstream sexual imagery, the sexual double standard persists, rewarding boys for their sexual experiences and punishing girls for theirs (Attwood 2007; Jackson and Cram 2003; Tanenbaum 2015), even as the line dividing "good" girls from "bad" is blurry at best (Brown and Chesney-Lind 2005; Charlton 2007; Ringrose 2005). Sexual imagery is ubiquitous in mainstream media such as music videos and other youth-oriented television

(Wolak et al. 2007). Girls are bombarded with the message that they can be reduced to their sexuality and that their sexuality can be reduced to the way their bodies look (Zurbriggen et al. 2007); boys are similarly barraged with the notion that they must want (heterosexual) sex at all times and that these desires should be dissociated from emotional longings (Pleck et al. 1993; Way 2011; Tolman et al. 2003). Media is rife with discourses of girls' responsibility to be gatekeepers against boys' "naturally" forceful sexualities and insinuations or accusations that girls are responsible when boys aggress and transgress (Aubrey 2004). These pervasive representations of girls and women as sexualized objects of others' desires rather than as agents of their own sexuality, and of boys and men using and consuming girls and women as commodities, are so common they often seem natural and normal (Chambers et al. 2004; Impett et al. 2006; Tolman et al. 2006).

The messages young people garner from Internet media shape their understandings of sex, sexuality, and gender (Escobar-Chaves et al. 2005; Ward 2003), as well as their behaviors (Wright 2011). Frequent viewing of sexualized genres is consistently associated with greater acceptance of common sexual stereotypes (Haferkamp 1999; Strouse and Buerkel-Rothfuss 1987; Walsh-Childers and Brown 1993; Ward 2002, as cited by Ward and Friedman 2006), and there is an empirical link between adolescents' exposure to media coverage and beliefs that women are sexual objects (Brown et al. 2006; L'Engle et al. 2006; Ward 2002; Ward and Friedman 2006). Furthermore, girls and boys (queer and straight, across all social and racial strata) who transgress the pervasive and localized mandates of hegemonic femininity and masculinity are subjected to gendered regulation on- and off-line through various acts of aggression (bullying), often in the form of name-calling ("fag," "slut," "thot") and harassment (Pacoe 2007; Rawlings 2014; Ringrose and Renold 2010).

Young people, particularly boys, also watch a considerable amount of pornography online (Braun-Courville and Rojas 2009), which is now widely available, affordable, and anonymous, and increasingly a part of everyday life for boys (Cooper et al. 2000; Binik 2001; Fisher and Barak 2001, as cited by Štulhofer et al. 2010). Regular exposure to sexually aggressive pornography increases boys' (but not girls') acceptance of sexist social scripts such as rape myths (Malamuth and Check 1981; Malamuth and Huppin 2005; Weisz and Earls 1985; Wilson et al. 2002), and sexually explicit content in online pornography correlates with viewing women as sexual objects for both boys and girls (Peter and Valkenburg 2007). The "pornographic script" also creates expectations among young people for stereotyped sexual performance and bodily ideals (Lofgren-Martenson and Mansson 2010) that place particular pressure on girls. When boys are repeatedly exposed to narrow conceptions of female attractiveness, they may also find it difficult to feel satisfied or be intimate with female partners (Schooler and Ward 2006).

Though some health professionals and scholars have expressed concern about whether young people can separate good and reliable information from the misleading and reprehensible (Eysenbach 2008; Morahan-Martin 2004), young people are not simply passive recipients of this inadvertent media education. One recent analysis, for instance, found that young people are able to distinguish between reliable and unreliable information when using the Internet for sex education (Simon and Daneback 2013). And though teens, primarily boys, turn to pornography as a source of information about sex, another study found that both boys and girls are critical consumers of it, recognizing that porn indulges the sexual fantasies of men, using women as sexual props to enact such fantasies (Lofgren-Martenson, and Mansson 2010).

Young people are, therefore, simultaneously affected by and critical of this media-driven sex education. This situation leaves adults conflicted about the relative merits or dangers of such media lessons for young people. For instance, some scholars argue that "sexting" is a teen production of pornography that positions young people as agents (Hasinoff 2012); others have found that girls feel compelled to produce "sexy selfies" in accordance with gendered, racialized, and classed discursive contexts (Ringrose et al. 2013). Such critical discussions are important, because they present the context of young people's sexual lives as complicated and uncertain. Perhaps sexting is not *either* an agentic moment *or* a capitulation to hegemonic norms but instead is *both* of these. Young people can and ought to be meaningfully engaged in discussions about these complicated tensions.

Considering the ubiquity of media and online sex education, we suggest that the urgent questions about sex education may be changing from what is or is not included in school-based curricula, to how adults can help young people engage with and push back against conflicting cultural messages. In other words, what are adults and young people learning and teaching about sex (including gender and power) beyond the classroom walls? In what ways are they finding and creating opportunities for resistance to gendered norms? How do young people educate one another and develop counter-narratives and social justice projects? How can young people engage with the contentious messages they receive in ways that subvert the dominant scripts and open up sites for critical education?

Sex Education and the Internet

Internet-based opportunities for independent and anonymous information seeking (Valkenberg and Peter 2011; as cited in Brown et al. 2014a) can foster sexual autonomy, healthy relationships, and healthy development (Barak and

Fisher 2001). Often, particular aspects of sexuality are addressed in particular places. Some websites convey information about STIs and birth control, while others incorporate information about sexuality and relationships, and others work to challenge hegemonic norms (and some sites may also incorporate more than one aspect of sexuality in one place).

As an example, the type of sex education provided by SPARK addresses one particular aspect of sexuality that is salient to young women—the sexualization of women and girls in the media. SPARK provides an intergenerational feminist community that allows girls to work together to strengthen their recognition that sexism gets in the way of their and their peers' ability to become comfortable with their developing bodies and sexualities, which has led the SPARK girls to address issues of gender, sexuality and power. The girls at SPARK bring a sophisticated understanding, in conversation with the adults with whom they work, of what ownership of and entitlement to their sexuality means as part of their overall well-being. This exciting form of sex education is made all the more powerful when girls work collaboratively with adults who support and are committed to girls' rights to embodied sexuality and self-expression. Intergenerational sex education provides a safe space in which young people can express their thoughts, opinions, and experiences without judgment, and adults can educate young people through gentle corrections of mistakes or misinformation. While sex education classrooms have traditionally served as the space in which such intergenerational discussions about sexuality occur, we argue that many other spaces can serve this role as well. Utilizing the Internet provides an opportunity for adults and young people to learn from one another, and is a promising avenue for sex education. At SPARK, for instance, the space is dynamic and reciprocal in that young people are able to discuss the issues that matter in their lives, thereby educating adults, while adults are able to oversee young people's dissemination of information to ensure that it is factually correct. The role of adults is to ensure young people's usage of empirically evidenced information so that debates and discussions remain grounded in research.

The SPARK members' activism is thus a kind of sexuality education that defies common conceptions, practices, and boundaries. The girls draw attention to problems in their lives using the Internet to recruit allies and spread the word. Through blogs and other writing, campaigns, performances, and other arts-based actions, these girls encourage media literacy and empower other girls to develop the skill set to do the same. Their challenges to dominant culture chip away at dominant norms about girls' and women's bodies and sexuality and call out a sexualizing culture that dehumanizes girls and women of all ages, as well as men and boys who are under increased pressure to commodify women, girls, and sex.

The potential for online media and media literacy skills to revolutionize sex education is as endless as it is underutilized for this wired generation. Young people create, produce, and widely distribute resources that push back against misinformation, opening up new avenues of discussion about sex and sexuality that are relevant and meaningful to their peers. Social media, in particular, is a powerful tool for disseminating interventions to help youth make informed decisions about sex, sexuality, and relationships, thereby reducing the risk of spreading or contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Dunne et al. 2014). The SPARK girls utilized Facebook to update their followers on the developments of their magazine advice adventure, and employed humor to convey a powerful message. After all, such magazine prescriptions are almost never followed to the letter, particularly in a public forum, and the girls' presentations of their experiences made it all look so obviously absurd. They also wrote about how following the diet prescriptions in the magazines made them so hungry they felt faint during school and could not focus in class. Aside from the physical danger of such extreme dieting, the girls connected this hunger to the gendered cultural mandates of femininity: girls and women should strive for perfection, but never show that they are hungry. But hunger, they argued, is a near-universal human want, like sexual desire. Still, women in our society are expected to keep all hungers underground. In this way, the SPARK girls utilized social media to push back against a form of damaging media that they had identified, led their peers through a media literacy lesson, and infused that lesson with an analysis of the sexist social contexts girls find themselves in.

Several other Internet-based sex education avenues are available to young people, and these websites importantly provide information about sex and sexuality that is contextualized within systems of misogynistic power. The tried-and-true Q&A method of sex education is still alive and well, both in classrooms and online. A number of interactive websites provide sexuality information and answer teens' questions without judgment, including Answer (answer.rutgers.edu/), Planned Parenthood (www.planedparenthood.org), Go Ask Alice (goaskalice.columbia.edu), and the feminist-flavored Scarleteen (www.scarleteen.com). For instance, Scarleteen offers "sex ed for the real world" geared directly to young people with intergenerational elements, combining staff-compiled information, such as sexual healthcare locators, with youth-dominated message boards for young people to discuss pressing issues pertaining to sex, sexuality, sexual health, and relationships. Young people can go to Scarleteen to ask questions or post original writing on a truly expansive variety of topics that invite basic and less commonly asked questions and contributions (e.g. "His mom walked in on me—does she hate me now?") The adult moderators provide answers (i.e., "Sex of any kind is something that you

want to make sure you have time and privacy for. When you know there's a chance for someone to come home, then you'll often find that you're rushing to avoid being interrupted. Sex is about pleasure—and this rushing can have a lot of effects on this pleasure"; http://www.scarleteen.com/article/advice). By providing a forum for candid information exchange, as well as sections on masturbation and sex toys, how to identify and understand one's desires, and space to talk about when sex "just happened," the site creates a venue for intergenerational collaboration and young people's burning questions about sex, sexuality, and relationships, while also exposing teens to under-discussed discourses of pleasure, agency, and boundaries. Likewise, Planned Parenthood's website is an example of successful intergenerational sex education that combines a forum for young people to ask questions about complex real-life situations, with a venue for adults to dispense information that young people need. Planned Parenthood's website offers visitors information about masturbation, sexual pleasure, sexual orientation and gender, relationships, and body image. SIECUS houses a Q&A section of their website dedicated to LGBTQ concerns in particular (http://siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=605&grandparentID=477&parentID=591), addressing questions about gender identity, coming out, and safe sex. And young people with disabilities (ranging from autism spectrum disorders to spinal cord injuries) can find answers to many questions about sexuality on the Center for Parent Information and Resources' website (http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/sexed/#disability). These types of sex education open up and normalize agentic approaches to sex and sexuality and promote autonomy and critical thinking (Lamb 2013).

The use of videos to disseminate information has been particularly popular. The tongue-in-cheek and cheerful Midwest Teen Sex Show (http://midwest-teensexshow.com), for example, is a video podcast widely available through YouTube dedicated to providing information about sexuality to young people by adults that is frank and funny. These brief videos explore topics important to teens, including the prom, anal sex, masturbation, hooking up, abstinence, and orgasms. Similarly, Laci Green's high-energy video series about sexuality (https://www.youtube.com/user/lacigreen) covers topics like "pulling out" as birth control, objectification and how it curtails the humanity of women and men, the basics of consent, lesbian sex, and how a "cherry" gets "popped." Youth-led activist and advocacy organizations like Branching Seedz of Resistance (http://coavp.org/bseedz/content/first-project) are attempting to harness the power and potential of youth media production by training LGBTQA young people to create and produce their own comprehensive sex education videos. These videos will cover topics largely avoided by AOUM

curricula including consent, healthy relationships, queer sexuality, and other topics deemed important by youth participants.

Many social service organizations and nongovernmental organization take information dissemination further by training young people on- and off-line to identify important and under-discussed sex education topics, and to educate their peers when adults will not or cannot. For instance, Planned Parenthood has a national peer education program, the Peer Education Institute (www.peereducationinstitute.org/), which trains interested young people to become Teen Council Members, providing accurate and relevant information about sexuality for their peers both in formal classroom settings and informal social ones. On a global scale, the Youth Activist Network (YAN; www.advocatesforyouth.org) has brought together more than 25,000 young people committed to peer education, activism, and policy advocacy around issues of sexual health and reproductive justice. At the same time, YAN harnesses the powers of the Internet by offering training and certification to interested and underserved young people in the form of online education modules covering topics like campus activism, adolescent reproductive and sexual health rights, contraception, and gender identity.

To address issues of gender and power within sexuality education, young people often make use of the tenets of feminism. Like their 1990s young punk feminist predecessors from the Riot Grrrl movement, contemporary girl bloggers are producing their own feminist media addressing the sex and sexuality concerns that matter to them, eschewing, engaging, challenging, and occasionally crossing over to the mainstream (Comstock 2001; Harris 2012), often on websites that are not dedicated solely to sex education. Harnessing the all-ages power of digital media production afforded by blogging, girls are writing about and leading youth-oriented conversations around sexualization, reproductive health and rights, and body image and pop culture (e.g. teenfeminist.com, thefbomb.org, feministing.com). Everyday Feminism (everydayfeminism.com) similarly harnesses feminism to educate young people about sexuality. They have compiled a basic sexual guide for (heterosexual) girls' fulfilling, healthy, and consensual sex to offer young people along with their sundry activist articles and blogs—a nod to the activist nature of dispensing such information. The guide (www.everydayfeminism.com/2013/06/your-first-time-girls/?1) encourages self-exploration through masturbation, becoming aware of media messages that compromise the sexual autonomy and agency of young women, and strong communication between sexual partners. It also encourages STI testing, and directs readers to Planned Parenthood's website (www.plannedparenthood.org/) for more information on birth control and STIs. The Internet has thus made it easier for girls to create communities

and engage in progressive information distribution, which has facilitated teen activist and peer-led sex education, while pushing back against neoliberal post-feminist discourses which argue that girls do not want or need feminism (Keller 2013).

In-Person Sex Education

Teaching media literacy and an awareness of systems of oppression need not happen solely in sex education classrooms or online. This type of intergenerational education can be dispersed throughout a wider curriculum, and can even be incorporated into such venues as after-school programs, summer camps, and other intergenerational venues. Rather than thinking of these learning opportunities as formal "lessons," we prefer to imagine young people engaging in activities or workshops with adults and with one another. These workshops can take many forms, and can address many different aspects of sexuality.

In school settings, classrooms outside of health or sex education classrooms can incorporate workshops about media literacy, or can address issues related to gender, sexuality, and public health. The centrally important issues of gender and power in sexuality education can be effectively incorporated into classrooms across the disciplines (see, e.g., The Population Council's curriculum development guide, *It's All One Curriculum* [2009]). Math and Science classrooms could analyze public health data about the epidemiology of STI transmission, for instance, and then discuss potential social contexts of their findings. Social studies classrooms could trace the history of public understanding of sexuality in the USA including shifting attitudes toward women, homosexuality, and premarital sex. Social studies classrooms are also an ideal venue for historical discussions about women's liberation and feminist movements, and the evolution of sex education policy in the USA and elsewhere. English literature and writing classrooms provide an opportunity to connect literature to broader social issues relevant to discussions of sexuality. Classic novels like *The Scarlet Letter*, for example, offer ideal examples of how power and gender norms intersect with sexuality in society.

Teachers in progressive-leaning school districts and private schools have also been able to incorporate explicit instruction about feminism and activism into their classrooms. Because we argue that sex education should (and does, even if implicitly) incorporate messages about gender and power, teaching students about feminism is a logical direction for this instruction. For

example, Feminist Teacher (www.feministTeacher.com) is the brainchild of Ileana Jiménez, a feminist high school teacher (and Fulbright awardee) in New York. She teaches a course on feminism and another on queer literature and film, engaging students socially, intellectually and politically. Students learn about intersectional feminism (feminism that considers gender, class, race, and other facets of identity, power, and oppression, simultaneously), write about their experiences (they have a blog: ftothethirdpower.com), and engage in direct education and activism to enact change in their communities. For example, she and her students have worked with researchers on a participatory action research project, "Sex in the City," for which they designed, analyzed, and disseminated findings from a survey of the student body's experiences with sexual and body surveillance and being called and calling girls "slut." They created a video report of their findings, presented to their peers and teachers, initiating discussion about these practices and how the school and students might respond.

Media literacy is now included in the Common Core Standards Initiative for US education, meaning that teachers are expected to include media literacy instruction in their curricula. Media literacy instruction, then, could be a sort of lifeline for teachers in more conservative school districts that feel their hands are tied when attempting to teach their students about gender, sexuality, and power in the media. The fissure created by media literacy mandates could be an opportunity for teachers to use media literacy instruction as a bridge between the Internet and the classroom, and between restrictive sex education policies and information about power and gender. While teaching about media literacy, educators can discuss topics like healthy communication in relationships, public health debates, gender expression, and slut shaming.

As young people become ever more proficient in media literacy, they become capable of educating their peers and using online media to do so. An ability to be a critical consumer (and producer) of media assumes utmost importance for adolescents in a media-laden and image-obsessed culture; these skills are especially salient and important for information about sex and sexuality. Research shows that young people benefit from media literacy training by learning to think analytically (Hobbs and Frost 1998). Media literacy can be taught in any K–12 classroom; even public schools in the conservative US state of Texas have included media literacy skills within the framework of language arts instruction. In the USA, isolated teachers lead most school-based media literacy initiatives in schools or school districts (Hobbs and Frost 1998), demonstrating that it is possible for solo teachers to incorporate these lessons into their classrooms.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the success of SPARK and other organizations, sex education can be intergenerational and activist, and take on the complex and interconnected issues of sexualization, desire, pleasure, relationships, and risk. Because so much of the information about sex, sexuality, gender, and power that young people receive comes from online media, we argue that media literacy should be a component of sex education efforts, both within and outside of classrooms.

Media activism, one outgrowth of media literacy (Brown 2011; Tolman et al. 2013), provides youth with tools to challenge the ubiquitous iterations of sexism in the media, and encourages young people to improve their media literacy so they can push back against these damaging messages. We argue, therefore, that media activism is the next logical terrain for a media-informed sex education. To properly scaffold this kind of education, young people must first be taught about basic media literacy, including: how to recognize the explicit and implicit messages that are being conveyed in various media; how to identify sexual stereotypes in media related to gender, race, sexual orientation, and other social categories; how to identify the probable motives of those who produce media (e.g. to sell something, to propagate a certain point of view); and how and *why* to begin to push back against such messages on both a personal level and a political level. Once young people are proficient in basic media literacy, they can begin to imagine ways to move from media literacy to media activism. That is, this scaffolding of education moves young people from critical *consumption* of media to critical *production* of media. As media activists, young people can work together to examine new ways of teaching others about sex and sexuality including: what sorts of messages they think their peers, corporations, parents, teachers, and society at large need; how to craft media messages that are effective and informative; and how to disseminate the messages they produce (see Workshop example at the end of this chapter).

The forms of sex education outlined in this chapter provide an overview of online, peer-mediated, and intergenerational approaches to engaging young people in discussions of sex and sexuality. Crucially, these creative forms of sex education contextualize sexuality within hegemonic systems of power such as gender, race, and sexual orientation. By meeting young people where they are—be it at school, at summer camp, or online—groups of intergenerational collaborators can innovate new ways to teach others about negotiating a healthy sexuality without ignoring the social and political context within which they must do so.

Workshop: Spreading Information Through Social Media: Producing Infographics

Setting: This can be done with any group of young people, ages 12–18

Prior Knowledge: Basic understanding of media literacy; Working knowledge of PowerPoint; Ability to use search engines to find information; Some previous education about sex and sexuality.

Students Will Be Able To: Identify the components of an effective infographic and create their own versions to educate others via social media.

Materials: Computers, Infographic examples (one excellent, one not as good)

Activity
[Some components of this workshop could be cut depending on the amount of time available, and this activity could also be spread out over several meetings.]

1. Introduction: Refresh young people's memory about media literacy.

   (a) What is media literacy?
   (b) What are some messages about sex and sexuality you notice in the media?
   (c) How do you think these messages affect people?
   (d) What other messages do you think people should be getting about sex and sexuality?
   (e) How do you think you could spread healthy messages about sexuality to others?

2. Introduce infographics as one way that people can share information with others online. Bring an example of an infographic to show students (there are hundreds of possibilities online) and display it for discussion.

   (a) What information is this infographic trying to convey?
   (b) What about this infographic helps to get the point across? (e.g. tells one clear story, use of charts and graphs, visual representations of information, images, clear and concise, catchy title)
   (c) What about this infographic (or bring in a less effective one to compare) is not helping to get the point across? (e.g. too busy or cluttered, trying to convey too much information at once, too many words and not enough visuals)

3. Make your own infographic! Work in groups of 2–4 to create an infographic that can be shared online. To make your infographic:

   (a) First pick a topic related to sex, sexuality, gender, or relationships that you would like to teach others about. Be sure to pick a topic you would feel comfortable sharing information about online. You can brainstorm your own ideas, or here are a few ideas to get you started:

      (i) A "how to" infographic: How to use contraception; How to talk about sex with your boyfriend/girlfriend; How to spot an unhealthy relationship; How to know if you are ready for sex; How to tell your boyfriend/girlfriend what you want to do and don't want to do sexually; How to love your body despite media messages.
      (ii) A "what is" infographic: What is masturbation? What is oral contraception? What is emotional abuse? What is an orgasm? What is puberty? What is sexual orientation?
      (iii) Other possibilities: Representations of girls and women in the media; Gender norms; Masculinity; Femininity; Menstruation; Genital anatomy; Sexually transmitted infections (maybe pick just one); Feminism; Healthy relationships; Condoms; Slut shaming, sexual harassment and bullying.

   (b) Next, use PowerPoint on a computer to design your infographic. Keep in mind the characteristics of a good infographic we discussed earlier. [If students don't already know how to use PowerPoint, and/or if computers aren't available, infographics can also be made on poster board, using basic craft supplies, and then students can photograph their creations to put online]
   (c) Share your infographic online! Use whatever social media platforms you like to share your infographic. If you see classmates' infographics that you like, consider reposting those from your account, and encourage others to share yours. [As a long-term project, teachers could create a class website or social media account, and post students' infographics there, maybe one per day or one per week.]

Possible Follow Up

Have students monitor the responses they get to their infographics. Have a discussion about this experience:

- What are some of the responses you got once you posted your infographic?
- Who responded to your infographic? Friends? Family? Women? Men? People your age?
- Do the responses seem to be positive? Negative? Neutral?
- Why do you think people responded how they did?
- How do these responses make you feel?
- What do you think about infographics now?
- What are some other ways besides infographics that you could imagine teaching others about sex, sexuality, and gender online?

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16

Immigration, Undocumented Students, and Sexuality Education in Schools: Collapsing Borders

Leigh Patel and Lauren P. Saenz

It is common practice to ask prospective educators to state their philosophies of education. In career portfolios, websites, and cover letters, avowed beliefs and preferred kinds of practices are made explicit. The actual practices that manifest also testify, sometimes more loudly, to the philosophies held by educators and governing bodies (Anyon 1980; Giroux 1984) working in specific contexts. Through its explicit language and actions, education is one of the key conduits of shaping and recognizing legitimacy. The pedagogical, curricular, and assessment practices around preferred forms of being all comprise this dynamic between word and deed in situ. The ways of being include how bodies are supposed to learn along myriad dimensions: corporeally, psychically, emotionally, and socially. While the cultural shaping of legitimate ways of being occurs through multiple sensory trajectories, it is also transmitted within and across disciplinary fields. A perpetual inquiry, then, must be how legitimate subjects of the state are shaped through schooling, and how these processes interact across disciplinary borders.

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In this chapter, we draw particular attention to the ways in which sexual identity and relationship to the state are part of formal schooling. While there are some specific curricular locations where topics of sexuality and national identity are explicitly discussed, these topics are in fact replete, in every content area, in every classroom, in every assessment given. We bring attention to the ways that schooling subtly and explicitly provides parameters and pathways for legitimate and illegitimate beings as subjects under the state. Undocumented youth are liminal, marginal in every setting that requires legal documentation in the USA. Similarly, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth are seen, through research and media, as at-risk of being bullied, with transgendered youth sometimes being called, "invisible and vulnerable" (Grossman and D'Augelli 2006). In this chapter, we consider both populations and how these liminalities, vulnerabilities, and invisibilities are created, experienced, and refused.

We draw parallels between how some ways of being, categorized through sexuality and documentation status, are preferred, how other ways are obscured, and the implicit theories of change that govern how liminality and at-riskness are addressed. We argue that the parallel curricula, both hidden and explicit, around sexuality identity and migration status intersect in their communication of normalcy and therefore hold strong lessons about liminality, theories of change, and the tacit and not-to-tacit contours of education as a normalizing force in white heteropatriarchal settler societies.

A few notes: our references and work are sourced in the USA. While we do not equivocate the cultural practices here with those elsewhere, we do think that youth, educators, and researchers in other similarly shaped settler societies (Veracini 2010) might be able to draw useful information from the negotiations, contestations, and collusions here about visibility and validation from the state through schooling. Second, in this chapter, we address some aspects of both sex education and sexuality education, although we do not conflate sex with sexual identity. These are distinct topics that inform each other and that permeate society and schooling, but they should not be used interchangeably.

Hidden and Explicit Curriculum

Schooling has long been researched and theorized as a place that engages in social reproduction of race, class, and gendered strata, in large part, through the hidden curriculum that is conveyed through the explicit messaging systems of pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment (Anyon 1979; Bowles and Gintis 1976). Other applied fields, such as social work and medicine have also taken up inquiries into what people learn about themselves as legitimate subjects

through spaces like hospitals, clinics, and government offices (Gaufberg 2010), but it is widely believed in the social sciences that because of its ubiquity and longevity, schooling plays the most central role in mediating cultural messages of acceptability and lack thereof. What is taught, how it is taught, and what is measured all act as messaging systems (Bernstein 2003) to convey parameters and expectations for individuals, groups, and society as a whole. While this is a foundational perspective in educational studies, less pervasive is the consideration of how distinct areas of hidden and not so hidden curriculum may, collectively and complementarily, convey a particularized set of messages about humanity, society, and social change. Hidden curricula (Apple 2004; Giroux 1984) are the ways that cultural practices and ideologies are conveyed not through explicit objectives but embedded and connected within formal lessons. For example, a fiction collection containing largely heterosexual characters can shape heteronormativity arguably more strongly without ever uttering the word, "heterosexual." Here we consider how the lived experiences of sexual identity and documentation status are manifested, seen, disciplined, and obscured through schooling. We also bring in some examples of intersectional resistance from out-of-school learning spaces. We begin with a discussion of how and where schooling explicitly addresses documentation status and sexual identity.

Explicit Curriculum: Sexuality and the State

There are two primary places where US schooling tends to explicitly address documentation status. First is in the recanting of the nation's genesis that usually begins with European invasion and discusses various waves of immigration into the nation. This still widely used approach normalizes the nation as having sprung out of only European referents and invisiblizes Indigenous people and Indigenous lands prior to the European invasion as well as obscuring the role of labor and chattel in developing the nation's wealth. This messaging of discovery and taming lands, which also associates the Native inhabitants as savages and therefore less than human, is common across settler societies, such as the USA and Australia, where populations have moved in to occupy, rather than ruling from afar (Wolfe 1991). This settler logic also positions immigrants relative to settler, enslaved, and Indigenous populations. They are welcomed by the beneficence of the state, even though societal security and upward mobility are historically reserved for land-owning settlers (Harris 1993), but this welcoming allows for a narrative of inclusion by virtue of deservingness, typically through hard work and following rules (McNamee and Miller 2009). By moving through various waves of immigration, US

history tends to reify a common adage that the USA is a nation built by immigrants, as a place whose identity is synonymized with welcoming "tired, poor, huddled masses."

Beyond history classes, the rhetoric of a nation formulated not through seizure of Indigenous lands but through fortitude of beneficent mission runs through US curriculum. For example, in the newly developed Common Core curriculum in the USA, a large-scale initiative to create nationally used English and mathematics learning objectives, a sample lesson for fifth grade language arts instruction, asks teachers and students to engage in a close reading of "The new colossus," a poem by Emily Lazarus. This poem is also emblazoned on a plaque at the base of the Statue of Liberty, with phrases including the well-known words:

> Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
> The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
> Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
> I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

While the focus of the language arts lesson is on determining the meaning of the poem, its meaning is far from singular, particularly when read by undocumented children and youth whose experiences likely include deprivation of human needs as well as denial of protection, sanction, or inclusion from the state. In this example, then, marginalized youth are expected to reconcile conflicting messages. The explicit curriculum of narratives of nation's formation and its ideals are presented with the implicit curriculum of those ideals as available one for some, creating a more tacit tale of conditional inclusion and exclusion for undocumented children and youth. Put another way, this is a nation that avows welcoming the downtrodden, in fact, claims its own manifest creation through those who had been cast out of their home nations, but the realities of Indigenous erasure and the increased xenophobia directed at today's migrants presents, minimally, a mixed set of messages for undocumented students.

The take away, for many undocumented children and youth, is that they are subject to exclusion from a seemingly unilaterally beneficent state because they are criminal, illegal (Gonzales 2011), with little hope for gradual inclusion.

The rights and terms of belongingness are one of the most robust areas of consideration. Keeping with undocumented students' experiences, in addition to US history classes, civics classes are also cites in which explicit

curriculum addresses the rights afforded to citizens, with such topics as the structure of federal government, voting rights, and processes for enacting laws. Of course, for students who don't have authorization to be in the country, civics courses are places of clear communication that they are not valid members of society, as they are not able to participate in any of the processes that make up the core content of civics courses, such as voting.

However, just as with the example of the ethos and poetry of the nation, there are mixed messages and productively lived complexities of civic engagement. While having the designation of undocumented or illegal happens in a single day by virtue of the state's designation, learning and refusing aspects of what that designation means comes into being relative to specific contexts. While undocumented youth are one of the most institutionally excluded groups of people residing in any nation, in the USA and elsewhere, they are also one of the most politically engaged. The liminality of "being illegal" is central to the goals and high levels of political action of undocumented youth (Patel and Sanchez Ares 2014). The prominent role of immigrant youth in the massive rallies for immigration rights in 2006 and the recent push for the DREAM Act signal their growing political potential. In youth-led activist spaces, undocumented migrants learn more than how to be illegal or the beneficence of the state. They learn how to use specific practices and tools to foment social change (Pacheco 2012). The civic engagement of undocumented youth, as contrasted with the terms of being named a legitimate subject of the state through both explicit and implicit school-based curriculum, raise up questions about how inclusion or change is conceptualized. In school-based curricula, as well as in popular and formal policies, there is a prevailing concept of linearity in social change. We explore this next as a place where disciplinary borders between sexuality education and civics both rely, problematically, on linear models of inclusion, ultimately reifying conditions of inclusion as necessary.

Deservingness: Contingent and Delayed

A key point of intersection across the created vulnerabilized positions of undocumented and LGBTQ is how protection and rights are conceptualized under the law relative to worth. Notably displayed in the Supreme Court case of Plessy versus Ferguson (1896), which determined that separate could be equal, appeals to the inalienable equality of men has been argued as a fundamental right of the state's citizens with a mixture of contingent conditions. First and foremost is the reification of binary versions of gender, malehood

specifically, as the primary version of legitimacy, and more implicitly so, some men more than others. The arguments in this case were composed of measures of how negatively impactful segregationist laws were for some people who approximated the normative center. It is not a coincidence that Plessy versus Ferguson had as its lead plaintiff a mixed race man who could easily pass for white and was born free in the USA. The case was argued as a contested denial of rights that were suggested to be more inalienable, more equal because of Plessy's racialized and gendered identity (Medley 2003). Across justice arguments against mass incarceration, mass deportation, and wholesale discrimination against nongender conforming peoples, there resides a worrisome default to individuals' deservingness, which itself is tied deeply to settler theories of change (Tuck 2009), normally scripted as inclusion to the rights of the state. The state, however, is one of the primary arbiters of the bodily harm that nongender conforming people of color, most notably youth of color, experience (GLSEN 2013).

The dubious relations to rights, as afforded by the state, marks both the state's actions and those seeking rights conferred by the state. For example, the undocumented youth movement has made significant progress toward motivating the federal government to provide pathways for some generation 1.5 youth (those who were born in another country but have largely only known the USA as home) through its deferred action program (Neapolitano 2012). Roughly 200,000 young lives have been inarguably materially improved through these temporary two-year permissions to work and live in the USA. And yet, the logics of the policy are hinged around some youth being more deserving than others because they were framed as innocent children brought to the USA by their apparently not as innocent migrant adult parents. At the time of this writing, a related logic was announced to allow for some undocumented parents who have cared for these youth to also be able to apply for deferred action from deportation hearings and temporary work permits. Often described as a "step in the right direction," these pressures and governmental acts also activate and leverage a logic of deservingness that has genealogical ties to Homer Plessy being a better plaintiff to demand recognition as a man under the law. There is some step forward, but it is conditioned on reifications of other conditions, in this case, innocence, deservingness, and Judeo-Christian concepts of nuclear families, with palimpsest of racialized and gendered centricity.

Linearity and its presence in theories of change (Tuck 2009, 2014) also appear in responses to the rampant discrimination and violence that queer youth experience in myriad societal spaces. In perhaps the most well-known example, a public campaign was launched in 2010 "to inspire hope for young people facing harassment. In response to a number of students taking their

own lives after being bullied in school, they wanted to create a personal way for supporters everywhere to tell LGBT youth that, yes, it does indeed get better" (itgetsbetter.com). In fact, rather than cite the ongoing investment in a heteropatriarchal structure to the nation, as demonstrated in the language and arguments in Plessy versus Ferguson, the core logic of the It Gets Better campaign is individualized hope and persistence. The message is that with enough time, bullies will eventually age out of their aggression, and those bullied will age out of being in some contexts, like schools, where they are arguably more susceptible to danger. The website includes videos of relatively famous queer adults testifying to their experiences of "it" getting better as well as news of public appointments and policies that, in different ways, address the lives of queer people. The logic of change here is perhaps more insidious, as it implicitly concedes a move toward progress, obliquely defined, that the state and public imaginary will manifest a better reality by virtue of its innate self. This is contrary to both contemporary and centuries-long evidence that shows delineation between individuals and groups necessary to meter out deservingness. The default is, therefore, more to relative worth and shifting terms of inclusion than linear change toward wider inclusion or even wholesale transformation.

The Tyranny of Measurement

Closely tied to the problem of linearity embedded in dominant theories of change is the implicit reliance on narrow categorization of individual experience, driven by a state-led desire for surveillance, regulation, and accountability in schools. Outcome measurement, broadly conceived, is a means of gauging progress toward a particular goal: equity, proficiency, and safety (among others). Yet even as we debate the desired ends of public schooling, our approaches to measurement are still largely determined by the extent to which we can narrowly define a construct. And once we consider the predominant existing means of educational (academic, social, and emotional) outcome analysis, it becomes clear that we are suffering from a stifling lack of imagination.

The tyranny of measurement is inescapably intertwined with the tyranny of linearity; the former depends on the latter. Quantitative measurement models (i.e., Rasch and Item Response Theory scales) often require that constructs be conceived as linear, progressive, and unidimensional, and more complex models account for multiple dimensions and layers (i.e., hierarchical linear modeling), but the primary appeal of all quantitative models is *predictability*. Measured constructs must conform sufficiently well to a formula in order to be measured "well"—that is, reliably and validly.

Therefore, human experience that is linear, progressive, and unidimensional is the surveyor or test developer's dream; it is also profoundly and happily imaginary. As it relates to queer and undocumented students and their locations in and experiences of sexuality education, consider the possible relevant measurable constructs. An immediate problem arises in the binary classification of individuals as queer/not queer, documented/undocumented. When, for example, does one *become* sufficiently queer to the extent that this is a legitimate box to check on a survey form? One first step to addressing this dilemma is to widen the response options to include more than simply yes/no; an obvious next step is to allow for open-ended responses. Regardless of how these inputs are measured, however, assessing outcomes as they are differentiated by identity markers requires explicit categorization. There is, of course, great debate over how and when to ask specific demographic questions, and more debate over how to *use* them; scholars in a wide range of fields have critiqued the limitations of categorical identity variables. Ridolfo et al. (2012), for example, questioned the use of categorical survey responses to assess LGBT outcomes in healthcare, noting the difficulty of describing such a fluid, complex variable as sexuality. The authors recommend separating components of sexuality (i.e., behavior, identification, and sexual attraction) into constructs that can be addressed with separate questions, therefore capturing some of its complexity while allowing for some analysis of trends and patterns across individuals. Similarly, the recently developed 32-item Multi-Gender Identity Questionnaire (Joel et al. 2013) aims to disrupt binary thinking about gender by capturing the nuances of gender, including identity, contentment with, and performance of gender. These markers matter to a specific but limited extent. Schooling is a complex multicultural context in which student experiences are explicitly differentiated by race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, documentation status, and more. Survey questions ought to reflect a range of identities, at minimum so that students see themselves reflected in measurement instruments, starting with, but not limited to, demographic questions. Yet identity itself is contextual, and it develops and changes in interaction with individuals, with institutions, and within social contexts. Capturing a student's "identity" with a response at a particular moment in time offers a remarkably narrow piece of information. Including more boxes to check does not preclude the fact of the *box*; measurement can only ever exist primarily as a tool of surveillance that redraws and strengthens artificially imposed borders and reifies static linear notions of sexuality, citizenship, relationships, and more.

The important issue, then, is not how to establish a threshold of, for example, sufficient queerness—but how to make space for young people to challenge these boxes, to ask questions of the question askers, and to document their

own rich, complex lives. Legal scholars have explored this question specifically in relation to immigration and refugee status law, questioning the requirement in asylum law that queer-identified individuals must demonstrate persecution based on their membership in a "particular social group" (Morgan 2006; Pfitsch 2006). This poses an obvious barrier once one considers what is necessary to demonstrate "membership" of the LGBT group. Consider also several recent well-publicized cases of queer-identified asylum seekers whose cases are denied on the basis that they are not queer enough (e.g., Batchelor 2015; Lior 2015; Taub 2015). One lesbian-identified Nigerian woman was denied asylum because she had children—thus proving she could not be a lesbian. According to the attorney representing the Home Office, "[y]ou can't be a heterosexual one day and a lesbian the next day. Just as you can't change your race" (Taub 2015). This rationale (common to a number of asylum cases) underscores the clear danger and suspect logic of categorical thinking around queer identity, oppression, and politics. One must "be" either queer or not, and the difference is quite often that between life and death.

The Case of School Safety

The example of "bullying" and its related actions in school is worth a closer look as we consider the role of the hidden and formal curriculum in shaping and constraining students' lives. The recent proliferation of safety-related policies, combined with the growing attention to school safety in general, begs too many questions. Among them: how do we *know* if students feel safe? Measurement and evaluation are implicit in the question; in order to answer it, we must be able to name the conditions under which schools can be considered "safe" environments. Yet if the instruments used to measure safety are constructed in the absence of a robust conception of safety, the measurements themselves are insufficient. This is particularly true when we consider the important and complicated influences of gender, sexuality, and heteropatriarchal norms on students' school experiences. Redefining the "safety" framework requires shifting language as well as the locus of inquiry; rather than exploring safety as an interpersonal issue (and therefore one that conforms neatly to the demands that students be categorized as one type or another), our attention should instead be focused on school culture and the heteronormative school environment that is poisonous to all kids, and especially those who are queer-identified (Lugg 2006; Meyer 2009; Payne and Smith 2012).

Given that Common Core standards linked to sexuality education explicitly require that schools include content around topics such as domestic violence, respecting "different" types of families, appropriate touching, and bullying/teasing, it seems clear that current curricular notions of sexuality education position sex/sexuality and safety as necessarily intertwined. The range of topics covered in the standards reflect an emphasis on the need to treat others with respect and to protect oneself from the psychological, emotional, and physical dangers related to sex and sexuality. A linear narrative around safety and sexuality tells us that "education" (i.e., progress toward a nationally held set of curricular standards) around both assumes growth in self-knowledge and awareness. Consider, then, the instruments we use to assess these outcomes. In most common measurement instruments, the construct of "safety" is typically divided into physical and social–emotional components (Cohen et al. 2009). Physical components include individuals' perceptions about a crisis plan; clearly communicated rules; clear and consistent violation responses; individuals' perceptions of physical safety; and attitudes about violence (p. 184). Social–emotional components include attitudes about individual differences; students' and adults' attitudes about and responses to bullying; conflict resolution taught in school; and belief in school rules (p. 184). The most common type of measurement instrument used to assess school safety is a school- or district-wide survey. A recent review of existing school safety and climate surveys (Zullig et al. 2010) identified five domains that comprise the majority of instruments: order, safety and discipline; academic outcomes; social relationships; school facilities; and school connectedness (p. 139). The authors identify four domain variations that make up the construct of safety: "perceived safety, respect for peers and authority, knowledge and fairness of disciplinary policies and presence of gangs" (p. 141). The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) is administered to high school students every year, and constitutes one of the primary sources of "safety" data from a nationally validated instrument. This survey uses the term "unsafe," yet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 2004), which administers it, does not provide a definition of the term. Further, the middle school version of the survey does not even include the item (or any other to assess safety at school). The YRBSS is, of course, not the only instrument being used to gather data on student safety and its relationship with sexual identity—yet its perception as a valid instrument used with a representative sample gives it an authoritative weight that belies the usefulness of the constructs it measures. There are a number of efforts underway whose primary aim is to *document* queer lives, rather than to *survey* them; GLSEN, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and FIERCE each collect and report data on the experiences of queer, trans,

and gender non-conforming youth. Information gathered from these surveys offers an alternative to traditional notions of accountability, and expands our understandings of the lived queer experience in and out of school, and in the spaces between. These efforts are not designed for surveillance; rather they are questions *for and by* the very people that provide answers. By shifting the locus of evaluation, by demanding that those who are traditionally *observed* become the *observers* of their social contexts, these attempts at measurement and description are disrupting traditional notions of data collections. The key difference here—and to any effort to capture experiences inclusive of identity and social context—is that alternatives to limited categorization must from the outset take *as a given* the dominant oppressive norms that shape every outcome space. To ignore the racist, nationalist, heterosexist norms that govern school culture is to render almost all surveillance efforts useless.

The limits of measurement and evaluation here are quite clear Our understandings of safety are so constrained by a categorical (and linear) framework that the process of measurement becomes the primary means of construct definition. That is, we come to define "safety" based on the structured instruments we use to measure it. Any push to understand youth experiences as reflective of comprehensive, complicated, and contextually specific identities requires more than simply knowing how experiences vary across identity markers; it means disrupting and questioning traditional category-based data collection and analysis. Queer theory scholar Kristen Renn (2010) has stressed the need for more complicated analyses of queer experiences in higher education, arguing that we need to study "student identities and experiences in ways that do not contain and constrain gender and sexuality" (p. 136). This necessitates, of course, moving away from positivist and post-positivist approaches to measurement and evaluation that inform policy, as well as paying close attention to studies that offer deeper, nuanced understandings of identity. Abes (2012), for example, offers an intersectional analysis of social identity development that conceptualizes one student's college experience as complex, layered, and nonlinear.

"What Works"?

In the last decade, the exponentially rising demand for "scientific research in education" (NSF 2002) has limited the field's understanding of "what works" in education research and evaluation to findings from experimental studies, often prioritizing politically "neutral" conceptions of merit at the expense of deeper understandings. Traditional normative theories of analysis are

insufficient to understanding the complex intersections among sexual identity, citizenship, heteronormativity, curriculum, and education policy. The prioritization of "evidence-based" science and practice assumes that notions about what constitutes legitimate evidence are shared or, at minimum, can be shared. To assert, for example, that "it gets better" means to invest in the possibility of a collective understanding of both the problem ("*it*") and the scale of measurement (how to gauge "*better*").

This "what works" frame is not merely flawed in its implementation; its fundamental question serves primarily to re-entrench oppressive structural norms that dictate the conditions under which we consider schools to "work." The fact that the United States Department of Education (DOE) explicitly focuses on funding studies that look at *within*-school factors, and it is this evidence that comprises the What Works Clearinghouse, highlights yet another artificial border: the school/not school divide. By delineating particular activities, behaviors, and outcomes as "school" and excluding others, we reinforce the false notion that school, home, and community are independently functioning realms.

The politics of difference figure most prominently in the case of "minority" rights and concerns, as these are often represented and legislated by the majority; queer and undocumented youth are no exception. Therefore, a critical framework that questions assumptions and conclusions reached regarding, for example, queer people, that are based on the experiences of heterosexuals as the normative standards, is essential. Likewise, rejecting categorization as a means of defining humanity and as the sole means of achieving equity requires taking a pluralistic and radical view of identity and experience.

Though federal- and state-level evaluation work tend toward the randomized experiment, there do exist a number of evaluation models and theories that aim to engage the politics of difference (Young 1990) in order to integrate the ideals of participation, inclusion, and deliberation, and that are particularly sensitive to the concerns of marginalized groups. Dismantling the borders and boundaries that define much of what constitutes the field of educational evaluation and research means rejecting externally imposed metrics of success, learning, and progress. It means these concepts and metrics—and most importantly, the need for evaluation and accountability—must originate from within. Approaches to evaluation that honor this ideal tend to share similar core principles of practice—meaningful participation, robust inclusion, and the creation of and reliance on true democratic dialogue and deliberation among stakeholders with particular emphasis on groups with less institutional power and privilege than others.

Collapsing Borders

Along with our critique of the governing terms of inclusion and collapsed linear theories of change, we also wish to highlight examples of radical refusals and remixes. A radical refusal, as Latino queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz, explored in his concept of disidentifying, involves both the dismantling of dominant definitions and creations of alternate possibilities.

> Disidentification is a performative mode of tactical recognition that various minoritarian subjects employ in an effort to resist the oppressive and normalizing discourse of dominant ideology. Disidentification resists the interpellating call of ideology that fixes a subject within the state power apparatus. It is a reformatting of the self within the social, a third term that resists the binary of identification and counteridentification. (Muñoz 1999. p. 18)

Disidentifying is a radical act that refuses assimilation and linear terms of inclusion for self-determined purposes. It indexes in order to destabilize. We acknowledge, with a deferential nod to Muñoz's work and the work of extant activists whose work necessarily resides outside of formal institutions that people have been disidentifying with the state and its terms of legitimacy for a long time. In fact, these are histories that could become part of the formal curriculum of schooling, studies of how people, particularly those dispossessed throughout history, have succeeded in maintaining agentic conceptions of themselves as other than dispossessed (Kelley 2002). Indigenous theorist Gerald Vizenor writes of Indian survivance, science fiction and Black feminist author Octavia Butler wrote about Black futurity, and the Sylvia Rivera Project helps to front projects showing the revolutionary in Black trans love. These are but a few of the myriad practices and spaces that are created by indexing, refusing, and reaching beyond state-defined metrics of personhood.

As a close to this chapter which locates the terms and measures of legitimacy through schooling, we reference the disidentification accomplished in the work of undocuqueer artist, Julio Salgado. In his print, Homoland Security (see Fig. 16.1), Salgado (2013) indexes and refuses borders, state security, cisgenderedness, and gender binaries. The print, through the specific uses of color that draws attention to insertions of self into inhospitable contexts, destabilizes the terms of those contexts.

Remembering that schools are primary conduits for settler state messaging around legitimacy and inclusion, how might a teacher take up the feel of disidentifying and destabilize more than discipline? What can a school culture do and value to consistently interrogate its messaging systems of nationhood, legitimacy, and personhood? Below is a brief idea for a critical

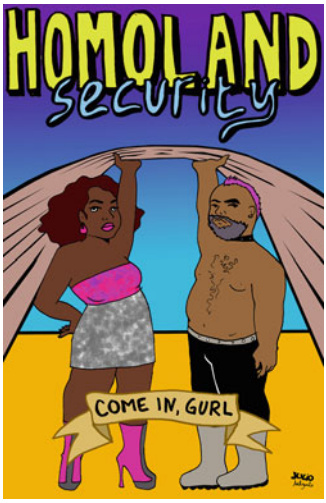


Fig. 16.1 Homoland Security

literacy-inspired lesson (Comber et al. 2001) that can destabilize a few of the constructs explored in this chapter.

Lesson Plan

Choose a survey that includes demographic questions about ethnicity, race, national origin, gender, and perhaps, sexual identity. Ask students to edit the survey for questions and categories it doesn't ask. Students could give the survey in their homes, neighborhoods, and other community spaces, with the same option of modifications, and report back further suggestions for changing the survey. The meaning making around the survey could focus on the practices that are used to determine what are most relevant and impactful demographic information for a particular context? How would we know when we need to add new questions or take out old questions from a survey? Such a discussion would help to maintain the need for information but a regard of all information as temporary and context based.

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17

Critically Sex/Ed: Asking Critical Questions of Neoliberal Truths in Sexuality Education

Laina Y. Bay-Cheng

With titles such as *Teens-in-Control* (www.teensincontrol.org), *mychoice2wait* (mychoice2wait.org), *Project TAKING CHARGE* (www.socio.com/paspp07.php), *My Future-My Choice* (www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/pages/teens/future/index.aspx), *I AM in Control* (Iowa Adolescents Making Choices to Control Their Future; http://www.iamincontrol.org/), *Making Proud Choices* (http://www.selectmedia.org/programs/choices.html), and *Be Proud! Be Responsible!* (http://www.selectmedia.org/programs/responsible.html) trumpeting personal agency, ambition, and responsibility, US sexuality education curricula are mouthpieces of quintessential neoliberal claims: that in the purported post-prejudice, capitalist meritocracy of the USA, individuals are masters of their own fate, deserving sole credit for success and bearing sole responsibility for failure. Regardless of any good intentions to inspire youth to take themselves and their health seriously, such aggrandizing rhetoric is deceptive. The determined, aspirational tone of "Nothing's gonna get in the way of MY dreams" (original emphasis), the tagline of the now defunct abstinence-oriented program, *Not Me, Not Now*, holds certain appeal. But in the lives of many US youth (e.g., those of color, those struggling to make ends meet, those who are—or whose families are—newcomers to the USA, those with

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nonconforming sexualities, genders, or bodies), pervasive stigma and system injustice, not the realization of dreams, are the inevitabilities.

Research lays bare the gross disparities between disadvantaged youths' sexual well-being and that of their privileged peers. Rates of chlamydia are five and nine times higher among black adolescent women and black adolescent men, respectively, compared to their white peers (CDC 2013), and gonorrhea is 14 times higher among black adolescent women than white adolescent women. Indicating the disproportionate incidence of unwanted pregnancy (as opposed to the de facto problematization of adolescent pregnancy (Geronimus 2003; SmithBattle 2012)), African American adolescent women experience an abortion rate three times higher than that of white adolescent women (Kost and Henshaw 2014). Adolescent women with physical disabilities are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted (Alriksson-Schmidt et al. 2010) and youth with cognitive disabilities report sexually transmitted infections (STI) rates that are twice as high (Cheng and Udry 2005) than their peers without disabilities. Lesbian and bisexual adolescent women become unintentionally pregnant at twice the rate of heterosexually identified peers (Blake et al. 2001), and HIV infection among young men aged 13–24 who have sex with men increased 22 % between 2008 and 2010, with half of all new cases occurring among young black men (CDC 2012; for further evidence of sexual health disparities among youth, see: Cheng et al. 2014; Gowen and Aue 2011).These statistics document not sexual risk, but instead how sex is *made* risky by unequal power, insufficient resources, and structural discrimination. It is not sex that poses a threat to young people, it is social injustice.

In this chapter, I argue that school-based sexuality education (SBSE), steeped in neoliberal ideology and confined by neoliberal "best practices," fuels the misdiagnosis of social injustice as sexual risk. I also use the chapter as a platform for proposing an alternative approach, one that engages youth in the collective critical analysis of the interplay between sexual well-being and social conditions. Reclaiming the original political, radical intent of empowerment (Gutiérrez 1994; Lee 2001; Rappaport 1987), critical SBSE counters the depoliticized and divisive rhetoric that suffuses SBSE. Instead of delivering pat lessons to students about right choices and responsible behaviors, critical sexuality education reverses perspective so that it is not individuals being scrutinized and "responsibilized" (Kelly 2001), but the social and material circumstances that constitute youths' lives and therefore also their sexualities. To illustrate this recommendation and to give it some practical teeth (and hopefully also practical use), I conclude with three possible lesson plans, each of which pose critical questions of what commonly goes unquestioned in neoliberal sexuality education discourse: (1) *Whose/Who Is Right and Responsible?*

probes the feasibility of "right" and "responsible" sexual behavior depending on one's social location; (2) *Why Yes?* moves beyond the simplified attribution of consent to sexual desire to examine how sexual decision making is shaped by social and material resources (or a lack thereof); and (3) *What Does Access Look Like?* examines the tangible and intangible barriers that obstruct youths' sexual and reproductive rights.

Neoliberal Sexuality Education: Individualized/ing Instruction

Neoliberalism originated in economic, political, and social policies designed to expand markets, deregulate industries, and shrink social welfare systems. Much of this was achieved by claiming the near eradication of systemic injustice and celebrating the power of individual will (Duggan 2003). Macrosystem policies and discourse (e.g., the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act) trickled down and out, infiltrating social systems, interpersonal relationships, and constructions of the self (e.g., Coburn 2000; Evans and Riley 2014; Fitz et al. 2012; Nafstad et al. 2009; Pulfrey and Butera 2013; Stringer 2014; Williams 2013). Scholars across diverse fields have dissected both the mechanisms and consequences of neoliberalism's ideological creep since the 1970s (Brown 2003; Duggan 2003; Harvey 2005). In the USA, its cardinal tenets of individual choice and personal responsibility have become so thoroughly naturalized and internalized that they are largely unquestioned as the quintessence of American culture and character. In fact, the pretense that neoliberalism represents a return to deeply seated core American values helps explain its rapid and largely uncontested spread (Duggan 2003). The position that individuals should be free to strive and succeed at will is a form of culturally self-congratulatory common sense. But closer consideration of this you-get-what-you-deserve (whether rewards or losses) stance belies its apparent nonpartisan objectivity and amorality (Brown 2006). In the midst of enduring implicit and explicit bias and oppression, the neoliberal credo of just deserts in fact promotes injustice by scapegoating individuals for system failures and alienating us from one another, encouraging us to view others as competitors and/or means to self-serving ends.

Neoliberal sanctification of individual choice and valorization of personal responsibility also marginalizes political mobilization and social change efforts. Protests against racism and economic inequality are denounced as "playing the race card" (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2003) and inciting "class warfare" (Lott and Bullock 2007) respectively, feminists are stigmatized for being

"pathetic females" (Rich 2005, p. 504), among other things (Aronson 2003; Rudman and Fairchild 2007), and women advocating for sexual and reproductive health care are "sluts" trying to get others to foot the bill for their promiscuity (e.g., Mirkinson 2012). Thus, protests against systemic bias are neutralized by accusations of shirking responsibility for one's own life and for the consequences of one's own choices (Stringer 2014). Neoliberal ideology turns personal responsibility into a badge of honor that relieves the state from any obligation to its citizens and individuals from compassion for one another. Neoliberalism may be couched in a rhetoric of liberation (e.g., free markets, open competition, individual choice), but its tactics are those of divide and conquer.

SBSE's reliance on bald scare tactics and its restricted content have drawn criticism for decades. Even before discourse surrounding sexuality education was channeled into the comprehensive versus abstinence-only until marriage (AOUM) debate, it was under fire for its gendered, heteronormative, moralist, and deficit-focused messaging (e.g., Fine 1988; Irvine 1994; Kantor 1992/1993; Tolman 1994; Trudell 1993; Whatley 1992). There remain many egregious examples of explicit fearmongering and factually incorrect sexuality education, as recently proven by Dreger's (2015) blow-by-blow Twitter report of sitting in on a sex ed class. But far more common and less easy to critique are messages like those presented at the outset of the chapter or those sampled by Lesko (2010) in her analysis of the "panoptimism" (p. 290) pervading sexuality education curricula. Drawn from both AOUM and comprehensive programs, these refrains—injunctions, really—reveal the wide spread of neoliberalism. While AOUM and comprehensive approaches differ from one another in many ways (e.g., coverage of contraception and condoms), they bear similar neoliberal imprints and articulate the same neoliberal claim: that if you are strong-willed, focused, assertive, and if you *make proud choices*, you will be successful.

Locating power completely within the individual is exciting and inspiring when talking about success. But when it comes to failure, these messages shame individuals for not being up to the task of being neoliberal agents. To drive home the point that "Ultimately it is your choice to protect your future" (mychoice2wait), SBSE programs rely on cautionary tales of promising lives derailed by a single bad choice: one drink too many; one time without a condom; trusting the wrong person. These lessons often take the form of textbook vignettes, panels of guest speakers, and public service announcements. In all cases, the implication is that unwanted sex, pregnancy, and infection are the fault of a single person. Vulnerability and weakness originate in individuals, not in systems that may stigmatize and unjustly deprive them. In a post-prejudice meritocracy, the only thing you have to fear is making bad choices.

Since the 1990s, scholars have consistently warned against the tendency to strip youth sexuality from its social and relational circumstances (Fine and McClelland 2006) and from its developmental purpose (Fortenberry 2014; Tolman and McClelland 2011; Vasilenko et al. 2014). Far from a simple translation of libidinal desire into physical action, sexual behavior at any age is motivated by a host of sexual and nonsexual interests (Meston and Buss 2007).Youth sexual self-concept, well-being, relationships, and behaviors are not only embedded in social, material, interpersonal, and intrapersonal systems; it is this intersecting and indivisible complex that imbue sexuality with meaning. But in the SBSE classroom, youth sexuality is presented as a discrete life domain and framed in normative, universalist terms. When culture and ethnicity are raised as relevant contextual factors, it is through the oversimplified, feel-good rhetoric of multiculturalism and celebrating diversity (Kendall 2012; Whitten and Sethna 2014). Absent from discussion are the racism, xenophobia, and ethnocentrism that block minorities' access to sexual health care and services, or the ignorance, bias, and hostility they confront in daily interactions with majority culture individuals and institutions, including their SBSE classrooms (Connell and Elliott 2009; Fields 2008; García 2009; Kendall 2012). SBSE's inattention to the link between sexuality and pervasive social inequality is a gross failure given the incontrovertible evidence of sexual health disparities (Schalet et al. 2014).

Across all domains (i.e., not just sexuality), decontextualization serves the primary neoliberal objective of depoliticization by removing conditions of inequality, injustice, and insufficiency from view. With blinders on, individuals can see themselves as free, self-determining agents operating in a fundamentally just world, a perspective that, however illusory, comes with substantial psychological dividends (Jost and Hunyady 2005). But it also leaves individuals wholly responsible for *TAKING CHARGE* of sexuality and *Be[ing] responsible!*, no matter how systemic barriers and disadvantage, violation or oppression, or sometimes simple bad luck undercut the range and feasibility of available options. When SBSE relies on lessons in self-improvement (e.g., how to be more knowledgeable, more assertive, and more ambitious) irrespective of the intangible norms and material conditions that structure youths' lives, it ultimately loads responsibility for sexual outcomes onto individual youth (Elliott 2014; Fields 2008; Froyum 2010; Goodkind 2009; Kelly 2001). SBSE lessons that instruct students to be sexually responsible by using condoms and contraception and getting STI testing without discussion of the practical obstacles to doing so (lack of transportation, fear of embarrassment or hostility, unaffordability, stereotype threat, parental notification, and consent laws; Fine and McClelland 2007; Schalet et al. 2014) help to prop up the pretense that *making proud choices* is a simple matter of individual will.

As one example of such responsibilization (Kelly 2001), programs intended to help "at-risk" girls (i.e., those facing multiple intersecting forms of oppression and histories of hardship) avoid sex-related dangers do so by urging them to apply themselves that much more intently to achieving academic, professional, and financial success (Froyum 2010; Goodkind 2009). Even when interventions are cognizant of how sexism, racism, heterocentrism, and economic injustice are implicated in sexual well-being, they often nevertheless rely on neoliberalized tropes of individual will, ambition, and resilience in envisioning progress, encouraging individuals to endure or to rise above their circumstances (rather than demand better circumstances). To be clear, these programs are well intentioned and genuinely dedicated to young people. Many should be commended for affirming youth who are routinely marginalized (e.g., LGBTQ youth and the *It Gets Better* Campaign) and/or written off as lost causes (e.g., those who are poor, racialized, and/or seen as damaged, such as those in the child welfare system [Polvere 2011]). But these programs' invocation of the neoliberal promise of future fulfillment given sufficient will and determination detracts from their potential to transform the systems of inequality that endanger these youth in the first place.

Even though SBSE rhetoric is often framed in explicitly affirmative, if also imperative, terms (*Be Proud! Be Responsible!*), its effect can be to estrange youth from their partners, peers, and adults. An individualist approach to sexual interactions assumes each partner to be invested primarily in their own gratification instead of the mutual prioritization of one another's wishes, comfort, and pleasure. From this perspective, partners may provide each other pleasure, but only as part of a calculated quid pro quo exchange (Braun et al. 2003). Lamb (2010a) warned that advocacy for the inclusion of female sexual desire and pleasure in SBSE runs the risk of promoting a self-centered view of sexual relationships. To break from this cynical mold of individuals using each other for their respective gain, she recommends that SBSE concentrate on helping students cultivate an "ethic of care" in which mutuality, not simply transactional reciprocity is the goal (Lamb 2010b).

If everyone is out for him/herself, as neoliberal SBSE suggests, then individuals must be simultaneously opportunistic and on guard against the opportunism of others. In interpreting qualitative data regarding barebacking among gay male participants, Adam (2005) reasoned that a neoliberal strain of self-interest led participants to conclude that it was up to a receptive partner to insist on condom use. In the absence of such a request, the penetrative partner was under no obligation to use one. SBSE poses this kind of every-individual-for-him/herself stance as the natural, common denominator of all interactions when it reproduces a discourse of bifurcated, "antagonistic"

(Elliott 2014, p. 218) heterosexuality: that men are driven exclusively by lust, including to the point of predation; and that women exploit men's sexual drive to entrap them in relationships (Gavey 2005). Combined with neoliberalism's naturalization—and celebration—of competition and self-interest, SBSE's constructed opposition of sexually insatiable boys and relationally manipulative girls implies that heterosexual relationships are founded on an inevitable degree of mistrust.

Peer affiliation may also be a casualty of neoliberal sexuality education discourse. Just as partners cannot be expected to prioritize your interests unless you demand it or offer an equal exchange, peers are framed in equally skeptical terms. SBSE often includes exercises in how to resist the endangering influence of peers (Darroch et al. 2000), basing these warnings on the twin assumptions that youth are particularly susceptible to peer pressure (Lesko 1996; Ungar 1999)and that such influence is detrimental (Allen and Antonishak 2008). As one example of this preoccupation with peers as threats, in a qualitative study of peer influences on sexuality and relationships, comparable frequencies of participants described peers as sources of positive support and as sources of negative pressure (45 % and 48 %, respectively); yet the recommendations for SBSE focused exclusively on lessons to mitigate peer influence, with no mention of how SBSE might foster peer bonds (Suleiman and Deardorff 2015). This is not only a gross oversimplification of peer relationships and influence (Brechwald and Prinstein 2011), but an irrationally negative one. Akin to youth sexual behavior, receptivity to peer influence is developmentally normative and ultimately facilitates important life skills. As Allen and Antonishak point out, "[B]eing influenced to behave in a way that one's peers find most acceptable and attractive is actually very close to being precisely the definition of what it means to be a *well-socialized* individual (original italics; p. 142)." Peers are also not uniformly threatening and negative. Instead, studies have found that participants in sex ed programs, particularly those that prioritize collaborative and respectful group dynamics, often trust and support one another, even while offering counterpoints and correction (Ashcraft 2008; Ball et al. 2009; Lindroth 2014). Youth may also find vital support among their peers when facing broader cultural scrutiny and judgment, as in the case of adolescent women who felt buffered by their friends from the sexual double standard and threat of slut-shaming (Lyons et al. 2011).

Operating against this potential for fostering cooperation and support, many SBSE lessons drive wedges—or attempt to—between youth and between youth and their families and communities. Potentially contentious, confusing, and "sensitive" topics are often avoided in sexuality education,

giving way to neoliberal platitudes (Lesko 2010). SBSE's excision of issues for youth to wrestle with and debate stunts their direct engagement with each other and therefore also any associated opportunities to learn about each other and consequently learn to trust each other. Thus, the censored "safe space" of neoliberal SBSE (a far cry from Fine's (1988) original call for safe spaces that would liberate youth sexual discourse) foments ignorance, mistrust, and shame.

Figures in the cautionary tales that are such mainstays of SBSE are not always distant "others." Surviving abuse and living with infection may be the experiences those close to students, particularly those whose communities are oppressed by racism and economic injustice. They may have loved ones who became parents during adolescence (and who do not endure lifelong regret as a result), or live in communities in which young parenthood is not automatically dubbed a catastrophe (Edin and Kefalas 2011; Geronimus 2003; SmithBattle 2012). A similar disconnect between SBSE and lived experience might be experienced by students from cultural minority families and communities. Whitten and Sethna (2014) critique Canadian SBSE's treatment of "traditional" or "cultural" (i.e., minority) values as ideologically backward barriers to sexual health, presumably in contrast with modern (i.e., majority) views (for a review and example of how maintaining ties to cultures of origin is beneficial to immigrant and refugee youth, see Qin et al. 2015). Such implicit degradation and ignorance was also observed by Haggis and Mulholland (2014) and Sanjakdar et al. (2015) in Australia and New Zealand, and by Kendall (2012) and Fields (2008) in US sexuality education classrooms.

These lessons draw sharp distinctions between individuals on the right track or communities with the right values (i.e., those trending upward along a course toward material achievement and independence) and lives that have been derailed by bad choices or are hampered by retrograde cultures. This presents youth with an apparent forced choice: (A) accept these deficit-focused and reductivist depictions of their families and communities at some expense to their subjective sense of belonging within those communities and support networks; or (B) reject these misrepresentations and disidentify with the classrooms in which they are propagated in order to preserve their self-esteem and their loyalty to extracurricular support networks. When SBSE curricula, classrooms, and teachers are experienced as stereotyping and hostile, as they often are (Fields 2008; Fine and McClelland 2006; García 2009; Kendall 2012), youth can hardly be blamed for rejecting them as desirable, credible, or reliable resources. This is a loss not only because alienated students might bypass some useful information, but also in terms of the missed opportunity to diversify—not displace or replace—youths' support networks. In fact, it is the cultivation of relationships with diverse others (peers and adults alike) and

getting to engage in candid, emotionally safe conversations that youth often value most about participating in sexuality and relationships programs (Ball et al. 2009; Bay-Cheng et al. 2013).

SBSE lessons that make use of others as the shamed objects of cautionary tales, activities that represent sexually active youth as chewed gum (e.g., Culp-Ressler 2013), and the "terror-based teaching" observed by Degler (2015) invite students to engage in dehumanizing and demeaning downward comparisons, distancing themselves from stigmatized "victims" rather than showing compassion, identifying common vulnerabilities, or critiquing disabling conditions. Neoliberalism's all-or-nothing division of self-determining, strategic agents from weak-willed, gullible victims (Stringer 2014) compels youth to push others below what I have referred to as the "agency line" (Bay-Cheng 2015) in order to fend off any taint of fallibility or vulnerability in themselves. To live up to neoliberal agency imperatives of *Taking Charge*, being a *Teen in control*, and *Making the choice to protect your future*, individuals push off of others, largely through slut-shaming and victim-blaming (Bay-Cheng 2015) and most often using racially and socioeconomically marginalized youth as their foils (Attwood 2007; García 2009; Stephens and Phillips 2003).

Neoliberalism's influence on sexuality education classrooms is channeled not only through ideology but also through policies that intentionally impoverish public systems. Schools and social services, including sexual and reproductive health care providers who are often contracted by schools to deliver sexuality education, have no choice but to comply with funders' mandates. In a corporatized culture that casts inefficiency and ineffectiveness (as measured in dollars) as cardinal sins, programs must compete for funding by providing empirical evidence of a program's success. This may seem like a reasonable expectation, but narrow definitions of empiricism, evidence, and success often lead to the prioritization of quantifiable results over meaningful ones (Schalet et al. 2014). The neoliberal preference for manualized and modular curricula, the presumption of a rational independent actor who proceeds from ignorance to knowledge and then to responsible behavior, and the expectation of SMART (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) objectives culminate in SBSE's foundation on the top-down transmission of information from teachers to students. This standardized, linear, expert–novice model may ease the measurement of a program's effectiveness in meeting discrete objectives, but it leaves little opportunity for teachers or students to pursue more complex, less quantifiable forms of inquiry and understanding.

Sexuality education classrooms dictated by competencies (in current assessment vernacular), manualized best practices, learning modules, and SMART objectives are not where the systemic, entrenched, interlocking drivers of sexual risk are going to be discovered and challenged. Yet without

concerted critical analysis of the factors that make sexuality risky for youth, and disproportionately so for some, it is not possible for students to receive a truly comprehensive sexuality education. Anti-contextual and anti-collective neoliberal discourse mystifies the social determinants of sexual well-being, laying blame for vulnerability on individuals and simultaneously isolating them from sources of support. Building on the foundation of existing critiques, recommendations, and practical models, I advocate supplanting the depoliticized and divisive neoliberal SBSE script of right choices and responsible behaviors with a model of critically comprehensive sexuality education that contests injustice and builds solidarity.

Critical Sexuality Education: Collective Analysis

Inquiry is most often conceived of as a process of asking questions about the unknown, but critical analysis may be more aptly characterized as asking questions about what *is* known. As Lindroth (2014) explains, the basis of a "norm critical pedagogical approach" is "investigat[ing] with young people (as equal co-investigators) different constructions of sexuality. Thus, the content of each session focuses on questions rather than fact" (p. 404; see also Sanjakdar et al. 2015). This entails weighing the possible fallibility and bias of commonly accepted truisms such as the equation of youth sexuality with danger or the attribution of risk to sexual behavior (Fortenberry 2014; Tolman and McClelland 2011). Probing the sources of youths' vulnerability to negative sexual outcomes shows intersecting forms of social injustice to be at the root of youth's vulnerability to negative sexual outcomes, just as they are of glaring sociodemographic disparities in virtually all domains of life and well-being (Krieger and Smith 2004). Removing neoliberal blinders reveals not only the pervasive reach of injustice but also new fields and paths of intervention. When youth sexual well-being is understood as predicated on equal and adequate rights, access, and resources, change efforts are redirected away from individual behavior and toward social conditions.

Advocates of critically comprehensive SBSE recommend orienting curricula not toward preventing sexual risk but instead toward the broader goal of promoting sexual rights (Berglas et al. 2014), sexual literacy (Connell and Elliott 2009), sexual ethics (Lamb 2010b), anti-racism (Whitten and Sethna 2014), sexual citizenship (Macleod and Vincent 2014), and collective responsibility for health promotion (Ioannou et al. 2014). Any substantive changes must be accompanied by changes in classroom dynamics, too, in order to enable intergenerational, democratic engagement. Adults must be willing to relinquish their age-based power and the veneer of expertise in order to

collaborate with youth as "evocative" mentors (Sullivan 1996) who foster and follow youth initiatives (Bay-Cheng et al. 2013). Critical SBSE must also recognize that engaged, productive discord plays a crucial role in forging critical consciousness and a sense of community in groups. Studies of youths' impressions of sexuality education programs show that they prize the chance to discuss and even debate complicated issues of relationships, gender, power, and personal experience (Ashcraft 2008; Ball et al. 2009; Sanjakdar et al. 2015). As Kendall (2012) argued, SBSE will be richer if we do not "stifle debate, [but] build curricula around it" (p. 238).

The mission of critical sexuality education extends far beyond the typical SBSE learning objectives of delivering concrete information and skills instruction such that youth can live up to curricular slogans of *TAKING CHARGE* and *Be[ing] Responsible!* It also defies tidy quantitative measurement, time-limited interventions, and immediately apparent effects. Instead of SMART objectives, the success of a critical SBSE program might be gauged by the diversity of views expressed, the proportion of vocal participants in a class, the complexity of dilemmas explored, and even the intensity of a debate. Indeed, most of the gains to come from critical SBSE will only be realized once participants can get past the "discursive foreplay" (McClelland and Fine 2008) of a neoliberal script of impeccable self-assurance, unflagging ambition, and more often than not, unsparing criticism of others. Echoing the core political principles of empowerment theory (Bay-Cheng 2012; Gutiérrez 1994; Lee 2001; Rappaport 1987), critical SBSE invests in an open-ended process of collective engagement—with ideas, in action, and with one another—rather than following a linear path to reach a predetermined goal.

A critical approach to SBSE does not displace the standard factual content that comprises any scientifically accurate and comprehensive SBSE curriculum (e.g., anatomical components and functions, the physiology of arousal and orgasm, the epidemiology of infection, the mechanics of sexual behaviors, and measures for pregnancy and infection prevention). Such fundamental knowledge is akin to learning historical dates, grammatical rules, and arithmetic functions. Just as the study of history, literature, and math extends beyond competent memorization and execution of basic skills to enrich both our understanding of the world and our contributions to it, sexuality education can have ramifications beyond individual health outcomes. Critical SBSE operates as a complementary layer, adding dimension by provoking discussions of the complexity and context dependence of sexuality. In keeping with this, I propose the skeletons of three sample exercises that build on standard elements of SBSE curricula: (1) sexual risk prevalence and prevention, (2) sexual motives and consent, and (3) access to sexual and reproductive sexual health services. But as in Paiva's (2005) use of "sexual scenes," these

activities are meant to situate the usual take-away messages (protect yourself against infection, consent is yours to give or refuse, use the services available to you) in fuller, real-life context. These are not part of an existing curriculum, but are presented as fantasies of what could occur if our sexuality education classrooms were allowed to grow into critical collectives.

Lesson #1: Whose/Who Is Right and Responsible?

After learning about the health risks primarily associated with sexuality (i.e., infection and unintended pregnancy) and attendant prevention measures (e.g., abstinence, condoms, and contraception), students will evaluate common blanket injunctions to youth about making the "right choices" and engaging in "responsible behaviors" in light of the diverse, interlocking structural inequalities that determine youths' options. Instead of the objectifying/dehumanizing scare and shame tactic of using others as cautionary tales of poor judgment and careless behavior, this exercise reverses perspective so that it is interlocked social and material conditions, not an isolated individual, that are subject to scrutiny (i.e., a sort of analysis from the inside out). In many ways, this proposal is not really so radical. A lesson focused on malnutrition, for instance, would not focus only on a lack of food as its cause or on the physiological effects of starvation. It would also review the environmental drivers of food insufficiency (e.g., poverty, war, drought, blight). It would hardly be considered satisfactory for a student to come away from a study of famine with the view that starvation is avoidable if an individual works hard to find food and applies himself to eating enough. Yet this is largely what happens in sexuality education: students are presented with rates of infection and unintended pregnancy and then urged not to become a statistic, so to speak, as though statistics reflect individual will and not social forces.

Whose/Who Is Right & Responsible?

Materials

- Visual display of up-to-date negative sexual outcomes; separate visual of rates by demographic groups (e.g., race, gender, SES, sexuality)
- Newsprint or large surface and markers to write brainstormed list
- Social location cards: index cards (or similar) with a different characteristic on each. Groups should receive one card from each of the following six categories:

1. race/ethnicity
2. socioeconomic status
3. family situation (e.g., single parent, foster home, extended family support)
4. personal attributes (e.g., physical appearance, disability/illness, fluency, & literacy)
5. gender, gender expression, and sexuality
6. residential location (e.g., region, urban with public transport, rural)

Introduction

- Display rates of key negative sexual outcomes (e.g., STI, pregnancy) among youth
- Class brainstorm: *What are young people told are the "right choices" and "responsible behaviors" when it comes to sexuality?* [Create visible-to-all list of responses.]
- Return to statistics of negative sexual outcomes, but with demographic breakdowns to highlight disparities according to disadvantaged and minority statuses.
- Add comparison statistics for the Netherlands to draw contrast.
- Point out how STIs and unwanted pregnancy are often talked about as "sexual" risks, but that disparate rates show how one's vulnerability has less to do with individual sexual behavior than with social status and resources (e.g., it's not the behaviors that change, it's the social context and one's status within it).
- Introduce activity ahead as aimed at figuring out how these differences come to be.

Activity

- Break students into pairs/groups. Distribute "social location" cards so that each group has one from each of the six categories.
- Ask groups to imagine an individual with all of the characteristics of their cards.
- Next, groups should discuss the feasibility of each of the "right and responsible" behaviors (from the earlier brainstorm) for an individual with all of the characteristics of their cards.
- Reconvene as a class, asking groups to share what they identified as the obstacles and advantages an individual with their assigned characteristics would encounter in trying to do the "right and responsible" thing.

(*continued*)

(continued)

- Spinoff discussions:
  - Ask groups how the situation would change if one of their characteristics was different;
  - Ask groups to randomly exchange one card and discuss implications;
  - Ask groups which characteristic they would most want to trade away or trade for; discuss different perspectives on liabilities and advantages of various statuses.

Takeaway Points

- Doing the "right and responsible" thing is more or less feasible at some social locations and for reasons beyond personal control.
- Systemic social inequalities are often misdiagnosed as individual sexual problems.
- If we are serious about preventing negative outcomes, we need to be serious about preventing biases and inequalities.

Lesson #2: Why Yes?

Sexual consent and sexual refusal skills are key components of sexuality education (Arbeit 2014). The "prophylactic of talk" (Fields 2008, p. 68) is featured as the primary means of sexual risk prevention in AOUM and comprehensive curricula alike. As critiques of "rape culture" gain traction in mainstream US discourse, an even greater premium is likely to be placed on teaching youth about unambiguous communication, whether enthusiastic yeses or emphatic nos. Yet such instruction efforts concentrate on individuals, teaching them to speak up (girls), to heed a partner's wishes (boys), and to intervene on others' behalf (bystanders), with little attention to the myriad social and material factors that shape sexual decision making. Consent is not unambivalent, one-dimensional, or static over the course of an interaction (Muehlenhard and Peterson 2005; Beres 2007), and it is filtered through intersecting personal priorities and dominant norms (e.g., Fasula et al. 2014). Discussing this complexity and the necessity of heeding "no" is essential, but so is exploring the many motives and facets of "yes."

Reversing perspective and focusing not on individuals but on the circumstances in which they offer consent may reveal this complex field. Through the *Why Yes?* discussion, students weigh the situation and perspective of a young

woman who consents to unwanted oral sex and unprotected intercourse with a boyfriend. At each stage of the activity, a new set of contextual factors is disclosed, prompting an iterative analysis of sexual consent as multiple-layered and dynamic interaction, not as a simple expression of sexual desire. From this examination of consent as emerging out of the interplay among needs, goals, and resources, participants may also be able to distinguish between making "bad choices" and *having bad options*.

Why Yes?

Materials

- Visual of backstory and successive contextual layers.
- Backstory:

  Stefanie is 16 and has been in a serious relationship with Lawrence for 6 months. She wants to use condoms, but sometimes he doesn't. She says that when she tries to insist:

It would lead into a big argument and we wouldn't understand each other. We'd take time to cool off and then get back together. Usually it'd turn into having sex without one, anyway.

  When it comes to oral sex, Stefanie says it is "gross" and that "I don't do that." But later says that she does go down on Lawrence. She explains:

I love him and he loves me. I did it because I don't want to lose him over something stupid. It isn't the worst thing in life. So, I do it when he's absolutely needing it so he doesn't go into break-up mode or turn into a really bad argument because I can't afford to lose him.

- Contextual layers:

  1. Lawrence is 20 years old.
  2. Stefanie is from a low SES family and community and lives in a city with one of the highest poverty rates in the nation.
  3. Lawrence has an apartment, a car, and a stable job.
  4. Stefanie is in foster care and doesn't have any family except a little brother (also in care) and an aunt who lives about an hour away.
  5. Stefanie's caseworker is trying to help her come up with an independent living plan for when she ages out of foster care when she's 18.

(*continued*)

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Introduction

- Class brainstorm: *What are the reasons why someone might want—or not want—a sexual interaction with someone else?* Prompt for or add vectors not mentioned by class.
- Point out how these vectors of wantedness might all be in play at the same time (provide basic example of how an interaction might be wanted in some ways, unwanted in others).
- Explain that point of the conversation ahead is to think through all the different reasons why someone might agree to a sexual experience that they don't totally want. And to think about how that person's decision to consent is judged depending on circumstances.

Activity

- Present backstory of Stefanie and her consent to unwanted sex with Lawrence.
- Ask groups to discuss different ways of interpreting Stefanie's situation and her consent to sexual interactions that she doesn't want (at least in some ways). Groups should imagine how the situation looks from Stefanie's point-of-view and what she might see as her options.
- Present each of the contextual layers, stopping after each to ask groups to consider: *In this context, now what do Stefanie's options look like?*
- Reconvene as a class to discuss:
  - Did your thinking about Stefanie's situation substantially change at some point? Was there one factor that you thought really was a game-changer? Or was it when a certain number of factors or stressors had piled up?
  - If someone thinks it is a problem that Stefanie is agreeing to sexual interactions that she doesn't want (at least for some reasons), how can they make a difference?

Takeaway Points

- People agree to sexual interactions for many reasons, including as a necessary strategy.
- Need to distinguish between making bad choices and having bad options to choose from.
- If we want prevent people consenting to unwanted sex, need to provide better options.

Lesson #3: What Does Access Look Like?

US youths' access to sexual and reproductive health care varies widely by place (i.e., state, city, school district) and by service type (e.g., sexuality education, STI testing, contraception, abortion; e.g., Guttmacher Institute 2014). These explicitly legislated dimensions of access are complemented by a host of implicit factors: transportation, hours, affordability, service providers' compliance with stated policy, youths' awareness of services, and threats of stigmatization. SBSE may strive to inform students of their explicit rights and existing resources in a given district or community, but there may be fewer opportunities to discuss the practical details and obstacles in accessing services. This may be a function of SBSE instructors' worry that discussion of barriers will deter students from seeking services at all, or it may stem from SBSE instructors' ignorance of how youth, especially those who are marginalized, perceive the services ostensibly available to them. Finally, presenting information about the services that exist is not the same as imagining the services that are *possible*. A critique of service barriers that is accompanied by a consideration of service improvements could counteract the concern that students will withdraw from seeking care and also engage them in advocacy for increased access.

To stimulate students' critical analysis of sexual health care accessibility and to stimulate their imaginations about alternatives, students could participate in a series of virtual field trips and subsequent comparative analyses. These field trips would capitalize on digital technology by using videos of youth in various locations engaging in the same task (e.g., seeking contraception). The videos would allow students to shadow others and gain a first-person experience of what it takes to access sexual health care under various conditions. Students might also produce such a video of their own community, contributing to a growing library. These virtual excursions would be geographically unrestricted, allowing students to witness the sexual health services climate for youth not only in diverse US locations, but in other nations as well. Exposure to radically different provisions for youth sexual health could help students: to understand how the normative, material, and policy climate shapes youth sexual well-being (i.e., that sexual health is not just a product of individual choice and personal responsibility); to realize that these conditions are variable; and to envision an alternative to existing systems and structures.

What Does Access Look Like?

Materials

- Internet and projection capability
- Video library of "virtual field trips" generated by youth in various locations (not limited to the US). Ideally, such a collection would span not only various legislative environments, but also diverse youth, including those likely to encounter explicit stigma (e.g., racial minorities, trans* youth) and those likely to encounter ignorance and neglect of their particular needs (e.g., youth with disabilities, youth with trauma histories, youth without English fluency/literacy).

Introduction

- Class brainstorm: *What are the sexual health services that youth in this community have a right to? And where should youth go to get that care?* [Make generated list visible; add/correct list as needed.]
- Make point that although these are the things that are technically available, there are lots of youth who do not get these services. Sometimes it might be because of something going on for that individual, but many times there are external circumstances that get in the way.
- Introduce the "virtual field trips" as a way to get a sense of what it actually feels like to try and access services, from the perspective of a young person. And that the videos will also show some of the different services that are out there in different communities and to different youth.

Activity

- Watch selection of virtual field trips.
- Ask students to pay attention to things like: Can services be accessed by the youth privately (e.g., without parents knowing)? How hard is it to physically get to services? How affordable are services and does the youth know about cost ahead of time? How is she treated by staff and other patients? What is the feeling of the physical environment of the clinic?
- Discuss as a class:
  - What aspect of the services was better than what we have here?
  - Where there any barriers or obstacles that people had in common?

– Which seemed like the best environment for youth in terms of sexual health care?
– How did ideas or values seem to affect access to services?

Takeaway Points

- Access is not just about having the right to services, it also has to do with making services practically available and personally comfortable.
- Youth sexual health services reflect values and biases, not just science and medicine.
- Youth sexual health policies and services are changeable; what exists does not have to be.
- If we want young people to be sexually healthy, we need to provide truly accessible services.

The crux of these proposed activities and any effort to infuse SBSE with critical analysis is to question the decontextualized and divisive truths on offer by neoliberal ideology. By reversing perspective, exercises in analysis from the inside out such as those I propose (but including many other possibilities) reverse the targets of critique, as well. Instead of belittling individuals for failing to live up to uniform standards of agency and responsibility, students may experience compassion for individuals and express discontent with systems that fail to meet—equally and adequately—citizens' needs. Treating the SBSE classroom as a site for collective critical analysis can also mitigate the individual psychological costs of recognizing system injustice (Jost and Hunyady 2005). Critical SBSE resists the gravitational pull of individualization, whether in sanctifying personal choice or demanding personal responsibility, and trains our sights not on individuals but on the injustices that buffet us.

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18

Intersex Bodies in Sexuality Education: On the Edge of Cultural Difference

Annette Brömdal, Mary Lou Rasmussen, Fida Sanjakdar, Louisa Allen, and Kathleen Quinlivan

We are surrounded by, and have embodied, the idea that while the vast majority of bodies may not be ill, they are nevertheless 'wrong' in one way or another: they have too few (or too many) limbs or digits; they (or parts of them) are the wrong size, the wrong age, the wrong color; they are 'sexually ambiguous'; they bear the wrong ethnic markers; they inhibit particular identities and/or aspirations; they simply do not seem 'right'.
Sullivan 2009, 313

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Drawing on Nikki Sullivan, we seek to address and challenge the ways in which intersex bodies and 'embarrassing bodies' are theorised in contemporary debates about non-gendered bodies and begin to think about how these understandings might be incorporated in sexualities education. As we shall explore, myths and ignorance regarding intersexuality abound, sometimes result in intersex bodies inhabiting the space of 'monstrous other' or 'embarrassing other' in discussions of sex and sexuality within and outside the classroom. In this discourse, individuals with intersex variations may feel, as intersex and English scholar Christopher Breu points out, that they are 'different in precisely the areas with which our culture is most obsessed' (Breu 2009, 102) and that our culture treats their difference as something that needs to be 'normalised' and 'fixed' out of their 'monstrous' or 'embarrassing' state to fit the normative ideas of gendered bodies and genitalia. This chapter shall thus explore ideas around 'embarrassing bodies' that are inspired by the UK Broadcast 'Embarrassing Bodies'.[1] This chapter will consider how this notion is implicitly and explicitly used within the school milieu to further 'normalise' and 'abnormalise' particular bodies and genitalia and how intersex fits into this debate.

The umbrella term intersex, also referred to as 'disorders of sex development' in medical milieus,[2] includes more than 40 variations (Hiort 2013) where approximately 17 in 1000 individuals are born with one (OII Australia 2014a). Here one's chromosome configuration, hormonal make-up, internal and/or external genitalia (combination or independently) are 'atypical' to those of 'standard' male and female anatomy (Fausto-Sterling 2000; Koyama and Weasel 2003). They also take shape in 'physical differences in secondary sexual characteristics such as muscle mass, hair distribution, breast development and stature' (OII Australia 2013).

Employing Sullivan's notion of somatechnics, an approach that does not distinguish between bodies, technologies, and associated discourses but rather sees 'bodily being (or corporealities) as always already technologized and technologies as always already enfleshed' (2009, 314), this chapter shall argue that individuals associated with the category of intersex cannot be understood as separate from or somehow outside the technologies of medical, scientific, media, and educational institutions that discipline and regulate their bodies. Inspired by Sullivan, we suggest this approach may 'engender more-nuanced understandings of and critical responses to the complex and multifaceted

[1] This programme attempts to 'raise health awareness and de-stigmatise "embarrassing" body parts and medical conditions' (Channel 4 2014).

[2] Since 2006 the medical establishment no longer refers to 'intersex' when referring to individuals born with intersex variations. Through a highly debatable consensus statement the taxonomy changed within medicine to 'disorders of sex development' (Lee et al. 2006).

technés in and through which embodied being(s) comes to matter in situated contextually specific ways' (2009, 317).

Sullivan argues that the notion of somatechnics is 'to think through the varied and complex ways in which bodily-being is shaped not only by the surgeon's knife but also by the discourses that justify and contest the use of such instruments' (2009, 314). Iain Morland adds that 'one's embodied cultural location makes … certain somatechnologies intelligible as body modification … prior to any conscious judgment about whether such modifications are right or wrong' (2009, 194). Hence, irrespective of whether one agrees or disagrees with the ways in which certain truths, knowledges, and technologies are applied to particular bodies in order to discipline and regulate them, mere participation in the debate has a profound and formative influence itself (just like this one) (Sullivan 2009, 314). For the purpose of this paper, somatechnologies can be readily applied to examine the ways in which 'one's cultural embodied location' affects how technologies police, identify, and regulate certain bodies and lives in the sex education classroom, marking them as either 'right' or 'wrong' (Sullivan 2009, 313).

In recent years, a considerable amount of academic material and research have been produced on the importance of including intersex issues in educational settings (Breu 2009; Burford et al. 2013; DePalma 2013; Herndon 2006; Hird 2003; Jones and Hillier 2012; Jones 2013; Koyama and Weasel 2003; Ollis et al. 2013; Vega et al. 2012). Many of these resources have however mainly focused on students in tertiary education or student populations outside the Australian and the New Zealand context. Those exploring intersex issues in the context of the two countries have done so by discussing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning/queer (LGBTIQ)[3] health and well-being concerns in general. We are specifically interested in exploring the ways in which intersex issues can be considered in the two countries' secondary sex education contexts and curriculum.

To this end, this chapter shall consider how intersex issues might be given greater space in the sexualities education curriculum beyond approaches which appear to feed young learner's voyeuristic curiosity with non-normative bodies. Some questions that this chapter is framed by are: How can the inclusion of intersex bodies in sexuality education be educative and in an age-appropriate way include topics such as social justice, medical ethics, the construction of truth, knowledge, and power-relations? How can this inclusion also complicate the ways in which intersex is represented in popular

[3] Henceforth, we are using the acronym 'LGBTIQ' when referring to 'lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer/questioning'.

media, rather than seen as a 'risky business', when students are encouraged to critically examine their stereotypical thinking about sex, gender, and bodies? And, how can the inclusion of intersex issues in sexuality education provide feelings of confirmation, awareness, and understanding rather than assuming that no one in the student population, or one of their family members, is born with an intersex variation?

We suggest that curiosity about intersex bodies, 'embarrassing bodies', and non-normative bodies can provide a pathway into conversations about knowledge production, power-relations, and cultural differences relating to bodies and the sexual practices that people participate in. Attentive 'listening' to and responding to what students are influenced by outside the classroom, such as social media, can further function as a 'source of sex education for young people' (Albury 2013, S33). Exploring and challenging the ways in which particular bodies are produced and labelled as 'normal', 'abnormal', or even 'embarrassing', and attending to the ways in which these understandings are reproduced and passed on (Evers et al. 2013) is important.

This chapter shall conclude that sexuality educators, at the very least, need to presume that intersex is around them, educate themselves about intersex issues, and dare to work *with* and *against* young people's curiosity for stories about what they may perceive to be, and are often told to be, 'embarrassing bodies'. Hence, considering students' media use (Albury 2013, S35) in their learning about what constitutes 'normal', 'abnormal', or 'embarrassing' bodies is important as it may not only function as a 'discussion starter or launch pad for classroom/workshop discussions' (S38) about sex, gender, and bodies, but also tap into their interests and is of relevance to them (Evers et al. 2013, 273). Engaging with their popular media use also allows them to expand their media and sexual literacy, critically explore the messages media is trying to convey to them as consumers, and what they then produce and recycle once that knowledge is consumed (Evers et al. 2013, 265).

Engaging with intersex issues in sex education in an inclusive and empowering way and educate students about real-life issues that people with intersex variations face, may not only detangle a range of myths and misconceptions about intersex issues, but also be a gateway to explore how power accrues to particular types of bodies and, get students to think about how they are implicated in these relations of power. Critically examining sex, gender, sexuality, bodies, and embodiment in an inclusive, sensitive, and empowering way may thus be 'a crucial public forum in which they [students with intersex variations] can feel affirmed and recognized, rather than stigmatized and negated' (Breu 2009, 103). Furthermore, discussing intersex issues in sex education and 'having intersex people's lives and experiences acknowledged, represented,

and discussed in the classroom can be profoundly empowering—indeed, it can be life-saving' (Breu 2009, 107).

We hope to inspire sexuality educators to see the value of becoming more aware of and sensitive to the notion of intersex within disciplines of medical ethics, popular media, social and political justice, and activism, in order to attend to the ways in which corporeal norms of discipline and regulation intersect. This will be done by drawing upon data collected as part of a broader ethnographic study on sexuality education in Australia and New Zealand. This is necessary as teachers still seem reluctant to actively counter heterosexism and LGBTIQ topics in schools as their knowledge and understanding about these students and their needs seem limited in order to provide them a more inclusive schooling and learning environment (Vega et al. 2012, 258). To set this discussion in context we begin with briefly describing details of the research team and the project objectives.

Research Context

From 2011 to 2013 the team was engaged in an ethnographic research project, funded by a two-year Australian Research Council Discovery Project Grant, exploring the intersection of cultural and religious differences in public school-based sexuality education in Australia and New Zealand. The team included six researchers; three were based in the Australian city of Melbourne and one in Sydney, and one in the New Zealand city of Auckland, and one in Christchurch. The research team are all well acquainted in exploring sexuality concerns and young people that said, our path to doing so crosses disciplinary fields, including public health, education, and sports sociology (see Allen et al. 2012, 2014).

The research team undertook field work in four secondary schools, two in Melbourne, one in Auckland, and one in Christchurch. The school populations differed quite dramatically, where one school in Melbourne mainly composed of middle-class Anglo and Southern European students while the other constituted of lower-middle-class students with Middle Eastern Christian and Muslim backgrounds as well as European Orthodox students. In New Zealand, one of the school's student population constituted mainly of pupils with Maori and Pacific working-class backgrounds, while in the other school, the greater number of students were Pakeha (Caucasian New Zealanders) and of middle-class background (for further details, see Allen et al. 2012)

The research project perceived that polarising cultural, religious, and secular disputes about sexuality education in schools hinder its capacity and delivery

of sex education programmes to promote, assist, and maintain good sexual health of those learners from different religious and cultural backgrounds. The project was conceived out of appreciation that sexuality educators are often at a loss about how best to address this matter. This is exacerbated because the implications of cultural and religious differences for sexuality education are critically under researched (Halstead 1999; Singh 2001; Jackson 2004; Sanjakdar 2009). Consequently, the research team wished to explore how to best address religious and cultural differences in sexuality education by concentrating on learners aged 13–14 years, and examine any cultural and religious roadblocks that may prevent students and their educational institutions from engaging in sexuality education. The ethnographic research project was also interested in learning how students from religiously and culturally diverse backgrounds understand and perceive the sexuality education provided in their schools. As a consequence the aim of the project was to potentially enhance sexuality education as well as the sexual health and well-being of young people within and across cultural and religious divides.

The empirical data collection was generally structured so that each researcher was responsible for contacting a school in their vicinity, negotiating informant access, and getting ethical approvals from their individual tertiary institutions. The project's ethnographic approach included methods such as sexuality education classroom observations, focus group interviews with students, individual interviews with students and their teachers, as well as diaries where young learners cut and paste images from visual media about sexuality into their diaries (for further details see Allen et al. 2012). Once in the field, there was a variation in what information and topics were discussed formally and informally, and how students and teachers responded to the different discourses.

Although the aim of the research project did not specifically set out to explore the ways in which conversations about 'normal' and 'abnormal' bodies surface and evolve in the sex education classroom, a range of formal and informal conversations lead to such dialogues. Thus, this chapter shall specifically draw information from three classroom observations from three of the four school sights—two in New Zealand and one in Melbourne. In these conversations, the teacher was either discussing body parts that boys/men and girls/women are born with and how they differentiate which led to ad hoc questions on the topic of 'embarrassing bodies' from the students to the teacher, or anyone willing to answer them, to informal micro-conversations between the students that the teacher did not partake in, or random questions that students had on the issue of 'embarrassing bodies', hair production, and genital configurations.

Before we explore these formal and informal conversations, the next section outlines some of the body of research regarding the importance of discussing LGBTIQ issues, and more specifically intersex issues, in school-based sexuality education. These discussions will provide a critical platform to think through the possible ways in which intersex issues are included/excluded in the sex education curriculum in both countries.

Conceptualising and Problematizing Intersex

While there has been an increasing amount of research suggesting the importance of including intersex issues in educational settings,[4] much of this work appear to focus on tertiary students, are broad LGBTIQ conversations within school-based sex education for secondary students, and lacks an engagement with the cultural and religious diversity of Australian and New Zealand secondary students. This research, with exception to Breu 2009; Herndon 2006; Koyama and Weasel 2003, also include individuals with intersex variations more *broadly* rather than *specifically*. It does not seem to explore popular media and discussions on the topics of 'embarrassing bodies' or intersex issues drawn from school-based sexuality education classes attending to discussions about power-relations, or the ways in which knowledge and truths are produced. Although much of our work is in the early exploratory stages, the roles that secondary students play in producing, circulating, and maintaining particular ideas about certain bodies and how they are implicated in relations of power appear to be lacking.

Breu (2009) argues that it is important to introduce discussions that could be linked to intersex issues already in high school and not leave those discussions to chance, choice, or to medical practitioners. Breu (2009) further suggests that introducing and discussing intersex issues in the high school classroom, such as in school-based sex education, is of importance to all students. As students of this age are 'typically concerned with sex and physical appearance' it is of importance to then consider 'how much more preoccupying and potentially self-negating such concerns are if your body, your desires, or your gendered experience differs from those that are the norm' (Breu 2009, 102).

When teachers have decided that they are going to discuss intersex issues in educational settings, Emi Koyama and Lisa Weasel stress the importance of considering theoretical lenses that not only try 'to demonstrate the social construction of the sexed/gendered body' but also value the importance of

[4] See for example, Breu (2009), Burford et al. (2013), DePalma (2013), Herndon (2006), Hird (2003), Jones and Hillier (2012), Jones (2013), Koyama and Weasel (2003), Ollis et al. (2013), Vega et al. (2012).

including the 'lived experience and a site of systematic erasure and resistance' (2003, 2). Discussing intersex issues in school-based sex education should also take into account that the subject often has 'real-world implications for real people' (Koyama and Weasel 2003, 3). However, as Koyama and Weasel suggest 'because the existence of intersex people is under pervasive marginalisation and erasure' the authors suggest that classroom discussions about intersex issues may 'wind up reinforcing exoticisation and objectification of intersex people' (2003, 5). For example, a teacher may use outdated material which may make intersex conversations seem like 'an anomaly of the past' (Koyama and Weasel 2003, 5). The teacher may also use language understood as stigmatising such as 'disorders of sex development' where the person is pathologised and deemed to have a disorder that needs to be 'fixed' (OII Australia 2014a, 2). Similarly, the teacher may use the term 'hermaphrodite' which also suggests that the person has 'fully functioning sets of both "male" and "female" sex organs', like the Greek mythological figure Hermaphroditus, which is 'impossible in mammals' (OII Australia 2014a, 2). This may be very harmful and destructive to intersex students. The Australian intersex organisation OII[5] advocates that the word 'intersex' should be used, and refer to people with 'intersex traits, variations or characteristics' (2014b, 6) when engaging in conversations about intersex.

Koyama and Weasel further suggest that educators should assume that intersex is around them and also talk about the ways in which sexism, binary body, sex, and gender norms affect people with intersex variations from a lived experience (2003). Hence, looking into issues of 'medical ethics, social justice and erasure' brings it to a level where there is an intersex *visibility* in the classroom rather than it being *invisible* (Koyama and Weasel 2003, 6–7).

As the sex 'educational space is colonised by young people's engagement with media', we are also inspired by Kath Albury (2013, S34) who stresses the importance for sex educators to consider 'the ways that young students' media practices' may 'play a role in the processes of sexuality education and sexual learning' (S42). As young learners are influenced by different media outlets in forming their ideas about particular bodies and genital configurations which they then use in various ways, we believe it is important that teachers tap into media channels that may influence their ideas about intersex and 'embarrassing bodies', which they may reproduce and then pass on to their peers (Evers et al. 2013). Similarly to introducing intersex in the sex education curriculum, young learners' media practices should be considered rather than categorised as a 'risky business'. This will validate their interests and help the

[5] OII Australia is part of Organisation Intersex International with its base in the USA.

teacher understand where they gain their information from and how they use and reproduce/resist it. It will also allow the educator to more carefully *listen to* and *listen for* the ways in which students' popular media practices (Albury 2013) may impact their ideas of what constitutes a 'normal' body versus an 'abnormal' body and challenge some of these heteronormative perceptions and their involvement in this production/resistance. The application of this media practice may further assist us to understand the extent to which young learners use the information they have learned from popular media to fill or extend the gaps of knowledge that they believe their peers may have concerning sexuality. Equally, it may assist for sex educators to better understand how their popular media use functions as ad hoc sexuality education experiences although their intention may not have been to explicitly learn about bodies, sex, and genitalia. Rather, their everyday media use lead to this newly acquired knowledge.

When considering discussing intersex issues in school-based sex education classes and following some of the suggestions presented by Breu (2009), OII Australia (2014a, b), and Koyama and Weasel (2003) we suggest, in line with Foucault (1980, 131), that it is important to scrutinise whose 'truths' and 'knowledges' are privileged and therefore who is seen as more competent than others to tell the truth about these issues. By attending to Foucauldian concepts of *who* establishes 'truths' and 'knowledges' about our sex, gender, bodies, and sexualities that seem to count more than others (Foucault 1980, 131), we believe that sex educators and their students can analyse the ways in which these ideals and norms are constructed, circulated, and maintained within and outside the classroom. Getting the students to then think about the role they have in facilitating or objecting to these ideas through various means is of value.

In addition to Foucault's discussion regarding the production, circulation, and maintenance of particular 'truths' and 'knowledges', Sullivan offers a further insightful lens to explore these discussions in the classroom. Applying Sullivan's notion of *somatechnologies* to the diverse and multifaceted ways in which the intersex body is (re)produced 'not only by the surgeon's knife, but also by the discourses that justify and contest the use of such instruments' (2009, 314) is also helpful in ascribing a proper value to the complexity of how individuals born with intersex variations are marked and regulated by those who participate in the conversation about it. Sullivan argues 'that the conceptions of, debates around, and questions about specific modificatory practices are themselves technologies that shape corporeality at the most profound level' (2009, 314). Through this lens, one may thus 'engender more-nuanced understandings of and critical responses to the complex and multifaceted

technés in and through which embodied being(s) come to matter in situated contextually specific ways' (Sullivan 2009, 317). Hence, the application of this theory to help understand how 'bodily being (or corporealities) as always already technologized and technologies as always already enfleshed' (Sullivan 2009, 317) may provide new insights when exploring the ways in which intersex issues or 'embarrassing bodies' are discussed in school-based sex education and the production of 'disturbing' body and embodiment idea(l)s.

The narratives that will be provided in the next section provide some examples that demonstrate how norms related to bodies and populations surface in the sexuality education classroom. We draw attention to these instances because we want sexuality educators to attend to the ways in which discipline and regulation intersect (Foucault 1980). Finding and marking these intersections in classroom conversations about sexuality is a means to draw attention to the production of normativity and its power within and beyond the classroom (such as popular media), and within and beyond individual bodies.

Norms, Bodies, and Classrooms

The extracts that will be explored in this section, come from several classroom observations, in Melbourne, Auckland, and Christchurch, where the teachers and the students are talking about what happens to the body during puberty. As these accounts will suggest, many of these conversations often changed to other topics, such as the one that will be presented shortly below.

This particular conversation on puberty was held in Melbourne, where the sex education teacher was talking to his students about the ways in which the body changes during puberty. One of our researchers, who was sitting at the back of the classroom observed a micro-conversation that branched off from the original conversation held by the teacher. This micro-conversation, open for anyone in the classroom to respond to, was initiated by one student, Mustafa (due to his cultural and religious background) and was linked to the UK TV programme *Embarrassing Bodies*. This programme is also broadcasted on Channel Nine in Australia and attempts to 'raise health awareness and de-stigmatise "embarrassing" body parts and medical conditions' (Channel 4 2014). However, as the micro-conversation below suggests, that can be hard to decode:

Mustafa: I was watching 'Embarrassing Bodies' and there was a girl that was born with two uteruses. How weird!
Nina: Can a man have three testicles?
Joel: I watched that too and a guy had a micro-penis. What is that?
Nina: Like an 'Asian' penis!

Although this TV show aims to raise health awareness and de-stigmatise what is perceived to be 'embarrassing bodies' or body parts by informing the public about different health and medical conditions, the conversation above suggests that it can be difficult for young learners to decrypt this when conversing about its content. For example, the students are quick to stigmatise the idea of having two uteruses as 'weird', and swiftly move on to objectify and exoticise other body parts and genital configurations that they interpret as 'embarrassing'.

Decrypting the objective of the show may present to be further difficult as the name of TV programme suggests that the clients/patients on the show have 'embarrassing bodies' or even 'embarrassing illnesses' and the 'embarrassing' body parts are shown in great detail for the viewers to observe (Channel 4 2014), which to some extent may further reinforce an 'exoticization and objectification' of people with intersex variations (Koyama and Weasel 2003, 5). Similarly, if the teacher chooses to stay out of the conversation, in ways which we will shortly discuss, this may also further mystify, reproduce, and maintain the idea of what prescribes to be 'embarrassing bodies' and body parts, rather than exploring what they have heard, think, or perceive to be 'embarrassing' body parts and why.

Sullivan (2009, 313) discusses that all bodies, one way or the other, are perceived to be 'wrong'. This is exemplified by having body parts that are either too few or too many in relation to the ideal, or that one has body parts of the 'wrong size', or 'bear the wrong ethnic markers'—one is therefore 'sexually ambiguous' (2009, 313). Drawing on Sullivan's theory claiming that all bodies, one way or the other, are not 'right' (2009, 313), with the conversation above, the teacher would most certainly have had confronting and challenging, yet eye-opening conversations, had he asked the group of students why the 'micro penis' was connected to the 'Asian penis'. Where did this particular knowledge come from, and what purpose may such statements produce? The teacher could have validated their source of popular media and helped them to decode some of the knowledge the students had acquired regarding 'Embarrassing Bodies' and teased out why the 'micro penis' was being disciplined into being something 'wrong'. Why was it seen as the 'wrong size' and therefore interpreted to be a penis that is 'abnormal', 'immature', and therefore something 'embarrassing' in comparison to a 'normal' and 'mature' penis?

This scenario also provides the teacher the opportunity to unpack with the students the ways in which they were 'racially' disciplining the 'micro penis'. As the 'micro penis' was connected to an 'Asian penis', this made it not only of the 'wrong size' but also of the 'wrong colour' and something that belongs to a group of people clumped as 'Asians' rather than 'Caucasian' or seen as a

human trait across cultures and ethnic backgrounds. From this, we not only see what is distinguished as 'normal' from 'abnormal' concerning penis sizes, but also see an overlap between bodily and cultural difference—both the 'micro penis' and the 'Asian penis' are othered and marked as non-normative.

The fact that the teacher stayed out of this conversation could also be interpreted as a lost opportunity for the teacher to better understand the ways in which popular media channels can function as sources of sex education for the learners (Albury 2013, S35) and engage the students in critical media literacy. As suggested by Albury, the teacher could have used the specific 'Embarrassing Bodies' episode 'as a discussion starter or a launch pad' (2013, S38) for their next sex education class and found a real story where someone, like the UK-born Hazel Jones, talks about being born with two uteruses[6] (Donaldson-James 2012) and her lived experience (Koyama and Weasel 2003). Doing this would not only have recognised some of their popular media outlets that may function as sources of sex education (Albury 2013, S35), but have meant that the teacher heard and also listened to his students and provided agency to them by pedagogically making use of material that they knew and interested them (S34). This would also have allowed the teacher to further understand how some of these young learners 'personalise (and in some cases normalise) [and maybe in this case further "abnormalise"] unfamiliar sexual identities and behaviours' (Albury 2013, S38). In this case specifically, it would have helped the teacher to better understand how the students with the help of the 'Embarrassing Bodies' footage make meaning of what is considered a 'normal' versus an 'abnormal' body and problematize why particular bodies should seek medical assistance to become 'normal' and 'fixed'. Hence, taking the 'risk' to revisit the topic may also have enhanced the learners' critical media literacy by challenging the messages presented in the programme, and allowed them as well as the teacher to become further sexually literate (Albury 2013, S33; Evers et al. 2013).

As educators, we may ask ourselves and our students the ways in which certain bodies come to be constructed as 'abnormal' and 'embarrassing'. Morland (2009) argues that 'one's embodied cultural location crucially makes certain somatechnologies intelligible as body modification in the first place, prior to any conscious judgement about whether such modifications are right or wrong' (194). Regarding the 'Embarrassing Bodies' extract on the previous pages, it would have been interesting to tease out some of the sources underpinning the students' knowledge and also untangle how people associated with this category cannot be understood as separate from or somehow outside the technologies of medical, scientific, media, and educational institutions

[6] Also known as the intersex variation uterus didelphys (Hill 2014).

that regulate their bodies (Sullivan 2009). This challenges us to think about 'the embodiment of all agents' (Morland 2009, 194) including teachers, students, popular media, and educational institutions.

As the authors of this paper, we are interested in the ways in which the inclusion of intersex issues in sexuality education could go beyond the 'abnormal', 'embarrassing', or even 'monstrous' (Breu 2009, 102) conceptualisation and objectification of intersex issues, bodies, and genitalia, especially taking into account that one of your students or their family members, may be born with an intersex variation. The current discussion regarding the 'micro penis' does not take into consideration that a student or their family member may be born with one, and it also objectifies a whole cluster of male students in the classroom that may be of Asian background. We may further speculate as to the reasons why the teacher opted to stay out of the micro-conversation as the teacher heard the discussion but chose not to engage with it. Perhaps he, stayed and did not join in due to an already cramped curriculum, was not confident to talk about intersex issues or found the topic too 'risky' (Breu 2009, 107) and thus did not to untangle their arguments and preconceptions.

Another extract encouraging teachers to work *with* and *against* their learners' curiosity about what they perceive to be, and are often told are, 'abnormal' and 'embarrassing' bodies, is taken from one of our sights in New Zealand. This classroom observation was performed by another member of our research team while a public school-based sexuality education class was taking place in Auckland. Here the researcher observed an activity where the female teacher was asking the students to name the body parts of males and females:

Teacher: Have I forgotten anything on the male body? So you have the bum, the butt cheeks, the pee-pee and the nutties. Are we forgetting anything?
Student: Man boobs
Teacher: Man boobs? Breasts? We will do that with the females. Move onto the females. So that's the male sexuality regions generally. Everyone got that down?

The activity continues but the teacher now asks the students to focus and name the body parts of females:

Teacher: Ok now the fun part, the females. It is usually a bit funnier and less comfortable.
Student: Facial hair.
Teacher: Not generally at this age, generally if you are 70 plus maybe you start to grow facial hair, in other words your hormones start acting up and all sorts start happening, things go where they are not supposed to go.

From these two extracts taken from the same classroom activity on 'male' and 'female' body parts, a production and reproduction of technologies that regulate and discipline 'abnormal' versus 'normal' bodies is shaping form.

Here one can see that Sullivan's notion of *somatechnologies* to the diverse and multifaceted ways in which the 'embarrassing body' or the body has things happening to it that is 'not supposed' to happen is (re)produced. It is important to clarify that this re(production) is not only taking place 'by the surgeon's knife, but also by the discourses that justify and contest the use of such instruments' (2009, 314). This is helpful in ascribing a proper value to the complexity of how individuals born with intersex variations are marked and regulated by those who participate in the conversation about it. This discussion about 'man boobs' and facial hair in adolescent female students suggests, in line with Sullivan, 'that the conceptions of, debates around, and questions about specific modificatory practices are themselves technologies that shape corporeality at the most profound level' (2009, 314). The ways in which the teacher talks and instructs her students that facial hair on girls and women (before the age of 70) is not a 'normal' development or phenomenon can be interpreted as a technology that shapes bodies and stipulates the amount of facial hair girls and women should and should not have. Although the teacher may have thought that the idea of engaging in the 'facial hair' conversation was quite progressive, we believe that being mindful of the ways in which one produces and reproduces particular corporealities as part of and outside the norm is important. Through norm-ascribing conversations, teachers and students may together better understand the process of the 'bodily being … as always already technologized and technologies as always already enfleshed' (Sullivan 2009, 317). This may further provide new insights when exploring the ways in which 'Embarrassing Bodies' and intersex issues are discussed in school-based sex education in Australia and New Zealand and where these knowledge productions may come from (Foucault 1980).

The 'wrong age' argument also justifies facial hair, but only when one reaches a particular age (70), implying that youth represents sexy hairless bodies which equally ignores the varied hair growth people have depending on their cultural and/or ethnic background. The teacher also seems to qualify that females only get facial hair when they reach a senior age, which reproduces the idea that if a younger female person has facial hair something is medically 'wrong' with their 'hormones' as things have apparently gone 'where they are not supposed to go'. This medical connection with 'abnormal' or 'embarrassing' hair grown also intersects with trans* issues and 'abnormal' hormone levels. Hence, myths and ignorance regarding intersexuality abound, may result in bodies inhabiting the space of that 'monstrous' (Breu 2009, 102)

and 'embarrassing' other in discussions of sex, gender, and body in sexuality education classrooms, especially when these myths are not addressed or critically analysed.

The teacher also discounts the student's naming of 'man boobs' as male body parts, instead saying that she would get to this when they labelled the female body. This suggests that 'man boobs', also known as gynecomastia, are 'abnormal' and something 'wrong' in men despite it being a common physical attribute in men—either for potentially being overweight or as a physical characterises associated with the intersex variation Klinefelter (Visootsak and Graham 2006, 2).

The next and last extract, observed by another member of our research team is from Christchurch in New Zealand. This material comes from an activity where the female sex education teacher was asking the students to imagine that a spaceship had landed on earth. As the aliens had landed and exited their spaceship and approached the first human beings they explained: 'my mission on earth is to find a female and a male'. As a consequence the students were advised by the teacher to draw this to the alien visitors:

Maria: Flop it out!
Teacher: So how do I recognise a female and a male? Can you not discuss it first? You are going to draw [them], shh!
Samantha: We will just draw a dick and a vagina!

The students continue their conversation while drawing their pictures.

Kevin: Females can have beards
Josh: Yuck, I have never seen a female with a beard… I know a woman who has like hairs here [on her chin]
Maria: They need shaving cream

This, humorous conversation to some, between the teacher and the students suggests that there are some type of bodies that are imagined as 'normal' and ultimately others that are perceived to be 'abnormal' in sexuality education classroom conversations. The 'dick' and 'vagina' examples provide an image of what young learners characterise as boys/men in comparison to girls/women.

Inspired by Sullivan's notion of *somatechnologies* (2009) and the various ways in which female facial hair is frowned upon in sexuality education conversations, this dialogue between the students, again suggests that facial hair and girls/women is not an ideal equation. Rather, girls/women who have facial hair should apply 'shaving cream' to remove it as it is simply a 'wrong' (Sullivan 2009, 313) attribute in women. Here, it is the young

learners' encouragement of using the technology of 'shaving cream', and the discourse justifying such instruments, that reproduce and maintain the idea that girls and women should, with the help of this somatechnology, remove any 'embarrassing' or 'abnormal' facial hair from their body (Sullivan 2009, 314). Similar to the previous classroom conversation about facial hair in girls/women in Auckland, this specific circumstance provides an opportunity to challenge the students to critically analyse their positions and underpinning root-knowledges, rather than potentially being seen as a 'risky' conversation (Breu 2009, 107). This may be a helpful tool in better understanding the production of normativity and the power within and beyond the classroom, students and teachers, and individual bodies. This may help students and teachers alike, to also think about how they are implicated in these relations of power, as they are, in line with Sullivan, taking part in conversations and debates about 'specific modificatory practices' concerning facial hair in girls/women (2009, 314). This may further provide new insights when exploring the ways in which intersex issues or 'embarrassing bodies' are discussed in school-based sex education in Australia and New Zealand and talk about individuals who disturb body and embodiment idea(l)s.

Opportunities and Limitations When Working With and Against Young Learners' Curiosity About 'Abnormal' and 'Embarrassing' Bodies

April Herndon (2006), Koyama and Weasel (2003) have called for specific intersex curricula when teaching intersex issues in educational institutions, but these curricula have mainly focused on student populations that are enrolled in tertiary units exploring issues in women's, gender and queer studies. A great deal of this material could be revised to the appropriate age group, but as the publications are closer to nine years old, or older, and do not specifically consider intersex activism and policy changes affecting individuals with intersex variation in Australia and New Zealand, large parts of these teaching manuals would need to be revised to consider the cultural and ethnic populations of these nations. The New Zealand non-governmental organisation Rainbow Youth published a report on the importance of including intersex issues in secondary public school-based education (Burford et al. 2013, 7). Here they delivered two one-hour sessions facilitated by a Rainbow Youth employed educator and storytellers from the LGBTIQ community. One of the activities where intersex was discussed was in relation to the 'Gender identity diagram' activity where 'differences between the terms "sex" and "gender"

[were] high-lighted' and in this case 'the identity category of "intersex" [was] mentioned with examples given' (Burford et al. 2013, 25).

In addition to this activity we are arguing that one valuable component of sexuality education is to talk with students about how power accrues to particular types of bodies. Drawing on Foucault (1980, 131) is of value in getting students to explore where this knowledge and truth production come from, such as their popular media practices, leading to particular bodies being understood as 'normal' versus 'embarrassing' or 'abnormal' and where power-relations fit into this equation. In doing this, it is also of great relevance to get the students to think about how they are implicated in these relations of power. However, in order to do this, the ethnographic examples provided in the previous section strongly suggest that sexuality educators need to become more aware of and sensitive to intersex issues. We propose this as there is an evident 'erasure and silencing against intersex people' and intersex issues by the teachers as well as the students which may reproduce and reinforce the 'invisibility of intersex people' which further 'prioritizes the privileged group over the marginalized one' (Koyama and Weasel 2003, 6).

On this matter, the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) in Australia have recently updated their 'School Policy and Advisory Guide' which now specifically discusses and formulates gender identity and intersex issues. Here, intersex is defined and DEECD (2014) suggest ways in which learners with intersex variations should be protected by the law. This policy however lacks to provide practical suggestions of how to teach or pass on knowledge regarding intersex issues, where it could fit in the curriculum or links to Australian intersex organisations to seek further information. That being said, the DEECD do provide links to other organisations on this webpage, such as the Safe Schools Coalition Victoria (SSCV),[7] which has material produced by the OII for schools to make their service 'Intersex Friendly' (SSCV 2014a). SSCV also deliver free school-based Professional Development (PD) on supporting students, staff, and families identifying within the LGBTIQ community (2014b). The extent to which intersex is discussed in these Professional Developments (PDs) and how to integrate it into the curriculum is however unclear.

We suggest that sexuality educators not only need to become more aware of the varied ways in which intersex variations may be characterised in individuals (socially and biologically), how these individuals have been treated and managed by medical professionals nationally/internationally, but also how these characteristics have been portrayed in popular media that their students may have made use of, more recently. Being more aware about how intersex

[7] SSCV is also co-funded by the DEECD (SSCV 2014b).

activism have pushed for intersex recognition in legal and policy documents regarding gender discrimination, gender labelling, clinical procedures, and medical developments in Australia and New Zealand would also be of great relevance when exploring the sociopolitical aspects of sexuality education. Exploring social justice and medical ethics in relation to sex, body, sexuality, and gender norms with an intersex lens, are such examples.

OII Australia and Intersex Trust Aotearoa New Zealand (ITANZ) have an extensive collection of material on their websites concerning intersex issues that can be linked to 'medical ethics, social justice and erasure' (Koyama and Weasel 2003, 7) and intersex activism. However, as these organisations consist of members who are mainly working on voluntary basis and not hired as paid staff members, this may affect the material they are able to offer and produce for their members and followers. Due to financial constraints none of these organisations have had the opportunity to produce their own teaching manuals or guides for primary, secondary, or tertiary teachers. However, they have a lot of material that could be used in constructing such a guide for the above mentioned students and teachers. For example, OII Australia has, including their material on conceptualising intersex, also produced material that carefully consider Australian issues around:

- Clinical developments;
- Legal developments (such as the anti-discrimination law of 2013);
- Federal regulations and guidelines (such as the federal gender recognition guidelines that enable intersex and non-intersex people to identify as 'M', 'F', or 'X' in legal documents such as one's passport etc.); and
- Reports on social (in)justice such as the 2013 Senate committee report on the 'Involuntary or coerced sterilisation of intersex people in Australia'.

All these resources could be used in sexuality education curriculums exploring and critically analysing social movements regarding sex, body, sexuality, and gender norms and how things have changed with the help of intersex activism. However, when producing an intersex curriculum in sexuality education for secondary students, it is of ethical importance to run this through these organisations, to make sure that the language is case sensitive and that the curriculum and pedagogy do not objectify, mystify, or exotify anyone or that intersex is discussed in a way that only tries to deconstruct the binary hegemony and therefore overlooks stories that addresses the 'lived experience' (Koyama and Weasel 2003, 2).

Inviting OII or ITANZ to come to one's school as part of teachers' professional development, if it is logistically possible, or invite the organisations to set up a forum or a webinar that is streamed live via the web are great ways for

teachers to become more aware of and connected with intersex organisations and what they do nationally/globally (through social media too) that could fit into a sexuality education framework for secondary students.

Conclusion

Drawing on Breu's philosophy on the importance of teaching intersex issues in secondary educational settings stems for the reason that 'teaching intersex issues can help students [and teachers] to critically examine their stereotypical thinking about gender and sexuality' (2009, 107). In line with Koyama and Weasel (2003), as gender binaries strongly characterise students' understanding about sexualities, engaging with that issue as well as sexism, binary body and sex norms would provide possible segways into also discussing intersex issues from a lived experience. Resources and questions we would strongly suggest that teachers and students explore in examining their knowledge and stereotypical thinking about sex, gender, sexuality, and bodies in sexuality education could be:

- To first watch the documentary *Intersexion* about being intersex to get a clearer idea of the ethical dilemmas (medical and sociopolitical) individual with intersex variations may be presented with—unpack and discuss these ethical dilemmas from the clip and explore ways to overcome these dilemmas (http://www.intersexionfilm.com/);
- Who gets to decide what is and is not normal sex and a normal body and why?
- What is to be gained by classifying particular bodies, practices, and people as 'normal' versus 'abnormal' or 'embarrassing'?;
- What things do we feel are okay to judge? And where to these feelings come from? What role may their popular and social media use have in influencing these feelings?;
- If some argue that sex and gender are social constructions, where does the category intersex fit in this equation?; and
- In what ways have intersex organisations in Australia/New Zealand challenged normative thinking leading to revisions and intersex inclusion in legal documents; clinical procedures; federal regulations and guidelines; and reports discussing social injustices?

Hence, we believe that the inclusion of intersex issues in sexuality education should be viewed from the lens of being educative rather seen as a 'risky' business (Breu 2009, 107). When including intersex issues in sex education,

it is equally important to not shy away from viewing popular 'media as a [powerful] source of sex education for young people' and how they use media 'in their learning about sexuality' (Albury 2013, S33, S35). The inclusion of intersex issues in sex education not only encourages young learners, in a dialogue with their teachers, to critically examine their stereotypical thinking about sex, gender, and bodies, but may also contribute to the fields of challenging cultural (and religious) views on binary sex, gender, and body norms, such as the 'Asian penis' conversation. When teachers and educational institutions consider how intersex issues might be given greater space in the sexuality education curriculum, we also urge teachers to be mindful that their approach does not feed their young learner's voyeuristic curiosity with non-normative bodies, but is a constructive, respectful, ethical, and inclusive approach. However, in doing so does not mean that teachers should ignore their students' curiosity for stories about what they may perceive to be, and are often told about 'embarrassing' or non-normative bodies, but to work *with* and *against* their curiosity in an informed and inclusive fashion.

That said, one of the most important reasons to consider including intersex issues in the sexuality education curriculum stems from, in line with Breu, that students with intersex variations 'often feel that they are going through their experiences absolutely alone' (2009, 107). Hence, if teachers discuss these issues in an inclusive, visible, and sensitive manner the realisation 'that there are others out there with similar experiences, facing similar challenges, can be life-affirming' (Breu 2009, 107). For that reason alone, we hope that this chapter has inspired teachers and scholars to evaluate the potential benefits students and teachers may experience from exploring this challenging yet rewarding topic. As those outside the hegemony are having their 'lives and experiences acknowledged, represented, and discussed in the classroom' it may not only be 'empowering', but more importantly 'it can be life-saving' (Breu 2009, 107).

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19

‘Getting It Right’? Producing Race and Gender in the Neoliberal School Based Sexuality Education Assemblage

Kathleen Quinlivan

> *I feel caught in what I see as the inherent ambivalence of education, we want to educate for change but we do so by ensuring what students will become … the paradox of education lies in its treatment of freedom. Wanting desperately for students to become free, while also wanting to form and mould them. What kind of freedom is this? … How can we live better in this aporia of education?.*
>
> Todd 2011c, p. 509

This chapter explores the im/possibilities of engaging with knowledges about race and gender in school-based sexuality education within neoliberal social and political contexts. Recognising that both the sexuality education classroom and researching contexts are shaped by the inevitable double binds of engaging with knowledges about race and gender in neoliberal classroom and research contexts (Ringrose 2010; Quinlivan et al. 2014), I respond to the challenges and the possibilities that Todd’s (2011c) question invites. Dilemmas emerging from a case study within an Australian and New Zealand research project investigating how contemporary knowledges about religious and cultural difference are engaged with in school-based sexuality education programmes (Rasmussen et al. 2011) are drawn on.[1]

[1] The New Zealand Kauri College project was one of four case studies undertaken in the project with sexuality education teachers and 13–14 year-old students in two schools in the northern suburbs of

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Utilising de-colonial studies and post-humanist theories, I begin by mapping the operation of what I am describing as a colonising and normative 'getting it right' orientation to knowledges and knowing that operates across classroom and focus group sites, and what this assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) produces. Following that, I draw on what I learned as a researcher working with the students in focus groups to explore some tentative post-humanist and de-colonising pedagogical approaches for engaging with and working the knowledges about race and gender that are produced. I also explore the (admittedly challenging) possibilities that they could hold for 'working' sexuality education knowledges in schools within an era of neoliberalism.

Given the role that the sexuality education and health curriculum plays in crafting the sexual health of citizens and normatively regulating their moral conduct (Leahy 2014; Lesko 2010; Moran 2000; Quinlivan et al. 2014), it is not surprising that an orientation to definitive knowledges which 'get it right', have been, and continue to be, a response to the uncertainties and destabilisation that sexuality education provokes (Britzman 2010; Gilbert 2014). Both progressive and abstinence models of sexuality education have long been underpinned by Western discourses of scientific rationality that insist that providing students with the 'correct' and accurate information will enable them to make the 'right choices' (Britzman 2010; Carlson 2011; Elliott 2014; Fields 2008; Fox and Alldred 2013; Gilbert 2014; Lesko 2010; McClelland and Fine 2012; Quinlivan et al. 2014). This has led to the dominance of a 'progressive' curriculum, both in policy and practice, which, despite curriculum developers' and teachers' best intentions, is often characterised by colonising appropriations of indigenous knowledge (Quinlivan et al. 2014; Silfver 2010), normative constructions of gender (Allen 2011; Quinlivan 2011; Ringrose and Rawlings 2015), and the prevalence of safer sex/victimisation discourses (Allen 2011; Jackson and Weatherall 2010). Such orientations to knowledge largely fail to equip diverse students with approaches that help them negotiate the complexities of their lived experiences (McClelland and Fine 2012), and the extent to which sexualities and relationships are being configured in a neoliberal era of consumption and commodification (Albury 2014; Bale 2010; Quinlivan 2014; Berlant and Edelman, 2014).

Long standing, and contemporary impossibilities or aporias (Derrida 1992[2]) characterising school-based sexuality education (Quinlivan forthcoming) are compounded within a neoliberal 'age of measurement' which privileges

Melbourne, Victoria, and in two suburban schools in the North and South Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand (NZ).

[2] Derrida's (1992) notion of aporia recognises the double-edged and contradictory nature in which divergent responsibilities can create tensions when engaging with difference

academic achievement over socialisation and subjectivation within schooling contexts (Biesta 2010; Quinlivan 2014). Within these neoliberalising national and global contexts, schooling is seen as a policy lever for increasing economic outcomes of 'at risk' (read Māori and Pasifika) students, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics subjects are privileged, and compulsory health and sexuality education subjects are marginalised within the curriculum (Allen 2011), despite the pressures students, and their teachers are experiencing due to over-assessment (Education Review Office 2015).Within an age of measurement (Biesta 2010), it is unsurprising that assessments to get normative forms of health and sexuality education 'right' are profoundly driving teaching and learning in the classroom (Quinlivan et al. 2014, under review; Education Review Office 2015). Neoliberalism is also shaping the ways in which diverse youth sexualities and health are being currently configured in an individualist era of consumption and commodification (Carlson 2011; Quinlivan et al. 2014). Many sexuality education scholars have critiqued the limitations of school-based sexuality and relationships education, in failing to critically engage with the ways in which broader social and political contexts, including digital teachnologies, shape how young people are learning about sexualities and relationships (Allen 2011; Gill 2012; Quinlivan 2014; McClelland and Fine 2012; Renold and Ringrose 2011). Attention has also been drawn to the re-colonising ways that indigenous knowledges can be drawn on in the sexuality education classroom, despite teachers' best intentions to engage marginalised students and cater to increasing racial and religious diversity within the classroom (Quinlivan et al. 2014).

Learning sexuality education within a low decile, racially diverse school[3] strongly shaped by national neoliberal educational directives of accountability, self-maximisation, and commodification (Biesta 2010), involves multiple engagements with what it might mean to 'get it right', for diverse students (Davies and Saltmarsh 2007; Elliott 2014; Nairn et al. 2012), their teacher (Ball 2003), and for me as a researcher (Davies 2010; Quinlivan 2014, forthcoming). Extraordinary demands are placed on teachers to raise Māori and Pasifika students' academic achievement within a low decile, ethnically diverse school such as Kereru College (Education Review Office 2015). As 10 Blue's Health teacher, Irene emphasises:

[3] In NZ, schools are ranked from deciles 1 to 10 according to the socioeconomic status of the community from which the young people are drawn, with 1 being the lowest. Kauri College is a decile 3 school, currently experiencing white flight (Gordon, forthcoming). The (2012) demographic make-up of the school was NZ European/Pākehā (55 %), Māori (30 %), Pasifika (10 %), Asian (3 %), and other ethnicities (2 %). While the students were identified demographically in these ways, for the purposes of participating in the project, most of them felt ambivalent about personally identifying themselves as belonging to those racial groups, although for some of them, these feelings shifted slightly over the course of the study.

> It's nationally, it's not even only at the school, it's what you hear, its what parents want, it's what the government wants, they want to publish the results so its more driven by the community really, not necessarily the Kereru College community, but the New Zealand community … its got to be clear evidence that's measurable … with regards to culture, and gender. *(Irene, teacher face to face individual tape-recorded interview, 31 July 2012)*

However, pressing directives from the Ministry of Education to raise the academic achievement of Māori and Pasifika students which well-meaning (if exhausted) teachers like Irene take as part of getting their job 'right' (Ball 2003), run the risk of framing these students as having a deficit (Bishop 2012; Penetito 2012), and produce unintended outcomes. One of the first intimations of this arose very early on in the research project (Rasmussen et al. 2011). The study was intended to explore how cultural and religious difference were engaged with in sexuality education, and the Māori and Pasifika students selected as part of the broader group of student participants for the Kereru College case study were demographically identified as such. However early on in the project, it became clear that the demographic identities were not how the Māori students, in particular, wanted to be seen. Despite approaches such as Culturally Responsive Practices which underpin curriculum developer's, teacher's, and researcher's best intentions to validate diverse students identities and indigenous ways of knowing in sexuality education, the enactment of those approaches in mainstream schools can prove problematic (Bishop 2012; Cooper 2012; Penetito 2010). Within the context of the high ability class, and in the focus groups, take up of these knowledges appears to be inflected by the contemporary neoliberal climate of individual self-maximisation (Quinlivan et al. 2014, forthcoming), and what I would describe as it's re-colonising consequences. In the next section, I explore theoretical approaches which I have found useful in understanding and negotiating such tensions.

Theories for Understanding and Working 'Getting It Right' Knowledges in Sexuality Education

To frame this work theoretically I draw on post-humanist, de-colonising, and queer theories to understand and map the production of normative and colonising knowledges about race and gender in sexuality education, and also how the emergence of unexpected and unpredictable insights can be 'worked' as they arise in neoliberal classrooms and research contexts. Talburt and Rasmussen (2010) acknowledge the challenges facing queer schooling

research in untangling itself from the impossible ideals of liberalism. They advocate the usefulness of queer theory in interrogating the wily ways in which late liberalism is shaping normative sexual subjectivities (Quinlivan et al. 2014). This chapter draws on the desire to move beyond the whiteness of queer theory (Alexander, 2007; Halberstam 2008; Perez 2005), in mapping how neoliberalising understandings of race and gender are produced and contested in sexuality education, and exploring what the 'getting it right' assemblage produces.

Post-humanist theories offer approaches for mapping the production of raced and gendered knowledges and understanding the affective flows which are produced. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the assemblage, as 'wholes whose properties emerge from the interaction between the parts' (De Landa 2006, p. 44), I map the workings of what I am calling a contemporary 'getting it right' assemblage, and the affective flows it produces. Connecting neoliberal global and national policy contexts to the localised ordinary affective worlds of classrooms and research undertaken in schools (Fox and Alldred 2013; Youdell and Armstrong 2011), the sexuality education 'getting it right' assemblage is profoundly *intra*-relational. Student, teacher, and researcher bodies together within classroom and interview room spaces,[4] and material objects (Allen 2015) are entangled to produce who we can be and become. The spaces, and the material objects of the sexuality education classroom and focus group classrooms intra-actively entangle themselves with the other human and non-human components of the 'getting it right' assemblage (Allen 2015; Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010; Ivinson and Renold 2013) to produce our 'becoming in being' (Barad 2007), and both contain and constrain what is possible (Lenz Taguchi 2012). The assemblage simultaneously produces both molar affective flows which restrict opportunities for experimentation, and molecular flows which open them up, and can pave the way for unexpected and unpredictable ways of being and becoming otherwise (lines of flight) to emerge (Albrecht-Crane and Slack 2007; Ivinson and Renold 2013; Mazzei 2014). The assemblage as a temporary grouping of relations (Coleman and Ringrose 2012) is in a constant state of flux: shifting,

[4] Preliminary individual face-to-face video-recorded interviews (1) and regular focus group interviews (2011 [2] and in 2012 [6]) were conducted with the students. Video-recorded participant observations of sexuality education units in the students' Health classes were undertaken in 2011 (5) and in 2012 (13). Artefacts in the form of classroom resources and students' notes and drawings were collected as data. Two sets of fieldnotes were written by the researcher in 2011 (5) and in 2012 (13). While the two-year project finished in 2012, I have extended the case study and conducted focus group interviews in 2014 (1), and 2015 (1 to date). Informed ethical consent was gained from the students and the teachers participating in the initial case study, and the follow up to it. Students have provided ongoing feedback on the findings to date. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the confidentiality of the students, teacher, and school.

changing, unfinished, and open-ended. What becomes important in mapping the assemblage is not analysing what it means, but mapping what it produces (Lenz Taguchi 2012). In a constant state of flux, mapping the affective flows of the 'getting it right' assemblage provides possibilities for sexuality education to exceed molarity and striated spaces, however temporarily, to produce lines of flight that can open up social fields of desire, and possibilities for transformation.

There are congruences between Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the assemblage, and indigenous knowledges in their attempts to problematise human-centric theories (Snaza, Applebaum, Bayne, Carlson, Morris, Rotas, Sandlin, Wallin, & Weaver 2014; Watson and Huntington 2008). Acknowledging the differing power relations between indigenous and Western knowledges, and the attendant dangers of re-colonisation that can occur when theories such as posthumanism can dominate and be seen to 'replace' indigenous ways of knowing (Grande 2004; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013), is vital. As Snaza et al. (2008) argue, what a range of disparate critical approaches do have in common is an interest in problematising the ways that the 'human' has restricted politics and education. Decentring the human, and problematising the human and non-human binary allows for explorations of the intra-relationality (Barad 2007) between animals and humans, humans and machines, and living and non-living objects, spaces, and their attendant power relations (Ahenakew et al. 2014; Tuhiwai-Smith 2014; Watson and Huntington 2008). Avoiding a simplistic suturing of posthumanism and critical theories and pedagogies, Snaza et al., (2008) suggest there are possibilities in developing political projects which are not narrowly restricted to humans, and can include things, animals, and machines on an equal political footing (Watson and Huntington 2008). Some work in sexuality education is beginning to explore these possibilities (Ringrose 2011; Renold and Ivinson 2014).

Recent queer scholarship explores the affordances of bringing queer theory together with a range of diverse theoretical frameworks including anthropology, postcolonial theory, native studies, psychoanalysis, history, and cultural studies to utilise queer theory as a mode of critique that moves beyond the queer subject. It problematises the production of normative constructions of race, sexualities, and nationalisms within the macro locus of late liberalism (Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan 2002; Puar 2007; Povinelli 2006; Morgenson 2011). While this work makes no claim to producing indigenous knowledges, it is de-colonising in its intentions to unpack how wily narratives of neoliberalism can work to problematically re-colonise while, at the same time, appearing to recognise and value racial diversity (Cooper 2012; Quinlivan et al. 2014).

Working within remote Australian indigenous communities, anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli's work shows how a liberal politics of recognition can arise within an ethos of multiculturalism that is ethically committed to engaging with difference. She argues, however, the form and effects of that recognition can impact negatively on lived indigenous life-worlds. Povinelli (2002, 2006) traces how the liberal politics of recognition are underpinned by two dominant inter-related discursive forms of liberal discipline: the autological subject and the genealogical society. The autological subject refers to the multiple discourses and practices which invoke the autonomous and self-determining subject. The genealogical subject relates to discourses and practices which operate as constraints on the self-authorising subject, through construing the subject as bound by obligations of social constraint and kinship inheritances. Povinelli argues that within late liberal nation-states, self-making is always enclosed within these two discursive grids which, while appearing to value difference, actually privilege normativity in ways that profoundly affect lives and relationships, and reinforce the white liberal status quo.

I have found Povinelli's de-colonising analysis of the liberal politics of recognition helpful in mapping and understanding the ways in which normative neoliberal orientations to get knowledges about race and gender 'right' are produced in the sexuality education classroom and research project sites, and in exploring what the operation of these knowledges produces (Quinlivan et al. 2014). Despite the best intentions of non-Māori teachers, curriculum developers, and researchers to meet their obligations in a bi-cultural nation by valuing Māori epistemologies in policy and in practice via the social obligations characterising the genealogical society, these aspirations often appear to be trumped by the dominance of 'the fantasy of self-authorising freedom' (Povinelli in Di Fuscia 2010, p. 91) that characterises the autological subject in an era of neoliberalism.

The raced and gendered sexuality education 'getting it right' assemblage decentres the human to explore how material and the discursive, human and non-human, natural and cultural factors work, and how they intra-actively produce each other. In a constant state of flux, being and becoming raced and gendered is produced intra-actively in entanglements of the material and the discursive (Barad 2007; Mazzei and Jackson 2012b). What becomes important is attending to what the assemblage produces, and the opportunities that can arise for 'working' the emergence of unexpected and unpredictable insights as they arise in sexuality education classrooms and research encounters.

Methodological and Pedagogical Implications

Traditional humanist notions of the researcher as somehow outside the data, and bodies within the data as separate entities, are challenged in de-colonising and post-humanist frameworks. In what Barad (2007) explains queerly as a diffractive analytical approach there is an attempt to examine how the intra-action of material and discursive, human and non-human, natural and cultural factors work, and how they 'must change to accommodate their mutual involvement' (p. 25). Rather than reflecting—mirroring—to critically self-position myself so that I might understand the data in order to 'get it right', I am experimenting with cutting together/apart different theories and data (Barad 2007) to experiment with producing something unexpected and different from my original intentions (Lenz Taguchi 2012; Mazzei 2014). Barad (2014a) describes this approach as *diffractive* rather than *reflective*. In diffractively reading for difference, rather than sameness (Mazzei 2014), I am queerly experimenting with reading data differently troubling dichotomies, un/doing identities, and exploring what ongoing differings of difference (Barad 2014b; Quinlivan 2014; Tuhiwai-Smith 2014) might produce. Such readings can enable possibilities for lines of flight and transformation. A diffractive research process and analysis is queerly geared to problematise normalcy, to de-colonise (Quinlivan, forthcoming; Quinlivan et al. 2014), and to produce differing encounters and engagements (Lenz Taguchi 2012). It requires *becoming* with the research process in the present in ways that move beyond cognitive interpretations to interfere with it trans-corporeally (Lenz Taguchi 2012; Watson and Huntington 2008). Developing the capacity to attend to the liminal sensory intensities and affective flows produced in the entanglements of the assemblage within the present (Ahenakew et al. 2014; Mazzei and Jackson 2012a; Todd 2011a, b), and in retrospect (Quinlivan, forthcoming) can sometimes lead to knowing, feeling, and acting differently (Todd 2014). However, cultivating diffractive research processes and reflexivities, within neoliberalising spaces of schools and universities which privilege Western notions of 'getting it right', can feel productive, while also discombobulating (Davies 2014; Mazzei 2013; Quinlivan, forthcoming; Watson and Huntington 2008).

Rather than attempting to create an accurate representation, through making your researcher positionality explicit, a diffractive reading concerns itself more with a spreading of thoughts and knowledge, as Mazzei (2014) describes it. It involves developing the demanding capacity (Davies 2014; Tuhiwai-Smith 2014) to explore how the assemblage intra-actively produces who you can be and become. In the moment it necessitates opening yourself up, and

uncomfortably engaging with the 'not yet known' of the thoughts and feelings and actions of both your participants, and yourself, and being open where that might take you (Ahenakew et al. 2014; Davies 2010, 2014; Tuhiwai-Smith 2014; Watson and Huntington 2008). Engaging with the initial student's ambivalence of being Māori, and exploring the complexities of their lived experiences with them over five years has encouraged me, over time, to explore what it might mean to move beyond 'getting it right' as a researcher. It has highlighted the possibilities of engaging with theoretical frameworks that can engage with understanding that broader social and political contexts produce the micro-encounter, paradox, decentring the humanist self, nurturing inter-dependence, and attending more closely to (often liminal and sensory) moments of being and becoming (Ahenakew et al. 2014; Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Snaza et al. 2008; Todd 2014; Tuhiwai-Smith 2014). As I shall show, the supposed impossibilities that called the intentions of the research project into question early on, such as the participants' refusal of indigenous identities and the dominance of the neoliberal 'getting it right' assemblage, were the beginning of a methodological process where the research questions diffractively interfered with what was happening in the field, and the analysis (Davies 2014), and precipitated (albeit challenging) possibilities to know differently.

Mapping Gendered, Raced, and Sexualised Formations of the Neoliberal 'Getting It Right' Assemblage in Classroom and Focus Group Sites

In this section, I map the ways in which neoliberal understandings of getting femininities, masculinities, sexualities, and race 'right' were produced, and the affective flows the assemblage produced as it moved across both the sexuality education classroom and focus group sites.

Colleagues and I have written previously about the extent to which the enactment of the Māori notion of hauora which underpins the national Health and sexuality education curriculum was shaped by the neoliberalising culture of the high-ability 10 Blue sexuality education classroom (Quinlivan et al. 2014). We argued that liberal notions of individual recognition equating hauora with European understandings of well-being shaped the deployment of hāuora, rather than the intended Māori epistemological and pedagogical knowledges. This had the effect of legitimating normalising Eurocentric ways of knowing (Bishop 2012; Cooper 2012; Penetito 2010), and re-colonising pedagogical dynamics. Despite

the best intentions of both curriculum developers and teachers, discourses of the autological subject dominated (Povinelli 2002, 2006). In the culture of this 'high ability' classroom, 'getting race right' appeared to be more important than engaging substantively with Māori epistemologies and ontologies and their notions of kinship, obligation, and care. Not surprisingly, when talking with students later in focus groups in school settings about their understandings of hauora, European understandings of well-being and individual discourses of the autological subject (Povinelli 2002, 2006) produced their knowing in being (Barad 2007; Lenz Taguchi 2012). Neoliberal notions of individual self-maximisation and competition characterising what it meant to get masculinities and race 'right' were also intra-actively produced within the focus group:

> First Matiu and then Hemi, grin and raise their heads and eyebrows to acknowledge and greet the camera, as if it is a 'mate'. Graeme responds to both Matiu and Hemi in a similar way, and then looks at the camera fleetingly, as if for validation.

Kathleen:	Who else could explain to me what "hauora" means? *(Looking around the whole group).*
Graeme:	Well … *(He attempts to answer the question while eating a biscuit but indicates he needs to finish it first, but is interrupted swiftly by Matiu).*
Matiu:	What a load Graeme, what a load man!! *(Disparagingly to him then smiling knowledgably at the camera).*
Kathleen:	Ok, come on Matiu … *(Acknowledging Graeme, but resignedly encouraging towards Matiu)*
Matiu:	It's like your feelings and you're like, whanau *(pronounced incorrectly as far now)*, and your extended family! *(definitively).*
Hemi:	Whanau *(pronounced far no correctly) (moving into his space, and emphatically correcting like a teacher patronisingly, while laughing, then leaning closer towards him expectantly for a response*)
Matiu:	Whanau *(pronounced far no correctly) (exaggeratedly, while banging the table, raising his eyeballs at Hemi and sighing)*
Matiu:	Anyway …
Hemi:	Are you Māori or not? *(jokingly disparaging to Matiu)*
Matiu:	Whanau! *(pronounced far no) (exaggeratedly rolling his eyeballs at Hemi)*
Graeme:	It's mainly your wellbeing and stuff … *(fruitlessly trying to interrupt and not being heard)*
Kathleen:	So it's to do with wellbeing? Say that again Matiu, what you said, before you were put down by Hemi for your mispronunciation? *(frustratedly)*
Matiu:	It's to do with your family, your feelings, your whanau, *(pronounced farno*, exaggeratedly), your extended family, like your friends and stuff.
Kathleen:	So would you learn about that in sexuality education and health?

Matiu: It has to do with social wellbeing, whole being.
Kathleen: Why, do you think it's a concept that's important to learning about sexuality and relationships and stuff?

(Graeme's hand reaches out to take a biscuit, he hovers over one then takes the other)

Hemi: Don't take one and then take the other! *(threateningly to Graeme)*
Kathleen: You sound like my mother *(taken aback but laughing ironically)*
Hemi: It's so gross!! *(angrily warning)*
Kathleen: Ohkayyyy righto … *(taken aback, puzzled, ironically)*

(Year 10 Student Focus Group Interview, 5th April, 2012)

Undertaken within the striated normative space of the classroom, our focus group exchange reiterates many of the intra-active dynamics of the official and most powerfully, the unofficial peer curriculum I witnessed as a feature of the classroom assemblage (Lenz Taguchi 2012; Quinlivan, forthcoming). Intra-actively, the 'getting it right' assemblage shapes how both I and the students, produce each other as teacher and student knowers within the neoliberal research space. The assemblage produces molar affective flows that hamper our attempts to explore more complex and nuanced complexities of hauora beyond normative responses. Despite my best intentions as a researcher, the assemblage produces me as a teacher into attempting (rather fruitlessly as it often turned out) to involve the girls more in the conversation, and intervene in the ways the boys perform for each other, as they dominated and controlled many of the group interactions, and intra-actively territorialised normative raced masculinities. Hemi chides Matiu to get his Māori pronunciation of whanau 'right', challenging him to prove that he is the 'right' kind of Māori, instantiating himself as the one who gets raced masculinities 'right'. In that instant, their competitive intra-active exchanges (Alldred and Fox 2015; Davies and Saltmarsh 2007; Gordon et al. 2000), Graeme's responses, the material objects of the camera, the biscuits, and the movements of our bodies, produce powerful affective molar flows. In that process, the absence of the girls, in every sense (Mazzei 2007), invisibilises and derogates femininities.[5] Getting raced masculinities 'right' consists of the boys relentlessly competing with each other for dominance, picking on Graeme to establish their superiority, and take up so much space that the girls were unable to get a word in. Both in the unofficial peer culture of the classroom and in the

[5] In the early stages of the project, the camera largely absents the bodies of the girls (Mazzei 2007), at their request—they didn't like it being trained on them so closely, felt distinctly uncomfortable when it was, and tended to avoid looking at it. This lessened of the course of the study.

focus group, the relentless intra-active forms of the assemblage largely shaped who we could be and become as gendered and raced subjects (Quinlivan, forthcoming). Producing highly charged molar affective flows, the moment restricted and shut down opportunities for being and becoming 'otherwise', and most importantly perhaps, for exploring the complexities and challenges that emerged over the course of the project in being 'kinda, and kinda not' Māori, as Huia described it, that I explore later in the chapter.

Despite my best attempts to develop the focus group primarily as a site where I could learn from students, value questions, and resist the easy answer, the raced and gendered 'getting it right' assemblage operated similarly to the classroom, mostly intra-actively producing who we could be and become in the first few years I met with them. Through their rapid-fire clever repartee the boys dominated the conversation, relentlessly intra-actively policing themselves and each other, the girls, and myself in order to 'get right' clever, funny, and heterosexually desirable masculinities, often in ways that derogated the feminine (Alldred and Fox 2015). The video camera largely produces the boys as authoritative self-maximising 'performers' of one kind or another, for the camera, themselves, each other, the girls, and for me (Quinlivan, forthcoming). The video camera produced the boys as authoritative 'chairman of the board', as a famous 'celebrity', or as mirror to preen in front of. The raced and gendered 'getting it right' assemblage produced fast, hyped, and zany affective flows which often simultaneously re-territorialised normative masculinities, sexualities, and gender relations (Alldred and Fox 2015), while sometimes de-territorialising them (Quinlivan, forthcoming).

While the boys dominated the use of the video camera early on in the project, the flipping twists and turns of the affective flows and intensities produced by the assemblage over the course of the project to date shows how they often took paradoxical turns, producing molecular affective flows and problematising the dominance of normative masculinities. In one instance, the girls, particularly Huia and Aroha, challenged several of the boys' displays of heterosexual prowess, drawing on inside information from their friends to use sarcastic asides that dismissed some of the boys' exaggerated claims as knowing sexually active playboys.

Later on in the project, when we were discussing relationships Jason acknowledged that looking back, he felt differently about the ways that he related to some young women he had been involved with in the past. Despite constant interjections from Matiu which cast the young woman in question as the 'problem', with support from Hemi and Huia, Jason tacitly was able to call how he previously acted into question by acknowledging that recalling the incident gave him food for thought:

Jason: Mmmm. *(looks down, pauses, leans his elbows on the desk, cradling his face with his left hand, and two of his fingers covering his lips)* Get back to me on that one I'll think about it … Yeah. Yeah, it makes me think. It makes me wonder *(tentatively questioning)*
Hemi looks thoughtfully at me (Year 13 Student Focus Group, 2014)

Both Jason and Hemi's bodies capture feelings of tentative ambiguity that began to emerge, among all the boys in the latter stages of the project.

Being and becoming raced and gendered also changed over the course of the project. Hemi's desire to instantiate what it meant to get Māori masculinities 'right', in an earlier focus group interchange with Matiu, was also accompanied by a deeply ambivalent feeling around Māori himself. The Māori students, made it very clear to me that despite being demographically identified as such, being Māori in the way it was defined at school was not that important to them, and not how they wanted to be seen. In the initial individual interviews, Huia's description of herself as 'kinda and not' undoes my own presumptuous desires (Tuhiwai-Smith 2014) to get 'race right' in the initial interviews:

Kathleen: Do you see yourself as Māori in terms of your beliefs and values or?
Huia: Kinda and not. I don't know.
Kathleen: Is it an important part of who you are to you or …?
Huia: No, not really.
Kathleen: How come?
Huia: I don't know, I just don't focus on it as much. Like I do—I used to do Kapa Haka and stuff … but no, not really now.
Kathleen: And so was it bigger for you when you were younger than you are now or?
Huia: More when I was younger, yes … I don't know. I just got more into other stuff … More like music and sports and stuff. *(Huia, individual interview 30th of November 2011)*

Huia's ambivalence resonated with the other Māori and European students in the group, who, at that point in time, didn't see their racial and ethnic heritages as important in how they saw themselves being and becoming. For some of them, like Hemi, it was something that was deeply important for his family, but he rejected it. For others, while their family members may have been identified demographically as Māori, it wasn't that important to them, and who they wanted to be seen as. Underpinned more by notions of the autological subject (Povinelli 2002), they described, and enacted their being and becomings more in terms of academic intelligence, and sports ability—as

well as 'weird' and a 'good liar'—attributes that speak to the importance of the enterprising, clever, and self-maximising neoliberal citizen (Elliott 2014; Nairn et al. 2012).

Over the course of the project, the student's ambivalence about their Māori identities remained, however, there was less of a desire to get race and gender 'right'. In the next section, I want to explore some of these diffractive pedagogical shifts, ponder what may have enabled them, and explore some of their possible implications for sexuality education practices in classrooms.

'Things Change': Towards Experimenting with Being and Becoming Otherwise

Five years have passed since I first met interviewed the students and observed them for the first two years in their compulsory Health classes. We have all got older. As Jason noted in the focus group interview I held with them late in 2014; 'things change'. Their lives are on the move, and my thinking about what it means to conceptualise and research the aporias of sexuality education is on the move too. Reading and working with post-humanist, queer, and de-colonising theories, I became interested in experimenting with moving beyond neoliberal notions of 'getting it right', and more interested in 'getting it' differently (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005, p. 962). I was excited and interested to see them, and in the beginning of the interview I was overcome by immense feelings of warmth and pleasure towards them, our relationship, while intermittent, had continued over five years, and we had developed a bond of sorts. While the focus group interviews were still characterised by gendered aspects of getting heteronormative raced genders 'right', more tentative and exploratory forms of enquiry seemed possible. These diffractive (Barad 2007) pedagogical orientations within the focus group interviews enabled us to tentatively explore some of the subtle complexities and dilemmas several of the students experienced in both 'being, and not being' Māori:

Kathleen:	So, what's your take on, has that been, is that still the same, or is that something that's changed?
Hemi:	I'd say it's still the same for me.
Huia:	I've learnt more about my culture, and stuff, studying, but, I dunno … I guess I still kinda feel that way.
Kathleen:	Mmm. *(thoughtfully)* Kinda and kinda not? Huia: Yeah
Kathleen:	I'm just interested to know whether that's changed at all.
Jason:	Yeah, I don't think it's changed much. Still kind of …

Hemi: I guess that's why we're holding back from doing, like, joining Kapa Haka and stuff *(tentatively thoughtfully)*.
Kathleen: What's that? … can you tell more about that, Hemi? *(carefully)*
Hemi: Like I guess, I don't feel Māori but I am Māori, that sort of thing. I guess, that's why I didn't join the Kapa Haka group, and all that, because I don't really feel like I should be there *(looking at me enquiringly with an outstretched left hand).*
Kathleen: Mmm, because you don't feel Māori even though you are Māori.
Hemi: Yeah.
Kathleen: Yeah, it's a tricky thing, eh, like I've been trying to figure it out from what you, piece it together from what you said to me last time, and it's quite complicated. (Focus Group, 23rd September 2014).

While the 'getting it right' assemblage was still active, their insistence on ambivalence enabled us to intra-actively narrate our 'knowing in being' (Barad 2007) differently. Perhaps my acknowledgement of changes and shifts struck a chord with how they were seeing themselves as 'growing up'. The tone of the interview felt quieter and slower, open-ended spaces were opened up, and molecular affective flows were produced which de-territorialised normative gendered and raced ways of being, and enabled more complex and ambivalent becomings to be explored. Hemi's outstretched open hand speaks to the lived dilemmas and ambivalences of being and not being a 'fair-skinned' Māori, (as he described himself), and how it felt. While my traditional humanist researcher desire to want to 'understand' and pin down what this was all about is present (Quinlivan under review), at the same time I can also feel myself trying to work against it, to experiment with the intra-relational ways that we were producing who we could be and were perhaps becoming—to 'know in being' (Barad 2007), by acknowledging the challenges that were presented for him, rather than try to solve or to remedy them (Ahenakew et al. 2014; Tuhiwai- Smith 2014):

Kathleen: And it might be something that changes, too, aye? that's the whole thing, you never know how it's gonna … *(tentatively)* like it's interesting that you said Huia that you've found out more.
Huia: Mmm.
Kathleen: What did you find out, just out of interest's sake?
Huia: Well, I dunno, well I've been studying it for the past, since Year 9. So I've learned more about the language and the culture and the iwis and my background, and stuff. But also my teacher, he tells us a lot of stories from his personal life, like, he didn't know Māori or whatever, and he wasn't really surrounded by much culture, and, yeah, he went off and studied Māori and got back to his roots.

Kathleen: So he felt the need to do that, to find out about who he was?
Huia: Yup.
Kathleen: Can you see, can any of you see *(tentatively)* that any of you might wanna do that at any point?
Hemi: Yeah. I'd say I would later in life. Because I know my mum, my mum.
Jason: I know my mum too.
Huia: Yeah, my nana did that.
Kathleen: Did she? Later on in life?
Hemi: Now my mum works at the Kohanga Reo.
Kathleen: Yep. Because you're in quite an interesting situation, Hemi, aren't you, where your brother is right into it. And you're not so much?
Hemi: Yeah, me and my sister didn't really get involved in that.
Kathleen: Mmm. Did you deliberately choose not to do that just because you felt pressured?
Hemi: No, it just.
Jason: It wasn't a choice.
Hemi: it just didn't happen, you know. I don't know. Maybe if I went to a Kohanga then it might have been different … *(thoughtfully).* (Focus Group, 23rd September 2014).

I am interested in how my tentative experimentation with post-humanist and de-colonising knowledges, that can, however fleetingly, intra-actively produce more diffractive pedagogical encounters which can 'know otherwise'. While the operation of the getting it right assemblage in shaping gendered and raced subjectivities was still in evidence, there were moments, when molecular affective flows and smooth spaces emerged which de-territorialised possibilities and punctured normative constrictions of getting intersections of race and gender 'right' (Puar 2007). The assemblage produces poignant and moving molecular affective flows that allow for an acknowledgement that, perhaps over time, and in light of the experiences of others they know, what it means to be and become Māori is open to change. Huia talks about 'my background', and Hemi emphasises the extent to which notions of choice in terms of how he sees his Māori identity, are insufficient to account for the complexities of how he currently feels. Capacities that neoliberal orientations to 'getting it right' make challenging such as not knowing, uncertainty, paradoxes, and an acknowledgement of the complexities, messiness, and sometimes losses, of everyday lived experiences (McLelland and Fine 2012; Povinelli 2002, 2006; Berlant and Edelman 2014), were acknowledged, just sat with, and allowed to emerge.

Some Implications

> The desire for mastery and absolute knowledge defends against the helplessness that learning introduces; our relations to knowledge are bound to be caught up in love and hate; questions, which remain an ambivalent object of education, are both exciting and hazardous; and the stories we tell about education risk holding the difficulty of learning at bay. (Gilbert 2014, p. xxiii)

In this chapter, I have experimented with drawing on post-humanist, queer and de-colonising theories to explore the im/possibilities that can arise when producing and engaging with knowledges about race and gender in school-based sexuality education that, as Gilbert suggests, can risk holding the difficulty of learning at bay. Drawing on a series of research conundrums with students over the course of the project to date, I show how who I, the students, and their teacher can be and become is inextricably intra-actively relationally entangled with bodies, material objects, and spaces in what I call a colonising neoliberal 'getting it right' assemblage. Mapping the flipping twists and turns of the affective flows and intensities produced by the assemblage over the course of the study to date shows how the sexuality education 'getting it right' assemblage both constrains, and yet also can provide possibilities for de-territorialisation and thinking and being otherwise. Possibilities for intra-relational (and often destabilising) lines of flight and transformation within the present, and their potential to facilitate unpredictable and diffractive (Barad 2014b) opportunities to know differently (Ahenakew et al. 2014; Tuhiwai-Smith 2014; Watson and Huntington 2008; Todd 2014), hold some promise in imagining sexuality education 'otherwise', and experiment with diffractively producing something unexpected and different from our initial intentions as we research and teach sexuality education.

My experimentation with diffractive methodological/ pedagogical approaches, gradually appeared to create a more tentative orientation to sexuality education over time in the focus group interviews. Over the five years, the students and I were both developing and changing, and my admittedly intermittent relationship with the students deepened. Both in the moment, and retrospectively, I became aware of the limitations of 'getting it right' with students, and what it produces for students, teacher, their teacher, and for myself as a researcher. Cautiously experimenting with what it might mean to let go of assiduously trying to 'get it right', and letting the affective flows that our encounters produced carry me along to see where they might take us (Davies 2010; Mazzei 2014), felt ontologically, epistemologically, and ethically challenging (Davies 2014; Lenz Taguchi 2012; Tuhiwai-Smith 2014; Watson and Huntington 2008). Experimenting with cultivating a less definitive orientation to sexuality

education knowledges within neoliberal social and political contexts is very demanding work for researchers, and even more so for teachers. Cultivating the art of remaining present in what can become the not entirely decidable space of the classroom or the focus group, challenges narrow and prescriptive orientations to sexuality education driven by assessment that characterise neoliberalism (Biesta 2010), and fundamentally calls into question the roles of teachers and researchers as 'expert knowers'. Listening more (Davies 2010; Tuhiwai-Smith 2014), talking less, coming to terms with a loss of boundaries and certainty (Biesta 2010; Mazzei 2013), and attending more closely to the peculiar and unexpected sensory liminal moments that occur (Ahenakew et al. 2014; Todd 2014), are destabilising and require a different educational sensibility.

As challenging as these diffractive approaches may be, my experiences in classrooms and focus groups indicate that the costs of 'getting sexuality education right' are too great, not only for students, but also for their teachers. They fail to equip students with the dispositions they need to negotiate a complex and demanding world, and are taking an increasingly huge toll on students' and teachers' sense of well-being and success (Education Review Office 2015). Acknowledging the substantial social and political constraints of neoliberalism, and the perennial double binds of sexuality education, what researchers, teachers, and policy makers can do is to understand the ways in which sexuality education knowledges are being shaped by particular orientations to Western neoliberal co-options of knowledge, and consider what they are producing—both in terms of limitations and possibilities. The next, admittedly challenging step, is within the constraints of curriculum demands, to 'massage' the curriculum in ways that can experiment with (not)/(un)knowing sexuality education 'differently'. One way that this can be experimented with is to understand the intra-active production of learning sexuality education with students as a dynamic assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), rather than a fixed pedagogical encounter. Drawing on diverse knowledges to explore the ways in which students are making sense of relationships and sexualities in the rich tapestries of their own lives, and the challenges and possibilities that they are encountering, has this potential. Within the not entirely decidable spaces of everyday relational encounters, possibilities to move beyond 'getting it right' can, and will always, emerge.

Provocation

- Become aware of the raced and gendered sexuality education assemblage operating in your classroom, both in terms of the taught formal curriculum, and in the informal student cultures of the classroom. How are bodies,

material objects, relationships, and the space intra-acting to produce who students can be and become? What molar and molecular affective flows are being produced by the assemblage? How are they affecting students?

- Experiment with developing less definitive orientations to 'knowing sexuality education' by engaging deeply with the molecular affective flows being produced by the assemblage to open up derritorialising lines of flight which can enable thinking otherwise and more expansive possibilities in the classroom. Eliciting students' own holistic lived experiences of relationships and sexualities, acknowledging the complexities and pleasures that are emerging in their lives, and building their capacities together to thoughtfully and critically negotiate them may enable this. Explore the de-colonising potential of authentically drawing on indigenous pedagogies to enable this work to happen (Cooper 2012; Penetito 2010). Build a partnership with a researcher who might be willing to work with you on this!

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Part III

Sexual Cultures, Entertainment Media, and Communications Technologies

Kath Albury and Alan McKee

Introduction

In this section, we take sexuality education out of the classroom and explore the ways in which communications technologies enable informal learning about sex in everyday spaces.

Much sexuality education research has privileged the schoolroom as the most important place for young people to learn about sex, and the work of teachers as the most important communication technology. But we know that young people learn about sex from a range of sources—including their parents, peers, and entertainment media as well as formal schooling (McKee 2012). It is our position that research into how young people learn about sex must take account of this learning ecology, asking how and what young people learn from each of these sources, and how the sources interact, support, or contradict each other. Traditionally this has not been how sexuality education research has approached the issue.

Sexuality educators have tended to assign different values to each of these sources without necessarily drawing on empirical evidence about how the various forms might operate in the context of everyday practices. For example, parents and schools are typically viewed as unproblematically positive sources

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of information about sex (Fisher and Barak 1989). This is despite the fact that mounting evidence suggests that both of these sources have important limitations as sex educators. In particular, both schools and parents often present a negative view of sex—as a focus group respondent in one research project puts it, young people are still getting the message 'Just don't have sex. You'll get pregnant and die' (McKee et al. 2014, p. 6).

Conversely, entertainment media are assumed by many researchers of sex education—again often without empirical evidence—to be a delivery mechanism for 'myths' and misinformation about sex, sexuality, and gender (Brown and Bobkowski 2011). This view of popular media implicitly draws on traditions of communication theory sometimes referred to as sitting within the *media effects model* (Gauntlett 2005) which seek to determine the 'impact' of media consumption in the same way scientists might determine physiological reactions to a drug, or a foreign substance within the body. Viewed through this lens, young people's media practices are understood as a problem of consumption (similar to smoking, drinking alcohol, or eating junk food). In this context, the educative response has traditionally been to explain the 'impact' of their media consumption to young people, and encourage them to consume more wholesome fare. Implicit here is the notion that media contain 'distorted' representations of sex and sexuality, and therefore serve as false or misleading pedagogical material.

This model assumes that the majority of media content relating to sex and sexuality contains a universally identifiable meaning or message, and with correct literacy skills young people will learn to decipher (and reject) media texts. However, from the 1970s onwards, many researchers in the fields of media and cultural studies have rejected the notion that media texts (and indeed media genres) have singular meanings (Hall 1993). Moreover, these disciplines tend to view media representations of gender, power, race, sexuality, and other aspects of identity as contextual. For example, Stuart Hall (2013), a key figure in the fields of media and cultural studies, has argued that media representations are not as 'distortions' of an objective reality, but are one aspect of our broader 'meaning making' practice.

As Hall puts it

> there is no single of 'correct' answer to the question, 'What does this image mean?' or 'What is this ad saying?' Since there is no law which can guarantee that things will have one, true meaning, or that meanings won't change over time, work in this area is bound to be interpretive—a debate … between equally plausible, though sometimes contesting and competing interpretations. (Hall 2013: xxv)

This doesn't mean that media and cultural studies scholars are relativistic in relation to media texts, arguing that they can mean *anything*. On the contrary, Hall and others have contributed volumes of work examining the ways that dominant cultural ideologies are played out within media (Stoddart 2007). Increasingly, however, the key question within media and cultural studies is not what media do *to* young people, but what young people do *with* media. In this context, media literacy within the context of sexuality education is not simply a matter of learning to deconstruct and resist media texts, or replacing 'sex myths' with 'sex facts'. Increasingly, too, the popularization of social media platforms and portable devices such as smartphones requires educators to adapt to new learning environments, in which literacy is an active process that requires skills including not only textual analysis, but digital media production and ethical decision-making (Albury 2013).

While there is a sizable literature addressing entertainment media as a 'risk factor' in relation to sexual learning (see e.g. Braun-Courville and Rojas 2009), and an expanding literature on entertainment media as a delivery mechanism for positive/legitimate sexual messaging regarding sex and sexuality (e.g. Ward et al. 2006), the chapters in this section seek to explore another aspect of the intersection between young people's media practices, and their formal and informal processes of sexual learning. As Sandlin, Schultz, and Burdick observe, while there is a tradition of debate within the fields of both education and cultural studies as to the nature of 'public pedagogy', there is a consensus within educational scholarship that 'schools are not the sole sites of teaching, learning and curricula, and perhaps … they are not the most influential' (Sandlin et al. 2010: 2). It is for this reason that the focus of the chapters in this section is less on 'education' and more on 'learning'. Although these two concepts are inextricably linked, the term 'education' is more focused on the intention of the teacher. 'Education' suggests an intent to pass on particular information to a student, a structured program, delivered within a formal space where students know that they have come to be taught and improved. By contrast, 'learning' as a concept is focused on the person who receives information and ideas, which can happen anywhere, with or without the intent of the producer or consumer. Communications technologies—and entertainment media—play a vital part in learning, particularly outside of the classroom. For this reason, only two of these chapters address formal education within schools (Abidin, Chapter 24, and Albury, Hasinoff and Senft, Chapter 26); all of them consider how different entertainment media might contribute to learning about sex.

This section considers media and media practices (such as selfies, and sharing on social media) that address what Allen (2001) has termed sexuality

education's 'knowledge/practice gap'. The chapters move from older media to newer, starting with a consideration of how even the most traditional media like newspapers can contribute to learning about sex, through the work of television and mobile phones, through discussions of material distributed on the Internet to end with a consideration of user-generated content, and its role in disturbing the traditional producer–consumer binary that still informs so much thinking about the entertainment media and sexual learning.

Read together, the chapters can be seen to explore media as a source of popular pedagogy via what du Gay and colleagues (1997) have termed the 'circuit of culture' model, which not only considers media representations as a source of meaning, but also reflects on questions of political economy, and the everyday contexts in which media are consumed, shared, and made.

Chapter 20 by **Despina Chronaki** takes an innovative approach to the news media, considering their role in young people's sexual learning. There exists a long tradition of communications research considering the role of journalism in political debate and the workings of the public sphere. However, little research has considered the ways in which news stories provide young people with a perspective on sex. Chronaki's analysis points out that the most common ways in which sex appears in new stories about young people are as a dangerous force from which they must be protected. Particularly in stories about pornography and sexualization, young people are repeatedly told that sex is dangerous and they should—ideally—be ignorant about it. What are the implications for young people, Chronaki asks, when one of the most respected sources of information about sex tells them that they should be scared of and ignorant about it?

Kyra Clarke in Chap. 21 discusses the ways in which young people might learn about sex from the entertainment television program *Glee*. Rather than limiting her analysis to counting the number of times that young people have—or don't have—sex in the program, Clarke argues that *Glee* presents an understanding of sexuality, intimacy, and identity which is profoundly progressive. Not only does the program embrace queer identities—including gay, lesbian, and trans* identities (the word "trans* is an inclusive term that includes a variety of sexual and gender identities including transsexual and transgender)—it also embraces a fluid version of sexuality that shows young people that identity need not be stable and fixed for a lifetime. In this, Kyra argues, the very format of entertainment television is better suited to communicating the reality of sexual experience than more formal versions of education with their fixed curricula.

Rob Cover's work in Chap. 22 is interested in the role of mobile phones in the formation of queer identities and communities. Like Clarke, he argues that entertainment television is better positioned to understand and communicate queer possibilities than formal classroom teaching about sex. While

many school curricula about mobile devices are framed in terms of threat to stable identities, Cover argues that the British version of the television program *Queer as Folk* embraces the possibilities of communication technologies to support the formation of fluid forms of identity and sexuality.

Chapter 23 by **Evelyn Aldaz, Sandra Fosado, and Ana Amuchástegui** discusses a series of 60 educational animations produced by the Mexican organization *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir* (CDD—Catholics for Free Choice). As Aldaz, Fosado, and Amuchástegui explain, school-based sexuality education is a vexed topic in Mexico, due to conflict between the secular basis of the Mexican State, and the influence of the Catholic Church within Mexican society. As a social justice- and human rights-focused Catholic organization, the CDD draws on popular pedagogical strategies to provide sexuality education that is not overtly opposed to the church, but illustrates the differences between conservative and progressive Catholic approaches to sexuality. Aldaz and colleagues contextualize the series within an emerging genre of 'entertainment education', in which popular entertainment genres are deployed for overtly pedagogical ends—in this case, a promotion of young people's rights to sexual safety and pleasure is positioned within a faith-based framework of sexuality.

Chapter 24 by **Crystal Abidin** also addresses the role popular sexual pedagogies can play in otherwise conservative environments, by exploring the ways that young Singaporean lifestyle bloggers both challenge and complement formal sexuality education curricula. Drawing on her ethnographic fieldwork, Abidin outlines the cases of three popular Singaporean commercial bloggers (or 'influencers') who have overtly challenged formal sexuality education's message regarding sex before marriage, same-sex relationships, and condom use.

Chapter 25 by **Natalie Hendry** draws on her experience of teaching in young people's mental health facilities, where 'sex education' does not form a discrete part of the curriculum. Hendry explores innovative pedagogical formats for exploring with young people how social media experiences relate to sexuality, gender, and embodiment. Her teaching once again sits outside of traditional classrooms, and is not based on a one-way transmission model of information from teacher to student. She does not accept paradigms that see social media as a threat that must be resisted: rather she outlines exercises whereby she works with young people to critically explore the affordances and limitations of different social media forms and how they relate to learning about sexuality and relationships.

Finally, **Kath Albury, Amy Adele Hasinoff, and Theresa Senft** in Chap. 26 draw on a range of research conducted with young people and

adults in Australia and North America to recommend new approaches to 'sexting' (or the digital production and sharing of naked or semi-naked images) within education and policy. Moving away from 'just say no' approaches to sexting education, this chapter draws on the theoretical and practical from the Selfie Researchers network's Creative Commons course on selfies to suggest exercises that engage with young people's everyday media practices. In doing so, they draw attention to the challenges and opportunities presented to educators who seek to draw connections between young people's rights to safe, respectful participation in digital cultures of friendship, flirtation, and intimacy, and broader social and political debates regarding the boundaries of privacy and consent in digital spaces.

Together, we believe that these seven chapters represent an innovative approach to the contribution of entertainment media to learning about sex, both inside and outside of the formal sexuality classroom. They demonstrate that entertainment media are not simply a bad object that can be corrected by more formal schooling or input from parents. They take a critical approach to the learning processes facilitated by communication technologies, in some cases demonstrating their limitations, in others demonstrating possibilities that go beyond what is possible in classrooms. We hope that they provide a useful model for how future sex education research and pedagogy might proceed.

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20

What Does the News Teach Young People About Sex?

Despina Chronaki

This chapter argues that news stories about sex and pornography contribute to young people's learning by providing them with frameworks for thinking about sex—not always in ways that sex educators might hope. The news tells stories about how young people should relate to sex and what they should know about sex—and those stories rarely promote sex education or the idea that young people have a right to know about sex. The news media consistently tell stories of young people at risk: and sexual content is one of the risks that they most extensively cover (Haddon and Stald 2009: 26). Journalism tells us sensationalist stories about what happens to children who encounter sexual risks in real life alongside campaigning for children's protection from stranger danger (Burn and Willett 2004). Within such a context, audiences are exposed to sensationalist stories and campaigns about children's risk not only from the increasingly sexualized nature of culture (Egan 2013) but also from practices like sexting. In fact, it would not be an overstatement to say that in many instances media coverage of sexuality—especially when it comes to children—is about protecting people from the perversity of their own sexuality (Chronaki 2014). Sex is consistently presented as something dangerous: parents are advised to protect their children from representations

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of sex, stories focus on the victims of sex, and the sex industries are presented as trashy, glamorous, and morally depraved, all at the same time (Tsaliki and Chronaki 2008).

However, we must not accept a simple hypodermic model of culture: young people do not unquestioningly accept everything that the news media tell them about sex. Rather, as I demonstrate below, when we speak to young people about news coverage of sex they demonstrate a series of complex negotiations whereby they understand, sometimes accept, and sometimes refuse the dominant discourses about sex offered by the news. A series of individual interviews and focus groups revealed the ways in which young people engaged with this material.

What Does the News Media Teach About Children and Sex?

In order to understand the role of the news media in teaching young people about sex, we can begin by looking at the content of news stories in this area. A search for news items about 'children and sex' and 'children and pornography' on the Nexis database returned 1193 articles in the UK national press within the previous year (24/11/2013 to 24/11/2014). I chose to search in the UK press for two reasons. The first was recent policy changes in that country aimed at protecting children from pornography—accompanied by extensive public comment on the topic by Prime Minister David Cameron as well as lobbyists from a range of interested parts. The second was that many participants of the projects discussed here come from the UK. A basic content analysis reveals the pattern of discourses employed to frame discussions around children and sex in news stories.

It is immediately clear that sex education, or the idea that children have a right to information about sex, is not an important discourse for British journalism. Rather, the majority of stories about children and sex take an approach that might broadly be described as the protection of children from sex, and from information about sex. Reports about criminalistic activity and law enforcement rank highly in the list of approaches taken. In general, sex is discussed in a context of what precautions should be taken to protect children—or perhaps more precisely, to protect the innocence of childhood—and for that reason most stories address law enforcement, criminal activity, and violence. In relation to children, sex clearly receives overwhelmingly critical coverage in the news. Young people encountering the news media will become aware of the existence of sex—paradoxically through the existence of many stories discussing the need to protect them from knowledge about the existence of sex (Fig. 20.1).

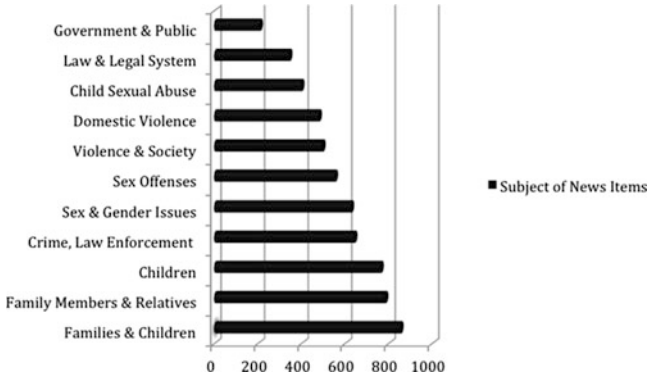


Fig. 20.1 Subject of news items found by the key phrase 'Children and Sex'

Empirical Evidence About Children's Interpretations of News Stories About Sex

Some researchers have expressed concern about the content of news stories about sex, and the effect these might have on young people. Mascheroni (in Smahel and Wright 2014) notes that the EU Kids Online network found that sensationalist news stories about Internet harmful experiences and appropriated news stories as told by peers are among the sources that shape children's perceptions of what is risky online, prompting researchers to suggest that parents and educators should not rely on news stories but should instead teach children how to think critically about risks online (Smahel and Wright 2014: 165).

However, young people do not uncritically accept the view of sex that is presented in the news media. Researchers increasingly accept that young people are critical consumers who draw on multiple sources of information in order to make their interpretations of media content (Buckingham and Chronaki 2014; Tsaliki et al. 2014). Young people learn about sex from a variety of institutions—at school, via media, from family, or through established knowledge informed by medical, religious, or other moral discourses. They 'know' about sex—even if they have a blurred perception of it—long before they have any encounters with sexual content in the media. In this context, I would argue that news can function as one source of discursive frameworks, alongside others, upon which children can critically draw in their accounts of the social world (Buckingham and Chronaki 2014; Buckingham and Bragg 2004).

For example, in discussing children's understanding of problematic experiences online, Burn and Willett (2004) identified the discourses used by children to talk about online risk and pedophiles. They found that to some

extent these discourses draw on those used in the news media, to 'construct dramatic pictures of internet danger, the most prominent theme being paedophilia, with associated dangers like pornography and (in some of the children's minds) viruses' (2004: 48). But they also identified patterns through which children 'discriminate more finely between types of internet risk' (ibid: 49). For example, they identified folkloric and rationalist discourses used by the young people, each with particular agentic, narrative, and performative characteristics. When talking about girls who are approached by a bogeyman, children draw upon folkloric discourses characterized by exaggeration and high modality. The truth that makes the urban myth a potentially true story is the assertion of news stories which confirm the existence of such stories. On the other hand, an example of rationalistic discourses is the form of pedagogic talk about the nature of appropriate sexuality. Such discourses usually draw upon medical or religious directives during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when sexuality took to a great extent its current discursive form. Similarly, Buckingham and Bragg's (2004) study of children's responses to sexual information in the media—including news media—found that media act as resources in various ways, either providing evidence for children's assertions about mainstream or dominant masculinities and femininities or about the modes of appropriate performances of sexuality. But again, they found a number of discourses competing with acceptance of news stories about sex: for example, they identified elements of media literacy in the children's accounts of news as a business, where the children showed an awareness of the aims underlying news media's choices to publish sexual stories or photos (2004: 148–149).

The research shows that young people are aware of both the contents of news agendas and the conventions of news genres and the nature of news as a money-making business. I would argue that literacy of this kind is part of children's broader sexual literacies that they develop through knowledge from different sources upon which they build knowledge about sexuality. In this sense, I would suggest that to approach the ways in which children use frameworks for thinking about sex we need to identify the nuances in children's accounts of the often contradictory ways in which the news media frame sexuality and childhood. The discursive strategies they deploy illustrate the fact that young people can be considered as legitimate participants in the public debate about sexuality and childhood. Acute awareness and critical judgments of the ways in which news construct sexuality are in itself a statement about citizenship. I will address this assumption further in my analysis of young people's accounts.

Method of Data Collection

The qualitative data presented in this chapter about young people's engagement with news media's discourses about sexuality have been gathered for two projects. The first is my own project about young adults' experiences with sexual content during childhood and teenage life; the second is the EU Kids Online III within we which we interviewed children about their understanding of risks online in nine European countries (Smahel and Wright 2014).

The samples in both studies were intended to be illustrative and not representative. In my own study, the sample consists of young people aged 17–22, 12 men and 14 women from the UK, Denmark, and Greece. The EU Kids Online III sample consists of children aged 9–16, 127 boys and 127 girls who were interviewed in an individual or group context. The data were collected in Greece, the UK, Spain, Czech Republic, Romania, Portugal, Italy, Malta, and Belgium. In both studies, the sample's ethnic diversity reflected reasons of convenience and not cross-country comparison purposes. The analytical approach I follow in this chapter is informed by thematic (Braun and Clarke 2006) and discourse analysis approaches (Potter and Wetherell 1987).

Young People Combine Knowledge About Sex from the News with Knowledge from Other Sources

In both samples, children argued that by the time they have encountered explicit mediated sexual content they already know what it is about from other sources. In most cases, they discuss knowledge they have from their family, from the interactions with peers, from sex education at school, or from mainstream media—including news media. Notably, different media genres offer diverse constructions of sex. For example, films, dramas, sitcoms, and soaps seem to provide representations of heteronormative or homonormative sexuality, that is, romantic sexual activity and affectionate relationships. News stories provide more sensationalist or didactic constructions of sexuality, that is, stories about pedophiles, rape, children's experiences with sexting, or pedagogic stories about what it means to be in a relationship, about safe sex, normative romantic sex, and so on. On the other hand, documentaries, or docu-reality programs offer either explicitly pedagogic constructions of sex (e.g. sexual health) or sensationalist sex educational knowledge. In talking about the cultural signifiers of sex, Ellie (22, EL) reports:

> There was always a kind of knowledge you know. I mean, even when watching a kiss on TV you were thinking that something romantic/erotic was going on […] you would see naked people in a bed and you would understand.

Kissing, nudity, and romantic activity between people in a bedroom are seen to signify sex, or at least something implying affection and romance: such representations reflect the dominant, iconic prototype of a romantic relationship, of love, to which individuals are exposed from a young age (e.g. parents' affection toward each other).

In addition to this, knowledge deriving from the news media is constructed in a form of meta-knowledge. As Jenny (17, UK) reports:

> There's always a massive debate whether it should be right or wrong, especially when there're young people or people that are vulnerable.

Jenny's comment suggests that media construct young people as sexual, and suggest ways of protecting them from their own sexuality. Most of the framing of children's experiences with sexuality within the mainstream media comes down to two main issues: child pornography and the sexualization of childhood (Bailey 2011; Papadopoulos 2010). Children's own sexuality thus becomes, by default, a problematic topic. A number of participants account for the negative framing of sexual knowledge in the news within a context of abnormality and illegality, and assert that media themselves provide children with many different representations of sexuality, some of which are most probably explicit. Sometimes young people combine knowledge from different interpretative frameworks provided by parents and the news:

> Well, my parents, they kind of do talk to me about, let's say something about kids, more kids are watching pornography or something like that my parents will, like, mum in particular would kind of sit me down and say, yes, so don't watch this kind of and so on, you know. (David, 13, UK)

> It's also on the news a lot as well. (Matt, 13, UK)

Young people draw upon different, supposedly legitimate, and authoritative sources about sex to make a stronger argument about sexuality. In this case, information coming from parents is highly respected by children as parents are framed as the most caring adult protectors of their children. Even if there is a doubt that what they teach their children about sex might not be entirely legitimate, the fact that it is also in the news makes it undoubtedly valid. It is very important to focus on how children cross-compare information they get

from different sources in order to make strong judgments not only about the issue discussed but also about themselves as reliable informants:

> Mainly from parents. They are our idols, and uh, but also from the media, when you read about, uh, a dad that rapes his child. You know, it is told that it is wrong. So it's just from your surroundings, from, what you have been told by parents and friends and media. (Gitte, 19, DK)

Young people's accounts combine knowledge about sex that they get from sources controlled by adults with knowledge they get from peers. And in this sense, their accounts balance between a conservative and a liberal perspective of sexuality. In addition to combining knowledge from different sources, they have a very clear picture of the attitudes that each group reflects:

> I think it's quite negative especially from people who have quite high standing so I mean by that prime ministers or, uhm, you know people in parliament, or news presenters are quite damning about it, whereas celebrities can be quite more open or relaxed about it, but generally there is a quite negative view about it yeah. (Harry, 20, UK)

The fact that young people show awareness of how the public debate around sexuality is developed is not new. However, it is ignored in sexual education, mass communication, and effects research, which is primarily feeding the debate with data about children's sexuality or children's encounters with sexuality in the media. In addition to this, I would argue that researchers might need to explore how young people make claims about a certain kind of citizenship considering their rights as informants to contribute to discussions about children's sexuality and not just about their rights as sexual beings (see Plummer, 1995 about the concept of intimate citizenship).

Young People's Thoughts on the Dangers of Sex

The news media repeatedly mention incidents of child sexual abuse or child pornography possession. When young people discuss sex in the media they commonly raise these issues. Here Vassilis (14, EL) refers to the profile of the pedophile that fits with the dominant media framing:

> What I've seen in the news is that many people have arranged meetings with girls or boys and abducted them, robbed them have kept them for themselves or have killed them. (Vassilis, 14, EL)

Likewise, John (17, UK) states:

> You'll hear about child porn or stuff like that, some freaks have been downloading pictures or something, you always hear about that on TV or radio.

As John points out, on one side, there are the 'freaks', those who according to allegations use child pornography; on the other side, there must be then someone who is producing this content, allegedly, a predator. A quick look at media coverage reveals a blurry profiling of the alleged predators as individuals who possess child pornography (e.g. Freeman 2013; Cafe 2013a, b). However, the profile of the user of child pornography matches the profile of a pedophile, which is also indicated by what George (17, UK) mentions later:

> Yeah, pedophiles watch the online sex, they find it interesting to go and watch it online and then try and find gals and talk to the gals. So that's who they find, that's how they find the way to do it.

This confirms Burn & Willett's suggestion that children reflect upon urban myth narratives about 'for example, what happens with girls who enter chat rooms' (2004: 48), which enter children's pool of knowledge about sex and are asserted in their accounts. This reflects a construction of sexuality in public arenas defined in terms of an overall notion of 'danger', 'harm', and 'unhealthiness'. Elisabeth (20, UK) makes a more general statement about illegal content:

> Like, you hear about the illegal stuff in the media, and with the illegal stuff, people are like, in general all of it, it's bad.

Elisabeth seems to be accounting for the hyperbolic nature of constructions of sexual content within the media. Whether in terms of sexualization or child pornography, it becomes clear that young people understand that sexuality is publicly framed in the news media as something problematic:

> There was also something on the news this morning about inappropriate use of webcams. (Sarah, 13, UK)

Finally, another problematic angle of sexuality in relation to childhood is related to the sexualized nature of culture:

> Uhm, the only thing that comes to mind is that during the election, David Cameron was all about sort of, […] he was talking about Lilly Allen's song that

> a lot of kids sing, and it was in relation to the sort of the kind of views it has, and that it was shocking, uhm, and that it should be some kind of censorship on all this, or whatever. (Tara, 20, UK)

Tara is mentioning the popular debate in the UK news media about the sexualization of culture and reflects on the numerous stories in the news about political and public figures' campaigns against products that are allegedly sexualizing for children. This is one more allegedly problematic angle of sexuality in relation to childhood, and Tara positions herself here as both a media and a politically literate individual.

So far it seems that sexuality in the news media is overwhelmingly framed as problematic when it is related to childhood. As I suggested above, however, I would argue that it is actually childhood itself that is considered problematic and sexuality is only one aspect of this inherently problematic status.

The Contradictory Position of News Media About Sexual Representation

Young people in both these projects were well aware of the contradictory position taken by the news media in regard to sexualized representation—where many news stories draw attention to sexual representation in the public sphere, in order to condemn sexual representation in the public sphere. Jenny (17, UK) claims that she has been brought up with information about sexuality being spread across the news:

> I think I've grown up with it being in the news, uhm, famous celebrities making their own porn tapes, I think it's accepted, even if probably it's classed to a lot of people as wrong.

She appears to have a clear idea of the ambivalent nature of sexuality in the public debate as she is commenting that although for several people exposure to sexuality in the public eye is unacceptable, it is something she is used to encountering in the news.

> D. what do you see in media about porn or what do you read or hear?
> L. only of celebrities who have accidentally published a porn movie or something … that's the only time I hear about.

For Lea (18, DK) too, celebrities' sexuality and its exposure to public life is a recurrent theme in the news. In fact, this might be an illustration of the appropriation of sex in a particular context, that of people who are popular public figures. And the same news media that condemn the publication of sexual material also publish pictures that for many are sexual or sexualizing. The popular Page 3 in the *Sun*, which publishes a topless photograph of a young woman every day, has always been at the heart of a public debate about sexuality in the UK. Although not explicitly sexual, Page 3 representations of females are usually framed as erotica, sexualizing, or even soft porn (e.g. Buckingham and Bragg 2004). The following extract is a statement generated by a discussion between the interviewer and the respondent about sexual representations on Page 3:

> You see it in the newspapers and television, women half naked but we've all seen it, and in the game they take it more seriously in the game instead of the newspapers or TV. I don't really see why they put rating like 18 because we've already seen it in newspapers. (Don, 12, UK)

Reasonably, young people make statements about popular representations of sexuality when reflecting critically on the news media's contradictory ways of framing sexuality. Even more explicitly, Shawn (11, UK) is highlighting news' contradictory framing of sexuality:

> If you look at the *Sun* on page three it shows an actual person, so while they rate a cartoon like an animated game, 18, they're showing the same thing for everyone to see, and it's a real person. But anyone can see it so it doesn't really make sense. They're saying it's bad to play a game that is a cartoon, and while they're saying that they're showing the same thing that's happening in that game on the news and in newspapers, it doesn't really make sense, to be honest.

Shawn understands that sex is discussed (and eventually rated) as something inappropriate—or even dangerous—in online games, whereas it is publically available in the news media. The irrationality of the public discourse, according to Shawn, concerns the fact that what is freely available (e.g. in the *Sun*) is a sexual representation of a real body, whereas in entertainment even animation is condemned.

Roland (14, UK) discusses the explicitness of the representation in the news and positions himself in a self-regulatory way:

> In the *Sun*, when I was little I was, like, opening the paper and I saw this, like, woman, like, sort of on the page and I didn't really know what was happening.

> My mum walked in so, I was kind of embarrassed and she thought I was, like, watching it, but I was only just turning over the paper so I think from then on, like, my mum started judging me.

Roland asserts his knowledge of sex from the news media—and that it is something he should not be looking at. He is more concerned about how his profile within the family might change if his accidental encounter with a sexual representation becomes known (Goffman, 1967).

These data provide a brief indication that young people are negotiating the contradictory ways that news frame sexuality, through the lens of literacy and ethics at the same time, and this serves as a strategy to make meaning of such constructions. The frameworks that news media provide to young people are those that they use to reflect critically upon information about sex that they come across in this context. The pedagogical role that the news media serve in relation to sexuality is not a monolithic one, and young people do not accept its teaching uncritically.

The News Media's Teaching About Pornography

Pornography is among the key themes in the news in relation to sex. Jenny (17, UK) provides an overview of news media's teaching about sexuality:

> There's quite a lot of information about it from everywhere, the internet, the TV, news channels, TV programmes, the media and newspapers, so there's always some form of discussion about it; […] whether it's morally right, whether it should be accepted, whether young people are watching it too much, whether it's too graphical

Jenny's account reveals an awareness of the ethical and moral implications and connotations of sexuality and ability to identify them clearly in media discourses. Tom (18, UK) works upon a clustering of themes in order to explain his knowledge about how the news agenda works:

> I think [about] porn industry and stuff like that, I think that media get more involved when it's like, a politician or someone big. Like a celebrity or something. But when they do underage people, I think that's 'crack it'. But I think with the newspapers and what you see on the news and the websites and the news stuff like that, I think that they know it's there and they don't, say it's a bad thing, but I don't think they 're saying it's a good thing. (Tom, 18, UK)

Tom's clustering is an illustration of young people's media literacy when it comes to how sexuality is framed in the news media, revealing an understanding of the agenda-setting functions of news media's pedagogy, and of the ways in which the frameworks within which people are expected to think are built on these agendas. In Lea's (18, DK) account, the news teaches its viewers a quasi-academic perspective about pornography effects on users:

> If they start by watching porn, they get those expectations that well, sex is like that and I saw that on a television show once, where an interviewer asked some boys, well they saw images of breasts, different kinds of breasts, and she asked which are the most beautiful, and they all pointed at those which were fake and completely perfect and I think that's a problem.

Lea (18, DK) explores effects discourses by drawing upon well-established views about pornography changing children's expectations about sex. Here the reference provides support to her view; evidence that derives from investigative TV is seen as a source of authoritative truth. As Burn and Willett (2004) mention, viewers (including young people) often build their argumentation on the basis of what is presented as truth from respected sources. And in this sense, news media teach a convenient framework for thinking about sex, and for making (allegedly) valid statements. To an extent, Lea's argument is an attempt not only to legitimize her view that children's expectations about sex change when viewing pornography, but also to create space for her recognition as an equal discussant of issues related to sexuality. Once again we see that, in relation to this key feature of news media's pedagogy about sex, young people engage with multiple sources of information in order to construct themselves as self-governed individuals in relation to sexuality, as mature and media-literate respondents to the public discourse, and particularly as legitimate citizens in the debate about sexuality.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have provided some empirical data about the ways in which young people learn about sex from the news. The data I drew upon confirm that sex in the news media is primarily framed as problematic and dangerous, with little use of discourses of sex education or the right of young people to have information about sex. The main discourses employed revolve around youth's moral deprivation, the need to protect children from deviant sexuality and sexual perpetrators, and the need to regulate free sexual expression via

regulating the visibility of representations of sexuality in the public. And yet the news media's teaching about sex is contradictory in a number of ways—for example, tabloids simultaneously publish sexual photos and moralistic stories about the moral deprivation of children by a sexualized culture.

However, the data show that young people do not simply learn what the news media want to teach them about sex. They demonstrate an awareness of the generic functions of news, and of the ways in which news media function as businesses. They also draw on information they have been taught about sex from a wide range of other sources—including their families, peers, and schooling as well as medical and religious institutions.

What do we make of this discussion then? It seems that still the young are not understood—either in the news media or in much academic research on their sexual learning as 'people—acting, reacting and helping to create their own social worlds' (see Alanen 1992). On one side, children are taught by the news media about debates about childhood sexuality, and their interest in news is celebrated as an indication of constructive media literacy. On the other side, they are constantly the focus of news stories reporting how much they should be protected from sexual knowledge. Young people will eventually come across information suggesting that they are sexual beings. But this information is often couched in a framework suggesting that they should be protected from their own sexuality. These conflicting types of information indicate that we grow up learning a range of potentially contradictory conceptual understandings about sexuality, and that news media play an important role in this process.

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21

Touching Affect: The Pedagogy of Intimate and Banal Moments in *Glee*

Kyra Clarke

Having just been dumped by Rachel (Lea Michele), Finn (Cory Monteith) stands alone on the high school auditorium stage. As he sings a cover of Coldplay's 'The Scientist', seven other characters appear around him, joining in the song. They stand still, facing the non-existent audience. Each character that appears has had their relationship placed in jeopardy in this episode and the performance is interspersed with flashbacks to one significant moment from each of these relationships. Finn and Rachel share an awkward first kiss on the auditorium stage. Kurt (Chris Colfer) and Blaine (Darren Criss) hold hands running down a hallway at Dalton Academy. Brittany (Heather Morris) and Santana (Naya Rivera) sit in glee club and smile at each other. Teachers Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison) and Emma Pilsbury (Jayma Mays) kiss in the school hallway. As the song ends, Finn looks around the empty stage.

In this chapter, I argue that television programs like *Glee* can serve a significant pedagogical purpose in the sex education of young people and that the form of teaching practiced by such texts can be significantly different from that practiced in formal sex education. From touching lips to touching fingers this pedagogical moment closes 'The Break Up' (4.4), a fourth season episode of musical comedy television show *Glee* (2009–) and is striking for its contrast in the representation

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of touching between the queer and straight couples. *Glee* depicts the relationships, dreams, and experiences of students and teachers at William McKinley High School (McKinley High) in Lima, Ohio, and particularly the experiences of the glee club, a show choir composed of misfit teens who sing, dance, and strive for popularity. In this chapter, I explore the multiple and varied interactions between the six teenage characters whose relationships break down in this episode: Kurt and Blaine, Brittany and Santana, and Rachel and Finn. My examination of *Glee* stems from this significant pedagogical moment: the performance of 'The Scientist' and I analyze the flashbacks it portrays and intersecting elements from *Glee*'s first four seasons, exploring the multiple friendships and intimacies that exist beside the coupled relationships depicted.

Given young people's media consumption, it has been suggested that film could be incorporated into sexuality education (Pearce 2006; Ashcraft 2003). Both public (school) and private (home) spaces are depicted in *Glee*, and drawing from Kellie Burns (2005, p. 65) it can be seen that 'mediated texts allow us to expand understandings of gender, sex and sexuality beyond the personal (represented by bodies, experience and personal narratives) to consider how they circulate within and across global mediated spaces'. Of course, the pedagogical potential of film and television, for education about sexuality and otherwise, goes beyond the classroom. As Carmen Luke notes, '[l]earning and teaching, … *are* the very intersubjective core relations of everyday life. They exist beyond the classroom, are always gendered and intercultural' (1996, pp. 7–8). Learning takes many forms and may be broadranging with children 'us[ing] a range of critical skills and perspectives when interpreting sexual content' (Buckingham and Bragg 2004, p. 238). While sexuality and schooling are often seen to have a difficult relationship (Gilbert 2006; Rasmussen 2006; Britzman 1995), *Glee* potentially offers an opportunity to explore such matters, incorporating a number of queer characters and presenting sexuality as both banal and a topic of concern. In considering the teaching and learning of issues of sexuality, the importance of moving beyond homophobia or inclusion has been noted (Britzman 1995, p. 151). Instead, making 'a claim for gayness as ordinary and ubiquitous rather than controversial', Jen Gilbert places her focus on hospitality where '[h]ospitality is a welcome but one that resists idealization and risks ambivalence' (2006, p. 26). Such a position acknowledges that 'we will affect and be affected by our encounters with others' (Gilbert 2006, p. 33) but also that failure might occur: '[i]n the pedagogical moment when we enact an imperfect welcome, we must also be striving for an unconditional welcome' (Gilbert 2006, p. 28). In contemplating pedagogical moments in *Glee*, I hope to acknowledge both the ordinariness of sexuality but also its queerness, placing categorization in question. As Deborah Britzman notes, 'Queer Theory offers methods of critiques to mark the repetitions of normalcy as a structure and as a pedagogy' (1995, p. 153). Considering moments as pedagogical potentially

enables recognition of the stabilized heteronormativity that often goes unseen and subjects it to challenge.

This focus on moments as a form of analysis highlights fleeting and flirtatious snippets of a text which at once suggest progress and yet do not move forward: momentary and present. As a television show which, for most of its story, had no definite 'endpoint', *Glee* enables and encourages the collection and experience of thoughts and feelings with a narrative that is complex and ongoing, open to possibility. Indeed, *Glee* may be viewed as subjunctive, that is, it 'renders gender, identity, and sexuality as subjunctive, or open' (Talburt 2010, p. 51). Further, the moments in *Glee* are particularly intertextual, linking to songs and other episodes, with pop music and musicals drawn upon to create new meaning (see Hunting and McQueen 2014). As Catherine Driscoll notes, '[t]he teen musical consistently uses song and dance to add narrative complexity', explaining that music may 'suggest an alternative story' (2011, pp. 137–38). Rather than focusing on a linear movement toward an ideal future, I am interested in exploring moments of intimacy regardless of their final outcomes. Moments have the potential to bring something else to the reading of a text, to recognize failures and confusion. As Claudia Schippert writes, '[c]onfusion or provocation can result in important pedagogical moments if used strategically' (2006, p. 293). This provocation can arise from a disjuncture of expectations with our own affective responses. As Britzman notes, considering 'the limit of thought—where thought stops, what it cannot bear to know, what it must shut out to think as it does—allows consideration into the cultural conditions that, as Butler writes, makes bodies matter' (1995, p. 156). Acknowledging agreement or disagreement with a text encourages assumptions to be questioned and recognizes that some feelings will remain uncertain. As Gilbert suggests, 'not knowing or feeling confused (for both youth and adults) are not problems to be solved by sex education, but rather the basis of learning about sexuality and, in fact, the very grounds of learning itself' (2010, p. 236).

Feeling is thus integral to the experience of film and television as well as to our intimate relationships and it is important to acknowledge affect and the embodied aspects of learning. Affective sexual literacies are potentially engaged in such pedagogical moments. The intersection of affect and pedagogy can be seen in the work of Elizabeth Ellsworth who considers the pedagogical value of experiences. As Ellsworth writes, '[t]hinking and feeling our selves as they *make sense* is more than merely the sensation of knowledge in the making. It is a sensing of our selves in the making, and is that not the root of what we call learning?' (2005, p. 1) Just as we learn from personal experience, so too affective textual moments teach us about others and ourselves; they hold the potential to touch us. As Susan Feagin (1996, p. 1) argues, discussing literature, '[t]o appreciate a work is, in part, to get the value out of

it, and "getting the value out of it" involves being affectively or emotionally moved'. Indeed, Feagin suggests 'a sensitivity to these sorts of features is often precisely what enables us to experience empathy or sympathy' (1996, p. 243). Touch entails a response both emotionally and physically. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003, p. 14) notes, touch demonstrates the inability to separate 'agency and passivity' as 'to touch is always already to reach out, to fondle, to heft, to tap, or to enfold, and always also to understand other people or natural forces as having effectually done so before oneself'. Touch is thus an intimate experience which allows acknowledgment of intimate practices other than sex. Sex is never displayed in *Glee* but is left to the viewers' interpretation as an unspecified but present pleasure. Unlike 'private' sex which is performed 'behind closed doors' (Jackson and Scott 2004, p. 243), intimate acts such as touching fingers and lips are often performed in public and it is this visibility which I highlight here. This does not mean that I dismiss the significance of sexual activity for youth: as Frederik Dhaenens writes, the portrayal of queer youth 'having sexual desires and/or being sexually active' is important as 'a counter-narrative to the gay teen as innocent, vulnerable, or desexualized' (2013, p. 314). In moving away from a focus on sex I am not dismissing the importance of transgressive behaviors, but acknowledging the experiences which may sit beside them. Considering the moments between characters represented in *Glee*, I hope to open out heteronormative understandings, recognizing the multiple forms of intimacy and touch represented in the publics of this text between characters.

Documenting the breakups of three significant couples on *Glee*, 'The Break Up' was arguably an affective episode for longtime viewers of the show, emotionally moving. With characters graduating high school and leaving town to attend college and take up new jobs, the couples I consider in this chapter begin season four in 'long distance' relationships, confined by a lack of physical and emotional intimacy, with each couple's communication restricted by work and school commitments. Arguably, the disparity in representation of the intimacy between couples created a disjuncture for some viewers, drawing attention to the normalization of such behavior for heterosexual couples (c.f. Meyer and Wood 2013). Charles Morris and John Sloop describe the representation of the heterosexual kiss as 'banal': so common in public that it sometimes seems invisible, potentially 'perpetuating heteronormativity' (2006, pp. 2–3). The awkward kiss between Rachel and Finn depicted in 'The Break Up' flashback first occurs in 'Showmance' (1.2). Finn, who is dating cheerleader Quinn (Dianna Agron), joins Rachel for a singing lesson and afterward they sit on the stage sharing a picnic Rachel prepared. Finn complements Rachel, she tells him 'you can kiss me if you want to', and Finn climbs

over Rachel as she inches under him. After Rachel and Finn's on again, off again romance and engagement (3.11), Finn cancels their wedding and sends Rachel to New York to attend NYADA[1] at the end of season three (3.22). When Finn does not contact anyone, including Rachel, for four months, Rachel begins a romantic relationship with third-year NYADA student Brody (Dean Geyer) (4.3). The repetition of Rachel and Finn's first kiss in the 'The Break Up' (4.4) may be directly contrasted with Rachel's first kiss with Brody in the previous episode, 'Makeover' (4.3) in which they share a picnic on the floor of her almost furniture-less New York apartment. Finn returns at the end of this episode, revealing his failure to call was due to his embarrassment at being discharged from the army after accidentally shooting himself in the leg and at the end of 'The Break Up' Rachel dumps him, citing his refusal to communicate and his attempts to control her life (4.4). It is following this breakup and their goodbye kiss that the performance of 'The Scientist' occurs. These heterosexual kisses between Rachel and Brody, and Rachel and Finn, are explicitly repetitive and highlight Finn's insecurities and jealousy, as well as reinscribing normativity and sexual double standards.

Heterosexual kisses are foregrounded in the pedagogical moment of 'The Scientist' by their direct contrast with an absence of kisses between Kurt and Blaine and Brittany and Santana. This distinct difference in portrayal of queer and straight relationships is not without precedent (Cochran 2007). Moreover, just as Tanya Cochran notes that a text such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003) 'contributes to the definition of what it means—what it looks like, sounds like, feels like—to be a lesbian' (2007, p. 55), *Glee* has an impact on how relationships are portrayed and read, with the potential that particular depictions will be repeated. Indeed, it must be remembered that often popular films 'construct and maintain the very binaries and identities that queer theory seeks, as praxis, to deconstruct and de-naturalise' (Cover 2000, p. 74). At the same time, Anne Schlichter notes that it may be possible to consider the way in which films 'queer heterosexuality', or 'explore the possibilities of a disruption of the master narratives of heterosexual formations of gender, race, and sexuality', potentially offering a space 'for a critique of heteronormativity' (2004, p. 560). As Dhaenens notes, *Glee* is more than just heteronormative, 'exposing how the social hierarchy operates and equally subverting its mechanisms' (2013, p. 313). For all *Glee* pays lip service to heteronormativity and monogamy, there is an undercurrent of dissent.

[1] NYADA, the New York Academy of Dramatic Arts is a fictional college in New York teaching singing, dancing, and acting that Rachel is accepted to attend at the end of season three, and Kurt is accepted into in season four.

Indeed, I argue that *Glee* is hopeful. While Sara Ahmed notes that hope can be risky as 'it reimagines the world *as if* there is no discrimination' (2010, p. 113), *Glee* presents this hope alongside discrimination. Rather than indicating how relationships between heterosexual and queer characters are the same, or should be depicted in the same way, I argue that contemplating the queer and straight couples in *Glee* alongside one another enables recognition of experiences of difference, as well as multiple ways of representing queer, that is, it is possible to consider a 'relation of hospitality' in which our encounters with others are acknowledged. Indeed, while the three primary relationships I have introduced seem monogamous and stable within *Glee*, they are represented in addition to a series of interpersonal relationships with other characters: Santana and Finn have sex (1.15), Kurt and Brittany kiss as Kurt attempts to assert heteronormativity (1.18), Blaine and Rachel kiss while drunk (2.14), Kurt and Finn become stepbrothers (2.8), Kurt and Rachel become best friends (2.4), and Rachel and Santana share a musical flirtation. These multiple intimacies exist beside one another and demonstrate the varied intimacies which may exist between characters.

Touching Fingers: Klaine, Contagion, and Desire

The flashback to Kurt and Blaine running down a hallway is drawn from the moment of their meeting in season two episode 'Never Been Kissed' (2.6). In the context of *Glee* more generally, this moment of touch with Blaine contrasts with Kurt's loneliness in earlier episodes. As the only 'out' student in a normative school, Kurt's experience in season one and early season two is dominated by restrictions upon his ability to touch (1.20) and even sing with other young men (2.4). Harassment is intended to force his conformity and such restrictions suggest that even friendship with other men is impossible. However, like Dhaenens, I believe reading Kurt 'exclusively in terms of victimization would ignore its resistibility', the complexity of the character, and his representation (2013, p. 313). Indeed, Daniel Marshall notes the importance of moving away from such stereotypes and thus 'making way for a more sophisticated appreciation of the diversity of queer young people's lives and their capacity to function in agentic ways' (2010, p. 70). Indeed, this scene may be considered as a turning point in Kurt's experience as he meets Blaine and experiences the possibility that things could be different.

The episode 'Never Been Kissed' (2.6) depicts Kurt experiencing physical attack for being gay and identifies the failure of teachers to deal with the homophobia and gender stereotyping they witness. Kurt challenges glee

coach Will for not standing up against homophobia and relying on gender normative lesson plans like 'boys versus girls'. While Kurt's complaint leads to Will instructing the teams to sing songs performed by the opposite gender, his male peers are reluctant to listen to his advice and he is told to make himself useful by spying on their competition at an all-male school. While Kurt is visibly insulted, viewers next see him at Dalton Academy, an all-boys' school and the home of rival glee club The Warblers. Kurt walks among unfamiliar uniformed boys and asks a student a question, with the young man introducing himself as Blaine. Blaine tells Kurt that the other students are heading to see an impromptu performance and Kurt is incredulous at the club's popularity. Blaine grabs his hand, telling Kurt 'come on, I know a short cut'. A shot of their hands is shown before panning back up to Kurt's face, surprised. It is here that the moment between Blaine and Kurt which is repeated as a flashback in 'The Break Up' originates; Blaine awkwardly holds Kurt's hand across Kurt's body as they run through a hall, a moment shot in slow motion and accompanied by a piano motif that stops as they enter a room full of loud boys.[2] While Kurt exclaims 'I stick out like a sore thumb', Blaine straightens the collar of Kurt's blazer and tells him with a uniform jacket he'll 'fit right in'. Blaine pats Kurt on the shoulder and excuses himself, taking his place front and center of the group as they sing Katy Perry's pop song 'Teenage Dream' a cappella. The mood is fun: sung by a group of young men, the object of the song is not explicit with a homosocial environment of camaraderie and queerness depicted. Read in relation to the show as a whole, Dalton is depicted as a 'teenage dream'—a high school utopia—and the lyrics foreshadow the flirtation that will build between Blaine and Kurt as the season progresses.

Music works on many levels in this scene. In an episode which is explicitly focused on gender and sexuality, the original song and its singer, Katy Perry, assist to highlight Blaine's popularity and the possibility of non-normative gender performances. In contrast to Kurt who has been critiqued for performing songs by women and his peers who require instruction to sing songs performed by the opposite gender, Blaine needs no such instruction, signaling a confidence lacking at McKinley High. Indeed, this performance itself may be perceived as queer. While the film clip for Katy Perry's song is explicitly heterosexual, the object of the song is less explicit as these young men perform for and with each other (Dhaenens 2013, p. 314). Lyrically, the song is sexually suggestive and it seems that Blaine sings to Kurt. Indeed, in contrast to the restriction on touch at McKinley High, Blaine has not only twice touched Kurt but intimated further acceptable touching.

[2] This piano motif was composed by James S. Levine.

Alongside this performance of 'Teenage Dream' is the classical piano motif which plays as Kurt and Blaine run through the corridor. Introduced at this 'turning point' in Kurt's story, repetitions of the motif throughout the episode and series assist viewers to 'remember its previous contexts' (Cox and Fülöp 2010, p. 69) as it is played at 'pedagogical' moments in Kurt's life. While this motif plays next in a moment in which Blaine advises Kurt to fight the homophobia he faces, when Kurt does confront the homophobic bully Dave (Max Adler), Dave kisses him, positioning him as potentially gay himself. While Blaine's words make it seem like the solution is simple, with a neoliberal emphasis on personal responsibility, Kurt is neither just the victim, nor entirely resilient. The motif is played once more in the episode. As Kurt sticks a sign saying 'courage' and a picture of Blaine in his locker, Dave hits him against the locker and he falls to the ground. The motif plays as he sits up, back against the locker, trembling.[3] This final repetition of the motif has neither the waiting possibility of the first, nor the completeness of the second: it just is, ending an octave lower. In the next scene, Kurt is depicted performing with his peers, an act which questions the veracity of the victim trope, with Kurt continuing in spite of the challenges he faces. Indeed, this piano motif comes to represent hope and potential in the face of negative moments and is played at a number of other significant moments of joy in Kurt's story: for example, when Blaine changes school to be with Kurt (3.1), and when Kurt earns an audition for NYADA (3.11).

Both 'Teenage Dream' and the piano motif are repeated in 'The Break Up'. Despite scenes of Skype conversations, Blaine and Kurt break up following Kurt's unavailability to talk given his exciting new job as an intern at Vogue online. Feeling left out and lonely, Blaine tells Kurt as the piano motif plays, 'I really miss you, a lot, OK? I miss talking to you and I miss hugging you and I miss messing around with you'. Required on another call, Kurt hangs up. This is a turning point in their relationship. Blaine is shown to poke another guy on Facebook, a digital appropriation of touch that leads to a physical 'hook up'. Later, Blaine spontaneously arrives at Kurt's New York apartment and on a night out, performs 'Teenage Dream' for Kurt at a piano in a bar. The performance is slow, emotional, and awkwardly personal with Blaine crying and his voice breaking, in contrast to Blaine's generally brazen and polished performances. Close-ups of Blaine's distraught face encourage empathy with Blaine, empathy which is tested when, after this scene, Blaine informs Kurt he

[3] When Kurt is crowned prom queen in season two he is upset, but refuses to sit beside Blaine with his back against the locker. Instead, Kurt kneels in front of him signaling that this is perhaps a position of disempowerment he refuses to experience again (2.20).

was 'with some one'. Blaine's 'hook up' effectively stymies any further touch between them for a number of episodes. The piano motif is repeated later in the episode as Kurt looks at the note and flowers Blaine sent him to apologize for cheating. The motif in this scene is incomplete, and yet its presence suggests hope as Kurt tells a colleague 'I'm OK. I'll be OK'. While the episode ends with no resolution, Blaine explaining 'I don't even know if we're broken up', Kurt persists: he *will* be OK. As Ahmed notes in a discussion of aspiration, '[i]t is possible to give an account of being happily queer that does not conceal signs of struggle' (2010, p. 118). In this scene, Kurt's words combined with the piano motif signal the devastation wrought by Blaine's betrayal, devastation empathic viewers might share, but also the aspiration to be OK once again. More generally, this motif represents the queer promise of happiness: these moments move and change, connecting across seasons to present the potential that remains in spite of upsetting disruptions.

While I have focused on the touching of fingers in this moment, a significant absence from 'The Break Up' is the first kiss shared by Kurt and Blaine in 'Original Song' (2.16). Morris and Sloop suggest that the same-sex kiss, particularly between men, 'constitutes a paramount political performance', unexpected and confronting, and as an act outside of 'heteronormative expectation', such 'same-sex kisses are therefore immediately marked, immediately suspect, and immediately susceptible to discipline', viewed as deviant rather than 'a mutually affirming encounter' (2006, pp. 2–4). Despite the kiss's political potential, Morris and Sloop suggest that where male same-sex kisses do occur, they are 'domesticated … shortcircuited by assimilationist logic in which lips and tongues are not allowed to exert the same thrust as, say, impeccable grooming or wedding bands' (2006, p. 7). While in many ways Kurt and Blaine's relationship may seem heteronormative (Dhaenens 2013), to merely define them in this way ignores moments in which sexuality is represented. In 'Sexy' (2.15), Kurt reports a discomfort with the idea of sex, explaining 'I like romance, that's why I like Broadway musicals, because the touch of the fingertips is as sexy as it gets'. When his reluctant father, prompted by Blaine, discusses sex with him at the end of the episode, he focuses on the intimacy and vulnerability of sex, with pamphlets to cover the 'mechanics'. Burt (Mike O'Malley) instructs, 'when you're ready, I want you to use it as a way to connect to another person, don't throw yourself around, like you don't matter, 'cause you matter'. Burt's comments arguably reinforce an idea of sex as 'special', prioritizing the idea of 'connecting with someone' and potentially devaluing casual sexual cultures, and yet the scene also confronts the discomfort surrounding teen sex, highlighting the disconnect between the acceptance of 'gay' and distancing of queer sexuality and sexual pleasure.

In contrast, Kurt and Blaine's first kiss in 'Original Song' (2.16) is represented as a moment of 'the body in pleasure' (Morris and Sloop 2006, p. 19). In this scene, Blaine places his hand on Kurt's, telling him he had a 'moment' watching him sing The Beatles' song 'Blackbird'. Blaine stands to kiss him, and as they kiss one of Kurt's hands spreads, fingers outstretched; then Kurt moves his hand to Blaine's face, before dropping it to the table. Kurt and Blaine's first kiss is neither comic nor just 'quaint romantic plotting' (Morris and Sloop 2006, p. 7) but is depicted as a moment of desire, and although kisses between Kurt and Blaine are rare on *Glee*, they are not de-eroticized or naturalized: when they do kiss it is connected to wanting more, wanting another kiss or each other at first, and in season three, wanting sex. To not convey Kurt and Blaine's first kiss in 'The Break Up' perhaps prioritizes the importance of handholding and 'the touch of the fingertips'. However, this absence can also be viewed as expressing a concern to only connect the male same-sex kiss with desire. In contrast to *Glee*'s explicit depictions of heterosexual intimacy, such subtle moments convey desire in public without de-eroticizing the kiss.

Touching Lips: Brittana, Ambiguity, and Authenticity

The flashback moment between Brittany and Santana emerges from 'Heart' (3.13), an episode in which their public touch is disciplined and Santana argues for their right to be publicly intimate like Rachel and Finn. In contrast to the linear progression of Kurt and Blaine's relationship, the intimacy of best friends and cheerleaders Brittany and Santana is represented as fluid and Brittany and Santana are shown to be sexually intimate with each other as well as with boys throughout the first two seasons. Although by season three the girls are explicitly in a relationship (3.4), in earlier seasons Santana explicitly refuses to label herself or her intimacy with Brittany and they may be read as heterosexual young women who perform fluid sexuality. Featured on a popular television show, their relationship may merely be perceived as produced for the pleasure of the public viewing audience. However, despite discussion of their sexuality, the representation of kisses between Santana and Brittany often seems excessively chaste, and recognizing the media's eroticization of girl same-sex kissing leads to questions as to how desire between attractive young women may be portrayed without it being fetishized. Santana and Brittany's intimacy and sexuality is marked by ambiguity and friendship, and their interaction places what constitutes authentic sexuality in question.

Throughout *Glee*, the pressures placed on Santana to formalize her identity are shown (see further Jacobs 2014). While Brittany and Santana are permitted to be intimate so long as they are explicitly heterosexual, this experience is complicated by any 'identification' as lesbian. As Mary Louise Rasmussen notes, 'categories are meaningful only as a sign; intrinsically, they bear no reference to a gender, a sex, a sexuality, or a body' (2006, p. 115). However ambiguity in the sexuality of young women is continually critiqued. Comments such as those made by Rosalind Gill, who argues that 'hetero flexibility' 'presents girl-on-girl action as exciting, fun, but, crucially, as entirely unthreatening to heterosexuality' (2009, p. 153), imply that an innate sexuality is more valuable. Ambiguity is presumed to enable representation of queer characters on television, however, '[a]mbiguity … is bound to inauthenticity' (Cochran 2007, p. 53) with the suggestion that the women performing in this manner are really heterosexual (Diamond 2005). In questioning the idea of authentic forms of behavior, I acknowledge the problematic focus on identity; as Heather Love writes, 'I do not think it is clear … what would constitute a "mistaken" way of being or feeling queer' (2007, p. 23). While for many viewers there may be a desire for Santana to be identifiable as a lesbian, Anoop Nayak and Mary Jane Kehily suggest 'identification is a partial, split and ambivalent process that, in the moment it announces itself as "identity" … conceals its incurable multiplicity and precarious contingency' (2006, p. 466).

Santana is ostensibly confined by the label lesbian after she is publicly outed in season three (3.6), with the show exploring the implications of her outing for her interactions with school peers and family. As Hispanic, Santana's 'outing' also has significant cultural implications for recognizing the privilege entailed in discourses of coming out. While white, attractive, middle-class Brittany experiences her fluid sexuality without consequence, Santana's coming out leaves her estranged from her beloved *abuela* (grandmother) and assists to recognize the restrictions her identification as lesbian places on touch with other young women.

Following Santana's outing, Santana and Brittany's intimate touch becomes public and yet in contrast to their heteroflexible touch in season one, as explicitly 'lesbian', it is disciplined. In this way, the contradiction in narratives of 'outing' is shown; just as private touch suggests a lack of honesty, public touch too is problematic, challenging acceptable boundaries. Early in 'Heart' Santana and Brittany are called before the principal following a brief kiss in the school hallway. While Principal Figgins (Iqbal Theba) comments 'please don't make this about your sexual orientation, this is about public displays of affection. PDA[4] simply has no place in the sacred

[4] Public Displays of Affection.

halls of McKinley High. We've had complaints', Santana identifies that no such restrictions are placed on Finn and Rachel's public intimacy. When Figgins reveals that the complaint was made for religious reasons, Santana replies 'all I want to be able to do is kiss my girlfriend but I guess no one can see that because there's such an insane double standard at this school'. This scene explicitly contrasts the way in which some behavior is disciplined while heteronormative kisses are barely noticed. Later at lunch, following a Valentine's Day performance for Rachel by the religious God Squad, composed of the three Christian glee club members and new Christian kid Joe (Samuel Larsen), Santana asks them to sing for her 'girlfriend' Brittany. Santana's abrupt request disrupts the happiness in the celebration of Rachel's heterosexuality, just as the principal earlier in the episode interrupted her own happiness with Brittany. Echoing the previous season's Valentine's Day episode 'Silly Love Songs' (2.12), Santana's acerbity may be linked to honesty: 'I just try to be really, really honest with people when I think that they suck, you know?' Santana is a troublemaker, in accordance with Ahmed's understanding, where trouble is 'an affective politics; acts of deviation mean getting in trouble but also troubling conventional ideas of what it means to have a good life' (2010, pp. 115–16). It is following this scene that the moment used in 'The Break Up' occurs, as Michael Bublé's 'Home' is sung in the classroom. Given the nebulous nature of Santana and Brittany's relationship, a flashback to their first kiss would not be possible, but for those who recognize the origins of this moment in 'The Break Up', this moment invokes Santana's demand for recognition of her relationship with Brittany, the desire to be publicly intimate, the double standard that restricts their relationship, as well as the comfort and love she finds with Brittany. But the performance, both in song title and imagery, also refers back to 'Home' (1.16) in which Santana linked fingers with Brittany and rested her head on Brittany's shoulder as Kurt sang Dionne Warwick's 'A House is Not a Home'. At that point in the series, Santana's sexuality was neither in doubt nor labeled and the scene invokes nostalgia, highlighting the restrictions labels place on relationships. Despite the disciplining their relationship undergoes, for this moment Santana seems happy: Santana 'encounters the world that is unhappy with queer love, but refuses to be made unhappy by that encounter' (Ahmed 2010, p. 117). As Ahmed notes, 'reading about characters who are happily queer in the face of a world that is unhappy with queer lives and loves can be energizing, can give us hope' (2010, pp. 117–18). While this moment is located within an episode in which Santana demands her pleasure be visible and presence felt, it is significant that the moment used in 'The Break Up' is not their passionate public kiss at the end of the episode

as the God Squad performs for them, but this momentary glance and smile they share which does not rely on the knowledge of their acceptance.

Santana and Brittany's breakup in 'The Break Up' (4.4) is focused on an acknowledgment that love and happiness may be found outside the couple form: Santana may be seen to recognize 'the unhappiness that is concealed by the promotion of happy normativity' (Ahmed 2010, p. 117). As they sit together in the choir room, Santana tells Brittany she would never cheat on her, but explains an 'energy exchange' she shared with a girl at college, stating they should be 'mature' and 'this is not an official break up, let's just be honest that long distance relationships are almost impossible to maintain because both people aren't really getting what they need, especially at our age'. While Brittany, crying, says 'this sounds a lot like a break up to me', Santana replies, 'you know this isn't working, you know I will always love you the most'. The instigating factor for Brittany and Santana's breakup is not deception but honesty, recognizing the importance of intimacy and acknowledging it may be found in an alternative form, with happiness potentially found beyond the space of heteronormative relationships. While treated in subsequent episodes as broken up, Santana states explicitly that that is *not* the case; rather, she reserves the right for them both to see, touch, and act on impulse with other people, acknowledging the multiple loves, desires, and intimacies people have. Indeed, it is friendship which Brittany most regrets the loss of when Santana leaves for college (4.2). In 'Diva', (4.13), they acknowledge the persistence of their friendship, with both characters stating the other is their best friend and parting ways with a chaste kiss on the lips, recognizing their friendship's potential to exist despite its previous sexual incarnation. While Brittany is now in a new relationship with Sam, the kiss shared by Brittany and Santana, and the lack of drama that surrounds it, suggests maturity in contrast to other adult relationships which are ended or placed in jeopardy by a kiss. Here Santana and Brittany envision a new form of intimacy which exceeds conventional heteronormative understandings.

Conclusion

While formal sex education is often perceived as a subject undertaken at school within a coherent linear frame of pedagogy in which a message is taught and learnt, film and television offer the potential for a messier pedagogy in which ambiguous pedagogical moments conceivably enable affective responses to texts. On a surface level, entertaining texts such as *Glee* may problematically

'teach' young people how to be 'gay', representing normative relationships between same-sex couples. However, as I have noted, the pedagogical moment which concludes 'The Break Up', and the relationships and experiences it alludes to, holds potential for developing multiple understandings of intimacy, pleasure, and happiness that move beyond conventional understandings and expand sexual literacies.

Television shows such as *Glee* present, and arguably 'teach', different ways of thinking about sex, relationships, and identity. The stark contrast in representation between the queer and straight couples in 'The Break Up' explicitly draws attention to the absence of touch between same-sex couples in *Glee* and yet despite such absences, *Glee* holds the potential to be hospitable, representing a wide range of intimacies between friends and in more intimate sexual relationships. In contrast to the classroom model, they highlight the messiness of relationships. *Glee* presents a wide range of relationships between characters, which intersect and/or exist simultaneously. While Kurt and Blaine's relationship is comparatively stable, the messiness of arguments and misunderstandings draws attention to the fact that relationships are rarely ideal. Perhaps more significantly, the indefinability of Brittany and Santana's relationship suggests a need to recognize and respect relationships between people that are not identifiable, or which resist categorization. In both these cases, the feelings engendered by moments of touch are pedagogical and are potentially experienced inconsistently. A moment of hope and excitement as Kurt and Blaine touch hands for the first time may be met with resistance in the viewing of 'The Break Up', with viewers desiring a kiss between Kurt and Blaine instead or reacting with outrage to Blaine's 'hook up'. As a subjunctive television show without a defined happy ending, *Glee* is comprised of a mixture of hope and pain, of hope without certainty: it is present and backward rather than forward moving, acknowledging that the future is not only unknown but that we do not know what to do about it. These couples in *Glee* may 'break up' but their presence continues, requiring viewers to continually re-evaluate their understandings of relationships and imagine possibilities.

While not all moments from film and television will be effective pedagogical tools for every person, the broad potential of such texts to informally affect viewers remains. Given that restrictions on what can be shown on prime-time television and in film rated for younger audiences generally leads to the exclusion of explicit representations of sex, television shows such as *Glee* open up the possibility of exploring representations of intimacy beyond penetrative heterosex. We must be aware of the pedagogical potential of more subtle forms of relating in which touch touches us.

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22

Learning About Mobile Sexual Identities from *Queer as Folk*

Rob Cover

In a digital, media-saturated contemporary culture, sexual, youth, and marginal identities are constituted in the context of new digital and mobile applications of communication and the processes of relational belonging they produce. Among these are the increasingly pervasive digital forms accessed on mobile devices, smartphones, tablets, and notebooks. Such devices encourage engagement and interactivity with texts, narratives, and discourses of new, multiple-constituted relationalities with other users. Importantly, such digital and mobile relationships are not to be understood as phantasmatic "online identities" but are always highly corporeal and embodied experiences implicated in the re-configuring of the constitutive power of space and place in identity.

Forms of digital, mobile, and networked belonging do not merely emerge with the use of contemporary digital and mobile devices. Rather, the framework through which relational belonging—hence subjective identity—is formed is through "learning". Such learning, for theorist of cultural pedagogies Henry Giroux, occurs at the interface between popular culture, which includes entertainment in a heavily media-saturated environment, and the shaping and mobilising of identities through which experiences and belonging take on form and meaning (Giroux 1999: 2). In the context of sexual

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identities, this occurs at two levels. On the one hand, learning about sexual identity and, particularly, marginal sexual belonging occurs through an intersection of frames of individual selfhood and community, whereby a young person might be understood to undertake exercises of pedagogy, sometimes through engagement with popular culture, at other times through engagement with other persons in a face-to-face capacity, in order to learn the codes of behaviour through which belonging is performed. At a second level, however, learning is cultural, by which I mean that cultures learn *new* everyday practices of belonging in relation to the uses—both desired and unexpected—of new technologies. The intersection between the individualistic performance of the subject who learns behaviours and ways of belonging through technologies and the broader cultural adaptation to new technologies as a formation through which belonging can—or might—be fostered is the site at which community resilience operates. Resilience, as a cultural form that helps socially in the production of liveable lives, is culturally produced, therefore learned by subjects and learned by cultures in the context of belonging and communication (Cover 2012). And the site of that learning includes, of course, the pedagogies of popular culture engaged with socially and informally.

This chapter investigates some of the ways in which we can make sense of queer television as popular sex education about marginal sexual identities, with particular reference to television texts that provide nuanced frameworks for understanding how to forge belonging and resilience as a young LGBT person. I will begin with an overview of queer mobile communication in the context of contemporary approaches to identity, before turning to an exemplary television text which indicates some of the ways in which use of mobile technologies can be understood as being available for utilisation in the performance of pedagogies of sexual learning. The British television series *Queer as Folk* (1999–2000) presented an early representation of the centrality of mobile technologies to community support, networking, sexual identity stabilisation, and resilience. The programme teaches viewers about the ways in which digital communication is pivotal in the everyday performativity of selfhood. Importantly, the programme depicts the "early adopters" of mobile telephony—middle-class, white LGBT community—just prior to the perceived first-world ubiquity of the smartphone; this depiction provides, on the one hand, a reflective measure as to how mobile digital communication will later serve as a broadly accessible formation for belonging and resilience and, on the other hand, as a text which serves as a pedagogical resource for learning how to belong and how to live (a queer life). I will end with a discussion

of the relevance of *Queer as Folk* for understanding the pedagogies of popular television and entertainment in the context of resilience and belonging, and the ways in which such textuality operates as a resource for younger viewers.

Queer Mobile Communication

The increasing accessibility of online spaces, sites, and communicative forms through mobile devices is changing how, when, where, and in what contexts users engage with a digital media environment. A proliferation of new research on mobile cultures indicates the close connection between sexual minorities, youth identity, and mobile/portable technologies, although also pointing to a number of distinctions in capacity and form of access along gendered, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic demarcations (Goggin 2013). Applications that allow mobile-phone-based contact for sexual and non-sexual meetings have shifted how young persons are to be understood in terms of isolation, geography, and forms of community belonging, whereby access to a network of community peers does not occur from private space to private space but in a broadening range of sites and contexts that include digital/mobile access in and from public spaces and not necessarily alone. In other words, the stereotypical image of lonely and shy lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) younger persons engaging each other in surreptitious online chat, search, and downloads from a desktop computer in a private bedroom or hiding in victimhood and vulnerability is increasingly understood as a fallacy in the context of queer popular culture and communication (Cover 2012; Driver 2008; Marshall 2010; Rasmussen 2006) and the everyday practice of mobile devices used in public spaces and shared company. However, the relationship between the use of an accessible device and the mechanisms for forging resilient, everyday, liveable belonging to a marginal community involves practices, performances, and codes of behaviour which must be learned. In that context, where digital mobile culture is to be seen as constitutive rather than reflexive or representational (Giroux 1999: 2), shifts in the perception of queer youth pedagogies must involve an understanding of the shifts in everyday cultural practices of communication, as well as an understanding of how those shifts have been marked and understood in contemporary media texts.

The mobile telephone has been a marker of queer/LGBT identity since the mid-1990s, with the early adoption of the communication device, operating at the interfaces of communication, community belonging, affirmative essentialism, neoliberal and conspicuous consumption, pride motifs, and

non-domesticity (including non-relationship sexual encounters) in queer representation. Sexual identity is constituted and made intelligible in the available discourses of sexuality, but how that intelligibility is operationalised centres on the communicative methods both available and appealing. If identity is performed through a range of social relationalities, these include ways of relating that are wholly dependent on networked communication and communication forms that respond to increasing mobility and remote access (to information, to one another). That is to say, in terms of the performativity of identity, complexity, flexibility and mobility, and interrelated. Although the development of its cultural uses in queer contexts unfolds historically over time, its outcome is exemplified by the queer mobile dating application *Grindr* which, as Senthorun Raj has indicated (2011), provides a site for sexual identity intelligibilities as well as for the contestation of identity norms. Further, however, as a formation which puts dispersed persons in contact with each other—whether that be for dating, relationship-seeking, or casual sexual encounters as among available forms for LGBT relationality (Cover 2010)—mobile telephony becomes emblematic of a form of community belonging that is no longer centred on the spatiality of LGBT ghettoisation, nor on the clarity of identity norms of "difference" offset against normative heterosexuality, but is performed, articulated, and related through a network logic of identity, relationality, and belonging.

Queer Television as a Resource for the Practices of Belonging

One site through which we see substantial early adoption and a fleshed-out account of the centrality of mobile telephone technologies to the formation of contemporary queer communities and identities is in Russell T Davies' *Queer as Folk* (UK 1999–2000). Like other television texts focusing on queer youth, this serves as pedagogical (Cover 2002), in the sense of performing an accessible role "in producing narratives, metaphors and images that exercise a powerful pedagogical force over how people think of themselves and their relationship to others" (Giroux 2004: 62). From the mid-1990s, there is an identifiable "renaissance point" in the representation of lesbian and gay characters in mainstream film and television with a clear shift from relative invisibility of non-heterosexual characters, themes, and personages (Russo 1981) to a proliferation of films and television with lesbian/gay-affirmative themes and content emerging from large production

companies and broadcast on major television networks (Cover 2000; Gross 1998: 98). This is an important development in available texts which cite, circulate, and reinforce discourses of sexuality and particularly for "youth" who had not previously been exposed to texts circulating discourses of non-heteronormative sexuality and/or representations of LGBT community. In many cases, even throughout the 1990s, and including early representations of sexual non-normativity in the 2000s in texts such as *Glee*, in which victimhood and sexual non-normativity are depicted as issue, and not merely a background attribute. This is what Diana Fuss identified as the "synecdochical tendency to see only one part of a subject's identity (usually the most visible part) and to make that part stand for the whole" (Fuss 1989: 116). In the case of queer issues in television representation, the difficulty of being queer located within a heteronormative culture is often related as the very essence of that representation.

The original British television series *Queer as Folk*, however, presents a markedly different approach to the depiction of non-heterosexuality as normative within the context of the thematic universe of the series matched only by a very small number of other series built on queer themes or characters, such as *Tales of the City* (1993, 1998, 2001) and *Noah's Arc* (2005–2006). In addition to its focus on the early adoption and heavy use of mobile telephony by affluent LGBT community members, it is thus an interesting case study of media depictions that pedagogically serve as a resource for queer youth. *Queer as Folk* has been noted for being the first television drama in which almost all main characters were gay or lesbian (Davis 2007: 7), and in which the narrative operated without an overt focus on non-heterosexuality as an issue (Davis 2007: 14). Interest in its narrative has been around the fact that while it is not ostensibly "queer" in the queer-theoretical sense of interrogating gender and sexual identities (although it can be read through queer theory), it was queer in the sense of its confrontational approach in disavowing the figure of the conservative, non-sexualised conformist and coupled representation of non-heterosexuality in favour of sexually active, ideologically complex characters (Creed 2003: 141). It has also been noted for the ways in which it explored ideological tensions within the expression of sexual orientation and cultural anxieties over the distinction between sexual pleasure and community or familial responsibility (Billingham 2003: 155), as well as for its critique of the relationship between space and identity (Skeggs et al. 2004) and for the innovative ways in which it presents non-heterosexual characters as active, multifaceted, and complex in their intersections with space, history, shame, pride, gender, and sexuality. As Sally Munt has put it, the characters are distinctive

in that they demonstrate a moving-forward in television representation of queerness—they are not "stuck in an ur-moment of being gay [rather] they are busy *doing* gay—the confession/conversion moment has been superseded" (Munt 2000: 534).

Its central premise focuses on three primary characters: Stuart Jones (Aidan Gillen), about to turn 30 years, highly popular in the queer community of Manchester, inner-urban dwelling, and very successful advertising executive, who is confident and sexually voracious. His closest friend since childhood is Vince Tyler (Craig Kelly), also facing the onset of his 30s—Vince is relatively shy, sexually unsuccessful, and a working-class shop assistant, with an underclass mother and precarious financial background. The friendship between the two characters is noted by others as being so close that they may as well be lovers, yet both regularly disavow this possibility. Nathan Maloney (Charlie Hunnam), aged 15, is young, confident, albeit apprehensive, and new to the queer scene—he is initially taken home for sex by Stuart, and spends much of the series developing the means to learn "how to belong" among Stuart's network of friends, acquaintances, and the Manchester LGBT community more broadly. All characters, in addition to several other friends, lovers, and family members, are portrayed across the series' broader narrative through questions over the complexity of belonging, resilience, and learning to live liveable lives.

This critical question underlies the array of plot lines in *Queer as Folk*'s two series, including: Stuart and Vince's non-relationship, beyond-friendship, not quite lovers, exploring ways in which to maintain a relationality that is neither sexual nor romantic prior to them both turning 30; Vince's relationship with the Australian Cameron Roberts (Peter O'Brien), Cameron's jealousies, and the ways in which his presence tacitly disrupts the status quo among all characters; Stuart's newly born child with lesbian couple Lisa Levine (Saira Todd) and Romey Sullivan (Esther Hall); Stuart's relationship with his sister Marie (Maria Doyle Kennedy) who is aware of his sexual non-normativity while his parents are not; Nathan's growing engagement with the Manchester queer community and his successful combatting of homophobia in his school environment, among other narrative threads. In that context, it serves to present informal education resources on nuanced, complex everyday engagements towards forging stable relationality and identity, depicting both as processual—ongoing projects—that are both normative and extant throughout life, in contrast to texts which represent belonging and stability as an attribute of movement from queer child to queer adult (Cover 2012).

Beyond Community and Geography: Mobiles, Technology, and Belonging in *Queer as Folk*

Queer as Folk depicts the use of mobile telephone technology not merely as an item of queer conspicuous consumption and fashionable gadgetry (although the narrative surely includes an element of consumerism and the visibility of class demarcations and affluence), but as the mechanism by which identities are formed in relationality to one another. The mobile phone is, indeed, regularly figured in the series across all episodes. When Vince visits a straight pub for a work function, he enters the space on the phone to Stuart, reporting back to him in anthropological terms (although the mobile is, figurative here of a safety net in which the two have even set up a key word—twilight—for urgent rescue). Comic scenes of missed calls, uncertain receives in mixed-up call-waiting scenarios, phone calls and phone messages that interrupt events, and self-calls used to remove characters from scenes and sites in which they are uncomfortable point always to the mobility of subjects within space and to the mobility of identity as that which is always "in process" across the series.

Several writers have investigated the British *Queer as Folk* for its invocation of queer community as constituted in space, particularly public queer space. Certainly, the Canal Street queer social district of Manchester has been noted for its representation in *Queer as Folk* as both a location, which defines community and pegs it to a locale, and an "imagined city", a heterotopia (Billingham 2003: 119). For example, a number of writers present *Queer as Folk*'s site for the construction of queer identity through Anderson's framework of an imagined community that is produced by the differentiation of both identity and territory from other, broader communities and figures itself as having a deep, horizontal form of comradeship and belonging as both ideal and function of community (Anderson 1983). For Skeggs and colleagues, drawing specifically on Anderson, a reading of *Queer as Folk* introduces the dialogical means by which space and community are collaboratively constructed as village (Manchester's queer village) as community, forging a territorialisation through sexuality as a the means by which to find resilience in sexual identity and minority community (Skeggs et al. 2004: 1846). However, the reading I would like to make here—particularly around the performativity of Nathan's identity as produced in his relationality to queer community, queer characters, and queer space—is one which works somewhat differently from an account that centralises community within Anderson's framework or that centres on access to fixed physical space as the necessary outcome of generating resilient queer belonging; instead, it is to look *less at space as constitutive and more at*

the devices of networking and mobility which permit movement in space while maintaining forms of connectivity and connectedness relationally with one's community peers. This helps shift the cultural pedagogies of representation from the perception that queer youth must engage with community geographically (by moving to major geographic hubs of LGBT activity) and instead are able to engage in practices of belonging through more complex, amenable, accessible, and (for many) liveable frameworks.

One way of understanding the interface between belonging, identity, and resilience as constituted through mobile communications technologies is in line with Manuel Castells' network morphology that characterises contemporary sociality across political, economic, labour, and technological environments (Castells 2000). While typically communication formations that are more obviously interstitial and networked, such as the internet, electronic trading, and social networking, are unsurprisingly more regularly invoked in giving contemporary examples of Castells' framework, the network that is represented by the *mobility* of the mobile phone is pertinent here. Rather than place, the network of mobile relationality is articulated through a structural logic of "nodes and hubs" (Castells 2000: 443). Mobility thus increases the perceptive complexity of connection between subjects beyond that of the landline phone which maintains a connection with place and location and access. Mobile phones, however, do not necessarily always articulate location in a real-time voice connection and certainly not on a text massage or voice message. Relationality as formative of the networks of identification between subjects provides the constitutive framework for making performativity intelligible and, in a mobile era, that relationality occurs in an increasing complexity of interaction (Castells 2000: 70–71) witnessed in the multiplicity of communicatory engagements across a mobile network.

For Castells, the contemporary technological paradigm that is the material foundation of the network society has a number of characteristics related to the pervasiveness of information technologies and the processes of individual and collective being which are re-shaped (not determined) by existing frameworks within contemporary informational technologies. Among these is the networking logic in which the "morphology of the network seems to be well adapted to increasing complexity of interaction and to unpredictable patterns of development arising from the creative power of such interaction … this networking logic is needed to structure the unstructured while preserving flexibility" (Castells 2000: 70–71). Such flexibility is key to the kinds of contemporary affiliations, relationships, friendships and communities of support, care and affiliation that operate within a networking logic—the networking

of technological information and communication tools responds to the identity-based cultural desire or demand for more complex and flexible forms of identity, including sexual identities that work within a queer theoretical framework of fluidity, complexity, historicity, and temporality beyond the strictures of essentialist notions of sexual selves. Within a networking logic of flexibility, "[w]hat is distinctive to the configuration of the new technological paradigm is its ability to reconfigure, a decisive feature in a society characterized by constant change and organization fluidity" (Castells 2000: 71). The network operates to re-shape relationalities by linking communicative "hubs" (those that co-ordinate the smooth interaction of all elements in the network) and "nodes" (the location of strategically important functions), hierarchically although flexibly organised within the network (Castells 2000: 443). Both nodes and hubs can, in some instances, be understood as the roles various persons play within a networked community, whether of peers, colleagues, marginal sexual communities or families, produced through flows of relationality that structure different, flexible, and changing forms of belonging; therefore also identities based on relationality; therefore also resilience.

A network morphology that structures relationality and identity through complexity and flexibility fits neatly within the contemporary sociality of the mobile phone as a device of communication portability and one which refigures space into a frame that is organised by the mobility of information, of identity, and of subjecthood. For Meyrowitz, electronic media destroys the "specialness of place and time" (Meyrowitz 1997: 49) and the telephone as specifically advertised as establishing "home" "wherever there's a telephone" prevents any domestic or public place from being "informationally special" (Meyrowitz 1997: 50). The mobile phone, however, does this even more so, whereby there is no longer any specific connection with place as that which is overcome, rather a network of space, of identity, of socialisation, and of new hierarchies that produce the constitutive frames of normativities in potentially new ways, including in the mobility of sites of access to communicative and relational flows of belonging.

Such a network morphology of belonging, identity, and resilience is articulated in the ways in which characters in *Queer as Folk* learn, over time, to manage belonging, selfhood, subjectivity, and relationality through the use of the mobile phone as a metaphor of connection—one that can enable but can also be disrupted and disconnected, requiring innovative and flexible re-routings of relational belonging to emerge. During Vince's first date with Cameron, for example, Vince and Stuart engage persistently via their mobile phones with multiple calls-waiting. Frustrated with Vince's calls from Stuart

and several other friends from Stuart's network, Cameron says: "Look, I hope you don't mind, but could you put it down just for a minute?" Intervening further, he takes Vince's phone, walks outside, and throws it into the canal. Vince exclaims "Oy, that's my phone!" Cameron then kisses him and leaves, saying "Call me". "What with?" Vince calls after him. The act of throwing the mobile phone into the water begins the process of Cameron teasing Vince from out of his community network and out of the social spaces of queer life that he has stated he so dislikes in favour of coupled domesticity—an ongoing contemporary tension in queer representation (Cover 2010). The separation, however, is not complete, for in the next episode (Episode Six of season one), Stuart's secretary hand-delivers to Vince, at his workplace, a new mobile phone as a gift from Stuart. As Cameron seeks to dominate further in Vince's life, he develops mechanisms to disrupt the flow of connectivity and relationality between Stuart and Vince, indeed by separating Vince from the network of all other characters.

A reconnection with Stuart occurs in Episode Eight of the first season, once Vince awakens to his increasing vulnerability, violently produced by Cameron's active role in separating him from his social connections. On a mobile call between the two of them, Vince complains of a noise in the door hinge of his new car and states that he will take it to his mother's gay lodger and close friend Bernie (within the network). Cameron says he doesn't trust Bernie: "I paid for the bloody thing, I'll take charge of it". Vince has realised that he must return to the flow of the network and overcome the blockage that is Cameron. Vince tests his knowledge of shared popular culture, a test Cameron fails dismally: "What the hell does it matter?" Here, the mobile phone becomes metaphor of the network at its most explicit. In the knowledge that the cultural pleasures enjoyed by Vince and his network are meaningless to Cameron he stands tall, stating "Sorry, what? It's breaking up. We're breaking up" and hangs up the phone, locking the keys to the mini inside it in a refusal of accessibility, the locking off of that particular node from his networked flow. The metaphor of the mobile call "breaking up" as an end to a brief, well-meaning yet violently divisive relationship points powerfully to the pedagogical force of understanding community through a networked logic of Vince's affiliation with the other characters in which there is uncertainty, flexibility, and multiplicity of *types* of relationships in the various flows, presenting queer youth with a non-idealistic (Giroux 2004: 76) representation of the realities of belonging.

Pedagogy, Resilience, and the Technologies of Belonging in *Queer as Folk*

The character of Nathan, as Glyn Davis points out, is the figure of contrast to Stuart and Vince, being a "teenager in formation". From early on, he embarrasses himself, mistakenly calling Vince's mother "a mong" unaware of her long-established belonging as a nodal point within the network of the group. Nathan is clearly "yet to learn appropriate codes of conduct among gay men". He pilfers language and phrases from the older men, using them ineffectively or improperly. In short, Nathan exemplifies the awkwardness of teenaged years (Davis 2007: 36). What is significant about him being in an adolescent state of identity formation is that he has an intense desire to belong whereby, in Judith Butler's framework of identity performativity, identity is geared towards the relational and performed in a process en route for an imagined coherence, intelligibility, and recognisability that are coded as necessary to achieve social belonging and social participation as a subject (Butler 1990).Nathan's outsider status is both visually and relationally represented in *Queer as Folk*, although this status is itself mobile across the two seasons. In the opening scenes, we see Nathan in the street, outside clubs, drawing on a common trope of younger non-heterosexual persons lacking the initial confidence, friendships, acquaintanceships, or resilience to enter the social spaces of queer life. Indeed, as a 15-year-old, his legal status to enter premises serving alcohol immediately conditions him as outsider or outlaw.

After he has been picked up by Stuart and taken to his home for sex, he confesses his true age with visible shame including the corporeal signifier of the hanging of the head. This, however, is not shame at his youth or at having initially lied about his age, but shame at the possibility of non-belonging in the network of queer community which, at that moment, is represented by the sexual possibility of Stuart. Shame here is not an individual expression but is, as with all shame, relational (Munt 2007: 220–221) for it is produced in Nathan's knowledge of his fringe-dwelling on the edges of the network. Drawing on Foucault's approach to biopolitics, Michael Warner has recently presented an account of the ways in which shame operates in the context of normativities which we can read here as a distributional network of proximities to a norm. This operates within the framework of the contemporary cultural imagination of statistical and demographic social organisation, whereby subjectivities are revealed in "their lawfulness by standard distribution; the norms and averages of population" whereby one experiences shame in the degree of *deviance* from this imagined "distributional norm" (Warner 2009: 291). This is to suggest

that contemporary cultures are no longer marked by the disciplinary and institutional separation of the normal from the abnormal, the dichotomies that align normal with legitimate against abnormal and the sinful, criminal, queer, and outsider articulated through otherness.

Rather, it draws attention to the importance of contemporary biopolitics as a technology of power that plot the normal and the abnormal along "different curves of normality", whereby certain distributions are considered to be "more normal than the others, or at any rate more favorable than the others" (Foucault 2007: 63). What this means for Nathan is that his shame is produced by being at a *distance* from the normative, whereby Stuart is—in Nathan's imaginary—a pivotal node of queer normativity within a network morphology of community belonging. Those he has already witnessed in his network are in proximity to the norm, whereas Nathan is aware—through shame—not of being an outsider to community in a strict inside/outside dichotomy but being at-a-distance from the intelligible normativities of queer identity structured by network, movement, and mobility by not (yet) having learned the performative codes that forge belonging. This is not, of course, merely something experienced in the individual circumstances of Nathan. Rather, in the second episode, Vince expresses concern for Nathan and tries to aid him into a sense of acquaintanceship and belonging in the bars and clubs of Manchester's Canal Street. He says that it was months before anyone even spoke to Stuart and himself as new community participants out on the scene when they were his age.

In the third episode, finding himself alone in his mother's house, Nathan turns to the landline to arrange with Donna to get away as a pretext for stalking Stuart and Stuart's apparent network. Like many middle-class teenagers in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Nathan does not yet possess a mobile phone of his own. The phone he uses to call a taxi (illegally using Stuart's charge account) is a cordless phone—the half-way marker that empowers mobility but leaves it at least partially tethered to the domestic sphere. Not merely status within a community, but identity itself is produced through the relative proximity one has within a network of relationality. Nathan's sense of selfhood shifts as those forms of access shift. While Nathan's growing confidence can be thought in the framework of a shame/pride dichotomy, applying a filter of network or nodal *proximity* allows us to see precisely how shame and pride operate within a network of flows in which both shame and pride can move in the same and opposite directions in producing the complexity of contemporary queer identity. As Munt points out,

> it is not until near the end of *Queer as Folk 2* that Nathan claims the name of 'Queer!' as his insolent answer to his homophobic classroom teacher's reading of the student register. Instead of responding with the predicted antiphon 'Here!', Nathan's rhyming intervention invokes Queer Nation's call, 'We're here! We're Queer! Get used to it!' Performing and citing shame carries the same implicit risk that identity summons, always open to that critical reinscription, of discursive thievery. (Munt 2000: 536)

Nathan's retort becomes evidence of his confidence in his identity in this context, but we might also say that this is not merely a self-confidence but a confident and more secure location within a network framework that produces the self through support and resilience. Certainly, his greater ongoing affiliation with the gang of friends and the broader community is evidence of his location within the network that is concomitant to his resilient and clever articulation of an anti-homophobic position in the broader public space of the disciplinary and normativising classroom.

In several ways, Stuart is the figure of identification for Nathan, both sexually and in terms of the coherent modes of performativity. In the first episode, Stuart announced himself on the rooftop of the hospital after the birth of Romey's son as "King of the World". In a network morphology reading, this is not necessarily the king of sovereign power but power in the microversion, it is to declare himself a pivotal node in a network of determinations, knowledge, gossip, and desire. Nathan, in the final scenes of the second series in which the fictional futures of each of the characters is captured on screen, is stated to have become "King of the World" and thereby not only to have usurped Stuart's position (travelling in the USA, Stuart is now absent from Manchester and the site of the network) but to have produced himself in Stuart's image. However, rather than looking at the performativity of Nathan as a direct replication of Stuart, an analysis grounded in a network morphology calls on us to consider how his performative identity is located within the network and how he *learned* to belong by the means of slowly learned practices rather than by virtue of his category of identity. Network pathways have to be built over time, and proximities to others in the network are not automatic. Nathan was not really desiring Stuart, or desiring to *be* Stuart—rather he desired the capacity to belong within the logic of the network at a point close to those pivotal hubs. While Nathan may not necessarily have understood this, it is his mother who comes to understand that the group is actually a network and, while out clubbing with Vince's mother, points this out to Stuart:

> Janice: Just keeping tabs on my son, that's all. If you're going out clubbing, Nathan's going out clubbing—His Master's Voice. … Time was, Nathan thought you were boyfriend material. Now you're better than that—you're god.

God, but again not in the sense of creator or sovereign—rather as being situated at the omniscient intersection of knowledge and life as a pivotal hub in the network which, to Nathan, represents perfection, community, communality, and intelligible subjectivity. God is not central in the logic of the network, neither is space nor territory nor identity. Rather, in this network logic, decentralisation is the network's primary characteristic but various points of substance—the nodes and the hubs—operate to govern, organise, receive, manage, and mechanise the multiplicities of flows, the technologically and culturally embedded properties of interactivity, individualisation, and identity (Castells 2000: 385). To be king of the world is not to dominate or to possess the sovereign power to "decide", but to be able to have unfettered access to the network, its knowledges, and its connectivity. Stuart, too, had to learn this as he and Vince regularly discussed in a complacent nostalgia for their youth.

Indeed, Nathan's relationship with mobile technology demonstrates the ways in which learning-to-belong are framed through a movement towards becoming a nodal point in the network, witnessed in the shift from his use of the semi-mobile cordless phone in the third episode, to his access and accessibility within a mobile network. Nathan is disappointed when Stuart hasn't appeared at his birthday party (his mother joking that he might appear by "satellite link", underlining the mobility of the central character of the mobile network). When Stuart does arrive, Nathan says to him casually: "You're late. Get me a present? You can get me a mobile phone if you want". Stuart, pre-occupied with other issues including his intended departure from Manchester, ignores him. When friend Alexander hears that Stuart is leaving to move to London—aware that this will disrupt the network—it is he who calls Nathan to tell him there's a drama, the entire network brought together by mobile connection. But once Vince has convinced Stuart not to leave for London but to go travelling in the broader spatiality and mobility of the world with him instead, Stuarts pulls out his mobile phone. He throws it over his shoulder to the approaching Nathan, saying "Happy Birthday". The gift, here, is not the gift of an electronic consumer device or a tool for access, but a sign of "graduation" to having learned to belong within the network. Stuart indicates that after their travels he will return, insisting Nathan look after the city, the space (of flows), and the network. Vince tells him: "It's all yours now. Just stick with your friends and you'll be fine". That is, to remember the flows

of relationality within the network and all will be well. Nathan is granted a place in the network,no longer precarious, having access within the metaphor of the process of mobility and the mobile phone.

In television series, realisation and learning are signals of character development. Character development is also identity formation. In *Queer as Folk*, identity formation is also the forging of belonging in community. In other words, as one grows up, one learns how to belong (which is learning how to live a liveable life). In utilising mobile technologies for the formation of identities of resilience and belonging, *Queer as Folk* usefully avoids the problematic trope of queer youth as vulnerable victims who only require specialised help to overcome their vulnerability (Driver 2008; Rasmussen 2006; Marshall 2010), and instead leads the formation of a new perspective on queer youth as resilient through a capacity to integrate—slowly, with adaptation—into a community produced through networked engagement.

Resilience, Pedagogy, and Belonging: Queer as Folk as Learning Resource

Belonging to a relational network of peers, family, or community is one factor in the kinds of resilience required by younger persons to develop and lead a liveable life. For scholar Michael Unger (2012a), resilience needs to be understood beyond 1980s psycho-social research which frames resilience within individualised concepts of highly personal, essential capacities to resist or bounce back from threats and risks throughout life. Instead, he defines resilience through more social and cultural perspectives as well as knowledge of the physical environment in order to understand it as

> a set of behaviors over time that reflect the interactions between individuals and their environments, in particular the opportunities for personal growth that are available and accessible. … The likelihood that these interactions will promote well-being under adversity depends on the meaningfulness of these opportunities and the quality of the resources provided. (Unger 2012b: 14)

In this context, resilience is interactional rather than a personal "asset"; it is a shared quality by which individuals recover and sustain liveability against threats through engagement with and by networks of communities, cultures, families, populations, and institutions. In the context of queer youth, LGBT young persons in educational settings and the pedagogies of sexualities more broadly, then, a contemporary approach to resilience implies that both the young queer persons and the cultural environment—which includes com-

munication forms such as film and television media representation, online resources, social networks, and mobile accessibility—are together implicated in the obligation towards a pedagogy of learned resilience through social and communicative engagement.

To take an ecological approach to resilience allows a re-framing of queer youth not *as* vulnerable because they are queer, but as subjects constituted in the (inequitably distributed) precarity of corporeal life in sociality, and thereby *already* formed in (inequitably distributed) resilience to the sorts of shifts, changes, and adversities that can shift a subject from an experience of vulnerability to an experience of a life that is unliveable (Butler 2004, 2009). Approaching queer youth from a perspective not of risk but through the simultaneous fostering and critique of resilience through cultural pedagogies and technologies of communication opens the possibility of providing solutions that aid younger persons to recognise the learning activities and resources required for healthy social participation. As I have been arguing, such opportunities and resources can be found in queer television texts and, simultaneously, in the contemporary technologies of communication that are both represented in those texts and utilised more ubiquitously in everyday life.

For Unger, resilience is always implicated within forms of learning, education, and pedagogy. If part of the capacity to develop resilience occurs within the context of interactions between the self and the social, then that includes a critical engagement with what resilience means.

> Our sense of who we are, our identity as resilient or vulnerable, depends on these processes of co-construction and negotiation. … The self is both what we learn from the statements of others, as well as self-generated meaning-making within culturally diverse social spaces that provide varying opportunities for accessing the resources we need to experience resilience. Just as we are influenced by the meaning systems of others, so too do we participate in their co-construction which reflexively determines who we think we are, what we value and how we behave. (Unger 2012b: 23)

In the context of the education frameworks through which resilience is fostered, then, it is important to consider the ways in which the "self" and young LGBT identities are produced as both "representation" and "resource" in contemporary media, online sites, and other forms of popular culture. Cultural sites such as media forms are always pedagogical, operating alongside the work of educators but most effective when critically engaging with the conditions of liveability towards a politics of preventing the "making vulnerable" of subjects (Giroux 2003: 14). This points to the need to understand the representation and representability of queer youth as subjects of both vulner-

ability and resilience in order to make better sense of what constitutes queer youth resilience.

That is, if youth resilience is learned through the learning codes of belonging that allow an articulation between subjective and individual coping strategies and community, peer and networked support, then how that articulation is produced depends to some extent on the available pedagogical "resources". In its role as provider of "information", as a "resource" for the construction of queer identities, as a provider of image, imagery, and rhetoric with all the "authority" and "legitimation" that popular entertainment texts surreptitiously articulate, a televisual text such as *Queer as Folk* serves as a site providing those reiterative codes of performativity which make queer performances of belonging intelligible and coherent.

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23

Catolicadas: A Sexuality Education Animated Series

Evelyn Aldaz, Sandra Fosado, and Ana Amuchástegui

This chapter discusses *Catolicadas*—an animated series produced by an independent progressive organization in Mexico with the aim of challenging the powerful Catholic Church's interventions in a number of areas of public debate. Launched in 2012 by the independent organization *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir* (CDD[1]—Catholics for the Right to Decide) Mexico, *Catolicadas* is broadcast through both online social networks and a local TV channel, and addresses social issues where the Catholic Church has a powerful voice in public debates. This includes several topics that relate to sexuality and sexual rights—such as contraception, reproductive rights (including abortion), violence against women, and sexual diversity—as well as a range of other issues

[1] Standing from a Catholic, feminist, and ethical perspective within the framework of the secular State, the organization *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir* promotes and defends women's and young people's sexual and reproductive rights, including access to safe and legal abortion. It was founded as a result of activism during the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Conference at Cairo, in 1994, when the Vatican became a fervent opponent and obstacle of sexual and reproductive rights.

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like human rights within the Church, migration, human trafficking, and the secular State.

Initially intended to include 12 episodes, the series' popularity has led to the production of 60 chapters by the end of 2014, achieving more than two million views on YouTube from young people between 13 and 24 years old.

Using official Church documents, qualitative research about the political views and biographies of a number of Mexican bishops, as well as a Catholic Opinion Survey conducted by CDD in 2010, *Catolicadas* highlights the inconsistencies between the Catholic hierarchy's positions on human rights and the messages in the Gospel and other Catholic traditions. It seeks to raise awareness among Mexican Catholics about women's and young people's human rights, often standing in contrast to the official teachings of the Church.

Through quantitative and qualitative information about the users and the number of views of *Catolicadas* on social networks, this article analyzes the conversation between CDD and its young followers regarding the issues raised on the series. The aim of this analysis is to explore the ways in which the series helps its young users as they explore sexuality and the role of the sexual education messages of *Catolicadas* on the formation of their sexual subjectivity.[2]

Background

According to Mexican writer Carlos Monsiváis (1995), sexual education in Mexico has historically been the field of a major political battle in which there is a clash between the moralizing approaches of the Catholic Church and the modernizing trends associated with scientific information and—more recently—with citizenship and human rights discourses.

The Secular Mexican State founded by the liberal Reform movement in the nineteenth century paved the way for secular education—'free from any religious doctrine' (Political Constitution of the United Mexican States)—by the (still current) 1917 Mexican Constitution. As a result of the anticlerical spirit of the post-1910 Revolution political class, the Constitution sought to

[2] We understand 'sexual subjectivity' as a process that fosters an 'agent who regulates his/her own sexual life, coping with the complexity of factors competing in his/her life. … In the context of HIV prevention interventions, Paiva stresses that such "sexual subject" is capable of negotiating with the sexual/gender culture and with family and peer group norms. The sexual subject is able to explore—or not—sexuality, regardless of the partner's initiative, and say "no" and negotiate pleasurable practices—as long as they are consensual—, as well as have access to material conditions in order to make reproductive and sexual choices' (Paiva 2000: 218). This analysis explores if *Catolicadas* contributes to such process.

'eliminate religious power from the new society that it intended to build'[3] (Blancarte 2008: 33). Thus, public education, which was 'mandatory, secular, and free,' became an essential tool to ensure freedom of belief.

The Church and its conservative allies, arguing that only families should address issues related to sexuality with children, sabotaged the first initiative on sexual education in the 1930s, and it was not until 1974—when national population policies emerged—that sexual education appeared in the public school system (Rodríguez et al. 1996). Since then, topics related to the physiology of reproduction have been included in the fifth grade curriculum. Middle school students have also received education about pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), while the Civic and Ethics Education curricula now discuss 'sexual diversity' using a rights-based and gender equality approach.

During the 1990s, public debate was reactivated regarding constitutional reforms that recognized the legal character of the Church and the commitment of the Mexican government to the Program of Action of the United Nations' International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994. Since then, the secular and scientific character of sexual education in Mexico has been reinforced through a rights-based approach promoted by progressive social organizations through modern discourses on sexual and reproductive rights. Despite this context, political struggle around sexual education is still evident—for example, in the recent rejection by the Mexican House of Representatives of a number of articles of the General Law for the Rights of Girls, Boys and Adolescents, which would have improved young people's sexual and reproductive rights (Jiménez and Nieto 2014).

CDD is among the most active feminist social organizations working to defend a comprehensive, secular sexuality education in Mexico. CDD offers an alternative voice to the hegemonic discourse of the Catholic hierarchy on sexual morality from a Catholic and feminist perspective.

CDD has defended the right of young people to scientific and lay sexual education, especially as conservative groups have tried to eliminate these topics from public schools and the Catholic hierarchy has tried to include religion in the curricula. In order to counteract the Catholic hierarchy's influence on sexual moral issues, CDD has designed education materials, workshops, advertising campaigns, and printed and electronic publications targeting women and young people, to promote the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights.

The political struggle here described sheds light on processes of change in the religiosity of Mexicans. Historically a Catholic country, Mexico has

[3] All translations from Spanish are ours.

experienced the great weight of the Church in its social, political, and cultural life. In 2010, 82.7 % of the population was Catholic, and 26.6 % were young people aged 15–29[4] (INEGI 2011). Nonetheless, Catholic men and women have an increasingly critical relationship with the hierarchy of their Church. They grant it authority only over certain aspects of their life while upholding their freedom of conscience in other spheres. In the case of young people, such autonomy becomes evident especially in matters related to their sexuality, reproduction, and family life. For example, 97 % of young Catholics aged 18–24 approved of public schools providing their students with sexual education, and 96 % are in favor of the Church allowing its followers to use condoms in order to prevent HIV and other STIs (CDD 2014).

Young People, Social Networks, and Sexuality in Mexico

In Mexico, according to Reguillo:

> there are two distinct kinds of young people[5]: one—the majority—that is impoverished, disconnected not only from what is known as the network society or the information society, but also disconnected or unaffiliated to social security institutions and systems (education, health, work, security), hardly surviving with the bare minimums. The other—the minority—that is connected, is incorporated to security circuits and institutions, and that has the possibility to choose. (2010: 395–396)

Such heterogeneity notwithstanding, young people have more access to digital technologies than does the rest of the population. In 2014 in Mexico, there were 51,200,000 Internet users, 57 % of whom were under 25 years of age (AMIPCI 2014).[6] The main activity on the Internet among young people between 12 and 29 is the use of social networks (overwhelmingly Facebook), followed by information searches and chatting. Social networks are used in order to communicate with others, cultivate, or find friendships,

[4] Two in three young Mexicans in this age group (15–29) say that religion plays a very important or somewhat important role in their life (67.6 %), whereas one in three (31.8 %) say that religion is of little or no importance in their life (INJUVE/IIJ-UNAM 2012).

[5] In Mexico, the population of young people aged between 12 and 29 was 36,200,000 in 2010, 50.8 % of whom were women and 49.2 % were men (INEGI 2010).

[6] In 2014, half of the Internet users were women and half were men. They used the Internet mainly to send emails (80 %), access social networks (77 %), and search for information (72 %). As many as 88 % used Facebook and 58 % used YouTube (AMIPCI 2014).

as a hobby, or to exchange information (Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud 2010). Internet and social networks have become the space where new social identities and subjects are developed among young people (García-Canclini and Cruces 2012). New technologies have increased the amount of available information about sexuality, pleasure, and, within a space of solitude and away from adult surveillance, allowing young people to access alternative frameworks about sexuality which allow them to confront moral teachings from their families, schools, or churches.

Catolicadas

In the development of *Catolicadas*—which aimed to provide progressive sexuality education through social networks—several factors were at play. On the one hand, there was the increasing intervention by the Catholic hierarchy and conservative groups in the political sphere with the goal of hindering the advancement of sexual and reproductive rights in Mexico. Such a context suggested the need to strengthen critical positions among Catholics, especially young ones. On the other hand, there was a need for an online project to provide progressive sexuality education in a format that would appeal to young people. While there are several organizations working on providing comprehensive sexuality education as part of formal education, they have not yet developed online education for young people.

CDD had been concerned that its previous attempts to improve sexuality education in schools had a limited impact. The creation of online material aimed to reach young people offered an alternative route to reach this audience, and so during 2012, CDD launched the animated series *Catolicadas* in an effort to broaden the scope of its work on youth education. The series disseminates sexuality education contents based on secular scientific information, from a feminist, human rights-based, and progressive Catholic perspective (Fig. 23.1).

Using animation, *Catolicadas* presents three-minute stories set in a local parish, where a progressive Catholic nun (Sister Juana[7]) and a conservative priest (Father Beto) live. Each episode presents the story of a Catholic woman or man who faces a moral conflict or dilemma, which is discussed by both the nun and the priest. With a touch of humor, the series addresses relevant issues for believers. These include the exercise of their sexuality, sexual rights, reproductive rights, violence against women, and sexual diversity, among others (Fig. 23.2).

[7] The name Sister Juana (Sor Juana in Spanish) refers to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a nun and poet from seventeenth-century colonial Mexico, considered to be the first feminist of the Americas.



Fig. 23.1 Sister Juana



Fig. 23.2 Father Beto

In each episode, Father Beto and Sister Juana represent the contrast between, on the one hand, the prevailing views among bishops, and on the other a progressive perspective based on Catholic traditions, human rights discourses, and feminism. All the stories have a progressive slant. CDD produced 60 episodes of *Catolicadas*[8] between March 2012 and October 2014. They have been viewed 4,199,795 times on YouTube and have received 173,175 'Likes' on CDD's Facebook page.

Catolicadas is inspired by a genre known as *telenovela de ruptura*[9] (Burbano 2003)(a type of soap opera that 'breaks the mold'), because it combines entertainment and education by subtly conveying an educational, social, and developmental message. This genre of soap operas addresses such topics as contraceptive methods and sexual education for adolescents. In Latin America, the soap opera is a form of family entertainment which, regardless of age and sex, has played an important role in the population's sentimental

[8] *Catolicadas* has followers in 45 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Several episodes have English and French subtitles.

[9] Break-up soap opera.

education, particularly in Mexico. It has evolved to the point that it now holds an important place in young people's entertainment cultures, appealing increasingly to diverse audiences.

The decision to broadcast the series on social networks has allowed an interesting and intense dialogue with its followers.[10] While it recognizes that the topic of sexuality is complex, as marked by desire, impulses, and feelings, it also asserts the individual's ability to reflect and make his/her own decisions. Therefore, it appeals to the rationality of its viewers by depicting situations that resemble their life experiences and address conflicts they need to solve.

Method

Through *Catolicadas*, CDD has established a dialogue with its young followers on social networks. In order to analyze such dialogue, we conducted an exploratory study in which we processed quantitative and qualitative data from three sources of information: a survey and a contest for viewers—carried out on Facebook—and statistics about the number of views of the episodes on CDD's YouTube channel.

(a) Episodes with the Largest Number of Young Viewers.

To identify the episodes about sexual education that turned out to be most appealing to young people aged 13–24, we identified the ones that dealt with issues around sexuality, including the body, sexuality, and pleasure (five episodes), gay and lesbian rights (four), contraceptive methods (three), STIs and HIV (two), abortion (eight), family diversity (three), violence against women (three), public policies on sexuality education (three), and pedophilia in the clergy (two)—these made up 33 of the 60 episodes broadcast during the first five seasons of the series.[11] We then retrieved information from the CDD YouTube channel about the number of times those 33 episodes had been viewed within a week of their premier, in order to compare the number of views for each episode and determine which had been the most viewed by youths 13–24 years old.

[10] In line with a critical perspective of the theories of reception, we use the concept of reading to characterize the interaction between *Catolicadas* and its audience on social networks. Of the theories of reception, we understand reading as a process of meaning which implies the existence of codes and diverse languages and stresses the activity of the subject in bringing a text to life (De la Peza 1993: 58).

[11] As noted above, the series also discusses a range of other issues where the Church has become involved in public debates, including human rights within the Church, migration, human trafficking, and the secular State.

(b) Survey about Sexuality and Message Reception among Young *Catolicadas* Followers on Facebook.

We designed a survey of young followers on Facebook to determine the audience's engagement with sexual education messages presented in the series and whether viewers used the material presented in *Catolicadas* to think about their Catholic identity, or about the place sexuality plays in such identity. Respondents had to be 13–24 years old (within our definition of 'young people'), identify themselves as Catholic, and live in Mexico. The survey consisted of a self-applied questionnaire that included closed multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. A total of 392 eligible young Mexican Catholics participated in the survey, which was available on the CDD Facebook page over a period of three weeks.[12]

(c) A Contest on Facebook to Vote for an Ending of a *Catolicadas* Episode.

CDD produced an incomplete *Catolicadas* episode to explore the assessments, meanings, and experiences of young followers of the series regarding sexuality, pregnancy prevention, and use of contraceptives, abortion, and motherhood and fatherhood. With the title *One Dilemma*, *Three Choices*, this special episode explores the case of an 18-year-old couple, Moni and Javier, who are about to enter the university but find out that Moni is pregnant and do not know what to do. CDD launched the incomplete episode on its Facebook page and asked viewers to choose one of three suggested endings and to explain the reasons for their choice.[13] In order to participate in the contest, participants had to meet the same eligibility criteria as for the survey. The contest ran for eight days,[14] with the participation of 460 young people.

Surveys like the above have the advantage of providing immediate and anonymous information. Nonetheless, rigorous control over the informants cannot be exercised, nor can their reasons to respond be explored in depth. Both the survey and the contest used intentional samples that included young people interested in participating and sharing their opinions, assessments, and experiences. Intentional samples are not statistically representative; hence, the results cannot be generalized. However, in this exploratory study, the survey

[12] The Survey was available from June 27 to July 18, 2014.

[13] After watching the video on Facebook, young people were invited to answer the following question: 'After watching Moni or Javier, which of the three endings would you choose and why?' Next, they would watch the three endings, choose one, and justify their choice.

[14] The contest ran from September 29 to October 6, 2014.

and the contest provided valuable data for understanding the ways in which the followers of *Catolicadas* on social networks engage with the material presented in the show.

Analysis

With the survey and the contest on Facebook, we collected quantitative and qualitative data to conduct two types of analysis. With the quantitative data,[15] we carried out a descriptive analysis of response trends in sexuality and the intersection of those trends with religion among a group of young *Catolicadas* followers. We conducted qualitative analysis in order to process opinions, arguments, and experiences revealed by the open-ended questions. This analysis included an initial coding of responses—disaggregated by sex and age—which were then interpreted to identify common themes.

Quantitative Data of Young Followers of *Catolicadas*

Sociodemographic Characteristics

Catolicadas has achieved more than two million YouTube views by young people between 13 and 24 years old. During the first five seasons, 52 % of *Catolicadas* audiences were between 13 and 24 years of age. Interestingly, in general, more men (67 %) than women (33 %) watched *Catolicadas* through this channel. For the followers of the CDD Facebook page, statistics showed results in terms of gender: in this group, 58 % were women and 42 % were men. Finally, in the case of the CDD YouTube channel, 62 % were young people between 13 and 24.

The Facebook survey and contest allowed an assessment of other features of young audiences who responded. Out of the 392 young followers that participated in the *Survey on Sexuality and Message Reception*, 59 % were women and 41 % were men, and there were more young people from the 18 to 24 age group than from the 13 to 17 age group (61 % and 39 %, respectively). With regard to schooling, most followers were high school students (43 %) and university students (41 %).[16] Although more women than men participated in the survey, the men reported having viewed more episodes—69 % of the

[15] The surveys on Facebook were conducted with Kwik Surveys and the data were analyzed with SPSS.

[16] The survey showed that 14 % of the youth were middle school students and 2 % were postgraduate students.

men and 51 % of the women said that they had watched 11 episodes or more. Most of the women and young men said that they watched *Catolicadas* on CDD's YouTube channel (72 %) and on CDD's Facebook page (64 %).

With regard to the contest, the results confirmed the participation trends by sex, age, and schooling, shown by the first survey. Among the 460 young contestants, there were more women (56 %) than men (44 %), and more young people aged 18–24 (53 %) than 13–17 (47 %). Most of the followers were high school students (40 %) and undergraduates (37 %), and their main activity was attending school (70 %).

The Most Popular Sexual Education Episodes

A Catholic's Adventures[17] was the most popular episode of *Catolicadas* on sexual education viewed on YouTube by youths 18–24 years of age—the largest audience (43 %) of *Catolicadas*.[18] Of all those who watched the episode within a week of its premier, 41 % were men and 23 % were women in the 18–24 age group. The episode addresses the infidelity of a married man who is caught by his wife, a very Catholic woman, after she has been diagnosed with the human papilloma virus. The episode is intended to question the Catholic ideal of fidelity in marriage and how it relates to the difficulties that women face trying to prevent STIs. The Catholic message that the episode conveys is that the use of condoms is a way to both love oneself and love and care for one another.

The second most frequently viewed episode is *She was only nine*.[19] Of all the users that played this video within a week of its premier, 38 % were men and 21 % were women, aged 18–24. The episode is based on a true story of a nine-year-old girl who had an abortion after being raped by her stepfather; a bishop excommunicated both her mother and the doctor who performed the abortion. The episode talks about the recommendations[20] that the UN issued to the Vatican, and it also questions, on the basis of human rights discourses, the Church's position on abortion, thus relativizing its role in the regulation of individual's sexualities.

Third most popular with this age group was the episode *The morning after pill*.[21] Of all the users that played the video within a week of its premier, 34 % were men and 20 % were women aged 18–24. The episode provides scientific information about the action of the Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) in

[17] To watch the episode on YouTube, go to http://bit.ly/1vRcVEP

[18] Youth between 18 and 24 years old make up 43% of the audience and 13 to 17 years olds, 9%.

[19] To watch the episode on YouTube, go to http://bit.ly/1scdIyT

[20] For more information on the case, go to http://bit.ly/11FbaQ2

[21] To watch the episode on YouTube, go to http://bit.ly/1vOSTIZ

an attempt to counter the misinformation and fear that the Church spreads among young Catholics when it states that the ECP is abortive and that abortion is a sin. It also exposes the gap between the hierarchy's moral teachings and Catholic believers' contraceptive practices.

The fourth most popular episode among youth 18–24 years old was *It's not a miracle, it's a law*.[22] Of all these users, 34 % were men and 19 % were women in that age group. The episode tells the story of a young indigenous woman who has two small children. She undergoes an unsafe abortion, thus risking her life and her freedom because in her community voluntary abortion is a crime punishable with prison. The story also depicts a discussion at the local Congress on a bill that would decriminalize abortion and the Catholic bishops' pressure on the legislators in order to persuade them to reject it. Since Mexico is a secular republic, the episode emphasizes concepts such as democracy, accountability of legislators, and the separation of State and Churches as a principle that ensures plurality, as well as women's freedoms and rights.

The Dialogue Between *Catolicadas'* Progressive Sexual Education and Its Followers on Social Networks

The opinion trends found by the Survey on *Sexuality and Message Reception* among young *Catolicadas* followers revealed that the series has helped many viewers to address their questions about sexuality (47 % of men and 35 % of women). Many also said that, thanks to *Catolicadas*, they have been encouraged to find more information about contents and messages: 53 % men and 39 % women looked for further information on the Internet or by asking their relatives or friends at school.

Qualitative analysis showed significant differences in the way men and women receive and interpret the messages conveyed by *Catolicadas*. While the women were more interested in the moral value of pleasure and sexual relationships and in information about contraception and abortion, men were more interested in topics related to homosexuality.

Recognizing and Legitimizing Sexual Experience

Some young men said that *Catolicadas* helped them to make decisions about their sexuality (27 %) and encouraged them to talk about it with their girlfriends or partners (20 %). Slightly more than a third (37 %) of the young

[22] To watch the episode on YouTube, go to http://bit.ly/1t3bjJc

men surveyed also said that episodes of *Catolicadas* dealt with personal experiences that were similar to theirs or to those of their friends, a finding that suggests that the series is relatable to their life situations.

With the qualitative analysis, we found that for the followers, men and women alike, the contents of *Catolicadas* endorse the validity of their sexual experiences. That is, they constitute a form of recognition of their sexual practices by an interlocutor that in their opinion is informed and to whom they grant some degree of authority. The respondents often said that they had felt 'relief' with the messages that legitimize sexual pleasure as an intrinsic part of the human experience. Standing in stark contrast with the constructs of Catholic morality, the followers of the series celebrate that it offers meanings other than the condemnation they perceive as prevalent in many religious messages. Viewers of both sexes said the series alleviated the guilt they felt especially toward engaging in sex before marriage—as said by women—and homosexuality on the part of men.

> I think that for us it's very important to be clear that feeling pleasure is not wrong. Besides, we have to get rid of cobwebs and stop thinking that masturbation is bad. This has to be clear especially for women, whose heads are always being filled with prejudice against sexuality (female respondent)

> Because pleasure is something that we grow up with and it's our natural right (male respondent)

Moreover, many of the young viewers were likely to identify themselves with the messages that construct sexuality as pertaining to the realm of personal decisions. That is, they identify with the feeling of being recognized as *sexual subjects* (Paiva 2000). The shift that allows them to exercise authority over their own bodies—as the series suggests—simultaneously removes authority from the Church's representatives. This was, according to the informants, one of the aspects of the show that they most valued.

> [Sex] is part of growing up. It's ok if somebody doesn't experience, but everyone can make decisions over their life and over their body (male respondent)

Resignifying Sexuality in the Midst of Religiosity and the Relationship with the Church's Representatives

The opinion trends suggest that *Catolicadas* has also challenged norms and precepts of the conservative Catholic morality on homosexuality, virginity, the separation of sexuality and reproduction, the use of modern contraceptives,

and the construction of sexuality as a space for pleasure and love. Openness toward these topics became evident during the selection of the most liked messages of *Catolicadas*. Among these were 'Homosexuals and heterosexuals alike are God's daughters and sons' (58 % of the men and 50 % of the women); 'Sex is for love, too' (48 % of the men and 39 % of the women); 'It is no sin that adolescents and young people use contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies' (44 % of the men and 40 % of the women); and 'It is no sin that adolescents and young people enjoy their sexuality before marriage' (42 % of the men and 39 % of the women).

In like manner, the survey suggests that *Catolicadas* has raised expectations of social change among its followers: half of the youth surveyed (54 % women and 51 % men) said that after having watched *Catolicadas*, they thought that their Church should change some of its teachings on sexuality. The respondents sought to resignify the Church's religious messages in order to bring them up to date and align them with the more modern approach of *Catolicadas* regarding the legitimacy of both sexual pleasure and the subject her/himself. They made a clear distinction between the Church and God. Young people attributed to the Church a will to control bodies and sexual pleasures that contrasted with the love of God who would not judge or condemn desire and enjoyment. This is not to say, however, that the responses to the survey can be characterized as permissive. Freedom—one of the concepts offered by *Catolicadas*—is restricted for many respondents, by *love*, the realm where sex should take place—especially for women—and by the need to exercise sexuality with *responsibility*.

> I had my doubts about having sex before marriage. Sex is not bad so long as you're responsible. God doesn't judge you for it. God is love (female respondent)

> It is no sin because if they do it with responsibility and perhaps with the one they want to spend the rest of their lives with, then it's right. Everything has its limits. I don't think it's wrong, but we shouldn't fall into promiscuity either (male respondent)

A similar process emerges with regard to the authorization of sexual practices among same-sex individuals. The discourse on responsibility, however, is not used with the same intensity as it is for heterosexual relationships. Responses of followers that identify themselves as *homosexual* or *gay* are mostly from men who said the series gave them the possibility of finding a space for their sexual orientation without having to give up their religiosity and faith.

> Actually, I don't feel uncomfortable with my sexuality, but the Church's position sometimes leads me to conflict over what to do, whether to distance myself from the Church or not, and keep my sexuality a secret. But I think that it [Catolicadas] has given me the opportunity to realize that people's sexuality isn't an issue. God loves us all equally. (male respondent)

These responses reveal, therefore, that young followers adopt and interpret the discourses presented in *Catolicadas* and use them in their approach to sexuality. This mix includes the discourse of public health linked to contraception and prevention, progressive religious discourses, and modern discourses of citizenship and of sexuality as a field of rights. In this regard, the series seems to offer the possibility for respondents to negotiate their religiosity in accordance with the increasingly important modernizing discourses on sexuality regarded as a decision-making space for the conscience.

Constructing Reproduction as a Decision (Contraception and Abortion)

Our analysis of qualitative data from the Survey on *Sexuality and Message Reception* found a common set of discourses about the separation of sexuality and reproduction, more specifically, of the legitimacy of sexual pleasure and erotic relationships for purposes other than reproduction. According to the perceptions of respondents, the discussions between Sister Juana and Father Beto offered the possibility of experiencing reproduction as a choice of the individual or the couple.

> I've had sex with my friends but just for fun. Now I tell them that it's for love and it's easier. Catolicadas has taught me that they [sexual relationships] are not only an act of procreation but that we can also show love and affection through them. (male respondent)

> That in the eyes of God using contraceptive methods is not a criminal act. (female respondent)

Young followers, men and women alike, applauded the endorsement of pregnancy prevention—which was more frequently mentioned than STIs. That was not the case, however, with abortion. With regard to the contest that invited the followers to choose one of three possible endings for the episode

One Dilemma, Three Choices, the winner was the one in which the leading character decides to carry her pregnancy to term and live with her boyfriend, hoping to be able to continue to study. The ending was chosen by 281 (61 %) of the 460 contestants. Respondents with middle schooling or undergraduate degrees—between 18 and 24—also chose this ending. The qualitative analysis found that the reasons viewers gave for their votes are based on two perspectives: one that condemns abortion on religious grounds and another one that resorts to the discourse of responsibility in order to argue against voluntary termination of pregnancy. Phrases such as 'having an abortion is murder' or [carrying a pregnancy to term is] 'complying with God's will' were used to argue in favor of the ending that agrees more with current discourses of the Catholic hierarchy.

> We don't have the right to take a life, we're not God. Together, they'll be able to carry on. With God, everything's possible. (female respondent)

> Those who have an abortion have a lot of regrets. The best thing for them is to have the baby because they are very strong, and as Javier said, they'll be all right. With God's power, it's possible. (male respondent)

Some comments, more in line with modern discourses on individual choice and autonomy rather than religious discourses, pointed out that carrying the pregnancy to term was a consequence by which the couple could assume their responsibility for having had sex. The birth is thus constructed as an unwanted outcome that is, however, necessary in order to close the cycle of responsibility. But this is still a moralistic position and it is not always clear if this alleged lack of responsibility is associated with sexuality or with the failure to use contraception.

> First of all, I'm against abortion. Second, they didn't act responsibly when they had sex, and those are the consequences. (female respondent)

At any rate, what is evident in this exercise is the symbolic power of the construction of the embryo as 'a different life' from the mother's and its preeminence over her in the eyes of *God*, who is represented in this case by the Church. It is perhaps for this reason that followers can more readily accept *Catolicadas*'s endorsement to decide to prevent a pregnancy than its authorization to terminate one. Furthermore, in some comments, the users mix scientific discourses, the feminist language of the right to make decisions

over one's own body, and religious considerations about the status of the embryo as a subject separate from the mother.

> I don't think that it's right to get rid of the baby. I fully agree that the woman has the right to make decisions over her body but I think that if I were her, I would carry out the pregnancy (sic) without dropping out of school. Anyway, I think that she's the only one who knows what to do but she can't forget that the little one is no longer her body; it's a different body, a different soul. It's true, perhaps a fetus doesn't have emotions, as science says, but it has a soul. (male respondent)

It is possible that this ending won the contest not only because respondents were against abortion[23] but also because it was so hopeful that it might have been more appealing to them.

The runner-up was the ending where the lead character decided to have a legal and safe termination of pregnancy with her mother's support but against her boyfriend's wishes. The ending was chosen by 120 (26 %) of the contestants. Young people with middle school studies, aged 13–17, were more likely to vote for this option. The ending with the least votes suggested that the protagonist and her boyfriend should terminate the pregnancy in a legal and safe manner without their parents' knowledge. The ending was chosen by 59 (13 %) contestants, who were women mainly 18–24, with higher schooling.

Even when the winning ending got 61 % of the votes, the other two endings—in favor of terminating the pregnancy—got 39 % of the total. Interestingly, in these answers, Catholic messages sit alongside notions of sexual and reproductive rights.

> Conscientious decisions will never be frowned upon by God. (male respondent)

> […] It's not easy to study and look after a baby at the same time. It's better that Moni sees a doctor so that he can guide her in her decision of getting an abortion. All of us women have the right to decide if we want to have a child or not. God will not rebuke us. That's how He loves us. (female respondent)

Many of the comments written by men said that women had the right to decide whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term; while some young

[23] An analysis of the comments on the winning choice revealed that, in general, they were based on arguments heavily influenced by doctrine or repeated messages disseminated by anti-choice conservative groups. The analysis also revealed that many of the responses used language different to that used by young people, which suggests that some adults may have participated in the contest.

people that were previously opposed to abortion changed their minds when they learned about the situation of the characters and agreed with terminating the pregnancy. In general, the comments of followers who voted for the options that included abortion showed that they strongly agree with the messages disseminated by *Catolicadas*. In addition, comments revealed that the dilemmas outlined in the episodes have encouraged them to reflect and make careful decisions. It is clear that abortion remains the most controversial topic addressed by progressive sexuality education in Mexico.

Conclusion

Catolicadas represents an engagement with public debates about the Catholic Church's positions on sexual education topics in Mexico. The discourse on sexuality from the Catholic hierarchy and the Vatican's is *doxa*, legitimized by centuries of institutional power. It emphasizes norms that rule over a conservative sexual morality and that supposedly need not be based on arguments, regarded, as they are, as self-evident truths. However, in the current context of secularization in Mexico where processes of subjectification—linked to modernity—have increasingly marked young believers, faith has become more of a choice. Thus, the information and ideas presented in *Catolicadas* appeal to them as reflective subjects with a capacity for choice and rationality. The series uses rhetoric as a discursive strategy, mixing progressive Catholic discourses (using documents from the Catholic tradition) with those of democracy and feminism in order to provide its users with progressive information and ideas about sexuality education.

As evidenced in the responses analyzed in this chapter, the rhetoric used by CDD in *Catolicadas* allows its followers to question the Catholic hierarchy's authority in sexual education. As noted in their messages, the series has allowed young people to authorize themselves to make decisions over their sexual practices and identities. Moreover, this information source has managed to create interest in topics and messages related to sexuality and rights. In doing so, *Catolicadas* upholds progressive positions on sexuality that challenge the norms and precepts of the conservative Catholic morality held by the Church's hierarchy. Our data suggests that the audience has found the series to be a way of bringing their beliefs up to date and resignifying their faith and the place of sexuality in it. And importantly, *Catolicadas* has done this without rejecting religiosity completely—an important offer in as Catholic a country

as Mexico. While viewers want to continue to profess Catholicism, they do not wish to conform to the inflexible norms imposed by conservative sexual morality. In this sense, *Catolicadas* has managed to juggle within this difficult middle ground.

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24

Sex Bait: Sex Talk on Commercial Blogs as Informal Sexuality Education

Crystal Abidin

Institutionalized sexuality education in Singapore undertakes a conservative, medicalized approach that promotes abstinence, and idealizes healthy (heterosexual) relationships between married couples. It assigns parents, the school, students, and the community as stakeholders in maintaining a comprehensive sexuality education (Liew 2014). However, young people are increasingly turning to commercial bloggers who are trendy, clout rich, and influential on the Internet Abidin (2014) for firsthand "lifestyle" information and advice. In response, some bloggers have innovatively engaged in various degrees of sensuousness to market sex and sexuality related campaigns and products, and to lure traffic to increase their viewership. Through ethnographic fieldwork conducted with lifestyle bloggers in Singapore, and the long-term observation of social media enterprises, this chapter examines sexual literacies among these bloggers. It argues that these bloggers have stepped in as informal educators of sex and sexuality education to provide alternative approaches amid a state-controlled hegemonic discourse. A close analysis reveals key scripts appropriated by bloggers to disseminate personal and endorsed sexuality education such as "shock and allure", "pedantic consumption", and "personal illustrations".

Data discussed in this chapter is drawn from the author's research on social media microcelebrity in Singapore since mid-2010, including nine months of

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intensive participant observation conducted with these blogger in the flesh in the capacity of various roles. Personal interviews were also conducted between December 2012 and July 2013. Fieldwork entailed continued interaction with other actors involved in the bloggers' social milieu, including their peers, back-end production management, sponsors and advertisers, and readers. Although data presented here—catalogued up till late 2014—is mostly drawn from the textual and visual content of publically accessed blogs and associated social media platforms including Twitter and Instagram, the analysis is influenced by long-term ethnographic work among these bloggers. A grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967) was adopted in the thematic coding of all content.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the place of sexuality education in Singapore in relation to the government's tight control over the national syllabus structured by the Ministry of Education (MOE). This is followed by an overview of the local commercial lifestyle blogging industry, and how sex talk has come to be a mainstay of content management. Two sexual scripts—shock and allure, and personal illustrations—will be examined in tandem with case studies and vignettes drawn from ethnographic fieldwork with Singaporean lifestyle bloggers. The chapter closes with an analysis of these sexual pedagogies in relation to local moral boundaries, class, and gender, highlighting the importance of commercial lifestyle bloggers as informal educators and gatekeepers of the circulation of populist sexuality education.

Sexuality Education in Singapore

Sexuality education in Singapore is generally disseminated via educational institutes regulated by the MOE. The MOE is the national board that directs educational policies and regulates curriculum across all government (also known as 'state schools' and colloquially referred to as 'neighborhood schools'), and government-aided schools in Singapore (MOE 2014a). However, the MOE also regulates the education syllabus to different degrees in the nation's range of institutional offerings including autonomous schools, independent schools, and specialized schools. These institutions' relationships with MOE vary in terms of financial assistance, organizational operations, and institutional autonomy to develop their syllabus and niche areas.

Sexuality education formally begins in Primary 5 (average age 11) and continues up to the second and final year of Junior College (JC) (average age 18) or the third and final year of Central Institutes (CI) (average age 19). However, strands of sexuality education are also integrated into the main syllabus in Health Education (Primary 3 to 6), and in General Science and

Biology subjects (Primary 4 to JC2 or CI3). Primary school education is compulsory in Singapore, and the law may penalize parents who fail to enroll their children by the age of seven. As such, there is a catchall for all children to receive at least basic sexuality education at the Primary 5 and 6 levels.

The MOE lists Sexuality Education under its Social and Emotional Learning Programs, and covers the physical, emotional, social, and ethical dimensions of a person's sexuality (MOE 2014b). On its website, the MOE alludes its implementation of sexuality education programs to the exposure youths face from "globalisation and technological advancements … from around the world". This is further broken down into three key impetuses: "Greater Access to Information", "Sexual Activity, STIs/HIV among Teenagers", and "Problems related to Teenage Pregnancies". In particular, this fear from youths' "Greater Access to Information" is explained as the exposure to the "social norms of other societies and interest groups", which the MOE claims is less objective and reliable than information obtained via schools and parental guidance.

The MOE reports that Singapore faces an average of 2000 teenage pregnancies annually (MOE 2014b). Among its goals of sexuality education are for students to practice virtue "premised on the heterosexual married couple forming a nuclear family as the basic unit of society, through the inculcation of positive mainstream values and attitudes about sexuality" (MOE 2014c; emphasis in original). In addition, one of the MOE's four key messages of sexuality education is for students to "[p]ractice abstinence before marriage, as it is the best protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and unwanted pregnancies [because] [c]asual sex can harm and hurt them and their loved ones" (MOE 2014c).

On a practical level, students are taught about contraception and the prevention of diseases "from a health perspective" (MOE 2014d). However, the program is focused on rejecting sexual advances and the repercussions of casual sex (Liew 2014). Regarding sexual orientation, the MOE's stance is for educators to teach students "what homosexuality *is* and the current *legal* provisions concerning homosexual acts in Singapore" (MOE 2014d; emphasis mine). Educators and external speakers approved by the MOE are asked not to use schools as "arenas for advocacy on controversial issues" (MOE 2014d). For instance, in October 2014, external vendor Focus on the Family Singapore, a pro-Christian charity, was accused of propagating sexism and gender stereotypes in a workshop it was engaged to give to students at Hwa Chong Institution. A student who had attended the workshop wrote an open letter to the principal of her coeducation preuniversity institution citing her concerns over the bigotry and conservatism undertones. Her letter, which was posted on Facebook, went viral nationally and inspired a petition organized

and signed by more than 300 others calling for the program to be discontinued (see Lee and Tan 2014). Although the MOE responded citing that the workshop was intended to focus on managing healthy relationships rather than its designated sexuality education syllabus, this event underscored two things: first, that young people are increasingly turning to social media to vocalize opinions that would usually be edged out of hegemonic educational system; second, that young people are using social media to organize themselves and share and obtain information regarding sexual education within their peer networks.

Women's Magazines, Commercial Lifestyle Blogging, and Sex Talk

Commercial lifestyle blogs are one successor of contemporary women's magazines. Kim and Ward define contemporary women's magazines as "mainstream adult magazines that are geared toward an adolescent or young adult female audience and that express the clear intention of providing readers with advice, scripts, and information about dating and sexual relationships" (2004, p. 49). They also feature product placements (Frith 2009) and concealed ads (McCracken 1993). Commercial lifestyle blogs bear similar offerings but with an underlying rhetoric of personalizing "advertorials" to readers engaged in aspirational consumption. The "advertorial" is a highly personalized and opinion-laden advertisement written in the style of an opinion editorial. Both contemporary women's magazines and commercial lifestyle blogs offer lessons to readers on how to perform in their private lives (Ferguson 1983), albeit largely through highly feminized (Basnyat and Chang 2014), domestic (Pugsley 2007), and sexual scripts (Kim and Ward 2004). Kim and Ward highlight that sexual scripts provided by contemporary women's magazines specifically target female readers via "intimate" address, and are "accessible", "private", "inexpensive", "available for multiple readings", and "sexually explicit" (2004, p. 49)—all characteristics are similarly demonstrated through commercial lifestyle blogs.

Commercial lifestyle bloggers in Singapore are predominantly women aged between 15 and 35. Reflecting Singapore's national ethnic make-up, most are Chinese. Those with a sizable viewership can monetize their social media platforms by selling advertising space in the form of a clickthrough image or URL; by writing advertorials; and by taking on sponsorships for various brands and companies. Their strength is reflected in the infocomm

Development Authority's (iDA) 2012 report finding that "Reading blogs that are created by others" was the third most popular activity after "Social Networking" and "Instant Messaging" (iDA 2012).

Since 2005 in Singapore, many young women have taken to social media to craft "microcelebrity personas" as a career. Theresa Senft defines microcelebrity as "a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites" (2008, p. 25). Unlike mainstream entertainment industry celebrities who are public icons with large-scale followings, microcelebrity "is a state of being famous to a niche group of people" and involves the curation of a persona that feels "authentic" to readers (Marwick 2013, p. 114). While entrepreneurial "bloggers" often transgress the blog form by using a range of social media platforms, these women are best understood by non-insiders across generations, class, genders, and cultural backgrounds as "bloggers" and will be referred to here as "commercial bloggers".

Microcelebrity bloggers document their everyday lives, from the mundane to exciting snippets of the exclusive opportunities in their line of work. This form of blog and social media publishing falls within the "lifestyle" genre, where each woman's life, "as lived" is the central theme of their output. The main appeal for readers is the sharing of personal, usually publically inaccessible, aspects of their life. Therefore, privacy becomes a commodity that is manipulated and performed to advance their careers. Sex-related content is one form of "clickbait" that sustains reader interest given the increasing saturation of the market. "Clickbait" is a "stylistic and narrative luring device [that] induce[s] anticipation and curiosity" among readers, capturing their attention and thus inviting them to click on a link to "read on" (Blom and Hansen 2015, p. 87). Popularized by commercialization and tabloidization in journalism, Blom and Hansen also refer to clickbait as a "forward-referring technique" that teases readers, utilizes "emotional wording", and creates "suspense". I use the term "sexbait" as a variant of clickbait that appropriates sex-related content to entice and sustain readership.

The sexuality education that bloggers offer to their readers seems to go unpoliced by the state censorship board, the Media Development Authority, despite some occasional raunchy content, because these blogs are largely perceived as entertainment and advertising outlets that do serve as useful sources of sexual literacies. Whereas overtly sexualized content on sex blogs have garnered state attention and community concern due to their blatant agenda to shock and defy social norms without any productive outcome (see Channel News Asia 2012; Chew 2012).

Shock and Allure

On 26 November 2012, a videoclip titled "Holly Jean caught in bed with ang moh man"[1] was posted on YouTube, under the account of an unknown user known as "jeremy", in the aesthetic of an amateur video filmed with a handheld camera. By July 2014, the video had received over 27,000 views. The clip featured Holly and an unknown man (with his face blurred out) on a couch, playfully conversing about what and how they intended to film what is presumed to be an intimate sexual act to follow. Holly was shown removing her nightgown, after which the camera zoomed in on her bra and cleavage. Toward the end of the clip, the camera is left to the side, facing the couple. The man and Holly are seen pressed up against each other, simulating sex, passionate kissing, and arousing sounds, with a few seconds focused on Holly's facial expressions. Amid some sensual moaning, she is heard muttering "PS I love you". The couple can only be seen from the waist up and Holly remained clothed in her lingerie. The video quickly went viral and created much buzz online, in part fuelled by mainstream press coverage and lengthy discussion on popular chat forums. Holly remained silent and "uncontactable" on her social media.

Six days later, a second video clip "The full version—Leaked Holly Jean Sex Tape"[2] was released on YouTube. It received over 202,000 views as of July 2014. The attached caption revealed that the initial "leaked" sex tape had been staged as part of a Durex campaign that Holly was engaged in:

> A week ago, you may have come across what looked like a leaked Sex tape, of myself and an unidentified male. Lots of speculation about what was going on about the leaked footage, was he a bitter ex BF etc? Today, I can finally reveal to you the full version. P.S. I Love you means PLAY SAFE I LOVE YOU … a campaign by Durex to encourage safe sex among youth in Singapore. xx www.hollyjean.sg

The extended video continues from part one to reveal the "backstage" film crew in the midst of filming and applauding the "actors" after the scene was cut. On the same day, Holly published a blogpost[3] discussing the video production process. She tells readers:

[1] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imB_vr9h4_Y

[2] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMSryVcmRZM

[3] http://www.hollyjean.sg/2012/12/the-leaked-holly-jean-sex-tape.html

> I'm sorry I've been laying low and avoiding questions about the leaked sex tape circulating on the internet.
>
> The male model in the video and I didn't actually have sex. But we were pretty convincing huh!!
>
> Even though the 'leaked sex tape' is controversial in nature, I decided to be part of this campaign because I think it's a great way to get the attention of the youths, and through that we can educate and get the message across to them. And this message is more likely to 'stick' than merely preaching the importance of playing safe.
>
> You can't dictate that they should wear condoms … if anything, that would make condoms unappealing. So what better way to get the attention of the youth than with a leaked sex tape.

Holly states on her blog that her "leaked" sex video "needed the chance to get your attention and sink in" and that the aesthetic and shock value of a leaked sex tape was selected to target "the youth", perhaps pandering to an audience constantly "in search of spectacles" (Kitzmann 2004). The post directed attention to Durex's new campaign that was encouraging the public to use a condom under all circumstances. Holly then presented readers with some statistics from the Durex Face of Global Sex Report 2012, and a short vignette about how the Durex range offers not only protection, but also pleasure with its "warming lube" condoms, "ribbed" condoms, and one that helps a man "last longer". The post ended with a call for participants to submit a 3–5-minute-long "educational video" to Durex's Safe Sex Video Online Competition.

In this event, Holly is not merely "bringing" the conventionally private sexual body and act of sexual intercourse into the public forefront, but goes further to stage it (with a professional film crew, no less) and manufacture "controversy" to bait attention. Although her intentions were ultimately positive and productive—the Durex advertisement had after all gone viral—Holly opens her blogpost with an apology that can be interpreted as addressing three groups of people. The first are her loyal readers and the press who have been sending her correspondence to solicit comments on the "scandal", which she explains she had to avoid for the video to have impact. The second are readers and curious passersby who may have found her provocative video offensive, since much of the hype generated on social media and forums

involved conversations about young people's relationship with private acts, recording technology, and risk. The third are readers who had fallen for the clickbait only to realize that her sex tape was inauthentic and the sex staged, in acknowledgement of the several forums commenters expressing disappointment in having bought into a publicity stunt. In any case, Holly's full explanation of the production process and her conceptualization of the advertisement implicitly signposts Internet users' voyeuristic interest in the taboo.

Personal Illustrations

As premised earlier, lifestyle bloggers are characterized by the personal accounts of daily events that they archive. Much of these revelations attempt different extents of privacy play in order to draw readers into the life world of these bloggers. In some instances, sexual pedagogies organically emerge from blogger narratives when they attempt to use sex talk as bait to increase readership and sustain their readers' accessibility and intimacy to their blog persona. The personal narratives of bloggers Naomi and Peggy, can be seen to include informal "lessons" on sexual agency, and counter-hegemonic sexuality.

Naomi is among the most popular social media microcelebrities in Singapore, whose social media posts frequently achieve viral status in the country and regionally in South East Asia. For instance, her Instagram photos may garner up to 2000 "Likes" in the first minute, and amass over 20,000 "Likes" on average. As of November 2014, Naomi boasts over 114,800 Twitter followers, over 174,000 Instagram followers, and over 146,000 followers on Facebook. Although her blog readership is not revealed, Naomi is often named as the most popular blogger in her age group among social media followers, mainstream press reports, and blog management agencies.

In a controversial blogpost entitled "Confessions of a teen",[4] published at the age of 15, Naomi revealed that she had lost her virginity to her second boyfriend at the age of 13. (In Singapore, the age of consent for heterosexual sex is 16.) In the post, Naomi states that she decided to publicize this reveal to counter gossip that her "haters" were circulating about her, yet she also seems to be offering advice to readers based on her experience:

[4] http://naomineo.blogspot.com.au/2011/08/confessions-of-teen.html

> Like I mentioned previously, I really had a strong affection towards him, and I felt really insecure about our relationship so I was naive enough to think that this would prolly sustain his love for me. Well, ostensibly I was wrong about having that thought. … As we only lasted for six months. Yes, honestly I did regret it terribly. And no, it's not entirely his fault, I admit I had a choice at that time.
>
> After we broke up, I took about a year and a half to get over this guy completely. I wouldn't deny, many others came in and out of my life which I thought I could replace him with and yes, I did hurt some of them realizing I couldn't forgo the past. But at the same time, I suffered pretty badly as well.
>
> I had another 5 official relationships after him, and 3 were as bad, they weren't serious with me nor did their feelings endured any longer. Whereas, I let the other initial two down similarly due to my unforgettable past. *Sigh, karma perhaps.*

In this particular post, Naomi recounts her (regrettable) decision to consent to under-aged, premarital sex in a relationship that only lasted six months, and details her agonizing experience in "getting over" this incident. After the news broke, readers searched her web presence to find old blogs that contained pictures of said boyfriend, including ones of them kissing.[5] Attempting to draw a lesson from this experience and subsequent "failed" relationships, she tells her readers: "If you don't love someone, just end the damn relationship, don't cheat on them". Photographs of some of her ex-boyfriends are in the archives of her current blog, and have been screenshot and disseminated among readers who are gossiping about her. Subsequently, she has been popular among young teenage readers for sharing controversial views on sexual practice and body image, and for answering fan Q&As on her sexual life and sex advice, which are communicated and archived via email and on Naomi's Formspring and AskFM accounts. On several instances, young readers are seen asking Naomi for advice about losing their virginity, contraception, and the management of relationships in general. Naomi usually offers short personal vignettes or redirects readers to her blogposts, and cautions them to consider their decision carefully.

[5] http://www.perdurable-solicitude.blogspot.com.sg/

In February 2012, another one of Naomi's Facebook posts[6] obtained viral status. She writes:

> It's funny how guys can have sex with so many girls and nothing happens, but once a girl loses her purity she's deemed to be a slut to 3/4 of the society or her peers. Sex is meant for both parties. Girls who says they don't enjoy sex are obviously lying. Girls who calls others sluts for sleeping with their bf obviously don't know how it feels. It's insane. Just saying.

As of November 2014, the post has received over 2400 "Likes" and 34 "Shares", and screenshots have had wide circulation. The post itself invited over 110 comments from Facebook users debating their opinions on gender stereotypes and the moralizing labels attached to women who enjoy sex. In response to some users who detracted from Naomi's message by being coy with flirtatious messages, the blogger writes:

> Don't be ridiculous. I'm just saying. I'm trying to put across the point that, first it's unfair to girls as to how they are the only ones receiving insults, not the guys. Secondly, if it's your boyfriend, and someone you really love there's no wrong to it. Thirdly, It's just annoying to see how some girls go like 'eeeew, I don't like it. It's disgusting' when deep down they actually do.

In May 2013, Naomi posted several photographs of herself and, seeking to offer readers a "bra education", points out how her breasts are shaped and sized differently at different times. Responding to accusations of photoshopping her breasts or undergoing bust enhancement surgery, Naomi explains that she is merely "enhancing" her appearance with different types of bras suited for different attires and occasions. She highlights that these changes do not make women any less "real" because they are still working with their natural bodies. She also tells readers that there is no shame in wanting to "improve", "better", or "enhance" one's appearance. Like many of her past posts, this achieved virality and was even publicized on mainstream news platforms.

Naomi speaks to her young readers about sexual agency and autonomy through a personal voice that is engaging and, at times, controversially honest. She privileges a sex-positive and body-positive lifestyle that is largely absent from a national educational curriculum founded on conservatism and abstinence. For this reason, she has emerged as a thought leader among her peers on taboo issues. Another blogger, Peggy, has drawn on personal illustrations

[6] https://www.facebook.com/Naaomineo/posts/312035762186222

to guide readers with sexual literacies regarding homosexuality. While there are a handful of commercial lifestyle bloggers who have been outed or have publicized their homosexuality, most either make token mentions of their female partners in "couple photographs", or have not disclosed this aspect of their lives despite public web gossip and knowledge about their open secret. Peggy is one of the few women lifestyle bloggers who has been consistently and overtly featuring her partner and their lives in her social media content, in a similar aesthetic to bloggers who write about their heterosexual male partners.

Peggy first publically wrote about her confusion over being attracted to a same-sex person in September 2011.[7] She tells her readers:

> All I know is that the affection I had for this person is way beyond what I should have for someone of the same gender. The thing is, it really doesn't matter what she is, who she is, or where she went to before she came to me. I love what I see when I look at her, and how we could have so little yet so much in common. I love her and love needs no classification. I hope things will not get too hard for us.

At the time, her blog already contained archives of her past two relationships with men. She was among the more prominent commercial lifestyle bloggers in part due to a stint on a television talent show, and once modeling for "Love, Bonito", one of the most profilic Internet-based fashion stores in Singapore. A month later, Peggy wrote a long and heartfelt entry about how she met her partner.[8] The post contained intimate exchange from the long-time friends including screenshots of Facebook Messenger conversations dating back to February 2008. Peggy produced a narrative account of the uncertainty and frustration she felt toward the development of her feelings throughout the course of these years, and talked readers through her various stages of self-discovery. She also detailed her partner's growing years through various stages of school life, including photographs of her appearance at each stage.

In response to comments on her blog, Peggy penned a second blogpost[9] collating some of these responses to encourage readers in similar situations. She writes:

> Writing about my newfound relationship with A had opened my eyes to many things. I realized that love has no boundaries—it's not limited by race,

[7] http://www.sixpegs.com/2011/09/are-you-lightning/

[8] http://www.sixpegs.com/2011/11/a/

[9] http://www.sixpegs.com/2011/11/she-loves-her/

> it's not limited by religion, it's not limited by gender. I realized that love can be so powerful that it has given me strength to overcome things I never imagined I could conquer. Most importantly, I realized that I am normal. I am not alone. And there are many like me out there. Some of them are liberated. Some of them are struggling and suffering and don't have the freedom to love.

Over the next few months, several users congregated on Peggy's blog to share in the joy of her new relationship. Readers in seasoned same-sex relationships offered their support while others asked for advice from Peggy and her readers. She became an agony aunt to a niche market in this time and even produced a blogpost containing the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on her homosexuality and relationship. Since then, Peggy has been blogging about her experiences in coming out and resources available to her, such as Oogachaga,[10] a queer-friendly organization that provides counseling and support to gay and lesbian communities, and Pink Dot SG, an annual nonprofit public event in support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual (LGBT) people in Singapore. More recently, Peggy has been writing about her journey with her partner toward marriage.[11]

The resources that Peggy shares with her readers, although freely available and searchable on the web, are not promoted in the mainstream educational syllabus. Personal voices on the process of coming out and the struggles involved also do not feature in the hegemonic discourse of mainstream sexuality education, although schools provide counseling services for students who indicate that they are struggling with these issues. The level of intimacy and insight that Peggy offers through narrative accounts of her self-discovery and relationship as they unfold, invites these side-lined others to partake in a conversation and community of support. Unlike organizations such as Oogachaga, the informal networks that Peggy has developed over time premise her as a key node of information dissemination. Unlike the hard and fast FAQs available on most LGBT support websites, Peggy delivers information about external LGBT support agencies by interweaving them into her personal journey, thus delivering sexual literacies effectively via her charismatic blog persona.

[10] http://www.sixpegs.com/2012/11/coming-out/

[11] http://www.sixpegs.com/tag/transgender/

Sexbait, Sex Talk, and Informal Sexuality Education

Amid Singapore's conservative approach toward sexuality education, young and influential commercial lifestyle bloggers have emerged as thought leaders providing alternative discourses to sexuality education within their cohorts. In contrast to the overtly disciplinary, pragmatic, and prescriptive (Haywood 1996) model of sexuality education regulated by the state, bloggers provide more receptive informal modes of learning, which are spontaneous (Eshach 2007, p. 173). Informal sexuality education encompasses sex-related information and influence a person receives outside the classroom (Spanier 1976). Where blogger role models replace authoritative didactic figures, readers are also "motivated intrinsically" (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson in Eshach 2007, p. 173) given that they exercise agency in seeking their reading material and imitating the sexual scripts they wish to pursue. Informal sexuality education has proven to be significantly more impactful on premarital sexual behavior than formal sexuality education, where peer group pressures—or in this case, the pressure to perform aspirational scripts offered by commercial bloggers—take precedence over previous "sexual socialization influences" (Spanier 1976, p. 40). Spanier adds that while not every one may be privileged to receive formal sexuality education, every person is exposed to "informal sex-educating experiences" in "one form or another", such as peer conversations, familial instruction, or societal influences (1976, pp. 41–42).

Be it Holly's risqué "leaked sex tape" or Naomi and Peggy's confessional stories, perhaps it is the hybrid "edu-tainment" comprising education packaged in an entertaining, attention-baiting format that lures readers in and sustains their interest. As a successor of contemporary women's magazines, it is tempting to brand commercial lifestyle blogs as mere trashy, raunchy, or frivolous media. Like women's magazines, however, such blogs are a crucial avenue for "women's oppression [to be] debated and negotiated, rather than merely reinforced" (Gough-Yates in Frith 2009). The highly personalized narratives offered by each blogger present the "sex talk" message as intimate and accessible, and different to the moralistic staple of formal sexuality education or traditional advertising formats. The "confessional" trope of Naomi and Peggy's personal illustrations, as a mode of "unmasking" one's personal sex life, also bear a "normalizing function" against which "'bad' sex [or bad beliefs about one's sexuality] can be corrected" (Yang 2004, p. 516). In addition, like contemporary women's magazines, exposure to commercial lifestyle blogs cultivates particular depictions of women, femininity, and

sexuality as "normative, expectable, and acceptable" (Basnyat and Chang 2014, p. 83). As sighted in blog readers' positive comments and the bloggers' increasing number of engagements with corporate sponsors (i.e. contraception, feminine hygiene, and LGBT support services), the delivery of sexual literacies through innovative and creative ways has proven fruitful for drawing readers in via clickbait, aspirational envy, or homosocial intimacies. Taken together, the underlying commercial rhetoric and aspirational consumption channeled through these blogs and the embedded sex talk have inadvertently positioned commercial lifestyle blogs as effective platforms for informal sexuality education.

However, some implicit ideologies across the case studies presented require a closer examination. First, while Holly Jean's appropriation of shock and allure sexbait successfully disseminated her message, she demonstrates an apologetic transgression when she acknowledges the deceit into which she had lured her readers. The implicit secondary message seemed to shroud shame over her production and subsequent "publicization" of the sex tape, and has resulted in the promotion of safe sex on the one hand, but the retraction from a sex-positive body image on another. Second, while both Naomi and Peggy effectively draw on personal illustrations to disseminate sexual scripts to readers, it is unclear if the long-term effect of this approach will continue to have an educational impact on readers, of if the audience will be desensitized to the baiting for mere entertainment. Furthermore, as a feminized and largely women-dominated industry at present, the influence that commercial lifestyle bloggers have among readers and their sexual pedagogies appears confined to young females. While there are some attempts at encouraging their readers to relay information and appropriate products and services to their male partners, there has yet to be an equally influential and large-scale mechanism for capturing the attention of young males.

Nevertheless, commercial lifestyle bloggers are filling in an important gap in the formal sexuality education syllabus. Allen argues "for the need to comprehend young people's sexual knowledge from their own conceptualisation", in a bid to recalibrate sexuality education to accommodate the gap between young people's "head knowledge" and their actual praxis (2001, p. 109). This acknowledges young people's subjective agency, and brings the focus back to discourses they wish to pursue in tandem with their everyday lived realities. By offering an alternative to authoritative, didactic, and rigid modes of formal sexuality education, commercial lifestyle bloggers in Singapore are pioneering vernacular dialogues in native nomenclatures that appeal to young people. Driven by the logic of the market in the attention economy, commercial bloggers *have* to be receptive to readers' preferences, and thus their

blogs inadvertently reflect or debut populist sexuality discourses. Since the commercial success of bloggers is dependent on readers' sustained attention, a "horizontally structured power relation" (Yang 2004, p. 517) emerges in which the normative is coproduced and negotiated by both bloggers and masses of readers. Given commercial lifestyle bloggers' rapid integration and engagement across a wide range of industries, their discursive influence as opinion leaders and shapers of popular praxis is projected to grow, suitably placing them as informal sexuality educators.

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25

Social Media Bodies: Revealing the Entanglement of Sexual Well-being, Mental Health, and Social Media in Education

Natalie Ann Hendry

In this chapter, I explore the entanglement of sexual well-being, mental health, and social media in young people's lives, particularly focusing on young people experiencing mental ill health.[1] I reflect on a workshop activity that I facilitated in youth mental health settings and schools in Australia.[2] Employing bodies as a metaphor for social media, participants in these workshops used visual methods to reveal and discuss their experiences, attitudes, and values. In particular, the activity moves beyond pedagogy framed by risk, and instead engages with the affordances of social media as identified by young people. By highlighting research that demonstrates this entanglement,

[1] I use the term 'mental ill health' to capture a range of diverse definitions for mental health challenges including mental illness or disorder, psychiatric condition, and madness, across a number of disciplines. Other terms are used through the chapter to reflect terms used in the references cited.

[2] These workshops have been incorporated into a pilot study about visual research methods and mental health. Findings from this pilot study will be used to inform a larger project towards a doctorate degree exploring visual social media and representations of recovery and well-being. The pilot will determine the feasibility of transforming workshop activities from education practice to research. This chapter captures my reflection about this activity at the point of transition from a pedagogical tool to its redevelopment as a research method.

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and how it is revealed by the "social media bodies" activity, I advocate for an intersectional approach to sexuality education, one that is necessarily complex and ambivalent.

While media and youth research reveals the intersectionality of young people's sexual well-being, mental health, and social media practices, little attention has been paid to how this entanglement is addressed in education. Efforts in Australia to respond to the perceived dangers of social media are largely driven by risk-oriented, isolated programmes. Typically, these programmes and resources reinforce that all young people, regardless of their life experiences, encounter risk in a similar manner. From this perspective, young people are defined as individually responsible for their own well-being, positioning the social and cultural contexts of their lives to have little impact (Leahy 2014). However, education that is not informed by a nuanced and interconnected understanding of young people's everyday experiences of sexual well-being, mental health, and social media, is likely to be ineffective and inadequate as it does not resonate with young people's own lives (McKee et al. 2014).

The Entanglement of Sexual Well-being, Mental Health, and Social Media

Experiences of mental ill health in youth are as common as they are complex. Prevalence data suggests that a quarter of Australians aged 16–24 years experience a mental health disorder, with almost one in ten describing high levels of psychological distress (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011). Whether clinically diagnosed or not, mental health challenges may influence every aspect of life for young people, including their sense of identity and social connection, motivation and future aspirations, social and occupational relationships, and physical well-being. In turn, mental ill health reduces the capacity for young people to develop and maintain healthy social, sexual, and romantic relationships and friendships. The complex relationship between mental health and sexual well-being is mutual, with each element of a young person's life influencing the others.

Although multiple factors including genetic and developmental factors, disadvantage and physical trauma, contribute to the aetiology of mental ill health, there is strong evidence that sexual violence and trauma contribute to psychiatric illness (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011). Sexual coercion and psychological, physical, or sexual abuse, both in childhood and later years, are linked to psychosocial distress and psychiatric illness (de Visser et al. 2014; Moore et al. 2010; Rizzo et al. 2010). Of note, self-injuring behaviours, such as cutting, burning, or intentional overdose of medications, are more

commonly reported by young people who have survived sexual assault (Daley 2015; Gladstone et al. 2004). Gender or sexually diverse young people are more likely than their peers to engage in self-injury, however research suggests this is predominantly a response to homophobic discrimination and violence (McDermott et al. 2013).

This entanglement of sexual well-being and mental health becomes further complicated and more difficult to unravel when we consider young people's engagements with social media. Recurrent risk narratives about social media in popular discourse centre on perceived sexual or mental health risks. These include accessing "inappropriate" content such as pornography or other sexually explicit material, content that encourages emotional distress and disordered thinking such as anorexic or bulimic consumption and exercise practices, suicidality or self-injury, or facilitating connections with other "problematic" users through sexually provocative communication or platforms or apps that afford cyberbullying (see Bantick 2014; Chang 2014; Wood 2014). Indeed, risk and harm are related, but they are not equivalent; engaging with "risky" content does not result in inevitable harm via a predetermined, linear, and direct media effects pathway (Livingstone and Helsper 2007; Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. 2015).

Funding in Australia for sexual well-being, mental health, and social media resources is typically directed by isolated federal and state departments and not-for-profit organisations, with each attending to independent issues. At federal level, for example, formal sexuality education is guided by the Australian Curriculum, under the Health and Physical Education domain, and supported by resources such as *Talking Sexual Health* which was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2014; Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society 1999). Sexting education resources are funded and produced by the Commonwealth Department of Communications through the national cybersafety and cybersecurity education programme, Cybersmart (Commonwealth of Australia 2015). This reinforces the siloed nature of programmes and resources, and mirrors the standard subject area-based delivery of mainstream education for young people. However, programmes and resources that isolate issues without engaging with these entanglements may not adequately attend to young people's needs or reflect their life experiences.

Catchments for youth mental health services often stretch across broad regions of both metropolitan and regional Victoria. Consequently, young people engaged with services are less likely to be grouped by age, year level, cognitive development, cultural identity, residential location, or socioeconomic status. Criteria for service admission varies between services, however

most use a range of clinical and psychosocial measures to assess the young person's mental state, and their family and social context. In contrast to mainstream schooling, education programmes of these settings do not organise their curriculum by discrete subjects or issues, and instead focus on general knowledge, literacy, health, and personal development, including themes such as creative writing, managing stress, or goal setting. In this way, these settings are sites of exploration for integrated and intersectional pedagogy.

Martin and te Riele (2011) remind us that space and place in education matter: the settings where education occurs influence not only the physical possibilities available for education, but also the stories and experiences young people bring to their learning. The diversity of young people in these spaces provides both opportunities and challenges for planning and facilitating workshops. In a service or hospital setting, young people are more likely to disclose emotional or deeply personal experiences in the context of support with peers who understand their challenges and lived experiences, than their everyday family or school environments. Yet as the composition of these groups is transient, there is often confusion about what behaviours are considered socially appropriate. What may be taken for granted in other educational settings becomes unstable in a health service classroom or on the hospital milieu as social norms shift in response to changing group dynamics. Norms, such as whom or what is popular, or what is regarded as "peer-approved" behaviour, shift as young people are admitted to and discharged from services.

Situating the "Social Media Bodies" Activity

The workshops were first developed as an "insider" employed in a school within a hospital-based youth mental health service in Victoria, Australia, and then later as an "outsider" asked to run workshops at a number of Victorian health services and alternative schools. I was invited to facilitate workshops on a range of topics from cybersafety, ethical relationships, managing risk on social media, sexting, and using technology to support well-being. The workshops predominately involved young people aged 13–18 years, who were connected with either inpatient or outpatient services, with 10–30 young people participating in each session.

While there has been increased funding in the broader youth mental health sector in Australia, most workshop locations had limited access to technology and devices such as iPads and other tablets, and regulated access to websites and social media (McGorry et al. 2013). On occasion, young people were restricted from using their phones or computers during appointments or

admissions, as hospital and service guidelines maintained the importance of peer privacy (and the legal ramifications if this was not upheld) and discouraged distraction from recovery goals. As a consequence, the workshops generally utilised conventional facilitation methods such as physical group activities that required participants to move around the room or paper-based activities, rather than incorporating digital devices or online resources.

Workshops typically began with a warm up or "icebreaker" to allow participants to get to know each other and establish group agreements about workshop safety and communication. These activities provided insight into the attitudes of the group and the interests and experiences of its participants. Tuning in to the tone of the group was important as it assisted me to judge the topics the group felt comfortable discussing, and in turn, to determine the issues to explore during group discussions. Following warm up activities, I facilitated different group discussions or activities depending on the central theme of each workshop. These activities have included a "Where Do You Stand?" continuum game where participants are asked to stand along an imaginary continuum to represent their opinion on statements related to social media and health; "Would You Rather?" games that ask participants to choose between improbable but provocative choices like "Would you rather only be able to use your mobile or only be able to use your computer?" or "Would you rather have your parents receive a print copy of every word you text and type 24/7 or have no surveillance but only have access to digital devices for one hour a day?," and "Advertising Expert" tasks where participants view and critique short online video clips about social media, health, sexuality, and well-being, and make decisions about which campaigns to "fund" based on their understanding of their peer audience's needs, issues, and interests.

Most of the workshop session time was allocated to the "social media bodies" activity. During this activity, I asked workshop participants to imagine that platforms, apps, and sites were people, and in small groups, they dressed up as, modelled, or drew those people. Participants discussed the different types of people the platforms and apps might be, and used the metaphor of the body to represent their experiences, attitudes to, and beliefs about social media. Participants were provided with a box either of costumes and props including fabric, hats, accessories, and craft supplies or, for those drawing the bodies, of large people-sized sheets of paper, markers, and other art materials. As a "generative theme" (Freire 1996) the activity was playful and well received, and inspired noise, laughter, arguing, productivity, and critical thinking.

In general, the activity sought to elicit young people's own expertise about social media to articulate the diversity of media practices in the group and highlight how social media influenced their sense of identity, connections

with others, and their well-being. However, the learning objectives of the activity were often modified in response to the main themes of the workshops. For example, for workshops on using technology to support well-being, the activity assisted young people to articulate how social media both enhanced and hindered their well-being through media content or relationships; or for workshops on relationships, the activity encouraged young people to consider how different media contexts afford different forms of communication with different friends and partners.

Visualising Affordances of Social Media

Sexual well-being, mental health, and social media education programmes and resources in Australia often exist in isolation from each other. This siloing of health and media issues erases the opportunities for educators to align their pedagogy with young people's lives. However, as Brown, Sorenson, and Hildebrand (2011: 608) highlight, sexual health education needs "to be positioned within the complex social world in which young people make decisions." The concept of *affordance* offers a nuanced approach to understand these "complex social worlds" and a productive and useful way to frame pedagogy beyond risk.

The ways young people engage with social media, and the practices that comprise their everyday use, are never entirely static, predetermined, or standardised. Actions such as writing a status update on Facebook, "liking" a picture on Instagram or "reblogging" a video on Tumblr may be enacted using different devices, be viewed by broad, diverse, and at times unknown audiences, and hold vastly different meanings for each individual. Considering what social media may afford young people, rather than how an app or platform functions at face value, requires educators to be mindful of the diversity of young people's media practices. Thinking about the affordances of social media is one way to highlight the opportunities and constraints that shape their practices.

Hutchby's (2001) use of the concept is useful to ground the "social media bodies" activity. For Hutchby (2001: 444), affordances do not determine but rather frame the "possibilities for agentic action in relation to an object." Affordances here are the perceptions individuals have of the technological features of an app, platform, site, or device that provide them with opportunities to act or engage. How young people use social media is in part determined by their perception of the choices they have available to them. These choices and actions respond to changing peer norms and social environments, and the mutable affordances of social media (boyd 2014). Livingstone (2008: 401) asserts that "although teenagers tend to describe their social networking activities

in terms of freely taken choices, when questioned more closely it appears that they are constrained in two ways: first, by the norms and practices of their peer group and, second, by the affordances of the technological interface."

For example, Facebook, a social networking site, requires users to provide their "real" name and links users to their friends, family, and acquaintances through profile connections, sharing photos of events, and displaying a timeline of friends' Facebook interactions. Baym (2011) likens Facebook to a "nation" as it constructs a virtual passport for users that can be used to establish their identity to other sites and platforms. Facebook identities presumably reflect users' coherent, legal, and civil identities. It affords users control over what they share with their friends, and allows users to approve friend requests or modify privacy settings to curate who is able to see shared content. In contrast, Tumblr is a blogging platform that encourages users to "express yourself freely and use Tumblr to reflect who you are, and what you love, think and stand for," through sharing content such as images, quotes, videos, and music (Tumblr 2014). Unlike Facebook's default norm for users to have one public profile, Tumblr users may have more than one personal blog and may post anonymously. Tumblr affords users control over their identity by allowing them to choose how much or how little they reveal about their "passport" identity. Both platforms afford control, albeit control through very different architecture, technological features, and potentially, the social norms of their users.

Although affordance is a useful concept to frame the diversity of young people's media practices, it is challenging to discuss affordances with young people as they are often taken for granted or presumed to be commonly experienced among peers. Using bodies as a metaphor for social media provides a material representation of young people's intangible and sometimes affective engagement with social media.

Workshopping "Social Media Bodies"

Reflecting on the opportunities and challenges of the activity, I continue by outlining three themes that arose from the workshops: revealing and destabilising affordances, the spatial and temporal affordances of social media, and young people's affective relationships through and with social media. This overview is presented as an effort not to analyse the workshops as empirical data, but rather to provide an example of pedagogy that engages with intersecting issues and attempts to shift prescriptive, risk frameworks of social media, sexuality, and mental health education. Each workshop example I discuss has been modified to maintain participant anonymity and confidentiality.

Revealing and Destabilising Affordances

> If YouTube were a person, it would be a man. The group wasn't sure why, but that he wasn't a woman, so he couldn't be a man. He would have a long beard, a cane and wear glasses. He wasn't dead, I was told, because people still use YouTube. If you look carefully he has the symbol for infinity on his pocket. He wouldn't take selfies, but he would look at them, and may even collect them. This old man curates the internet, and selfies, into his bottomless video vortex.

Broadly, the workshop participants' attitudes and experiences of social media revealed in the activity may be collected into three types of representations. First, some representations embodied the content young people saw as typical or notable on social media. Often this was represented in the accessories and fashion used to decorate the bodies. Second, and perhaps the most common type of representation in the workshops, were the bodies that depicted an imagined user of the platform. Rarely was this someone that the young people admired or spoke kindly of. Groups drew young women more often than men to represent Instagram and Snapchat, both photography and video-based mobile apps, creating caricatures of women with exaggerated pushed-up cleavage and make-up in excess. Finally, other groups embodied their abstract and intangible experiences of social media through the body's features and expressions. The characteristics of their social media bodies allowed them to display and articulate emotional and social interactions with social media. Beyond emotional engagement with content or other real or imagined users or audiences, these groups talked about social media as human-like and emphasised the embodied characteristics that afforded them an emotional relationship with social media apps and platforms.

Different "social media bodies" embodied particular representations of young people's lives, such as "selfies" (self-portrait images), "branding" oneself, or expressing feelings and values. For example, even though participants felt that selfies were ubiquitous and could be found on most social media forms, participants rarely linked them to YouTube, a video-sharing social network, or Tumblr, a creative, visual-based blogging platform. Rather, selfies were represented in the bodies of Instagram, Facebook, or Snapchat as groups often articulated that these platforms not only afforded easy uploading and sharing of selfies from mobile phones, but also cultivated an individual or "real" identity. On these platforms, it was seen as normal for users to upload a photo of their face, showing who they "really" were.

The groups that dressed up as or drew Tumblr bodies often represented similar themes about the content rather than Tumblr's users. The Tumblr bodies were often secondary to the content displayed by the props and images on or over the bodies. One Tumblr group added props to their Texta (felt-pen)-tattooed and multicolour wig-wearing model. The group curated, constructed accessories to show what they thought were popular interests and identities on the site: a bong, camera, make-up bag, animals, sex toys, rainbow flag, and paint brushes. These respectively denoted that the site afforded the production, curation, and sharing of media related to substance use, beauty and fashion, animals and other cute characters, sexuality, queer identities, and artistic and creative pursuits. Another group depicted similar themes in their Tumblr drawing, and discussed the forbidden, often taboo, and typically private content the site afforded. Both groups drew markers of self-injury on their bodies, and one marked a tear on their body's face to represent content related to depression. These representations of Tumblr echo literature that depicts the platform to afford media content that is often excluded in popular media. Renninger (2014: 14) posits the platform as a "counterpublic," in that Tumblr "allows those that lie outside of sanctioned publics to map their own ideologies, thoughts, and subjectivities among people, mostly strangers, that share an awareness of similar countercultural referents." Emerging studies about Tumblr suggest that connections are maintained by users who have shared interests in non-mainstream or marginalised cultures and identities including fandom communities, political commentary, and gender, sexuality, or queer lives (Anderson and Sheeler 2014; Fink and Miller 2013; Petersen 2014).

Overall, however, the affordances described by the social media bodies were unstable; groups often argued about what was common practice, and how the sites both enabled and constrained their practice. Aside from the Tumblr bodies, the differences between the social media bodies of the same platform created by different groups emphasised the diversity of how affordances are negotiated within different contexts such as privacy and control. One group's representation of Instagram focused on health and well-being "microcelebrities," who were predominantly women, and shared personal, health-focused lifestyle images of consumption practices and well-being routines (see Marwick 2015, for discussion on microcelebrity). These accounts categorised content with hashtags such as #fitspo (fit inspiration) or #healthie (healthy selfie) to denote exercise inspiration or health-focused photos of healthy meals, gym, or yoga activities and fashionable sportswear. Often these users were entrepreneurial and used their Instagram profiles to promote well-being services and health products. This exemplifies what Abidin and Thompson (2012:

468) define as "persona intimacy," as users engage in micro-media strategies to promote, in this example, healthy lifestyles, through a mediated persona, rather than personal connections with followers. In contrast, another group dressing up as Instagram performed poses with groups of friends at parties and sports events. This group stressed that Instagram was a way of collating social memories over time by uploading group photos and amassing comments and likes from friends and followers. Robards (2012: 394) describes these practices as "transition traces" made by young people through the media content they upload and share as they grow up in online social spaces. For young people, these traces are less about managing future privacy concerns as adults, but about how they manage friendships online and their sense of identity over time.

Spatial and Temporal Affordances of Social Media

> If Facebook were a person it would sweat a lot. It would be overweight, seeking more food, violently consuming with its sharp teeth. Facebook, as a person, would wear Crocs. Nobody wants to be friends with Facebook really, but you can't help but find yourself next to it, sweating along with it, your boundaries blurring with its own. Who would want to be friends with someone who wears Crocs? The body in excess is represented as overweight, rather than strong, solid or encompassing warmth or love. Facebook, for this group, was ageless and female.

Using bodies as a metaphor for social media allowed young people to embody perceived spatial and temporal characteristics afforded by social media. The spatial qualities of the participants' social media bodies demonstrated how young people experienced and conceptualised the boundaries of sites and platforms. Supporting Berriman and Thomson's (2014) research exploring perceptions of privacy and participation, participants described different levels of comfort with different visibility practices. Facebook was described to be taking over everything: people's lives, social communication, and other social media, and consequently visualised as overwhelming and intrusive. This mirrored responses from young people in an education study by Pangrazio (2012: 43) who felt there was "an unwritten set of rules" on Facebook. This "cybersense" denoted the ways participants in this study felt they were pressured to engage with friends on Facebook, and how they felt they should share their lives by uploading images and engaging with friends (Pangrazio 2012). Similarly, boyd (2014) identifies that young people's practices are shaped by what they perceive to be shared expectations of behaviour

on different platforms or sites, and how young people see their friends using social media and their social contexts including school and family.

Boundaries were also depicted as enclosing rather than expansive. One Instagram body was drawn with a square around their female figure's face, suggesting that selfies were the primary type of image shared. The outline also demonstrated the boundaries of the app: full Instagram functionality is limited to mobile phone use, and the mobile screen dimensions determine the size of uploaded images. Instagram was represented as a containing app, in contrast to Facebook's uncontained excess, and described in the group discussions as an example of the limited affordances of Instagram compared to Facebook. Groups representing Tumblr also avoided drawing set boundaries of their bodies; however, this was achieved through adding symbols of content around or on the bodies.

"Younger" sites such as Snapchat or Instagram were depicted as younger bodies, while older sites like YouTube or Facebook were elderly or ageless. These decisions were frequently incorporated into the participants' drawings or dress-ups without overt priming for them to consider temporal characteristics of social media. Groups were often definitive about the age of social media platforms and sites, even if their bodies' ages did not correlate with the history of platforms. In one example, YouTube was depicted as an elder through his long beard and the infinity symbol drawn on his pocket. Although Tumblr was established in 2007, it was often represented as youthful. Participants perceived the majority of Tumblr users to be young people and regarded it as new, as afforded by its relative public obscurity in comparison to "elder" platforms like Twitter, released in 2006.

The body metaphor was also a tool for participants to project how they imagined their engagement with social media might develop into the future. Questions about the ageing process of these bodies prompted productive conversations about both hopeful and despairing possibilities for social media. Predominantly, these conversations centred on playful and imaginative affordances such as three-dimensional video messaging, and practical functions such as on-demand privacy settings that provided more nuanced and easy to use invisibility from peers and family. By highlighting the temporal qualities of their bodies, I encouraged participants to consider and articulate how their future reputations might be shaped by multiple and conflicting interactions between their own media practices and the affordances of social media. These discussions were often framed by questions such as "What might be important for you when you finish school and how might you share this on social media?," "How might social media change in the future?," and "What might motivate you to leave a social media site now or when you are older?"

Affective Relationships Through and with Social Media

> If Instagram was a person it would care a lot about how it looked. She would definitely be a young woman. Instagram focuses on selfies, self-image and self-confidence; a square outline bordered her excessively made up face. Instagram would rely on others' likes and comments to feel good, especially when she posted sexy selfies, but she also wouldn't care about other people's opinions. She would use fake tan as a "filter" for her body, and sometimes have a tear down her cheek when she was upset and lonely. Participants both admired her, and despised her.

Using the body as a way to envisage social media provided workshop participants with a familiar visual language to describe relationships that emerge through media interaction. The affordances young people visualised through their social media bodies were often emotional, personal, or intimate. In one workshop, a participant punched their Facebook illustration when presenting their illustration to the larger group. The participant laughed and expressed they hated Facebook, yet explained they wouldn't delete their account and cited a significant list of benefits for engaging with Facebook, including private messaging and socialising without face-to-face interaction. The constraints of Facebook—its relatively incoherent privacy settings and large audiences often consisting of family members watching you—were often discussed in preference over the benefits of the platform.

Another group of women, relatively younger than their workshop peers, struggled to describe their Instagram representation. Mentioned earlier in this chapter, this group drew a box around their illustrated women's head, emphasising selfies as the primary content afforded by the mobile-based, visual platform. The group quickly drew their figure; laughing and sharing anecdotes about people they felt used Instagram primarily to boost their popularity. Each group member agreed that, like this figure, they posted selfies and chose filters, images, and text to represent their lives to their followers in a favourable light. The group were ambivalent towards the affordances of Instagram: they distrusted the attention-seeking figure but also acknowledged that their own representations were complex and that the Instagram body may also have diverse reasons for sharing content they thought of as attention-seeking.

In another workshop, a different group representing Instagram expressed frustration about profiles and users that only represented a narrow range of images about health on Instagram. The group's depiction of Instagram included a line down the middle of their social media body. This pointed to the tension between healthy eating and disordered eating and suggested porous

boundaries between healthy and disordered. One participant expressed their derision and frustration towards these users, questioning the authenticity of this imagined user's visualised life. She highlighted the often invisible labour and resources required to maintain a visibly individual, disciplined identity. For this group, images of Instagram users preparing and eating "easy" healthy (and often expensive) meals, and working out in designer sportswear were perceived as a disavowal or disguise for the necessary labour and self-control involved in maintaining a disciplined, healthy body and lifestyle.

The conversations in the workshops often elicited relatively intense expressions of affect: the bodies they performed or illustrated overwhelmed, frustrated, disgusted, angered, energised, rescued, and pleased them. A sense of intimacy with social media, not just content shared, or users they connected with, emerged from the activity. This provided a useful springboard for discussions about the impact of social media on their lives, as participants disclosed ambiguous attitudes that did not easily align with either utopian or dystopian theories of media practices.

Transforming Entangled Risks and Pedagogy: Implications for Sexuality Education

As a means towards social justice, the activity is not unproblematic or complete (Kumashiro 2009), as "creative approaches are not certain, linear, nor predictable" (Harris and Farrington 2014: 156). The participants are the experts in this activity: not experts in all aspects of social media, but in the affordances they negotiate in their everyday lives. Consequently, each time I have facilitated, the activity of the participants' responses and the themes discussed shift. While the activity aims to disrupt discourses that reinforce simplistic or linear conceptions of risk behaviours and attitudes, it also invites the possibility of "Trojan stories" to enter the workshop space (Cahill 2015: 127). Just as bodies and people represent and are subjected to differences of power and status, so too can these social media bodies reinforce differences of power through the marginalising stereotypes, norms, and ideologies young people bring into workshop spaces. Indeed, other metaphors (such as cars, countries, or animals as some examples) may be used to represent social media and provide different insights for educators; however, I found bodies to be a generative, albeit challenging, tool for education.

When talking about their social media body, some participants shifted from speaking about their body as an example of their own practice to an external

figure that held authority or control over their practices. The examples discussed above that focused on the "slut shaming" of Instagram, the inescapable, lazy, and sized discourses of Facebook, and self-injuring and hidden bodies of Tumblr each point to the ways the activity may reveal but not necessarily challenge the gender, sexual, racial, physical, or emotional discourses that privilege some bodily identities and expressions at the expense of others. Although conversations following the activity did not demonstrate the critical digital design that Pangrazio (2014: 9–10) advocates for, they did hint at the potential for the activity to further engage young people in critical self-reflection whereby "the individual can move between the personal and the ideological while exploring and analysing concepts that are embedded in digital technologies and networks."

Uncertainty about outcomes or how an activity may potentially question and but also reinforce hegemonic ideas can be a source of anxiety for educators. McKee, Walsh and Watson (2014: 133) recognise that this is challenging work for health educators as "the very characteristic that makes a text powerful for pedagogy—the fact that it offers grey areas for discussion—also means that its message must be less clear cut." The urge, as they describe, to provide correct information sits at odds with more effective methods whereby young people are provided with opportunities to make up their own minds, as it is "difficult for us to embrace approaches that might give young people a range of perspectives and allow them to reach their own decisions about what is best for them" (McKee et al. 2014). Work that engages with this challenge may be described as a "decentring pedagogy" as it displaces the role of the educator or facilitator. Employing Sedgwick's (2003) reflections we are reminded however, that although it may not be obvious in the moment, this educator displacement may offer productive outcomes for pedagogical efforts. Also, participants may experience discomfort in reflecting on their own practices and attitudes, however as Pangrazio (2014) suggests, self-reflecting pedagogy may lead to discomfort that is potentially transformative and critically productive.

Attempting to develop education that embraces complexity and engages with the entanglements of sexual well-being, mental health, and social media is challenging, and yet perhaps crucial for educators working with young people experiencing mental ill health. The impacts of mental ill health—decreased locus of control, experiences of disadvantage and trauma, stigma and discrimination, and confusion, fear, and distress—require pedagogy that is attuned to narratives that reinscribe responsibility for harm on individual young people and their "bad" decisions, or dismiss both their agency and what they are unable to control. Risk-oriented education programmes and

resources demand personal responsibility and the capacity to make "good" choices. These programmes and resources obscure the gendered, social, political, and cultural factors that influence young people's experiences of sexual well-being and mental health. However, for young people experiencing mental ill health, it would be unwise to ignore the potential risks that social media may afford. Without a nuanced, diverse and realistic picture of how various, and perhaps unanticipated, risks may lead to harm, educators are unable to determine the priorities for educational intervention.

Social media does not determine but rather frames the networked representations available to young people. By using the body as a metaphor for social media, young people visualise and reveal the affordances of social media that influence their experiences and the spatial, temporal, and affective dimensions of their engagement with social media. Given the complex and often contradictory evidence base about risk in young people's lives, pedagogy that is open to young people's diverse experiences and attends to their social contexts may offer possibilities to work through this tension and the entanglement of sexuality, mental health, and social media.

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26

From Media Abstinence to Media Production: Sexting, Young People and Education

Kath Albury, Amy Adele Hasinoff, and Theresa Senft

'Safe Sexting: There's No Such Thing'. Or so says a 2009 information brochure produced by the New South Wales (Australia) Department of Education. Just as decades of research demonstrates that abstinence-only sex education is at best ineffective and at worst results in negative health outcomes (Alford 2007), there is no reason to suspect that policies and pedagogies that focus on sexting abstinence will be any more effective. But what are the alternatives? This chapter draws on recent research and pedagogical practice to move away from 'just say no' approaches to sexting and toward a contextualized understanding of young people's media practices. The authors draw on recent research on representations of sexting in mass media, educational campaigns, and the law (Hasinoff 2015); empirical research seeking young people's responses to 'sext education' (Albury et al. 2013); and new media pedagogies (Senft et al. 2014a) to recommend alternative approaches to shame and fear-based sexting education. Throughout, we maintain that an educator's goal should not be to eliminate sexting practices, but instead to teach young people to promote

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the same affirmative consent standard for picture sharing that they would for other forms of sexual behavior. In the pages that follow, we offer some new pedagogical practices for teaching these principles, based on student-image production exercises and case study assignments, and drawing on research traditions such as photovoice.[1]

Our recommendations are grounded in Albury et al.'s (2013) interviews with sex educators, policymakers, and young people in Australia where we learned that terminology matters. Most adults understand sexting to be either the exchange of text messages that are sexually suggestive or explicit, and/or the sharing of naked and semi-naked images via online and mobile media. In mass media coverage, education, and policy, however, the focus is almost exclusively images (Albury et al. 2013). However, focus groups conducted with 30 young people 16–26 years old indicated that young people themselves are unlikely to use the term 'sexting' to describe what they do, as the word signifies to them adult 'overreaction', or moral panic (Albury et al. 2013; Albury and Byron 2014). Instead, they speak of naked or semi-naked pictures produced and shared among intimates or peers as 'nudes', 'selfies', or simply as 'pictures'. For this reason, we suggest that educators seeking to discuss 'sexting' should seek to embed this conversation within a broader exploration of a range of digital picture-sharing practices.

Sexting, Selfies, and Schools

Sex education about 'sexting' is often reactive, responding to negative incidents rather than emerging from a positive vision about appropriate sexual practice. In many high schools in both Australia and North America, educators and resource officers begin their discussion with students about sexting in response to a particular incident of a sexual privacy violation. In many cases, one or more girls' sexual images have circulated among peers, and adults

[1] Participatory action researchers in the fields of both health and education have utilized photovoice—a method that invites research participants to create photographs that represent problems in their communities in order to discuss these issues and collectively develop solutions (Wang and Burris 1997). Given that sexual violence and sexual harassment are endemic problems in schools at all levels (American Association of University Women 2001), sex educators could consider using selfies as part of a photovoice technique for addressing gendered and sexual violence in schools. For example, in her research on sexual cultures in schooling, Allen invited school-aged participants to take (non-explicit) photographs that documented their experience of sexuality in school (2009, 2011). As students discussed these pictures, they explored the ways that their school cultures and school rules (e.g. prohibitions against kissing or hugging) created implicit understanding of how sex and gender 'should' be performed at school (Allen 2009). Without asking young people to share explicit photos, there is still space for productive conversations about how they use mobile media to produce their own 'sexy' images and texts, and the ways in which they might be challenging the sexism of the commercial media industries as well as reproducing it.

scramble to respond. They tend to use the occasion to advise young people that sexting is a serious crime and that they should never participate in it. Indeed a review of ten official sexting education campaigns demonstrated that abstinence is the most common approaches (Döring 2014). While such a message may seem logical, simple, and appealing to adults, this strategy will undoubtedly be ineffective in curbing sexting. Young people are well aware of the risks of sexting but many choose to participate regardless (Sex and Tech 2008)because they enjoy it and they trust their partners. Adults who are appalled by sexting and suggest that no young person should ever participate in it will lose the trust and respect of many teens, as studies demonstrate that around one-third of youth under 18 years old are sexting, and the practice is even more common among young adults aged 18–24 years (Drake et al. 2012; Drouin and Landgraff 2011; Englander 2012; Strassberg et al. 2013).

Educators often counsel abstinence by emphasizing the worst-case scenarios, which are intended to communicate the seriousness of the potential legal and personal consequences of sexting. However, telling young people whose private images have been distributed that their future job, college, and relationship prospects are ruined, and that child molesters are viewing their images, creates unnecessary fear and shame. While further research is needed, private studies indicate that in cases in which images are distributed without permission, they are rarely if ever uploaded to public websites (Cox Communications 2009; Gatti 2009). Focusing on the potential (though unlikely) consequences for the victim of a privacy violation diverts attention from the perpetrator and authorizes the victim-blaming that survivors of all types of sexual violations often experience. These common approaches to 'sexting education' are not working well, either for young people or for educators, according to our research. On this basis, we have identified a number of different approaches that stand more chance of engaging young people, and allowing them to develop skills to promote critical and informed responses to sexualized digital communications.

Responding to Sexting

It is important that schools do have in place strategies for dealing with negative incidents, even though this should not be the totality of their education around sexualized selfies. An evidence-based approach developed from our conversations with educators and young people suggests that incident response in schools should focus on the privacy violators and actively discourage slut-shaming—the common practice of blaming or undermining female victims who are deemed to have 'asked for' abuse by displaying sexual curiosity, or active desire.

Our first recommendation then is that rather than waiting to respond (reluctantly) to specific incidents, schools should develop a proactive abuse prevention strategy extending across online and offline communities. Ideally, this process would focus on building networks between schools and information services for young people who are questioning their sexuality or gender identity; youth legal services, and support services for victims of abuse and assault. These networks could then support teachers introducing discussions of sexting and selfies into sex education and media literacy curricula (ideally from Year 5 onward). As with other kinds of evidence-based sex education, messages about sexting should avoid shaming or blaming, and take a harm-reduction approach that includes conversations about how to weigh the risks and benefits of sharing sexy selfies.

Our second recommendation is that educators should focus on developing students' skills in recognizing and negotiating affirmative consent (the model that 'no' is the default and that both parties need to engage in a process of negotiating voluntary, meaningful, and explicit consent). As many anti-rape advocates have explained, discussions about consent are vital for an effective sex education program (Carmody 2005). Sexuality educators can view classroom discussions about sexting as an opportunity to open broader conversations about sexuality, privacy, and consent. In the context of digitally mediated sexual interactions, students are especially in need of skills and practice in identifying and discussing consent. Texting and image-sharing eliminate the nonverbal cues that many people—accurately or not—rely on for in-person sexual contact. As such, educators have an opportunity to promote affirmative consent as a standard both in sexting and, ideally for all sexual interactions.

This means that before sending a photo to another person, the subject of the picture should make sure that their recipient wants to receive a sexual image. Similarly, any person should be able to refuse a request for a sexy picture without having to justify or defend their choice, and recipients of consensually shared pictures should never share a picture with a third party, or forward it, without the explicit permission of the person depicted. In other words, educators can encourage students to think about the process of producing and sharing sexy selfies as an intimate or sexual activity, and make sure they have enthusiastic consent from their partners before they create or share an image. In this context, producing and sharing images can be integrated into broader conversations about negotiating consent within friendships and relationships—an approach which reflects media researchers' findings regarding the way young people themselves understand their participation in online and mobile media cultures (Boyd 2014; Albury and Crawford 2012; Ito et al. 2009).

Sexting and Double Standards

Since 2009, a range of 'sexting awareness' media campaigns and teaching resources have been produced and circulated for use by educators in Australia, North America, and the UK (Albury et al. 2013). These practices have focused on the 'risks and consequences' associated with producing and sharing naked and semi-naked pictures (i.e. 'sexts'), and less explicit images (i.e. selfies). While these resources are clearly well meaning, many have attracted criticism for victim-blaming and/or simplistic abstinence approaches (Döring 2014). Educators should encourage students to reflect on their personal expectations of privacy and challenge them to resist the instinct to blame victims of privacy violations. In one study (Hasinoff and Shepherd 2014), researchers found that some survey respondents indicated that they believed privacy violations were never or rarely acceptable in a variety of sexting scenarios, but nonetheless left optional written comments blaming the victims of such violations. Other studies reveal that such contradictions are also present in attitudes about sexual violence, since while most people denounce rape, many still hold victims responsible (Suarez and Gadalla 2010). Just as anti-rape activists have been working to dismantle victim-blaming myths for decades, this work is equally important in sexting education.

Sexting highlights the need for educators to work on dismantling the double standard that sexuality is encouraged or tolerated for boys but shamed and pathologized for girls. For example, privacy violations involving sexual images can harm girls more than boys because peers are particularly likely to respond to female victims with victim-blaming and slut-shaming. Indeed, adults may inadvertently support this kind of harassment, since abstinence-only messages about sexting communicate that sexting is always wrong and shameful without distinguishing consensual sexting from acts of deliberate harm and humiliation (Hasinoff 2015).

Our third recommendation addresses this issue. Classroom discussions and activities can enable students to see the unfairness of the sexual double standard. For example, generating a list of words people generally use to describe a person who has many sexual partners reveals that most of the feminine words are negative (e.g. slut, whore) while many of the masculine words are neutral or positive (e.g. stud, player). Such anti-sexist educational interventions have the potential to reduce the likelihood of harassment for the next student whose images are distributed without her permission. Further, we suggest that rather than framing young people's online and mobile media practices (such as social networking, and producing and sharing selfies) as 'risk behaviors', sexuality educators should strive to integrate contemporary media cultures with their learning and teaching practices.

Mediated Sexual Cultures

Social networking services, online gaming, and online chat sites can provide productive opportunities for young people to socialize, flirt, and 'play' with friends and intimate partners. As Pascoe (2011) observes, online and mobile media can assist young people in overcoming feelings of vulnerability when establishing new relationships. For gender variant and sexually diverse young people, online and mobile media technologies can provide anonymous access to explicit information, flirtations, or peer-to-peer conversations that are not otherwise available in school, family, or local geographical settings (Hillier and Harrison 2007; Albury and Byron 2014; Gray 2009).

It is important, however, to avoid claims that online relationships are somehow safer than 'real life' relationships. While adult fears regarding online 'stranger danger' are often unjustified (Livingstone and Smith 2014), these sites may facilitate some peer-to-peer aggression. The online disinhibition effect (Suler 2005) likely enables some people to send unwanted sexts or to pressure others for nude images. Our fourth recommendation is that educators should discuss this effect with students so that they understand how new media can amplify these forms of gender- and sexuality-based harassment, though one study suggests that coerced sexting is still less common than coerced physical sexual behaviors such as kissing or sex (Drouin 2014; Drouin and Tobin 2014).As such, the online disinhibition effect may be capitalized on whereby girls could be encouraged to be more assertive and confident in expressing their sexual needs and desires though digitally mediated communication than in-person. As Tolman notes, girls are still trained to be sexual gatekeepers and to subordinate their own desires to others (1994, 2005). As Pascoe points out, 'mediated gender practices look a lot like nonmediated gender practices in the objectification of women and definitions of masculinity as homophobic and dominant' (2011, p. 15). In school cultures where physical bullying and gender aggression is common, peer cultures of digital bullying and online sexual harassment may coexist (Ringrose et al. 2012). For this reason, we suggest that any school community seeking to promote safe and respectful online/digital practices must also address school cultures. By taking this approach, online safety education can be seen as a complement to other programs promoting respectful relationships on and off school premises.

Our research suggests that any education program that does not acknowledge young people as media producers in their own right is bound to fail, which leads to our next recommendation. A range of recent studies have pointed out that young people are quite adept at finding what Ito et al. (2009)

term 'back-channels' and 'work arounds' when adults restrict their access to sexual information and sexual banter on these sites (Marwick and boyd 2014; Pascoe 2011). These studies demonstrate a need to rethink older media studies research models, in which scholars focused on how audiences absorbed, interpreted, and reacted to commercially produced media content (sometimes termed the 'media effects' model).

Ito et al. suggest that young people's contemporary media cultures are best understood within the context of media practice, or as they phrase it, 'modes of participation' (2009, p. 37). As they explain, media practices and mediated identities are not fixed, nor are they fully explained by generational categories such as 'digital native'. Rather, they 'are constantly under negotiation and flux as people experiment with new modes of communication and culture' (Ito et al. 2009, p. 37). Although educators need not (nor could they) be up to speed on every new development in participatory media practice, they need to understand that these practices are dynamic and evolving, and conversations that resonated six months ago may need to be reshaped today. Consequently, our fifth recommendation suggests that educators embrace pedagogical strategies that recognize students as media producers, not just passive recipients of 'empowering' or 'harmful' media messages. In the next section, we offer some background on this idea, and in the following sections some suggestions as to how to do this.

Teaching About Media Versus Teaching *with* Media

To date—within the field of sexual education, at least—the term 'educational media' has been largely synonymous with mass media, and this has limited how educators have used media resources to promote learning about sexualized selfies. For instance, educators interviewed as part of the *Young People, Sex, Love and the Media* project and the *Young People and Sexting in Australia* project supported the use of media in sexuality education but tended to frame and understand 'educational media' in terms of professionally produced formal resources. These include 'Public Service' content, (such as the *Megan's Story* video and teaching package discussed in Albury and Crawford 2012), commercial news items, professional pop music videos, or entertainment television programs such as *Glee* (see Albury 2013). Popular social and mobile media forms were notably absent from the list of examples offered.

While implicit or explicit notions of 'media literacy' were common to sexuality educators in the studies above, it was apparent that such literacy was generally equated with students demonstrating an ability to 'read' (view and

interpret) media imagery, rather than 'write', or produce their own texts (see Buckingham and Sefton-Green 1994). Taken at face value, this might seem surprising, given the ubiquity of smartphones, and young people's widespread access to, and active participation in digital cultures that demand an element of self-reflexivity and literacy in relation to self-representation. As Parker observes in the preface to *Teaching Tech-Savvy Kids* (based on the Macarthur Foundation study also published as Ito et al. 2009), digital media cultures are centered on 'specific friendship-and-interest-based practices', and can be highly engaging for students (2010, p. xii).

However, Allen (2009, 2011, 2015) and Albury (in press) have noted, while mobile phones (increasingly smart phones) are becoming ubiquitous within contemporary youth cultures, they are generally considered as disruptive to classroom discipline, and are consequently subject to a great deal of suspicion among teachers and school authorities. Educators may be concerned that young people will use their personal data plans and smartphones to circumvent school fire walls and access inappropriate material in class (Albury 2013).We would like to suggest, however, as Parker observes, that 'if all we see from our students are behaviours that appear foreign or are prohibited by the school e.g. cell phones and texting, then we are missing out on myriad ways to connect with our students and youth culture' (2010, p. 9).

One understandable concern an educator might have with media production exercises that engage with issues of sexuality and gender through practices of self-representation is that young people will produce images of themselves (or their peers) that might be classified as 'child pornography' (Albury 2013). Other educators may worry that such practices could be construed as unethical, or otherwise unsafe for students who are already vulnerable to gendered bullying and/or sexual harassment. While such concerns are understandable, we believe that when both individual teachers and the school community are aware of local laws as they apply to both visual and written texts, and are supported and resourced to seek legal advice if necessary, risks can be managed in class (see Tallon et al. 2012).

It is important to acknowledge, too, that many young people view their social networking spaces as 'private' (even if they appear to adult onlookers to be public), and do not necessarily *want* adults to participate in (or even discuss) media practices with them in formal educational spaces (Parker 2010; Byron et al. 2013; Pascoe 2011; boyd 2014). Given, however, that one of the primary risks for young people who produce and exchange sexual images privately and consensually is potential prosecution under child pornography laws (Albury et al. 2013), it seems appropriate that extended discussion of such laws should form part of any 'sexting education' program.

Taking on the Challenge: Teaching with Selfies

As noted above our fifth recommendation is that educators explore ways of integrating media literacy-based activities into sexuality education classrooms. While this practice may be challenging, there is an increasing body of evidence suggesting that online/mobile media technologies and environments are already sites of informal sexual learning for many young people (see Pascoe 2011). It would seem to make sense, then, that sexuality educators might also engage with these technologies and spaces as sites of formal education.

In the final section of this chapter, then, we suggest some approaches for initiating classroom discussions of practices of sexed and gendered self-representation (including sexy selfies). These approaches draw on the legacy of pre-digital media literacy education practices (particularly Buckingham and Sefton-Green 1994), recent academic research using photography to investigate young people's sexual cultures (Allen 2009, 2011), and 'Teaching with Selfies', a Creative Commons syllabus developed by Senft et al. (2014a). We also discuss approaches adopted by our colleagues in the Selfies Pedagogy Group, and the broader Selfies Research Network (Senft et al. 2014a).

As noted above, we have found it particularly useful to discuss sexting by using the language of selfies—but this does not mean that all selfies are implicitly or explicitly sexual (Albury et al. 2013). It is clear that while all selfies reflect aspects of identity, they do not necessarily depict a subject's face or identifiable aspects of their body—for example a 'felfie' depicts a subject's feet, while a 'shelfie' is an image of a bookshelf which is deemed to represent an aspect of the photographer's 'self'. We suggest sexuality educators can draw on young people's existing literacies regarding selfies to create classroom exercises that open up space for nuanced discussions of a range of issues that are often glossed over in 'sexting education'. For example, while students should not be asked to create or share sexually explicit photos, educators could ask students to explore and analyze online sites that both promote and critique normative notions of beauty and/or attractiveness (see e.g. The Body Is Not An Apology 2015), and contextualize images of themselves that they believe are attractive as well as some that they think are unattractive in relation to the images and texts on these sites.

A consideration of Facebook profile pictures can serve as a springboard for a discussion of gender norms. Students could also be asked to create a series of photographs of themselves that depict, for example, masculinity, femininity, and androgyny in order to discuss and understand the social construction of gender. Such exercises are not new or radical. In their account of a similar student project conducted with UK high school students in the 1990s, Buckingham and Sefton-Green recount an assignment in which students

were invited to create an 'identity portrait' or photo collage, and 'consider the ways in which individuals display a variety of identities or images in different contexts, and to consider how these can be conveyed by using different clothing, poses and gestures' (1994, pp. 85–86).

For educational purposes, the difference between a Facebook-oriented exercise and the more traditional photo-oriented one described above lies in decisions regarding publishing, or sharing pictures. This is something that participants in the *Young People and Sexting in Australia* study spoke of frequently, noting that there are 'public' selfies (which might be comfortably shared on social networking platforms), and 'private' selfies, which are intended primarily for the purposes of self-examination and self-reflection (Albury 2015).

One practice that can yield particularly interesting results is combining traditional photo exercises with ones that involve decisions regarding online publication. For instance, Buckingham and Sefton-Green recount an exercise in which students drew on celebrity images to reflect on their own identity:

> For the first of these, students were asked to take three photographs of themselves: one as they 'really' are, one as they would like to be and one as others see them. They were then asked to combine these images into a 'media identity poster', juxtaposing images of themselves with their favourite media stars or personalities. Finally, they were asked to write an account of their work using a series of directed questions. (1994, p. 153)

In the Teaching with Selfies syllabus, students were asked to recreate their favorite (or least favorite) celebrity selfies, and reflect on the process. While the Buckingham and Sefton-Green assignment encouraged students to use images to think from the 'inside out' about themselves, an exercise requiring students to reproduce celebrity iconography allows them to think more deeply about how images—including sexualizing ones—influence from the 'outside in'. This sort of thinking can then be combined with conversations regarding how and when we decide to distribute photos of ourselves, using exercises like the one below.

> Locate four photos of yourself on your phone, computer or posted to social networks you think are flattering. Locate three photos of yourself that you find to be unflattering, funny or embarrassing in some way. Label your four photos A-D, and then write a photo essay in which you explain which pictures would be the best and worst to use for the purposes below. In your explanations, be as specific as you can (e.g. don't say 'this photo looks professional', explain how and why you came to that conclusion, based on signifiers like clothing, background details, and so forth.)

- Facebook profile page
- Company profile for someone who works in a bank
- Dating site profile page
- History book showing what everyday life was like in 2014 in your country

…

> Now we are going to engage in a thought experiment: Pretend you are an archeologist from, say 5000 years from now, and these photos are the only existing records of human culture from 2014. What would you know about culture, based solely on these photos? What important information about our culture would be missing? (Senft et al. 2014b)

This assessment task deliberately offers students a range of 'distancing strategies' to allow them to minimize the risk of overexposure to adults and peers (a key ethical consideration when engaging with student's self-representations). The exercise was trialed in both senior high school and junior university classrooms in North America and Europe in late 2014, with a positive response from students. While it doesn't directly address issues of sexuality or gender, it has the potential to open up conversations regarding different contexts for self-representation, and the ways that every social media user (educators included) monitors or curates the visible markers of their public identity.

Selfies and Mediated Sexuality

In discussing selfies and sexting, educators have an opportunity to raise broader issues of consent and respectful relationships, and think with young people about how they represent, and are represented as, 'sexual' via social media practices. This exercise from the Selfies Syllabus suggests that students research both media and academic reports on sexting and selfies in order to answer the following question:

> How do you explain/describe the anxiety regarding young people's production and circulation of sexy selfies? If you were designing a class exercise on 'safer sexting' for a mixed-gender group of 16 year olds, what activities, tactics, and discussion starters would you suggest? Why? How would you explain your rationale to a group of concerned parents and teachers? (Senft et al. 2014c)

This exercise could be used to explore various models of learning, and consider the ways that adults and young people might bring quite different assumptions to 'commonsense' terms like risk, safety, and privacy in regards to social media settings.

It's About Privacy: Using Celebrities as Case Studies

As before, the difference between classical education tactics using photography and ones we advocate here turn on the issue of online distribution. Educators who counsel abstinence from sexting on the grounds that all sexts will be distributed will lose the attention and respect of their audiences, whose personal experiences likely demonstrate that sexts are in fact not routinely distributed to third parties, especially in voluntary sexting among intimate partners. To be sure, the distribution of private sexual images without the senders' consent can cause serious harm and trauma (Powell 2010; Ringrose et al. 2012), yet this behavior is relatively uncommon. One large peer-reviewed study estimates that around 10% of people who sext report that their images have been forwarded to at least one-third party without their permission (Mitchell et al. 2012). Yet, another study found that wide distribution was significantly more common (36% of sexters) with images obtained though pressure or coercion (Englander 2012).

In that context our sixth recommendation is that sexuality educators can and should reinforce the widely shared norm that forwarding a personal sexual image without permission is a violation of privacy (Hasinoff and Shepherd 2014).From this perspective, educators can lead discussions asking students to consider how they know if an image they receive is intended to be private or if it's okay to pass on to their friends. Discussing scenarios with young people (e.g. Jane receives a suggestive image from her boyfriend; is it ok for her to share it with a few people?) may be an effective way to assess and reinforce students' normative and ethical sense of privacy in sexting.

Again, this issue can be depersonalized by referencing broader media events, such as the recent mainstream media debate following the digital theft of celebrity nudes. In August 2014, naked and semi-naked pictures of a range of North American celebrities, notably *Hunger Games* star Jennifer Lawrence, were shared on the social media platform/message boards Reddit and 4chan (Selby 2014). The incident was known on Reddit as 'The Fappening' (a play on 'fapping'—a slang term for masturbation). The pictures had not been shared by their subjects, but were stolen when digital cloud storage was hacked by a (still unknown) person. While some public commentators on the event (including celebrities such as Ricky Gervais) blamed the victims of the theft for taking the pictures in the first place, these comments were in the minority. The executive director of the US-based Future of Privacy forum said the theft and subsequent sharing of the pictures 'should be treated like a sex crime, a privacy invasion taken to an extreme' (Isaac 2014).

The event triggered a shift in the debate about sexting (or naked/semi-naked selfies). The practice of taking naked pictures was discussed not as a shameful and implicitly individualized moral lapse, but in the broader social and political context of digital privacy and security. Celebrity blogger Perez Hilton expressed regret for sharing the pictures (Isaac 2014), and other celebrities encouraged audiences not to search for, or click on the leaked pictures, arguing that to do so perpetuated the violation of Lawrence's (and others') privacy. The broader ethical role of media and IT organizations came into question, and reporters and editors of publications such as *Forbes* and *The New York Times* began to debate the level of responsibility that developers and manufacturers of smartphones and apps held in relation to their users' security (Manjoo 2014; Hartzog and Selinger 2014).

This media debate could be used to inform student research projects, and/or a classroom discussion of 'teen sexting' in the context of broader cultural understandings of digital privacy, and the ethics of information sharing. For example, students might collect a selection of official educational materials and mainstream media commentary on young people's sexting (or the production and sharing of sexy selfies). They could then compare this material to mainstream discussions of 'The Fappening'. Reflection prompts might include questions such as:

> Why is the debate so different when adults' pictures, rather than teens', are shared without permission? (Points to consider might include that age of consent, laws regarding child pornography, or other factors identified by students.)

> Why did celebrities and media commentators refer to this non-consensual sharing as 'abuse'? Why was there such a strong response against commentators, such as Ricky Gervais, who suggested the subjects of the hacked pictures should not have taken them in the first place? Do you think the response would have been different if the pictures were shared by an ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend of one of the celebrities? Why? Why not?

In classes directly addressing issues of online privacy, students could be asked to explore the following:

> It has been suggested that 'The Fappening' was a result of a security flaw in Apple's Cloud storage. How was this issue addressed in the commentary you have read? How does this discussion compare to other reports of major security breaches or hacks, such as the hack of Sony PlayStation Network users' credit card details and passwords in 2011 (Schreier 2011). Who was deemed responsible for security in these cases? The individual using the service? The service

themselves? Someone else? If different parties were held responsible for securing data in different circumstances, how do you explain this?

Students can be encouraged to investigate and discuss the commercialization of personal information, and the challenges to privacy in digital media environments alongside the strategies that young people currently use or might consider using to manage their online presence. For example, students can Google one another and discuss why their personal information is available online, what it implies about them, and who profits from it. Online reputation management should be offered as a strategy to achieve particular ends (such as getting a job or getting into college) rather than through shaming young people for revealing too much or supposedly having no sense of privacy. Many studies demonstrate that young people do indeed value privacy, though these values take forms that may be unfamiliar to some adults (Marwick et al. 2010), and assessment tasks and class discussions should take a strength-based approach in acknowledging these existing strategies, rather than assuming a deficit. Finally, we suggest that schools, educators, and parents should seek to model the respect for privacy in digital spaces they aim to foster in the young people in their care.

What's 'Appropriate' Sexuality? Thinking Critically About Context

Our seventh recommendation is that educators help students to explore platform-specific or contextual appropriateness for online images. Educators may wish to specifically focus on the ways different social networking platforms and apps define 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' sexual representations, or images of naked and semi-naked bodies. Two assessment tasks, adapted from the Selfies Syllabus (Senft et al. 2014c) encourage students to critically analyze notions of online and offline locale-based appropriateness.

In the first, students are asked to go to a social media platform of their choice (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) and look up its Terms of Service and Terms of Use. They are asked to search for sections in which sexuality is mentioned in relation to the kinds of language that can be used, or the kinds of images that can be posted on the site. They are then asked to answer these questions:

What kinds of sexual representations do the Terms of Service and Terms of Use allow? What kinds of representations are disallowed? What policies are there and how do they create conditions for particular kinds of image sharing? Pay specific

attention to the language used. Do these meet your standards for promoting consent, minimising risk and promoting safety online? Why? Why not? If they do not meet your standards, re-write the Terms of Service and Terms of Use, and explain why these new versions are an improvement on the original versions.

Another exercise from the Selfies Syllabus asks students to visit sites such as the 'lactivists' page on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/lactivistpage), where discussions rage about whether an image of a woman nursing a child ought to be considered sexually explicit material. Against this discussion, one might suggest students undertake a Google search for the words 'Kara Walker sexually explicit selfies'. This search produces slew of articles, whose authors critique a series of pictures taken by (predominately white) individuals at Kara Walker's installation, *The Subtlety* (which was housed in the old Domino Sugar factor and featured a massive sphinx like figure made out of sugar with the features of a nude Black woman, an homage to the slave bodies who produced the substance). Following study of these articles, students can suggest reasons why so many visitors to the installation chose to take and share photos in which they pictured themselves performing sexually suggestive acts 'on' the central sculpture, while laughing, and why critics (and the artist herself) found this behavior to be disrespectful. Classroom discussions such as these can be used to draw out students' understandings of contextual sexual appropriateness—that is, an appreciation that cultural codes and conventions relating to both nudity and sexual behavior are in fact not universal, but context dependent.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have articulated a range of strategies that educators might use in discussions with young people about sexting. Throughout, we have maintained that anti-sexting strategies with 'youth-oriented' language (e.g. in a recent Australian 'Say No to Selfies' promotion) are wrongheaded, in that they tend to emphasize worst-case scenarios, victim-blaming, and slut-shaming. Instead, we advocate a model that emphasizes privacy protection, harm reduction, and affirmative consent, where 'no' is the presumed the default, and individuals need to seek and negotiate voluntary, meaningful, and explicit consent before and during sexual interactions. As researchers and educators, we have had the most luck with discussion prompts and pedagogical exercises that invite young people to think of photos they produce for themselves and photos they release to the world; sexualized images of celebrities and privacy violations that celebrities regularly receive; and case studies

where nude bodies (in science, art, nursing, etc.) are subjected to a mediasphere where they are sexualized out of context. We have also found that it in order to have meaningful conversations with minimal risk to all parties, it is important that we honor young peoples' language choices regarding what they do with the photos they create, receive, post, and forward. In closing, it is worth noting that the Selfies Research Network welcomes new members. Individuals wishing to contribute to their ongoing pedagogy initiative are welcome to visit their site at www.selfieresearchers.com.

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Part IV

Re-animating What Else Sexuality Education Research Can Do, Be, and Become

Emma Renold and Jessica Ringrose

Introduction

Every section in this handbook illuminates just how complex and expansive contemporary sexuality education research has been and continues to be. As Sara McClelland and Michelle Fine outline so lyrically in their introduction to the section on sexualities in schools, when we loosen our grip on the known, and dive into the possibilities of what might constitute young sexualities research, we are open to infinite assemblages of 'fluids and fantasies, words and images, relationships and tweets, where organs, desires, silences, naughty giggles' await us. Indeed, the handbook is replete with chapters that encourage us to think again how sexuality is 'taught, learned, witnessed, affectively charged, embodied, enacted, muted, and resisted by students and educators'.

Evidenced and amplified throughout, it is clear that these are challenging times for researching what we would conceptualize as the contradictory and schizoid socio-political terrain of young people's sexual cultures (Fine and McClelland 2006; Renold and Ringrose 2013; Renold et al. 2015). Like many academics, we continue to learn about what it means to be doing sexuality research with children/on childhood at a time of ubiquitous youth sex

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panics and high-profile sexual abuse scandals. As we, and others, have written elsewhere, mapping the complex power plays of how young sexualities are lived and felt in schools, communities, online, and beyond are often lost, caricatured, silenced, absent or undermined, and increasingly commodified and sensationalized in much popular representations of what it means to be young and sexual. Indeed, finding ways to capture the ruptures, ripples, and regulations of contemporary young sexualities is no simple task, and demands ever inventive ways of doing research and being a researcher. It also frequently pushes the boundaries of what even counts as research, especially when our 'research' is plugged into the evidence and impact machines of neo-liberal universities.

In his writings on 'existential refrains', Guatarri (1995/2013), p. 147) introduces the metaphor of the messenger bird 'that taps on the window with its beak, so as to announce the existence of other ways of being that rupture the status quo'. This section's focus on re-animating what else sexuality education research can be is one such messenger bird, tapping on and into new ways imagining, designing, doing, feeling, being, acting upon, and transforming what (else) research into young sexualities can do. Indeed, it is no coincidence that a core cluster of the chapters are from scholars whose post-structural foundations have been uprooted and re-routed to entangle with post-constructionist theories and methods (Taylor and Hughes 2016; Coleman and Ringrose 2013; Lather and St Pierre 2013) which explicitly engage with the challenges and affordances of researching the human and more-than-human affective and material features of sexuality.

Tasked with the privilege of exploring some of the new directions for sexuality education research, we invited and selected contributions which continue the handbook's refrain to nurture the creative ways in which sexuality scholars are pushing the boundaries of what counts as sexuality education research, through engaging with perhaps less developed concepts, encounters, methods, praxis, and pedagogy in an established field of sexuality education research. We were keen to provide readers with a glimpse of those at the forefront and edges of the/their field, including contributions from established scholars to doctoral researchers. Each chapter provides a journey of their entanglements with not necessarily new but perhaps newly assembled theories, methods, and topics which enable them, and hopefully readers too, to think-feel Otherwise, about the 'more-than' of sexualities and education research.

The first two chapters enliven our conceptualizations of what more sexual identities can be and become when we shift into post-identitarian modalities of inquiry.

Gabrielle Owen (Chap. 27) asks, 'What does the increasing availability of "transgender" as a subject position do to conceptions of sexuality education?' and 'How can trans phenomena and transgender theory provide a context for reimagining the role of the school in the production of sexual subjectivities?'. Addressing these questions through two recent sex education children's books, *What Makes a Baby* (2012) and *Sex Is a Funny Word* (2015), Owen explores the possibilities for re-imagining sexuality education in ways that decenter identity and rupture the linearity of developmental narratives that regulate the being and becoming of young gendered and sexual subjects. The chapter critically engages with the limits of discursive and categorical approaches to sexual identity formation, and encourages a radical reconceptualization of sexuality pedagogy that does not rely on gendered or sexual identity categories for its efficacy.

Chapter 28 by **Ester McGeeney** reflects upon a participatory film-making project with young people and visual artists that sought to 'reanimate original research materials from a study of young people's experiences of sex, pleasure and desire'. She critically explores how arts-based methodologies can create opportunities for young people to consider the complex, sensual, and emotional aspects of teen sexuality that are frequently left out from sexuality education programs. Analyzing the making of a series of short films with young people, the chapter provides rich examples of what it means to co-compose open-ended spaces with young people to explore pleasure and desire. By privileging process (i.e. creating the films) over outcome (i.e. the films as product), she illuminates the pedagogical 'possibilities for involving young people in the process of sexual "knowledge in the making"'. McGeeney's chapter offers a rare glimpse of how to work with research data without compromising the privacy or safety of the story-teller. She also encourages us to explore different ways of creating safe spaces and activities that attune to the affective and spontaneous ways in which experiences emerge and through which students and educators learn to unlearn the making of young sexualities.

Also exploring the power of art to refigure sexualities, **Mindy Blaise** and **Affrica Taylor** (Chap. 29) continue to draw upon but also further queer queer theory by illuminating its anthropomorphic tendencies. They are interested in moving beyond diversified Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex identity taxonomies, by illuminating the inherent queerness of the non-human through a Haraway-inspired entanglement of 'queer kin' relations that disrupt the nature–culture divides of much Western liberal humanist thought. They take readers on a journey through three performative events: a performance staged by US 'sexecologists' Elizabeth Stephens and

Annie Sprinkle; a queer–kin encounter between kangaroos and young children in the Australian urban 'bush'; and an exhibit that challenges the limits of queer taxonomies, via Julia deVille's phantasmagoria exhibit performed at the Adelaide Biennial Art Gallery of South Australia. Like Owen's chapter, they decenter the human subject of queer theory—each episode re-animating queer scholarship as a 'more-than-human worldly ethico-political project'. This chapter provides us with a rich tapestry of provocations through which to re-imagine the field of sexuality education beyond the anthropomorphic constraints of identity categories.

Louisa Allen in Chap. 30 joins a range of researchers who are troubling post-structural and discursive analysis-driven qualitative research practices and findings drawing on the work of Karen Barad and others who are situated in the area of feminist new materialism. Drawing on Baradian theories of agential realism, Allen seeks to re-think the place of photographs in her sexuality research in school. Through this lens, the assumed effects of images are transformed into a consideration of affects (see also Coleman 2009, for discussion of media affects) showing how photographic practices of camera–human–surroundings create sexuality through relational processes, rather than 'capturing' sexuality out there. Allen offers some useful glimpses into her process of searching for human-driven sexuality narratives through photos, to developing what she calls an 'anti-humanist' and non-anthropocentric gaze with which to regard and make sense of images in her research, including considering the 'thing power' (Bennett 2010) of various agents and non-human spatial and temporal phenomena. In re-thinking images of breasts and penises in particular, some questions of how this approach may directly challenge conventionally sexist or binary-driven ways of looking and understanding of what images of girl and boy bodies convey and do are left tinglingly open for discussion at the end of Allen's chapter.

Emma Renold and Jessica Ringrose in Chap. 31 approach the issue of posthuman embodiment through a related new materialism lens in their chapter 'Pinballing and boners', which provocatively headlines the power of gendered part-icipations (balls and boners) in schooling sexuality assemblages. The chapter seeks to re-materialize and posthumanize our understandings of phallogecentric power relations at school. They outline an approach drawing on Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad to put the affirmative and activism back into research explaining their concept of intra-activism through two case studies from a project on feminism groups in schools. The ethical and political complexities of creating projects and methodologies that enable young people to feel safe enough to spontaneously share what is often hidden or taboo in formal sexuality education curricula are explored, as in McGeeney's

chapter. Through a micro-analysis of explicitly activist feminist lunch clubs, they dwell upon the difficult moments where the feminist groups encountered are threatened and breakdown in the face of penetrative phallogecentric power plays. They also, however, document the ways that feminist fire sparked up in spite of such blockages, documenting 'micro-processes' of every intra-activisms in and beyond school.

Pam Alldred and **Nick Fox** in Chap. 32 take us much deeper into the meanings and operations of a research assemblage. The authors explore Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of micropolitics in relation to a range of new writing on new materialisms. They elaborate in some detail the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari such as molar, molecular, and territorializing, which code bodies and sexuality in context- and culture-specific formations. What is most useful and interesting in the chapter is the attempt to use the Deleuzo-Guattarian 'tool box', as they put it, to think of the machinic processes undertaken in social scientific research processes, and in this case, they apply this to different types of sexuality and educational research. Enlivening and transforming a key Deleuzo-Guattarian question about what the body can do, they show what the various research machines allow the research to do and not do. They consider the affective flows that are mobilized in research machines as relative to the types of relationships and research practices set in place and through the very research instruments and design enacted, implicitly following the logic of Karen Barad's examination of scientific research apparatuses. They explore how the power relations in a survey versus a qualitative research method produce either simplicity or complexity 'aggregate event affects', thus offering a powerful reflection upon research design, practices, and findings.

Ian Thomas in Chap. 33 continues to delve into Deleuzian Analytics for thinking about sexuality research in education**.** Like Alldred and Fox, Thomas explores Royal science as a mode of molar theory testing and building that aggregates data on sexualities working at the very level of abstraction that Deleuze and Guattari rejected. Minor sciences, in contrast, offers a more transformative mode that rejects a priori assumptions, and it is better able to remain attuned to the unknown. Thomas explores various forms of network assemblage methodologies including social network text analysis used in qualitative research. But what is unique in Thomas' approach is that he seeks to include quantitative research in the minor science category (making the macro micro). He shows us how his research uses quantitative data and network discourse analysis to produce a visual map of over 1000 sex-seeking advertisements posted online by men who have sex with men. The visual map allows the centrality of concept–word–things and relationships between various aspects of the adverts (time, sex acts, and the visual) to be explored by the

researcher as a whole, with regard to the network-assemblages 'structure', but in relation to the micro level as well. Thus the data is used to show micro-relationality rather than simply macro measurement and comparison.

As a section, these chapters offer powerful provocations to *re-animate* sexuality research. To animate something is to enliven, to make, to en-courage, and to inspire act/ion. Taken together as an assemblage, the chapters do this very work—charting some unfamiliar territory in sexuality education research and creating provocative points of departure for where we may go next.

To support these new directions, we conclude this brief introduction by re-posing a few of the questions (see Renold et al. 2015) that we have asked elsewhere which we think can help us to identify some of the key challenges of future sexualities and education research:

- How might post-queer and posthuman approaches continue to unsettle what counts as sexualities and education research?
- How might inventive and creative methodologies enable us to continue to explore what else sexuality education research can be and become?
- How might we create transformative, safe spaces, for radical and critical sexuality pedagogy and practice?
- How can our research practices dovetail with our activisms and engagements with policy processes in ways that are sustainable and ethically viable?
- What are the opportunities and challenges for involving children and young people more directly in sexualities educational research, activism, practice, and policy formation?

Our hope is that these questions will prompt those grappling with sexualities and education research to continue pondering how they settle and unsettle their imaginings of what their projects can become and what they can do.

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Adolescence, Trans Phenomena, and the Politics of Sexuality Education

Gabrielle Owen

As 'transgender' increasingly becomes a subject position that is culturally available to young people through its circulation in media and popular culture and its proliferation in the institutional discourses of medicine, psychology, and education, so do the stakes increase for understanding its radical social potential and its limits within hegemonic discourse. What does the increasing availability of 'transgender' as a subject position do to conceptions of sexuality education? How can trans phenomena and transgender theory provide a context for reimagining the role of the school in the production of sexual subjectivities? Central to these questions is the question of 'adolescence' itself as a discursive and performative category with specific social and cultural functions. This chapter theorizes both transgender and adolescence as a way to unravel fixed notions of developmental sequence, gender identity, sexuality, and selfhood, positing the radical potential of queer and trans phenomena to rethink the politics of sexuality education.

Transgender theory is methodologically invested in disrupting notions of identity, an investment shared with queer theory, though one perhaps framed more centrally through gendered embodiment than paradigms of sexuality and desire (Stryker 2006, p. 7). Susan Stryker (2004) playfully describes transgender studies as queer theory's 'evil twin', explaining that while queer theory might critically engage categories of sexuality such as gay, lesbian, or

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heterosexual, transgender studies emphasizes instead the ways categories of gender, like man or woman, 'enable desire to take shape and find its aim' (p. 212). Transgender theory takes account of trans phenomena in bodies and the world, but it is not concerned with categorizing, stabilizing, or defining a minoritarian population, instead approaching issues of social justice from an interdisciplinary position of systemic intervention and critique. Stryker (2006) writes:

> [T]ransgender studies is concerned with anything that disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we generally assume to exist between the biological specificity of the sexually differentiated human body, the social roles and statuses that a particular form of body is expected to occupy, the subjectively experienced relationship between a gendered sense of self and social expectations of gender-role performance, and the cultural mechanisms that work to sustain or thwart specific configurations of gendered personhood. (p. 3)

This chapter participates in the theoretical work of transgender studies by thinking through the ways trans phenomena and the concept of adolescence make visible these normative linkages—ones that are particularly taken for granted in existing practices of sexuality education.

James T. Sears (1992) observes that '[s]exuality education is first and foremost an *instrument* of sexual and social control in which the effectiveness of such programs is judged on the basis of sexual *behavior* and its observable consequences' (p. 7). And in Janice M. Irvine's (2002) history of sex education in the USA, she notes that '[s]ex education's story is part of long-standing efforts to regulate sexual morality through control of sexual speech' (p. 6). But sexuality education is only one apparatus of the regulatory schema of 'sexuality' itself as a compulsory mode of self-understanding (Foucault 1978). As a mechanism of what Foucault calls biopower, and later, biopolitics, '[t]he sex of children and adolescents has become, since the eighteenth century, an important area of contention around which innumerable institutional devices and discursive strategies have been deployed' (1978, p. 30). Biopower describes the organization and exercise of social power aimed at fostering life: 'Sex was a mean of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species' (Foucault 1978, p. 146). One of the results of a society whose goal was to foster life is that childhood and adolescence emerge as sites of intense disciplinary control in which the life of the species is seen to be at stake in the policing of gender norms, the construction and maintenance of heterosexuality, and the affirmation of the reproductive nuclear family as an organizing principle of society.

Liana Y. Bay-Cheng (2003) explores how present models of school-based sexuality education in the USA rely on and perpetuate a notion of adolescent sexuality as an intense biological drive that is difficult to control or contain. She writes that 'the infusion of a biologically determined hypersexuality into the identity of the adolescent succeeds in giving inevitable and natural cause for adult intervention and surveillance' (2003, p. 62). She notes some of the consequences of present regulatory practices of sexuality education, such as the predominance of abstinence-only models, the exclusive focus on the risks and dangers of sex, the exclusion and erasure of all sexual practices other than heterosexual coitus, and the reproduction of sexist, classist, and racist constructions of sexuality. Bay-Cheng argues that these problematic effects must be addressed or school-based sexuality education 'will continue to propagate a narrow and unrealistic version of "normal" adolescent sexuality, failing to truly inform and empower teens to make healthy and responsible sexual choices' (2003, p. 71).

While scholars are at work on how to best achieve sexuality education's radical potential (Allen 2005, 2011; Britzman 1998; Gilbert 2014), the regulatory history of sexuality and its institutionalization within the school provide significant obstacles, raising the question of how such regulatory functions might be resisted. This chapter aims to contribute to this conversation by taking up trans phenomena in relation to questions of gender and sexuality, theorizing the production of gendered subjects as a social and discursive process that aims to contain embodied queer and trans phenomena within the ideological concept of adolescence. Through a discussion of two recent sex education children's books, *What Makes a Baby* (2012) and *Sex is a Funny Word* (2015), I then explore some of the possibilities for conceptualizing and enacting sexuality education in ways that decenter identity and developmental narrative, making room for an expansive and fluctuating range of self-understandings and identifications.

Producing Gendered Subjects

Last fall, controversy erupted in Lincoln, Nebraska, a small city in the Midwestern USA, one that understands itself as a progressive city in an otherwise conservative state, home to the state capitol and to the public university where I teach. The controversy began after a parent obtained some handouts on gender inclusivity shared with teachers during a summer administrative training session. That parent emailed the handouts to other parents, beginning a crusade of protests brought before the public school board on the grounds

that the handouts were 'promoting an agenda' and 'a serious breach of trust' (Reist 2014a). According to news reports, the handouts contained suggestions for using gender-neutral language when referring to groups of students, advice on how to give more than two options should a child need to designate a gender, and information about sex and gender as a spectrum rather than a stable binary (Kellaway 2014; Reist 2014a). The story drew national media attention, with Fox News falsely reporting that the Lincoln Public School district had banned all references to gender and had mandated referring to students as 'purple penguins' instead (Kellaway 2014). The handouts, which aimed to help teachers create a safe and welcoming environment for transgender and gender nonconforming students, were not intended for parents or students, but this fact was received as further evidence of the school's underhanded actions. The mere fact that teachers received this information was enough to outrage parents and to spark national media coverage, suggesting that this local controversy resonated with wider cultural assumptions and beliefs about gender and schooling. But what shared beliefs underpinned these protests?

Rachel Terry, the parent who began the protest, asserted that the handouts promoted 'the deconstruction of fundamental family and religious values' (Reist 2014a). Another parent, Ali Moghadam, whom the newspaper described as a veteran 'once tortured as a political prisoner in Iran', claimed to be in favor of anti-bullying measures and cultural diversity, but said that the gender inclusivity training was 'indoctrination, not education' (Reist 2014b). Courtney Criswell, another parent, argued, '[w]e cannot strip away one part of a child's identity to build another one up', claiming that the content of the handouts 'creates unnecessary confusion for the majority of students' (Reist 2014b). The local newspaper recounts an uneven debate, with school officials on the defensive and upset parents turning the terms of the argument against them. Rather than hearing the school's concern for transgender students, the parents positioned themselves as the ones who were 'concerned' in contrast to a careless or calloused administration. The handouts were not seen as preventing the bullying of students, but rather as an act of 'bullying' themselves aimed at intimidating teachers into accepting the agenda of the school superintendent, whose defenses of gender inclusivity training were subsequently cast as more 'bullying' (Reist 2014b). These tactics casting the school and superintendent as themselves worthy of suspicion might be understood as part of a long-standing rhetorical script in the history of sex education in the USA, what Irvine describes as 'making up enemies' to discredit and stigmatize particular kinds of information (2002, p. 122). Irvine notes that '[p]assionate local debates tend to be read as though they are spontaneous, indigenous uprisings of outraged citizens' (2002, p. 10). She argues, however, that these

local debates must be understood as 'profoundly shaped by national political rhetorics' (2002, p. 10). Irvine's account of the debates surrounding sex education shows the close relation between local and national rhetorical scripts, some of which have been redeployed in the debate over gender inclusivity training in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Ultimately, the school superintendent Steve Joel caved amidst his defense of the training, saying that he would remove the handouts from the schools on the grounds that they were not clear enough about the school district's positions and policies to stand on their own (Reist 2014c). Whether gender inclusivity training was stopped is not entirely clear. This summer, the controversy bubbled up again as parents returned to the school board, casting doubt on whether the materials were actually removed, and claiming that parents whose children were 'affected' should have been notified about the school district's 'violation of their parental rights' (Dunker 2015). Nancy Carr, a parent also involved in the debate the year before, stated: 'My concern is for the children who hear these tales of transgenderism and confusion and doubt that is sown in their impressionable minds at a time when they are vulnerable and innocent' (Dunker 2015). Carr deploys another rhetorical strategy described by Irvine in which children are cast as 'potential or actual victims' and the information in question is a danger or risk to them (2002, p. 108). And yet, this pattern of comments raises questions about what is so threatening about the idea of gender inclusivity, which, unlike the sex education initiatives discussed by Irvine, does not involve any talk about sex or sexuality. How does the acknowledgment of even one student, who may have a fluid, trans, or non-binary experience of gender, appear to threaten students who identify as boys and girls?

The protests from parents, surprisingly, highlight the performativity of gender and its power to produce the thing that it names (Butler 1993). It is interesting that protests do not rely on arguments about the naturalness of gender or biological sex, but rather readily admit that the school has a central role to play in constructing gender. If teachers do not regularly assert the differences between boys and girls in their classrooms, these comments seem to imply, their students will not emerge from those classrooms *as* boys and girls. When Courtney Criswell says that gender inclusivity training could 'strip away one part of a child's identity' and '[create] confusion for the majority of students' (Reist 2014b), she suggests the incredible fragility of gender as a social role and subject position. Nancy Carr also mentions 'confusion and doubt', problematically evoking young people as passive and 'impressionable' while suggesting that their automatic or 'natural' state is one of gender instability (Dunker 2015). Carr's denial that students have much agency

in the classroom or in their own gendered lives serves not only to shore up her argument, but also to prop up a larger fantasy of control, the idea that the school can shape students into whomever it wants them to be. The school must deny that gender is a spectrum, the logic goes, so that students will conform to the strict binary roles that Carr and other parents have in mind for them. Both childhood and adolescence as social categories play a role in supporting the idea that young people are inherently porous and pliable and thus in need of institutional direction and control. When Ali Moghadam insists that gender inclusivity is 'indoctrination, not education' (Reist 2014b), he also takes for granted the school's role in producing gendered subjects. For him, as long as the school's practices reinforce the gender binary, this is 'education'. The regulatory functions of education, the school, and even gender itself are simultaneously acknowledged and denied. Though gender and sexuality often function as naturalized, taken-for-granted 'truths' in social discourse, what we see in this controversy is that the mere acknowledgment of trans phenomena exposes gender as unstable and fragile even among its staunchest defenders.

A Theory of Adolescence

The tenor of anxiety in the protests over gender inclusivity training reflects a notion of childhood as 'a potentiality rather than an actuality' (Castañeda 2002, p. 1). Rather than seeing the children in Lincoln Public Schools for the actual people they already are—some of whom are transgender or gender nonconforming—the protesting parents refer to school children only in terms of the future adults they might someday be, people who will grow up to embody their 'fundamental family and religious values' (Reist 2014a). Consequently, the figure of the child and childhood itself are constructed as primarily empty spaces waiting to be filled with adult desire, expectation, and direction (Kincaid 1992, 1998; Rose 1984). This emptiness is often referred to as 'innocence', and the imposition of innocence onto children radically excludes sexuality and denies their agential and world-making capacities. For scholars, to consider sexuality in relation to children, as Emma Renold (2005) has done, requires 'a "queering" of childhood', which she describes as 'paying attention to the multiple and contradictory ways in which sexuality is constitutive of both the subject "child" and the social and cultural institution of "childhood"' (p. 9). Kerry H. Robinson (2013) considers childhood innocence as a regulatory tool, noting that '[n]owhere has the governance of childhood and adults—and the use of "the child" as a technology of

power—been more obvious than in the area of sexuality' (p. 6). Far from the mere acknowledgment of child and childhood as social constructions, these approaches grapple with the discursive and performative functions of categories of age in order to understand their impact on gendered and sexual subjectivities. The imposition of the categories 'child' and 'childhood' onto young people plays an essential role in the production and maintenance of gender and sexuality as regulatory schemas.

Likewise, adolescence serves specific functions as a category of age working to organize the social and cultural recognition of some gendered and sexual subjectivities as more 'right', 'real', or 'true' than others. Adolescence works as both a mechanism of social control and an ideological container for the trans phenomena in all gendered experience (Owen 2014). To show how this works, I want to turn to an example that illustrates how the category of adolescence works alongside childhood to prop up notions of binary gender and heterosexuality: a self-help book for preteens by James Dobson called *Preparing for Adolescence* (1978). Dobson is the founder of a fundamentalist Christian organization in the USA called Focus on the Family, and this book has appeared in many subsequent editions. My examples are drawn from the 1978 edition because it is the one my father gave me when I was 12 years old. I do not think this book is representative of the discursive functions of adolescence in all situations; in fact, its sentiments will strike some as conservative and old-fashioned, but Dobson's deployment of adolescence illustrates its particular and far-reaching logic as a concept.

Adolescence, as a stage of human life, is understood as a transition from childhood to adulthood. As a transition, it is characterized by uncertainty, instability, and the search for identity. Dobson opens his book with a preface addressed to parents describing 'our adolescent years as the most stressful and threatening time of life' (1978, p. 5). While the book conducts its own version of sexuality education, explaining puberty and sexual intercourse among other things, I want to focus on a section titled 'On Becoming Men and Women'. Dobson begins this way: 'One more comment needs to be made in regard to your search for identity, and it has to do with finding the proper masculine or feminine role' (1978, p. 138). Here, Dobson locates adolescence as a time when gender identity is unstable or unformed. He considers this instability an inherent part of adolescence, an inherent part of the transition in which '[g]irls will begin taking on the behavior that is appropriate for women, and boys will adopt the very different style of men' (1978, p. 138). The transition to a properly gendered adulthood, however, is not something Dobson naturalizes as biological but rather anxiously describes as social and cultural:

> [B]efore these changes occur, you have to know what is masculine and what is feminine. Those differences are not as clear today as they were when your parents were children, and many young people today have a very hazy sexual identity. (1978, p. 138)

Though Dobson is clearly promoting differentiated binary gender roles consistent with one's assigned birth sex, a linkage usually taken for granted as a given in hegemonic discourse, he does not seem to take it for granted here. He describes gender identity as socially contingent, changing from generation to generation, expressed through behavior and requiring explicit knowledge of 'what is masculine and what is feminine' (1978, p. 138). Like the parents opposed to gender inclusivity training in Nebraska, Dobson highlights the fragility of gender. Gender norms require institutional maintenance and personal vigilance to sustain their hegemony.

In this section, Dobson overlaps gender nonconformity with homosexuality, at times using gender nonconformity as a euphemism for homosexuality (which is not itself explicitly mentioned in this section) and at other times positioning gender nonconformity as the cause of homosexuality, suggesting that if a young person has a clear sense of their 'proper' role, then the 'proper' object choice will follow. Learning about what is masculine and what is feminine, however, is positioned as something that all adolescents must do. He writes:

> Maybe you too will have to answer some questions about your sexual identity between now and adulthood. If so, the easiest way to learn how to play the role of your particular sex, whether it be a man or a woman, is to watch an adult whom you respect. Try to be like him or her. This is called *identifying* with another person. If it's your mother or your teacher or another adult of your sex, watch and learn how he or she acts. Quietly observe how he walks and talks, and gradually, you will find that it will become natural for you to be something like your model, even though you're a unique individual. This process comes under the heading of the search for identity, and it is an important part of growing up. (1978, p. 139)

In this passage, the trans phenomena Dobson describes—the sense that one's gendered behavior or identifications do not line up with one's assigned sex—is talked about as an ordinary part of adolescence, as 'the search for identity' and 'an important part of growing up' (1978, p. 139). Likewise, trans phenomena and queer desire are collapsed, both contained by adolescence.

Dobson describes adolescence as 'stressful' and 'threatening' (1978, p. 5) to displace the perceived threat of queer and trans phenomena onto this

stage of supposed instability and transition in which personal, therapeutic, or educational intervention appears to be appropriate and even developmentally necessary. Dobson is encouraging young people to make an effort to conform while simultaneously constructing adolescence as the time when queer or trans phenomena are to be expected. To put this another way:

> Adolescence exists in a curiously contradictory relation to conformity as the place where resistance belongs and is expected, and yet where it can still be managed, guided and controlled. Adulthood needs adolescence to maintain the illusion of this management and control, and thus the illusion of arrival at adulthood as a normative and stable identity position. (Owen 2015, p. 130)

These functions might be understood as part of what Angus Gordon (1999) calls 'the production of adolescence as a narrativistic field of knowledge' (p. 3) in which constructions of adolescence retrospectively narrativize one's adult identity as inevitable. While Gordon focuses on the effects of adolescence in queer theory and subsequently for queer adults, my analysis suggests the ways these narrativizing functions work to produce the idea of a stable and normative adulthood by locating queer and trans phenomena in adolescence where they are presumed to be changeable. Adolescence bears the ideological weight of all transitory and contingent moments of self-making so that adulthood can represent a final arrival at selfhood. In this sense, adolescence itself works as a regulatory and disciplinary tool for both adults and adolescents. The view of adolescence as a time of instability and transition justifies perceptions that young people are rebellious, hormonal, or confused, descriptions which imply that they are not agents of their own actions, desires, or identities.

Decentering Identity

Jen Gilbert (2014) writes, '[s]ex education rests on a distinction between adults and adolescents' (p. 25). This distinction is usually made to justify and rationalize the regulatory functions of sexuality education, but if we reconsider adolescence and childhood themselves as highly contingent, performative categories of age in which young people must negotiate their agency, desires, and self-understandings, we can think about sex and sexuality outside of their logics. Indeed, we might imagine how to decenter developmental sequence and its points of arrival at gendered and sexual identities from the process of sexuality education altogether. This conception does not suggest that gendered and sexual identities do not inform a young person's understandings of

sexuality, but rather that it is not the work of sexuality education to stabilize, define, or regulate the arrival at such identifications. Decentering identity not only broadens possibilities for sexuality education for queer- and trans-identified youth but also broadens possibilities for a diverse range of families and cultures. I want to discuss two children's books written by Cory Silverberg and illustrated by Fiona Smyth to explore what these conceptualizations might look like in practice.

In Silverberg and Smyth's *What Makes a Baby*, the 'facts of life' are explained for children in a way that leaves room for a wider range of reproductive possibilities than are usually acknowledged in children's books or in sex education classrooms. Departing from conventional narratives that euphemize sex and reproduction as the property of the nuclear family, the result of love between married men and women, Silverberg and Smyth's book features smiling bodies illustrated without gender markers, some of whom have eggs in them, some of whom have sperm, and some of whom have uteruses. Bringing egg and sperm together, along with finding a place for them to grow, is framed as something people—not gendered 'moms' and 'dads'—decide to do. In the author's note by Silverberg, he writes: '[This book] doesn't include information about sexual intercourse, donor insemination, fertility treatments, surrogacy, or adoption. But it creates the space for you to share as few or as many of those details as you like' (2012). While Silverberg and Smyth's book is the first of its kind, one that makes space for queer and trans reproductive possibilities, it is also notable for its nonpathologizing approach to reproductive technologies that might be accessed by any person.

Silverberg and Smyth's follow-up to *What Makes a Baby*, a book aimed at 7–10 year olds called *Sex is a Funny Word*, takes a similarly ambitious approach to sexuality education, forgoing sterile biological explanations and emphasizing instead the reader's own process of inquiry and discovery. This book might be read as an enactment of Gilbert's suggestion to 'imagine sex education as a place of questions rather than answers' (2004, p. 234). In the author's note by Silverberg, he writes:

> Most books about sex are full of answers. Answers can be helpful and reassuring, but they also tell us what to think and even how to think instead of encouraging us to think for ourselves and to honor our own knowledge and experience. (2015)

The book emphasizes questions, ending each chapter with questions for the reader to think about and talk about with someone they trust. The pedagogical structure of teacher–student is disrupted by the comic book formatting,

featuring four child characters who are shown engaging with the book's content in different ways. The questions at the end of each chapter come from these characters rather than the seemingly 'objective' and factual text of the book itself. The book contains information about the word sex, the human body, gendered ways of being, and touch. However, this information is layered by scenes featuring the four characters interacting with the information, with each other, and with other people in their lives. This layering effectively exposes the information as subject to context, relationships, and individual engagement rather than as rule or law.

All of the characters subvert gender stereotypes in some way, but the book subverts gender most powerfully by decentering it from the logics of sexuality and self-knowledge more generally. On the first page of the book, we learn about each of the four characters, their ages, favorite foods, and likes and dislikes that include lists like 'candy, math, swimming' and 'climbing on things, music, shy people' (Silverberg and Smyth 2015). These lists suggest a process of identity formation and self-understanding that exceeds the bounds of gender identity or is based on alternative logics altogether. Cat Fitzpatrick (2015) explains that the book 'holds itself open to diversity by always being particular. The four characters aren't blank every-kid stand-ins—they are distinct and weird people who do things like collect antique cell-phones or develop opinions about climate change'. One of the characters, whose name is Zai, does not immediately appear to be clearly male or female judging by the illustrations and Zai's dialogue. However, the great diversity of the other characters in terms of race, ethnicity, ability, and gendered expression creates the effect of incorporating Zai's androgyny as not especially noticeable or notable to a reader. Early in the book, Zai is shown with a question mark thought bubble while watching two girls say to another child: 'You can't wear pink! You're a boy!' (Silverberg and Smyth 2015). The question mark does not indicate anxiety or concern but rather Zai's puzzlement at why anyone would make such a rule. In a subsequent frame, we see Zai shopping with a parental figure, holding a shirt on a hanger and insisting confidently, 'But Mom, I like the color pink!' (Silverberg and Smyth 2015). These frames suggest that Zai's sex was assigned male at birth, but that the social meaning of this assignment doesn't necessarily fit Zai's self-conceptions.

Trans phenomena are represented in the book as a process of inquiry without a predictive outcome, just like any of the other characters' processes of learning about themselves. On the title page of a chapter titled 'Boys, Girls, All of Us', Zai is shown asking: 'Only boys and girls? What about the rest of us?' (Silverberg and Smyth 2015). This chapter explains that babies are called boys or girls when they are born, even though there are more than two kinds

of bodies. One of the characters, Omar, asks the reader, 'What did they call you when you were born?' while Zai asks, 'Why do you think people want to know if a baby is a boy or a girl?' (Silverberg and Smyth 2015). On the next page, the text explains:

> As we grow into being a kid and then an adult, we get to figure out who we are and what words fit best. Most boys grow up to be men, and most girls grow up to be women. But there are many ways to be a boy or a girl. And there are many ways to grow up and become an adult. For most of us, words like boy and girl, or man and woman, feel okay, and they fit. For some of us, they don't. (Silverberg and Smyth 2015)

If developmental sequence—the very idea of growing up—implies the arrival at a normatively gendered adulthood, this book disrupts developmental sequence by representing growing up as a process of change and of learning about oneself: 'Growing up can mean learning about your outside, what your body can and can't do. Growing up can also mean learning about your inside: the stories, memories, and feelings that make you who you are' (Silverberg and Smyth 2015). This distinction between inside and outside doesn't privilege one or the other as the stable or originary source of gender, but rather creates the space for trans phenomena to be experienced and explored not as a bodily contradiction but as an embodied understanding of the relationship between inside and outside.

Rethinking Sex

Silverberg and Smyth's children's books do not deal directly with sex acts, but the author's note at the beginning of *Sex is a Funny Word* says that they are working on another book aimed at older readers that will (2015). While I wish that book were available for consideration in this chapter, I think that Kate Bornstein's self-help book *101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks & Other Outlaws* (2006) provides a glimpse of how queer and trans phenomena might suggest ways of rethinking sex and sexuality education in similarly expansive and non-identitarian ways. Bornstein's book also focuses on questions rather than answers, directly addressing the reader as a 'you' who can interact with the text in various ways. Bornstein situates sexuality as an essential part of the process of imagining a life worth living. She writes:

> Try this advanced mode of the exercise you just did: Imagine sweet sex with a really great person or persons, and it's making both or all of you feel great. […]

> Think about every kind of sex you can think of […] even if some people say it's not right for you to think about it.
>
> Can you imagine being the kind of person who has that kind of sweet sex and relationship? If you can imagine it, you are completely capable of taking steps to realize it. It's a matter of trusting someone enough to let them know who you really are. Trust yourself first. (2006, p. 29)

Bornstein's self-reflexivity and vulnerability elsewhere in the text suggest that this exercise is one that she has used for her own survival, and she shares a bit of her process of negotiating a trans identity in relation to desire and cultural prohibition.

There are similarities between Bornstein's exercise and a moment in *Sex is a Funny Word*: 'Part of being a kid is learning what you like, what you don't like, and who you are. That's part of being a grown-up, too. We never stop learning or changing' (Silverberg and Smyth 2015). The emphasis on self-knowledge and discovery is described in relation to process and change rather than identity formation or points of arrival, resembling Jen Gilbert's (2014) 'cautious theory of development in sex education' (p. 28) that is 'grounded in psychoanalysis and the interpretive possibilities that are opened up when a good life is measured not by one's proximity to norms but by one's capacity to love and work' (p. 29). Likewise, Bornstein's notion of being 'who you really are' is not essentialist or stable. She writes, 'keep in mind that the you that makes life worth living today probably won't be the same you that makes life worth living this time next year' (2006, p. 32). Bornstein accounts for the usefulness of identities while theorizing their subjective function as moving one through life:

> Identities aren't mean to be permanent. They're like cars: they take us from one place to another. We work, travel, and seek adventure in them until they break down beyond repair. At that point, living well means finding a new model that better suits us for a new moment. (2006, p. 32)

Transition here is not the movement from one stable identity to another, but the very condition of inhabiting multiple identities that take us where we want to go.

We might hear an echo of Bornstein's exercise in Judith Butler's (2004) articulation of a psychoanalytic notion of fantasy: 'The struggle to survive is not really separable from the cultural life of fantasy, and the foreclosure of fantasy—through censorship, degradation, or other means—is one strategy for providing for the social death of persons' (p. 28). Butler explains that

fantasy exposes the definitional limit of what can be considered 'real' and possible. 'Fantasy is what allows us to imagine ourselves and others otherwise; it establishes the possible in excess of the real; it points elsewhere, and when it is embodied, it brings elsewhere home' (Butler 2004, p. 29). Essential for the survival of queer and trans young people, Bornstein's exercise is an open invitation, a process of being and becoming that transgresses the bounds of what language and culture deem real or possible.

One of the challenges of sexuality education, as Deborah Britzman (1998) puts it, is '[w]hat becomes unthinkable when sexuality is thought to have a proper place?' (p. 63). The open-ended questions and invitations of Silverberg and Smyth's children's books or Bornstein's self-help book suggest pedagogical methods for approaching the work of the sexuality education classroom without creating a regulatory discourse determining in advance which gendered and sexual becomings are thinkable and possible and which are not. These methods might participate in what Louisa Allen (2005) calls a 'discourse of erotics' or what Mary Louise Rasmussen (2004) calls 'an ethics of pleasure'. They might contribute to Britzman's suggestion, '[w]hat if sex education became a lifetime study of the vicissitudes of knowledge, power, and pleasure?' (1998, p. 74) Rather than integrating definitional notions of transgender identity into models of sexuality education curriculum, we might think instead about how to radically reconceptualize the work of sexuality education in such a way that it does not rely on gendered or sexual identity categories for its efficacy. A radical politics of sexuality education would enable young people to challenge the contingent limits of what is recognized as 'real' and possible within a shifting set of gendered and sexual subjectivities.

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28

Possibilities for Pleasure: A Creative Approach to Including Pleasure in Sexuality Education

Ester McGeeney

A number of researchers and practitioners have suggested that engaging with the arts in sexuality education can create opportunities for young people to consider the complex, sensual and emotional aspects of sexuality that are frequently left out from sexuality education programs (Quinlivan 2014; Sandlos 2010; Albury 2013; Addison 2006). This includes the use of film (Sandlos 2010), contemporary art work (Quinlivan 2014), literature (Helmer 2015) and participatory theater (Batsleer 2011; Ponzetti et al. 2009) as tools for creating open and exploratory contexts for sexual learning and critique. Such approaches are offered as an alternative to those driven by the scientific rationality that often underpins sexuality education policy and practice, in which it is assumed that providing young people with information about sex and sexual health will enable them to make 'responsible and well informed decisions about their lives' (DfE 2000: 3). Advocates of more holistic approaches to sexuality education have long argued that such approaches are limited by the failure to engage with the messy, complex and embodied reality of sexual experience and young people's everyday lives and relationships (Alldred and David 2007).What is needed and facilitated through using arts-based approaches, it is argued, is to open up critical and reflective spaces for examining dominant sexual and gender norms, and developing what Sandlos (2010) characterizes as new forms of 'emotional understanding'.

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The chapter introduces an arts-based methodology for thinking about pleasure within sexuality education and considers what forms of learning, 'unlearning' (Britzman 1998) and 'emotional understanding' such an approach might allow. The methodology is drawn from *The 'good sex' project*—a participatory filmmaking and knowledge exchange project that sets out to reanimate original research materials from a study of young people's sexual cultures. Led by Principal Investigator Rachel Thomson, this was a collaborative project involving researchers at the Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth at the University of Sussex, staff at Brook—the UK's largest sexual health charity for young people, as well as independent artists and young volunteers. Over a one-year period the project team staged a series of participatory filmmaking workshops in London, UK, during which groups of researchers, young people and artists experimented with developing strategies for reanimating research materials relating to young people's experiences of sex, pleasure and desire.

This chapter documents two of the strategies developed during the project that I am calling—*visualization/scriptwriting* and *performance/response*. In my discussion, I consider these techniques not just as technical solutions within a filmmaking/research project but as potential strategies for sexual learning. I examine what kinds of 'places of learning' (Ellsworth 2005) were created by using these strategies and what kinds of knowledge and knowledge-making were made possible as a result.

The chapter starts by outlining the study on which the 'good sex' project is based—a four-year doctoral study of young people's understandings and experiences of 'good sex' and sexual pleasure conducted by the author between 2009 and 2013 (McGeeney 2013). In summarizing the findings of this study, I outline the rationale for the approach taken in 'good sex' project and our interest in using a participatory, performative and arts-based methodology. I then move on to provide a reflexive account of the two methods that are the focus of this chapter. I write as the lead researcher on the 'good sex' project and author of the doctoral research on which the project is based, using data from workshop recordings, materials produced during the workshops and my own observations and reflections recorded on the project blog.[1] In concluding the chapter, I evaluate the potential of the methodology described for enabling innovative sexuality education in different institutional contexts.

[1] https://goodsexproject.wordpress.com/

The Study: What Is 'Good Sex'?

For over three decades, sexuality researchers and practitioners have argued that sexual pleasure should be included in sexuality education policy and practice (Watney 1990; Fine 1988; Holland et al. 1992; Harrison et al. 1996; Hirst 2004; Allen 2005; Ingham 2005; Philpott et al. 2006; Centre for HIV and Sexual Health 2009; Allen and Carmody 2012; Jolly et al. 2013). Broadly, these arguments suggest that a more positive and holistic model of sexual health that foregrounds the emotional and physical pleasures of sex and relationships, would produce more favorable and gender-equitable sexual health outcomes for young people. Much of this work has focused on the benefits of including pleasure in sex education programs for young women, arguing that this would enable educators to create 'safe spaces' (Fine 1988, 35) in which young women could explore the 'discourses of desire' that researchers have frequently observed to be 'missing' from sexuality curricula and classroom practices. Increasingly, however, critics have argued that the inclusion of pleasure in sexuality education programs could also be potentially transformative for young men by creating opportunities for them to explore accounts of gender and sexuality that are more critical, diverse and equitable than those presented in popular media, pornography and current sex education curricula (Beasley 2008; Allen 2005; McGeeney 2015).

More recently, researchers have reflected critically on this call, raising questions about the politics of the 'pleasure project' and its unintended and potentially harmful consequences (Fine 2005; Harris 2005; Lamb 2010; Allen and Carmody 2012; Tolman 2012; Lamb and Peterson 2011; Allen et al. 2014). As Louisa Allen and Moira Carmody note (2012), the nature of discourse itself means that an individual cannot exert control over how it operates in different contexts. In creating spaces to explore discourses of 'desire' (Fine 1988) or 'erotics' (Allen 2005) in sexuality education therefore, an educator cannot predict how these discourses will unravel as they get taken up and contested by different groups of young people, perhaps becoming 'untethered' from the educator's original aims and intentions. Drawing on queer theorists Jagose (2010), Talburt (2009) and Rabinow (1997), Allen and Carmody argue that what is needed is not a standardized or regulatory set of ideas about what pleasure is or what political aims it can achieve, but a concept of pleasure as an open, disruptive 'site of possibility' within which sexuality can be imagined in ways that are not bound by limited heteronormative gender and sexual identities (2012: 463–4).

This chapter draws on a study that sought to critically engage with these debates and consider what it might mean in practice for a researcher or a practitioner to create 'sites of possibility' within which to explore discourses of desire, erotics or pleasure with young people. The study, a doctoral research project conducted between 2009 and 2013, used an incremental, reflexive research design consisting of an initial stage of exploratory and pilot work, followed by three stages of fieldwork using survey, focus-group and biographical interview methods with young people aged 16–25. My aim was to document young people's understandings and experiences of 'good sex' and sexual pleasure and to reflexively examine the effectiveness of different research methods for creating spaces within which to engage young people in conversation about sexual pleasure.

The study found that young people responded with enthusiasm to the invitation to talk about pleasure in groups and one-to-one settings, drawing on a diverse range of discursive resources and emotional registers to define 'good' and 'bad sex' and articulate their experience of sex, pleasure and desire. Although 'good sex' and sexual pleasure were the focus of our discussions, the interview data document the confusion, frustration and discomfort experienced by participants as they encounter contradictions between their own desires and expectations and those of partners, peers and family members. In group discussions, these tensions played out in emotional expressions of disgust, discomfort, humor and playfulness, as participants attempted to negotiate some of the inequalities and exclusions surrounding young people's experiences of sex, pleasure and desire (McGeeney 2015).

These findings suggest that asking questions about pleasure can indeed open up unruly 'sites of possibility' (Allen and Carmody 2012) in which it is possible to move beyond limited public health agendas concerned with preventing sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies (Ingham 2005), but that there may be considerable challenges for educators and young people engaging in this work. In the study, conversations about pleasure were found to be contested, unpredictable and strikingly varied, suggesting that there are a range of experiences that young people consider to be pleasurable or 'good'—many of which may sit uncomfortably alongside an educator or an institution's political, professional investments (McGeeney 2014). While it was possible to create such unpredictable and contested sites within research contexts driven by an exploratory line of enquiry, the study suggests that there may be challenges in operationalizing such an approach within institutional or policy contexts driven by protectionist or public health agendas (Alldred and David 2007).

The 'Good Sex' Project: From Research to Practice

The 'good sex' project: Building evidence-based practice in young people's sexual health is a one-year knowledge exchange project that set out to explore the implications of the study for sexuality education practitioners and organizations. What approaches and critical methodologies might educators need to open up conversations about pleasure and respond to the range of discursive and affective possibilities that this invitation might generate? What support might educators need to carry out this unpredictable and sometimes challenging work?

Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council's knowledge exchange opportunities scheme[2] the project sought to consolidate relationships between researchers (the author and project P.I. Rachel Thomson) and staff at UK sexual health charity Brook. Brook had co-funded the doctoral research on which the project is based and had been involved in shaping the research design and implementation. Funding for the 'good sex' project enabled us to formalize these relationships and develop strategies for embedding the findings of the research within the organization.

Within the project, 'knowledge exchange' was imagined not as the transfer of knowledge between research and practice communities but as a program of activity and interaction between different knowledge-making communities (Davies et al. 2008), principally young people, sexuality researchers and sexuality educators. The project involved two key strands of activity: the development of a training program for youth practitioners and sexuality educators on why and how to talk to young people about sexual pleasure and the production of high-quality audiovisual outputs that reanimated the research materials. Through hosting the training and audiovisual materials on Brook's website and the project blog[3] we hoped that the resources produced over the course of the project could be used not just at Brook but by other sexuality education and health providers, commissioners and campaigners to support the inclusion and prioritizing of pleasure in health and education work with young people.

This chapter focuses on the second strand of the project, the aim of which was to create a series of short films that reanimated research materials from the original study and communicated the study findings to young audiences. This would result in resources for Brook to use in their education and campaigning work, both via their website and in direct work with young people.

[2] Grant reference ES/K005421/1.

[3] https://goodsexproject.wordpress.com/

Over the course of the project, we staged a series of participatory filmmaking workshops involving young people all aged between 16 and 25. Participants were recruited from Brook's local participation groups as well as local theater and acting groups, all based in London, UK. None of the participants had taken part in the original research although they were a broadly similar demographic in terms of age and ethnic, religious, sexual and gender diversity (McGeeney 2014). The young volunteers brought a range of skills, interests and experiences to the project; some were motivated by an interest in peer education and a desire to educate other young people about sex and relationships, others were young actors looking to increase their acting portfolio and/or students interested in learning new filmmaking skills. Within the 'good sex' project, all volunteers were understood as co-researchers, tasked with interpreting and producing new knowledge and creative content. Informed by insights from participatory, performative and recursive research methodologies (Cammarota and Fine 2008; Conrad 2004; Thomson 2014), we were interested in using arts-based approaches to open up the process of data analysis, inviting young people to work alongside researchers and artists to re-interpret the meaning of the research data and imagine its significance within the context of their own lives and communities.

When conducting the original research, I had not negotiated consent with research participants to re-use the audio recordings of interviews and focus groups, meaning that our new team of co-researchers could only work with anonymized data transcripts. Drawing on Kate Eichhorn's (2013) work on 'archival proximity', we were interested in how these archived transcripts might be reanimated in ways that were ethically sensitive and meaningful for young audiences (Thomson 2014). Although the topic of the research was 'pleasure', the accounts were complicated, messy and ethically sensitive—revealing underage as well as non-consensual sexual activity. What new knowledge might be produced in restaging these accounts and for whom might this have value?

To explore these questions, we held an initial two-day workshop, led by theater director and scriptwriter Lucy Kerbel who introduced the use of visualization and scriptwriting techniques as tools for engaging with and responding to excerpts from the interview data. This was followed by an 11-week project, led by the group of young people with support from documentary filmmaker Susi Arnott and I, in which the group experimented with re-performing excerpts of interview data to camera and documenting their responses to the extracts on screen. This led to two further spin-off workshops in which young actors replicated these techniques of re-performance and response to produce a series of 11 short films about young people's experiences of first sex.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I document these two approaches and provide an account of the films produced during the project. Throughout I suggest that both these methods can be understood not just as solutions to technical/methodological dilemmas within a filmmaking/research project but as strategies for engaging in arts-based sexuality education.

Visualization and Scriptwriting

We are in a training room in an office building in Old Street. Lucy asks the group of 6 young people to sit or lie somewhere comfy. They are settled and quiet. Lucy asks the group to close their eyes and reads the following extract from the interview between E (me, the researcher) and J (the 17 year old woman who chose the pseudonym Jessica).

E: Do you have feelings that you would describe as sexual? (pause)
J: I don't know (laughs). I don't know. Um (pause) like if I'm around someone that I'm attracted to. (E: yeah) then I feel like, sexually attracted to them if that makes sense. (E: yeah) but I don't know what that is, like.
E: How do you know when you are attracted to someone, how-yeah.
J: (Smiling) Cos … I get butterflies, I and things like that.
E: So it's a physical feeling?
J: Yeah.
E: Yeah, Can you describe how else that feeling feels?
J: Um, like I feel sort of excited but then it's like, I think calm down and (laughing) walk away from the situation (laughs). Um, um, I feel like smiling and things like that.
E: Yeah, and what do you do, if you are attracted to someone?
J: (Pause) You see that's the thing like, I don't like to do anything about it, I like to just go. Because it's like, I don't want this to go any further so it's like so that's when I always put that barrier and I'm like, no, stop, move away (laughs).

The first two-day workshop was led by theater director and scriptwriter Lucy Kerbel who introduced a series of visualization and scriptwriting techniques to the group. Over the two days we worked with two interview extracts. One extract, which is partially quoted above, was taken from an interview with a 17-year-old heterosexual woman called 'Jessica[4]' who had kissed a boy at the age of 12 or 13 but had not had any 'sexual experiences' since. The second was an extract from an interview with 'Indiah', a 17-year-old bisexual young

[4] All names of original research participants are pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

woman who talked about her 'rubbish' sexual experience at the age of 12 with a boy she thought she was in love with and her confusion about 'what actually happened that day'. Both extracts had been selected by Lucy as contrasting examples of the complexity and ambiguity of sexual desire that is documented throughout the research.

At the workshop, the group worked with one extract at a time, using each one to generate a series of monologues, images and scenarios that were formed as the basis for our first two short films—*Indiah's story* and *Jessica's story*. The visualization/scriptwriting process involved Lucy reading an extract aloud three times; first asking the group to just listen to the extract sitting or lying somewhere in the room with their eyes closed, then asking the group to imagine Jessica in a place where she feels relaxed and comfortable and reading the extract again. A visualization exercise followed in which the group were invited to '*look out through the eyes of the person who is talking*' and imagine the space around them. The group were then guided around their imagined space, asked to embody the speaker ('look at your feet') and pay attention to the sensuality of the space ('is it warm? Is it cool?') and how they/the speaker might feel ('is it familiar? … how does the young person feel about that object').

> Look out through the eyes of the person who is talking. You are looking out into the environment that you were imagining. What's above you? Look down at your feet- look to one side and then to the other. What is the air like? Are you inside? Is it warm? Cool? What's the quality of the air like?
>
> Look around and spot one object. An object that appeals to that person. Move towards it, touch it, can you pick it up? Does it make any noise? How does the young person talking feel about that object? That place? Is the young person in a familiar place? Choose one word to describe that space. What would it be?' (Lucy)

After the visualization, the group came back together and shared their imagined scenes with each other before picking up a pen and paper and writing as fast as they could, non-stop for two minutes as if they were the person from the interview extract talking to someone they felt comfortable with. Next, the whole exercise was repeated, this time with the group imagining Jessica in a space where she did not feel comfortable and talking to someone with whom she was not relaxed.

These exercises produced 12 short monologues and 12 imagined scenes.[5] Working rapidly during the group's lunch break, Lucy used these new materials to create a meta-monologue, synthesizing and responding to the group's

[5] Further details of the groups monologues can be viewed here: https://goodsexproject.wordpress.com/2013/10/10/the-story-of-jessica-turning-interview-data-into-film/

materials, which was recorded by one group member as the audio material for our first short film. We also created a meta-scene based on the group's imagined scenarios in a disused office next door. This was then filmed by the group with support from documentary filmmaker Susi Arnott to create the visual content for 'Jessica's story'. The following day we experimented with a similar set of visualization techniques to produce another short film based on the extract from the interview with 'Indiah', this time using the original text from the interview extract, rather than our own responses to the extracts.

Observing the visualization and speed-writing activities, I was struck by the ease and creativity with which the group engaged with and responded to the interview materials. Their imagined scenarios were vivid and emotional, drawing on images, language and experiences from their own lives and local cultures to engage with the research material; Jessica was imagined sitting in Nandos[6] listening anxiously to her friends talking about their sexual experiences, relaxing in a messy bedroom with her laptop, going to house parties and using her iPhone on the bus.

The group's written responses similarly captured a range of imagined scenarios and modes of address; Jessica spoke in a dreamy and romantic tone of her 'search for fulfillment' and in a tough street vernacular about her reluctant desire for 'hot guys'.

> Basically he was flirting with me aint gonna lie I was gassed because he was so fricken hot but look at how many hot guys are out there and I don't need no hood rat type of guy who aint doing nothing with his life you know what I mean. (Chrystal, co-researcher)

Guided through these structured activities, the group were able to engage with the data imaginatively and spontaneously. Lucy frequently told the group 'try not to think, just get something down' and to write non-stop 'almost without thinking'. The exercises privileged the participants' intuitive, affective responses to the data, asking them to respond by embodying, imagining and voicing the original research participants' thoughts and desires. Further, through instructing the group to imagine Jessica/Indiah in both a safe and unsafe space, the group were encouraged to 'rethink' and 're-feel' (Quinlivan 2014) Jessica's story through different affective lenses. Driven by an exploratory and creative mode, the group were asked not to consider whether Jessica and Indiah's experiences were good or bad, or right or wrong but to embody and imagine the experience within safe and unsafe spaces.

[6] Nandos is a popular fast food restaurant chain.

The visualization and scriptwriting techniques provided the opportunity to open up the research process and invite the group to interpret and respond to the data first individually and then collectively through the sharing of images, voices and ideas. In doing so, we created an open-ended, exploratory 'thinking-feeling' space (Ellsworth 2005) in which it became possible to experience different sexual meanings, values and ideas. Further, through being invited to imagine ourselves as Jessica/Indiah we were asked to imagine different ways of desiring and experiencing or sexuality, in ways that crossed many boundaries of gender, sexuality, age and experience.

Drawing on Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005), we can understand these encounters as 'places of learning' in which it is possible for the learners to imagine themselves as a 'learning self' in transition toward 'previously unknown ways of thinking and being in the world' (p. 16, Quinlivan 2014). For Ellsworth, the experience of our learning selves—that embodied 'thinking-feeling' sensation of making sense of the world—makes up the 'thing we call knowledge'. Here knowledge is understood not as a 'thing made' but as knowledge 'in the making'.

The final edits of both films, which were reviewed, re-shot, re-edited and commented on by the group in the weeks following the workshop, consist of a female voice-over telling a story about sexual desire (Jessica's story) and sexual experience (Indiah's story), accompanied by a series of slow-moving images. One shows a young woman sitting in a library, looking, dreaming and tapping her fingers on the keyboard (Jessica's story). The other shows a messy bedroom with a young woman lying on the bed, face hidden, tapping her fingers, wriggling her feet and holding a soft toy (Indiah's story).

When viewed by the project team of young people, researchers and staff at Brook, we all agreed that the films were intriguing but strange, lacking a clear audience and mode of address (Ellsworth 1997). The voice-overs in the films were compelling—rich intimate narratives that were expertly performed and recorded so that it sounded as if Jessica or Indiah were telling their story close to the listener's ear. Indiah's narrative was found to be particularly compelling, more shocking in its frank description of first sex.

> He told me to get on top of him. I didn't really know what to do. I think I just sat on his lap. He was lying down and I just sat on him and started moving or something. I was like ok. What the hell was that? It was so embarrassing. I really don't think it went in because I didn't feel anything, any pain or anything.

The visual images were strangely disconnected from the intimate stories being told however, appearing in an abstract artistic mode (slow shots

of clothes in a bedroom and a young woman flicking through texts books) that seemed to tell their own unfamiliar story with few faces and no speaking mouths. Reflecting on the films and their production, we realized that the films were the product of a creative learning and research process, rather than products that could speak directly to new audiences of young people. In Indiah's story, for example, we see a young woman in a bedroom, surrounded by mess, earrings and bright colors. These were all images that had come from the group's visualization and creative response to the original research material, yet they lack explanation and significance for the viewer who is left confused about how this scene relates to the intimate audio narrative that is delivered by an unseen, unknown young woman.

For all of us involved in the project, the materials did not achieve our aim of communicating with young audiences about sex, pleasure and desire. As a result, these early experiments with reanimating data have not been included on Brook's website or used in education work with young people. They have however been included on the project blog, alongside an account of the visualization and speed-writing techniques that were used to create them,[7] as documents of a participatory research process. Here our audience is not young people interested in understanding more about sexual experience, but researchers and educators interested in developing new strategies for engaging young people in creative sexuality education and research.

Re-performance and Response

> I played Michael. He's 17 year old. That was really interesting to me. I felt like I actually became that character and it felt like I was in his position where he wanted to have sex but he just didn't do it. Like even as a young person, you have them feelings sometimes, like even when you are younger, like you want to have sex but in the back of your mind you know you are not going to know what you are doing 'cos you are not older enough yet, you are not smart enough yet to handle those kinds of things. (Montel, *Michael's story*[8])

The second series of workshops lasted for 11 weeks and were co-facilitated by documentary filmmaker Susi Arnott and I with a view to experimenting with new approaches to reanimating interview data and creating a series of

[7] https://goodsexproject.wordpress.com/2014/07/11/kats-story-experiments-in-reanimating-data/ https://goodsexproject.wordpress.com/2013/10/10/the-story-of-jessica-turning-interview-data-into-film/

[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpnUO-Is-qY

short films about young people's sexual experience. The films focused on early sexual experiences, following the group's interest in Indiah's story and in the many frank accounts of first sex contained within the data. After an initial few weeks of experimentation and debate, the group grew confident about the mode of address we wanted to adopt; extracts were to be performed directly to camera by a young actor speaking as if the text were their own story. At the end of the monologue, the young actor would step out of role ('that wasn't my own story') and comment on the story they had just re-performed. The group wanted to see faces speaking directly to camera in the familiar confessional YouTube video diary mode of address in a deliberate move away from the abstract mode of the earlier films in which there was a strange disconnect between image and voice. The group also wanted to ensure that this time the films were able to fold in the group's response to the data, creating space for the personal responses and educational messages that many of the group felt it was important to emphasize. At the end of performing Indiah's story for example, co-researcher Rebecca says directly to camera:

> That wasn't my own story but Indiah's story is the same for a lot of young women. For a lot of people sex does get better over time. That is the core thing about having sex with a partner—no-one has sex just for sake of having sex, people have sex with the aim of pleasuring themselves and pleasuring the other person in the same process. (Rebecca, *Indiah's story*[9])

Using this method we produced 13 short films each featuring one young actor performing extracts from an interview transcript, followed by their comments on the story they had just performed. As social researchers, we can understand this approach as a performative and participatory method of data analysis that opens up spaces for young people to interpret the meaning of research materials. Each performance and performance commentary are a re-interpretation of the original data, as well as a moment of data collection itself as the young actors share their own sexual values and experiences both through their performance and their commentary. For example, through interpreting Indiah's story as confirmation that sex should always involve mutual sexual pleasure or through understanding Michael's story (see above) as affirmation of Montel's belief that it is not wise to have sex when you are young as you are 'not smart enough yet to handle those kinds of things'.

Drawing on Kate Eichhorn's (2013) work, we can understand these films as an example of recursive 'archival proximity' as data from the archive are

[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBQ_9O9CeFI

reanimated and interpreted in the present through performance and then again re-reanimated and re-interpreted through the actor's reflective commentary. For viewers watching the films, these layers of interpretation are signified by text on the screen stating that is a performance—'Indiah's story: read by Rebecca'—and by the actor stepping in and out of role ('that wasn't my own story'). In this way, the films both draw the viewer into the narrative through the direct and intimate mode of address, while also opening up space for re-interpretation, personal reflection and new sexual stories.

> I just played Sarah. She's 22. I couldn't relate. I mean, I can find a certain place of losing your virginity but … my experience- my experiences was totally different to hers. It wasn't in a hotel room. He wasn't forceful. Oh—but no! Actually 4 o'clock in the morning, squeaky bed? Yes. Squeaky bed. Yes, yes. I think that's a lot of people (laughs). I wouldn't say it was pleasurable. He was a virgin. I was a virgin. So I guess it's different if someone's not a virgin and someone is a virgin, you know what I mean. But me and him, we didn't-we knew what we was doing but it wasn't as pleasurable until maybe the second or third time. (Kristal, *Sarah's story*[10])

Drawing on performance theorist Richard Schechner (1934), we can understand this strategy of performance/response as opening up a liminal space where the 'me' and the 'not me' encounter the 'not, not me'. The young performer is asked to both embody a character (who is 'not me' but a 'real' person who participated in social research) and participate in an imagined 'as if' world, as well as performing as an actor who is evaluating that same story from outside the imagined world. In the extract below, young volunteer and co-researcher Carlos repeatedly performs the beginning of an extract from an interview with a 17-year-old man called 'Oscar' in which he describes his first sexual experience. At first the story appears alien to Carlos and he struggles to hold the unfamiliar words and vernacular in his mouth. After several attempts and permission from me to say the story as he 'would say it', Carlos is fierce and confident in his delivery of this story of a young man's first, messy experience of first sex. When Carlos reflects on the story and his performance at the end of the film he shifts out of this confident delivery mode and into his role of peer educator. Here he is surprised at Oscar's honesty and worried about the 'concerning' aspects of the story, thinking what more peer educators could do to educate young people. As Carlos slips in and out of roles, he performs—and the audiences see—different versions of me, not me and not, not me.

[10] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bamJjbEky8c

For Carlos, the elements of 'Oscar' that are 'not me' become 'me' without ever losing their 'not me-ness' (Schechner 1934; 111).

> Carlos: (*To camera*): 'When it was, when it was happening I was worried because I didn't know' *(Stops and says to Ester who is standing behind the camera)* I see why you like this! It's crazy! (*Turns back to camera*). 'When it was, when it was happening I was worried because I didn't' (*Stops. Pause sand starts again).* 'When it was' … (*To Ester*) I can't say this bit … (*To camera, trying again*) 'When it was'.
>
> Ester: How would you say it? (*reading*) 'When it was happening I was worried because I didn't know where to put it' how would'-
>
> Carlos: Yeah (*laughing*) that's a bit embarrassing!
>
> Ester: (*Laughing*) How would you say it?
>
> Carlos: (*Serious now*) In my words? (*Pauses*). Wait. Do you want me to say it how it is, or in my words, cos I don't see the guy how I'm reading it.
>
> Ester: Try saying it your way.
>
> Carlos: Ok. (*Quickly and confidently to camera*) When it was happening I was worried because I didn't know where to stick it in, what to do, you know? And how to move. Do you know what I mean? (Carlos, *Oscar's story*[11])

Thinking of the value of these films—and the techniques that were used to produce them—for sexuality education we can understand this process of performance/response as opening up spaces (for young performers *and* young audiences) in which knowledge about sexual experience and sexual pleasure is not 'a thing made' but an ongoing process of knowledge-making that is performative, spontaneous and affective (Conrad 2004). As we see with the example of Carlos' repeated performances, with each performance the story takes on a new meaning; Oscar's story is 'crazy', funny, 'embarrassing', serious, real, surprising and 'concerning'. In performing/responding to the story, Carlos rethinks and re-feels its meaning, producing a series of performances that invite the audience to do the same.

As with the strategy of visualization/speed-writing documented above, working within this performative mode enabled young people to engage creatively and spontaneously with the research materials and consider their meanings in relation to their own experiences and values. Further, these strategies enabled participants to work within a subjunctive mode and to imagine themselves *as if they were* in situations, relationships and bodies that were—and were not—their own.

[11] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lZBWaXYFN0

Unlike the method of visualization/speed-writing however, the strategy of re-performance/response also produced creative outputs that have been judged by the project team as capable of communicating directly with young audiences about sex, pleasure, consent and desire. These films have been included not only on the project blogs as documents of a research process, but on Brook's website and within education programs as tools for engaging audiences of young people with some of the messy, complex and emotional aspects of sexuality that are often left out from sexuality education programs.

Possibilities for Pleasure: Using Creative Approaches to Sexuality Education

> In order to make social and political change, I believe you have to listen and learn from people's experiences. By creating these videos of real young people's experiences it can powerfully challenge damaging misunderstandings about sex. It can also be used to open up discussions around consent and sexuality, which are often ignored. (Megan, co-researcher)

Over the course of the project, the team of researchers, artists, educators and young volunteers produced more than 20 short films that reanimate research materials from a study of young people's experiences of 'good sex' and sexual pleasure. All of these films are now hosted on YouTube and the project blog as documents of a participatory and exploratory research process. A selection of these films—those judged by the project team as successfully communicating with young audiences about sex, desire, pleasure and consent—are now hosted on Brook's website and used by education practitioners in their work with young people.

For Megan, who participated in the project, the films are potentially transformative in their (re)telling of stories that often remain publically untold or 'ignored'. At present, we have limited feedback on whether the films are able to engage young audiences in learning and (re)thinking about pleasure and sexuality as the project participants intended. We know[12] that for some project participants, taking in the project taught them that 'everyone's experience is different' (anonymous co-researcher) and caused them to rethink their own past and present relationship experiences. We also know that for others the project gave them experience of acting and filmmaking but brought little reported challenge to their sexual values or ways of 'thinking-feeling' about

[12] An impact evaluation was issued to all project participants 12 months after the project had finished. Comments from this survey are included here.

sexuality. As previously noted, we cannot assume that engaging young people in work around sexual pleasure will necessarily have transformative effects.

The aim of the 'good sex' project was to develop materials and strategies for communicating findings from the research to new audiences—principally young people and sexuality educators. Throughout the project, it was clear however that these two groups' would respond differently to whatever materials we produced. For example, during the early stages of the project, staff at Brook raised concerns about the content of one of the films (*Indiah's story*) which describes a young woman's first 'rubbish' sexual experience at the age of 12. For the young people involved in the project, this story was a compellingly frank account of first sex that needed to be heard by other young people in order to counter vague narratives of 'virginity' loss. For staff at Brook, however, there were concerns that stakeholders who viewed the film on Brook's website or as part of an education session might interpret the film as the organization sanctioning underage sex.

While staff concerns were not significant in shaping the content or publication for the films within the 'good sex' project, they serve as an important reminder of the wider politics of sexuality education within which teaching and learning take place. While the strategies documented in this chapter could arguably be employed in a range of different teaching and learning contexts, for educators working in publically funded schools in the UK there may be tensions between a desire to create exploratory 'places for learning' and a statutory duty to promote the value of delaying sex, avoiding pregnancy and only having sex within loving and committed relationships (DfE 2000; McGeeney 2014).

While there may not always be opportunities to 'wedge' (Fine 2005) arts- and pleasure-based approaches into restricted school timetables and policy frameworks, insights from the 'good sex' project suggest that there may be possibilities for employing elements of the approach documented above in a range of different institutional and policy contexts. For example, involving young people as investigators tasked with researching and creating new knowledge; working with anonymized research materials as a way of investigating 'real' stories without compromising the privacy or safety of the storyteller; and/or using activities that privilege affective, spontaneous and intuitive responses and that encourage students to view sexual experience through different affective lenses. This involves working within a creative and subjunctive mode in which young people are invited to imagine themselves *as if they were* in relationships, bodies and situations that are—and are not—their own and, further, to explore and articulate what they might think and feel from within this liminal space of the me, not me and the not, not me (Schechner 1934). While introducing one or more of these elements may not create the unruly,

open-ended sites of possibility documented in the research, they may open up possibilities for involving young people in processes of knowledge-making and for creating spaces within which to rethink and re-imagine the potential of pleasure and sexuality.

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29

Queer Departures into More-Than-Human Worlds

Affrica Taylor and Mindy Blaise

> Queering has the job of undoing 'normal' categories, and none is more critical than the human/nonhuman sorting operation. (Haraway 2008a, p. xxiv)

Queer theory has provided the field of sexuality education with the critical tools to deconstruct the gender binaries that structure our thinking (Sedgwick 1990), to destabilize and diversify the taxonomies of gender/sexuality identities (Jagose 1996), and to critique the normative effects of the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1990). However, leading queer theory exponents are now interrogating the limits of its application within the field of sexuality education (Talburt and Rasmussen 2010; Rasmussen and Allen 2014; Allen et al. 2014). Susan Talburt and Mary Lou Rasmussen (2010), for instance, identify ubiquitous liberalist 'habits of thought' within queer educational research as entrenched and problematic. They point out that even as queer educational research focuses upon non-normatively gendered

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and/or sexed subjects as an explicit challenge to liberalism's (and neo-liberalism's) heteronorms, it often unwittingly rehearses liberalist premises about unified subjects, innate identities, and prescribed individual rights (p. 7). As they explain, it is for largely pragmatic reasons that queer educational research has 'tethered itself to subjects of gender and sexuality and to narratives of political progress' because of 'researchers' desires to recuperate a queer future for youth' (p. 1). Unfortunately and somewhat ironically, this has also constrained the potential to think beyond the pervasively normative liberalist (and humanist) construct of the free and agentic individual (human) subject.

In this chapter, we take the anthropocentric humanist premise that queer is the exclusive domain of individual (human) gendered and sexual subjects and their liberation as our point of departure. We deliberately break with trends to assimilate queer within the alphabet soup of human gender and sexuality identity categories—the diversified taxonomies of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex. We bypass the self-determining individual liberal human subject of mainstream sexuality education and the 'progressive' or 'liberatory' agenda of humanist politics. Instead, we take the act of queering as an invitation for pursuing a 'radical openness' (Rasmussen and Allen 2014, p. 442) to the world at large, as we launch ourselves head-on into the inherent queerness of the nonhuman (Barad 2012; Giffney and Hird 2008; Hird 2004, 2008) and our enmeshment in 'queer kin' relations with other species or 'kinds' (Haraway 2008a, 2008b). We concur with Donna Haraway's (2008a, p. xxiv) assertion that the primary job of queering is that of 'undoing "normal" categories', and that 'none is more critical than the human/nonhuman sorting operation'. To this end, we set out to de-center the human subject of queer theory to reposition queer scholarship as a more-than-human worldly ethico-political project and, in so doing, to offer a new set of provocations to the field of sexuality education.

We begin by reviewing some of the more-than-human queer literature that messes with the structuring nature/culture divide that separates human being off from the rest of the world and is axiomatic to modern western liberal humanist thinking. In line with this literature, we argue that by refusing the nature/culture divide, and re-engaging with our entanglement in the more-than-human world, the queering project taps into new and worldly collective and relational possibilities, sensibilities, ethics, and politics. It also opens up new worldly horizons for desire as a life-sustaining ecological force. By way of gesturing toward these possibilities, we outline three very different performative events that simultaneously queer nature and culture. The first of these is the performance of ecosexuality staged by US 'sexecologists', Elizabeth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle. The second is a performance of queer kin within

an encounter between young children and kangaroos in an Australian urban 'bush' setting. The third is a confronting performance of queer taxonomies in Julia deVille's *Phantasmagoria* exhibit in the 2014 Adelaide Biennial at the Art Gallery of South Australia. Each of these performative events moves us to consider love, desire, and becoming beyond the anthropocentric constraints of human identity categories, and poses new provocations to the field of sexuality education.

Why Queer Nature?

Exponents of queer theory have good reason to be deeply suspicious of the concept of 'nature', with all its essentialist resonances, and to focus instead upon gender and sexuality as cultural constructs. Nature, and the indictment of 'unnatural' that closely shadows it, has been used to justify the condemnation and persecution of many people who do not fit social norms—including people with non-heteronormative genders and sexualities. Paradoxically, it is the structuring nature/culture binary of modern western epistemological traditions that has enabled 'nature' to perform such a dangerous political role (Latour 2004). This is because the division between nature and culture presumes that the 'natural' domain exists in a pure and independent state beyond the subjective influences of human cultures and societies. Separated off from human society in this way, nature has been attributed the authoritative status of external and objective 'truth' and, as such, has been wielded as the ultimate moral arbitrator and regulator of modes of human being (Daston and Vidal 2004).

We want to argue here, that it is precisely because of its history of malicious political deployment, that it becomes particularly pertinent to engage with and queer the concept of nature, rather than simply avoid it. Let us explain. When Judith Butler (1990) first set out to 'trouble' the assumed-to-be-natural state of gender and sexuality in her book *Gender Trouble,* she was acutely aware of the widespread political deployment of nature as a potent regulatory and normalizing authority. Establishing the poststructural philosophical framework of the 'heterosexual matrix', which inspired the emergence of queer theory, Butler foregrounded that far from being 'natural', gender and sexuality are culturally construed. To be more precise, she argued that both gender and sexuality are reiterative performative effects of the discourse of hegemonic heterosexuality. More recently, in conversation with Vicky Kirby (Kirby 2006, pp. 144–145), Butler conceded that she had over-determined the productive effects of culture (via the heterosexual matrix) in this early framework, largely because of her acute mistrust of 'nature' claims. With the benefit of hindsight,

she acknowledged that her conceptualization of nature was a limited one. As she explained, at that time she was not able to take 'account of a nature that might be, as it were, beyond the nature/culture divide' (Butler in Kirby 2006, p. 145).

So how might the insights of queer theory be expanded by engaging with accounts of nature that move beyond the nature/culture divide? There is now a substantial and rapidly expanding body of interdisciplinary scholarship to draw upon that is deliberately setting about to produce alternative and non-binary accounts of nature. Emerging from conversations across the fields of science and technology studies, human geography, environmental, feminist, and posthumanist philosophy, and the environmental humanities, this scholarship retheorizes and rearticulates nature (and by association culture) in ways that actively resist the separation of human being and our meaning-making practices (the cultural and the discursive) from the rest of the world (the natural or the material).

In order to circumvent the binary logic of the nature/culture divide, scholars involved in these interdisciplinary conversations have invented a new lexicon. To displace the unitary and bifurcated concepts of liberal humanist discourses that rehearse the separation of human and nonhuman worlds, this new lexicon offers a repertoire of terms that evoke human/nonhuman relationality, entanglement, and collectivity. These new concepts are designed to help us think through the ways in which natural and cultural worlds are inextricably entwined and intra-actively co-produced (Barad 2007). They remind us that there is world beyond the human and they reposition the human in that world. Terms such as 'more-than-human' worlds (Whatmore 2002), a 'posthuman' 'nature–culture continuum' (Braidotti 2013), 'common worlds' (Latour 2004), 'natureculture' worlds (Haraway 2008a, 2008b), and 'agential materialism' (Barad 2007) are designed to enable such thinking.

Within these interdisciplinary conversations, it is well noted that non-binary reconceptualizations of nature (and culture) constitute a radical challenge to the human subject of liberal humanism and the concomitant human-centric understanding of agency (see, for instance, Braidotti 2013). It is simply not possible to partake in rethinking nature (and culture) beyond the nature/culture divide without simultaneously displacing the autonomous free and agentic individual gendered and sexual subject of liberal humanism. For this reason, we suggest that one sure way to unsettle the liberalist 'habits of thought' within the human-centric brand of queer theory that has taken hold in the field of sexuality education (Talburt and Rasmussen 2010; Rassmussen and Allen 2014) is for educational scholars, including sexuality

education scholars, to enter into dialogue with theories that reposition the human within more-than-human worlds.

Not only does retheorizing nature beyond the nature/culture divide hold the promise of displacing the liberalist subject of sexual education, and disrupting the liberalist 'habits of thought' of queer sexuality education scholars, but as Karen Barad (2012) and Donna Haraway (2008a) point out, messing up the foundational categories of nature and culture is, per se, a performative queer act. Reconceptualizing nature beyond the nature/culture divide is tantamount to queering nature and thereby to queering what it means to be human.

Moves to queer nature in order to queer what it means to be human and to thereby queer pedagogy have barely begun within education (see Taylor 2013; Taylor and Blaise 2014), but queering nature is not a new idea. 'Queering what counts as nature' has always been Haraway's central motivation (Haraway 1994, p. 60). Since the mid-1980s, she has pioneered inventive methods for queering nature and culture by reconfiguring them as entangled 'naturecultures', and by offering a quirky set of hybrid figures (including her legendary feminist cyborg figure) that circumvent 'the more "normal" rhetorics of systematic critical analysis' (Haraway 2008b, p. 47). She has deliberately chosen to subvert the categorical distinction between nature and culture by working with these hybrid figures, rather than only ever critiquing or deconstructing the discourses that produce cultural 'truths' in the name of nature (Haraway 2004a). As Haraway puts it, this is because the more conventional critical/analytical approach can simply serve to 'repeat and sustain our entrapment in the stories of the established disorders' (Haraway 2008b, p. 47). Haraway's point is that queer(ing) is as much an enacted method as a theoretical position. If we only ever deconstruct the cultural/discursive systems that produce our ideas about 'nature', our intellectual work is delimited by (and ultimately trapped within) the framing of the nature/culture divide. To get out of this constraining binary framing, we need to do things differently—more playfully, more inventively, more 'queerly'.

It is important to keep on queering queer theory to ensure it does not turn into a new kind of normal. As Noreen Giffney and Myra Hird (2008, pp. 5–6) point out in the introduction to their edited collection *Queering the Non/Human,* the queer of queer theory needs to be continually interrogated, lest it slide into normative framings such as the business-as-usual of liberal humanism's human-centric focus and individualistic concerns. One way of doing this is to push queer theory beyond humanism's nature/culture divide and beyond the anthropocentric horizons of human gender/sexuality, in order to attend to the queerness of human–nonhuman relations. This is a move that

Haraway (in her foreword to this same collection) refers to as the task of 'queer re-worlding' (Haraway 2008a, p. xxvi; see also Taylor and Blaise 2014).

Why Queer Sexuality and Nature Together?

It is possible to open up to the world and do this kind of queer re-worlding without abandoning queer theory's original project of queering (human) gender/sexuality. Working at the intersection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex and ecological politics, Catrina Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (2010) draw attention to the ways in which understandings of nature and sexuality are mutually constituted 'through a strongly evolutionary narrative that pits the perverse, the polluted and the degenerate against the fit, the healthy and the natural' (p. 3). Because of the entangled epistemological trajectories of sex and nature, they argue that there is the need for a lively conversation that builds a strong connection between sexual and environmental politics under the rubric of 'queer ecologies'. Their vision for queer ecologies is to enable a new kind of sexual politics that is attuned to the 'biosocial constitution' of the natural world and a new kind of environmental politics that 'demonstrates an understanding of the way in which sexual relations organize and influence both the material world of nature and our perceptions, experiences and constitutions of that world' (p. 5). In fact, they see 'the articulation of sexuality and nature as a form of eco-sexual resistance' (p. 21), a form of politics that we will soon explore.

Moreover, the evolutionary narrative that frames prevalent understandings of sexuality and nature is a priori heteronormative and intergenerational. It is based upon human-centric notions of sexual division and reproduction. Inspired by Lynn Margulis' counter-evolutionary theory of symbiogenesis, which is based upon the horizontal gene transfer of micro-organisms, Myra Hird (2004) points out that the vast majority of life on earth does not reproduce according to the heteronormative male/female reproductive human-centric script. To the contrary, she notes that although the male/female sex binary is 'culturally significant' to certain groups of humans, our binary ontology of sexual difference 'obscures the much more prevalent sex diversity among living matter' (p. 86) and it also distorts the fact that in evolutionary terms, sexual reproduction is still a minority form of reproduction as well as a relatively recent phenomenon (Hird 2008, p. 240).

Queer Performativity

Thus far in this chapter, we have discussed how and why queer is relevant not only to rethinking what it means to be a gendered/sexed human subject, but much more broadly to rethinking nature (and culture) beyond the nature/culture divide. We have used the word queer as a generic verb—proposing that we not only need to queer gender/sexuality, but also to queer theory, to queer nature, and to queer nature and sexuality together. We need to work on all these fronts, in order to ensure that the pernicious and pervasive veil of 'normalcy', as well as those normalized 'habits of thought' that Talburt and Rasmussen (2010) warn about, do not constrain our thinking and our practice. In the concluding sections of the paper, we set out to performatively enact a queering of human/nature relations, not just to talk about it as such, but to *do* it. To these ends, we draw, at least in part, upon the original notion of performativity that Butler (1990) so famously wrote about in relation to gender/sexuality—that through reiteration, we bring into being that which we name.

However, as Karen Barad (2012) points out in her essay 'nature's queer performativity', even though the concept of performativity 'has been essential to queer theory', in Butler's original terms, it is an exclusively citational notion, framed by the discursive practices of human meaning-making. This means that it 'has been figured (almost exclusively) as a human affair; humans are its subject matter, its sole matters of concern' (p. 30). Barad takes pains to clarify that to talk of *nature's* queer performativity 'is not to invite nonhuman others into the fold of queerness, but to interrogate the binaries that support the divisions that are at stake' (pp. 29–30). For Barad, the idea of celebrating nature's queer performativity lies 'in seeing "ourselves" as always already a part of nature' (p. 32); moreover, the nature she speaks of is in and of itself already inherently queer, right down to the very atoms that constitute it/us as matter. To highlight the performativity of nature's queerness, Barad stresses that despite scientists' best efforts 'to contain, tame or normalize nature's queerness' (p. 45), the 'ultraqueer' phenomena (p. 29) that we call atoms, remain radically unstable, unpredictable, and unknowable within 'classical ontologies'. In other words, as testament to their queer performativity, 'atoms' queer behaviours refuse to be civilized by the laws of classical physics'(p. 45).

So how are these two notions of performativity—Butler's (1990) original notion of performativity as discursive effect and Barad's (2012) more recent notion of 'nature's queer performativity' as matter's refusal to conform to type—relevant to the queer performative nature–culture events that we are

soon to recount? To answer this, we return to the Haraway quotation that heads this chapter: 'Queering has the job of undoing "normal" categories, and none is more critical than the human/nonhuman sorting operation' (Haraway 2008a, p. xxiv). We hope that these following queer performative events—one that queers love, one that queers kin, and one that queers kind—will disturb the 'normalcy' of the human/nonhuman sorting operation both through our telling of them (our discursive reiteration), as well as through their 'real world' inherent queerness, their refusal to conform to type. As well as breaching the nature/culture divide in their own small ways, we hope that they also gesture toward the folly of trying to maintain straight-laced 'natural' and 'normal' categorical separations in an always already recalcitrant, lively, and mixed-up world.

Performing Queer Love[1]

> I knew that I was an eco-sexual on my early camping trips. We'd hook up my mother's best friend's trailer in the early morning hours and drive 30 miles up to Summersville Lake. Even though it was only a short distance from home it felt as though we had driven all the way to Europe. In the middle of the hottest afternoons Aileen and Mattie would let me go skinny-dipping in the lake. Skinny-dipping is not only a great way to cool down but just knowing that it was kind of naughty to swim naked in public make it even more delicious. My feelings of oneness with nature were boundless as the minnows nibbled my toes and I peed in the water. I loved nature and I knew nature loved me. (Stephens 2011, p. 13)

Ecosexual performance artists, theorists, and activists Elizabeth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle are pioneering a new field they call 'sexecology'. On their website (Stephens and Sprinkle nd), they describe sexecology as 'where ART meets THEORY, meets PRACTICE, meets ACTIVISM.' Their work can be seen as part of the broader movement toward queer ecologies, as it queers the ways in which we think about sexuality and the environment through a parodic conjoining of sexology and ecology. They promote new ways of relating to the Earth that are 'fun', 'sexy', and 'diverse' as well as 'mutual' and 'sustainable'.

The sexecology website features a strategic array of playful and inventive activities aimed at enticing readers to explore their own queer love for the 'Earth' and to make 'Earth vows'. These include creative arts projects and

[1] The events recounted in 'performing queer love' are taken from the website http://sexecology.org/

events, research and writing, education, blogging, and activism. The excerpt above is from one of the writing events—Elizabeth Stephen's ecosexual coming out 'Herstory' entitled 'When I knew'. It recounts Stephen's earliest childhood memory of her ecosexual awakening through the illicit thrill of skinny-dipping in the lake and her accompanying sensory encounters with hot air, warm sunshine, cool water, and the minnows that nipped at her toes. This first awakening is followed up by numerous other events that similarly document her unfolding and intensifying awareness about her erotic feelings for 'Nature'. Her recounting of memories in which the boundaries between her own skin and other bodies and elements dissolve evoke the kind of libidinal desire to become other, which Deleuze and Guattari (1983) describe as transgressive, heterogeneous, and polymorphous. One of the key features of Stephen's ecosexual coming out stories is a sharp sense that nature is actively engaging her in this queer love. The earth's seductive powers come to life as Stephens performatively communicates the vital eros of 'Earth as lover'. By narrating nature as an agentic libidinal force, this coming out story far exceeds the normative humanist notions of human sexuality, subjectivity, and agency. It is a story of quintessentially queer and resolutely non-anthropomorphic love.

One of their most famous sexecology practices is the staging of ecosex weddings around the world. These wild and zany events involve Elizabeth and Annie marrying themselves and participants to different elements of nature, such as the earth, dirt, rocks, snow, and coal. Wedding participants are invited to make vows, promising 'to love, honor, and cherish Nature … until death brings us closer together forever' (Stephens & Sprinkle, nd). They invite us to join them in performatively queering love and marriage, to partake in subverting not only the heteronormative framings of marriage but also the anthroponormative notion of love, desire, and commitment.[2]

Their film, *Goodbye Gauley Mountain: An Ecosexual Love Story* (Stephens and Sprinkle 2013), tenderly documents a very special wedding performance. It is Elizabeth's ode to the West Virginian Appalachian mountain that nurtured and grew her up, but has since been violently disfigured by the coal mining industry's 'mountain top removal' practices. This film is deadly serious because it is about human destruction of the earth for greed and profit, but it nevertheless has a life-affirming parodic touch. Of course the act of marrying a mountain is inherently quirky and humorous, but the commitment to love it forever is profound. This seriously playful act of marriage performatively

[2] For more on queering anthroponormativity, the normative assumptions of human-centrism, see Taylor and Blaise (2014).

mourns and celebrates the vitality of this place. Ultimately the film provokes us to question what is more crazy, marrying a mountain or blowing it up?

As with the coming out stories, the film makes it clear that 'nature' is never passive and inert. Rather, it is vibrant and agentic (Barad 2012; Bennett 2010) and calls us into relationship with it. Gauley Mountain is so much more than a backdrop to or a stage for the enactment of human lives. Through a series of interviews with people who live on and love the mountain, it is clear that it is the mountain itself that sparks their passion and desire. In particular, Stephen and Sprinkle are keen to exhibit the ways in which the mountain moves them not just to love platonically, but to erotically love. Through showcasing multifarious performances of ecosexuality on Gauley Mountain that climax with the celebratory wedding, the film underscores that libidinal desire can be as much about the queer life forces that foster lateral and mutually sustaining heterogeneous co-habitations, as it can be about the reproduction of a species (Chisholm 2010).

By performing the vitalism of nature across all of their queer events and activities, these sexecologists offer us a joyful way of celebrating sexuality, love, and desire that far exceeds the anthropocentric romantic script. They help us to appreciate that our libidinal relations with the more-than-human are necessary for fostering co-evolving, diverse, and flourishing multispecies life on earth (Haraway 2015).

Performing Queer Kin[3]

The children and kangaroos can't keep their eyes off each other. This is evident every time we walk through the grassy woodlands behind the childcare centre where the kangaroos graze. Over months of regular rendezvous, the kangaroos have become quite accustomed to the children's presence. They have gradually allowed the children to come closer and closer, but they never lose their attentive stance. Their imposing kangaroo bodies are always alert and face-on. Perched upright on their enormous haunches and balancing tails they are primed and ready to bound away. Like radar dishes, their large swivelling ears steadfastly track the approaching children.

The children, in turn, are besotted by the kangaroos. They eagerly anticipate seeing them with animated discussion and an enthusiasm that inevitably moves them to rush forward. Their teachers always have to remind them to slow down and be quiet as they approach the kangaroos, so they don't frighten these wary creatures away. They never seem to lose their fascination for these imposing animals. Perhaps

[3] The narratives described in 'performing queer kin' are excerpts from Affrica Taylor's field notes from her ethnographic 'children's common worlds' research, conducted in Canberra, Australia, 2013.

it's the intense attention that the kangaroos pay to them that holds their own. But there are other forces at play. The children are always on the lookout for joeys in their mothers' pouches. They are captivated by imagining what it would be like to be tucked up in a furry pouch and to bound across the landscape.

The children often draw kangaroos after they meet them on their bushwalks. Perhaps not surprisingly, almost all of these drawings feature joeys in pouches. The girl that drew this picture had earlier spotted a joey in its mother's pouch. She and her friend had spent a long time carefully creeping up to the kangaroo in order to get a good look at the joey. When I asked her about her drawing, she pointed out that she, her friend and the joey were all holding hands. This is 'because we are close', she told me (Fig. 29.1).

Through paying close attention to the kangaroos over an extended period of time, the children have become quite adept at mimicking their mannerisms. They are seriously interested in what it might be like to live in a kangaroo's body and they regularly become kangaroos in their play. They use their hands as swivelling ears to tune into sounds around them and stand upright and attentive as others approach. When others get too close, they turn abruptly and hop off with front paws bent against their chests (Fig. 29.2).



Fig. 29.1 Photograph of children's drawing (Author's photograph)



Fig. 29.2 Children becoming kangaroos (Author's photograph)

On one occasion, a child came on the regular weekly walk wearing a furry hoody, complete with ears. Her kangaroo-like attire drew a lot of attention from the other children. As the group of children approached the kangaroos, they pushed her forward, encouraging her to take the lead (Fig. 29.3). Willingly, she hopped out in front, acting as some kind of intermediary between the mob of children and the mob of kangaroos. The kangaroos watched her with their customary intense gaze, while I wondered if she really did imagine herself to be a kangaroo, and to be seen by the other kangaroos as one of their mob.

Some might affectionately dismiss performances such as these as nothing more than innocent child's play. However, we take the children's close, filial identification with the joeys, and their desires to become kangaroos and to join the mob, as queer boundary-crossing performances of child–kangaroo kinship. Haraway's (2008a) notion of 'queer kin' seems like an apt name for this relationship, as it not only exceeds the heteronormative understanding of family as 'blood' relatives, but it also exceeds the nature/culture orderings that would enforce a categorical separation between humans and all other living beings.



Fig. 29.3 Hopping child in kangaroo hoody (Author's photograph)

In stretching the notion of kin, Haraway is actively promoting a simultaneously queer and ecological ethics and politics. In a recent essay, in which she argues the need for urgent recuperative action in the face of massive anthropogenic ecological destruction, Haraway urges us to 'make kin not babies!' (2015, p. 162). The kin she is referring to are trans-species kin. She passionately affirms that:

> all earthlings are kin in the deepest sense, and it is past time to practice better care of kinds-as-assemblages (not species one at a time). Kin is an assembling sort of word. All critters share a common 'flesh', laterally, semiotically, and genealogically. Ancestors turn out to be very interesting strangers; kin are unfamiliar (outside what we thought was family or gens), uncanny, haunting, active. (2015, p. 162).

Haraway goes on to acknowledge that: 'Making kin is perhaps the hardest and most urgent part of this recuperative action' (2015, p. 161). She notes that it has long been feminists who have led the way in disentangling the categorical ties that lock gender, sexuality, nature, and reproduction together in exclusive and oppressive ways. Now, she emphasizes that: 'If there is to be multispecies ecojustice, which can also embrace diverse human people, it is high time that feminists exercise leadership in imagination, theory and action, to unravel the ties of both genealogy and kin, and kin and species' (2015, p. 161).

Having witnessed the children's joyful moves toward making kin with kangaroos, we wonder why it is seemingly so hard for adults to stay open to other species as kin? Our wonderings about children's openness, and Haraway's encouragement to seek 'multispecies ecojustice, which can embrace diverse human people' spurs us on to be on the lookout for all sorts of performative events that consciously or not, queer kin and kind.

Performing Queer Kind[4]

I turn the corner in the gallery and enter a dimly lit room. Dark wood, silver, glass, antique lace and linen, gemstones, feathers, and taxidermy animals are spread throughout. It feels sinister. Animals are mounted and displayed on top of pillars and under glass domes. Birds hang from the ceiling, mice are playing on dressers, and a fox is draped over a mirror. Looming from the wall is a mounted head of a Clydesdale horse. The rocking horse, old wooden steamer trunk, dark dresser, chair and desk, black wicker pram, and baby's iron crib are from a dignified time. Is this a nursery or a menagerie? (Fig. 29.4)



Fig. 29.4 Installation view 2014 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Dark Heart featuring Julia deVille, 2014, Art Gallery of South Australia (Artist, Julia deVille's photograph)

[4] This narrative about Mindy's visit to Julia de Ville's *Phantasmagoria* exhibition is part of a larger post-qualitative inquiry about monstrous childhoods (Blaise 2016).

Moving in-between strangely familiar objects, I come across a white Victorian cast-iron crib. A doll is lying asleep in the crib, but hanging from the ceiling is a black crow, wings spread out in mid-flight and beak open. I imagine it calling out harshly, its rough voice echoing in this eerie space. This is a peculiar kind of mobile to be in a nursery. Feeling slightly disturbed, I quickly leave.

But, I am soon drawn back. I brush against an antique writing desk and something catches my eye. Things do not seem quite right. There are small furry animals sitting on top of the desk. I catch myself wondering all sorts of things, 'Are these mice playing?' ' They seem to be having fun.' ' No, but they're dead!' 'They seem strangely innocent, but do they belong here?' I want to leave again, but I linger.

These macabre objects have got a grip on me now. The more I look, the more I see. A piglet perches atop an ornate pillar. White feathers adorn it. It looks like an angel. I stop and wonder, 'Or is it a bird?' It seems so smooth and pink. This pig-bird-cherub could fly. This is not the same kind of dead specimen that I dissected in school. This one is beautiful. It even has tiny jewels meticulously stitched into its side. It's delicate. It's begging to be stroked. But even as I bend closer to this exquisite creature, I pull back. What am I thinking? This isn't right. This unthinkable creature unnerves me. I leave the room.

There's something about these queer mis-matchings between the dead and alive, the child and the animal that won't let me go. That room is full of unlikely belongings. How can I make sense of this? I return one last time to figure it out. Amongst the assemblage of objects, a rocking horse grabs my attention. It's familiar and seems to belong in a nursery. But things are never as they seem. As I approach the horse, its body doesn't seem right. Its stature is unhorse-like. Its neck is too long. Where is its mane and tail? But, it does have a pearl harness, a tiny crafted leather saddle, and sterling silver stirrups. And it has the most exquisite ostrich plumage coming out of the top of its head. All these adornments momentarily attract and reassure me, delaying my inevitable realisation that this is a rocking alpaca, not a horse at all! On closer examination, nothing is as it seems.

By disrupting the boundaries between the 'natural' and the 'artifactual', Julia de Ville's *Phantasmagoria* exhibition deliberately queers the taxonomies of natural science and the technologies of taxidermy that materialize them. Taxonomy is the science of ordering and thus knowing about the 'natural world' in ways that preserve the binary logics of the nature/culture divide and performs the assumed exceptionalism of human rationality. The scientists who do the classifying are rational cultural subjects, and the organisms they know about and classify are unknowing natural objects. Taxonomy is therefore a divisive cultural practice. It not only reiterates the nature/culture divide through its enactment, but it divides up the 'nature' of the natural world into

sub-categories. Everything, every species, every kind has its specific place in the natural world, and taxidermy makes this 'real' by telling 'the life history of nature' (Haraway 2004b, p. 166).

Through exhibiting dead, stuffed, but nevertheless 'real life' specimens as evidence of this 'natural order', taxidermy also performs a politics of reproduction (Haraway 2004b). Donna Haraway explores these politics in her piece, *Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908–1936.* She explains:

> Taxidermy was about the single story, about nature's unity, the unblemished type specimen. Taxidermy became the art most suited to the epistemological and aesthetic stance of realism. The power of this stance is in its magical affects: what is so painfully constructed appears effortlessly, spontaneously found, discovered, simply there if one will only look. Realism does not appear to be a point of view, but appears as a 'peephole into the jungle' where peace may be witnessed (Haraway 2004b, p. 166).

As the opening narrated experiences suggest, the queerly taxidermied specimens in *Phantasmagoria* perform a radically different set of 'magical affects'. Instead of displaying realist taxidermied animals within natural habitat dioramas and reconfirming the natural order of the living world, Julia deVille creates strange hybrid animal–child–toy objects and places them in a child's nursery. Rather than reproducing the natural order, de Ville's queer hybrid taxidermied specimens and their 'unnatural' placings affect disconcertment. They disturb rather than reassure. Instead of materializing taxonomies of the various separate 'kinds' that slot into an order within the logic of the nature/culture divide, they mess kinds up through performing a queer articulation of nature and culture.

Through disturbing and confounding taxonomies of kind—masquerading piglets as angels, alpacas as rocking horses, and a taxidermied natural history display as a children's nursery—Julia deVille's *Phantasmagoria* exhibition challenges us to confront the inherently queer performativity of nature (Barad 2012) as well as the inherent queerness of human endeavors to scientifically reproduce it, order it, and know it. Any enactments, such as this exhibition, that confound the realisms of taken-for-granted categories or kinds, have an unsettling affect. They interfere with the binary (nature/culture; self/other) logics we use to determine that 'this is not that' and our desire to categorically know the world. It is clear from the opening narrative that de Ville's uncanny hybrid taxidermy objects had a strong 'magical affect' upon Mindy, but not one that opened a window into a reassuringly peaceful and naturally ordered

world awaiting discovery. Rather, the window into deVille's strange animal nursery discombobulated Mindy's sense that there was any 'natural' order to the world. None of it, neither the room nor the objects, seemed to make sense. Mindy's unsettling encounters with this exhibition remind us that we are already a part of, not separate from, a nature–culture world that is always already inherently mixed up and queer. This realization not only disturbs the human-centric and binary logics of our habituated ways of thinking, but it also has the potential to deliver a new kind of radical openness to the world and our place in it.

Conclusion

By contesting the gender binary that structures heteronormativy, queer theory has supported the creation of new taxonomies, new kinds of human gender and sexuality identity categories. In line with (neo-)liberalism's agendas, it has diversified the options for individual choice and in line with humanism's liberatory project, it has championed individual's rights to freely make such choices. Within sexuality education, queer theory has been 'corralled' by these liberal-humanist agendas, thus limiting its potential as a concept that is well positioned to enable more radical and productive thinking (Rasmussen and Allen 2014).

Our queer departures into the more-than-human world not only move beyond the resolutely anthropocentric and individualistic concerns of liberal humanism, but they also challenge the human tendency to taxonomize—to 'discover' new (but always pre-existing) types and to fit them into classificatory systems (including gender and sexuality classificatory systems) in the ongoing quest to consolidate human knowledge about the world. Instead of expanding human knowledge 'about' sexuality, the queer performative events that we have recounted are departures from the business-as-usual of human knowledge making. They move us beyond a human-centric preoccupation with reworking classificatory systems, and toward a much looser and more open apprehension of human desires, loves, and attachments as enlivened through our very entanglement with the world. In refusing the nature/culture divide, and re-joining humans with the world, these queer performances of love, of kin, and of kind, do the work that Haraway refers to as 'queer re-worldings' (Haraway 2008a, p. xxvi).

Back in the world at large, we move on a queer ecological stage. We can no longer cordon off queer as an exclusively human gender/sexuality affair and we certainly cannot cordon off the rest of the world from the task of 'queer re-worlding'. As Haraway (2015) points out, the 'business-as-usual camps'

(whether queer identified or not) have nothing to offer this queer re-worlding task, but there is always plenty of room for good humor, playfulness, and joy. We raise our glasses to her final queer cheer: 'Here's to Odd Kin—non-natalist and off-category!' (2015, p. 164).

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30

The Power of Things! A 'New' Ontology of Sexuality at School

Louisa Allen

This chapter is an experiment. The word experiment when used in relation to research usually belongs to the domain of the pure sciences, and not critical sexualities studies (Plummer 2008). Employing the word 'experiment' here extends a bridge across the traditional disciplinary gulf between pure and social sciences. This chapter is experimental in that it breaks with analytic traditions of sexualities research in schools, by drawing upon the work of feminist physicist and philosopher Karen Barad (1999, 2003, 2007, 2012). Forming part of what has been coined the 'material turn' in feminist theory (Alaimo and Hekman 2008), it is concerned with taking things or 'matter' (as it is more usually referred to by physicists) seriously.

A concentration on 'things' is not the usual object of investigation when researching sexualities. So-called inanimate objects and material artefacts rarely feature in studies where there is a preoccupation with what sexuality *is* or *means*. In these investigations, objects are relegated in favour of viewing sexuality as 'a subject position(ality), nicely and relatively stably wrapped under the epidermal cover of an individual human body' (Lambevski 2005 p. 578). When objects do surface in sexuality studies, they are constituted as an extension/expression of sexuality requiring human activation (e.g. condoms, contraceptive pills, Viagra, sex toys). The possibility that 'things' might

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be implicated in the production of sexuality in an active (rather than passive inanimate) way seems unfathomable. Therefore, it is this chapter's rendering of 'things' as 'vibrant matter' (Bennett 2010, 2004) explained below, which makes it an experiment.

My aim in this chapter is to reconfigure the way in which we might think about how sexuality comes into being at school. In this sense, I am concerned with sexuality's ontology and interrupting what has been characterised within new material feminisms (Colebrook 2002) as its anthropocentric focus (Fox and Alldred 2013). Anthropocentricism is a frame of thought that centres humans and human meaning-making as the sole constitutive force of our world. It places humans above other matter in reality, creating a hierarchy in which humans reign supreme. Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) explain how such a perspective 'reduces our world to a *social* world and neglects all other non-human forces that are at play' (p. 539).

Much existing research in the field of sexualities and schooling has exhibited this anthropocentric focus (my own included). The legacy of the 'linguistic turn' (MacLure 2013a) engendered by post-structuralism has been to encourage an understanding of sexuality at school as discursively constituted through everyday schooling processes and practices (Allen 2005). An emphasis on the discursive constitution of sexuality is evident in examinations of sex education's history (Sears 1992), the curriculum (Measor et al. 2000), classroom pedagogy (Scholer 2002), teachers' work (Ferfolja 2008), peer group interaction (Hilton 2003) and sexual cultures (Epstein and Johnson 1998). In these studies, the focus has been on *what sexuality is* and *how it is experienced* by students and teachers rather than *how sexuality comes into being* (beyond its discursive constitution) and with what a/effects? The latter forms the concern of the current chapter with recourse to how matter and meaning are mutually constituted in the production of sexuality at school (Barad 2007). A desire to explore *what more* we might think (Blaise 2013) about sexuality at school, in a way that decentres the human subject, is the motivating force for this discussion.

While this investigation is situated in schools, its implications for thinking about the ontology of sexuality seep into the field of critical sexualities studies more broadly. The chapter contributes to the conversation initiated by Fox and Alldred (2013) around establishing an 'anti-humanist sociology of sexuality that shifts the location of sexuality away from bodies and individuals' (p. 769). While Fox and Alldred's account of sexuality is Deleuzian-inspired and orients itself in relation to the sociology of sexuality, the current chapter sets this discussion in an educational context and draws on conceptual tools from Barad (2007), Bennett (2010) and Lenz Taguchi (2012, 2013). Fox and Alldred (2013) note that one of the consequences of anthropocentrism has

been 'to narrowly define what counts as sexuality and sexual identity' (citing Lambevski 2005 p. 771). In anthropocentric accounts, the human body and human individual represent the privileged site where sexuality 'happens' regardless of the mechanisms by which this is understood to occur. From a biological perspective, sexuality is rendered a natural and relatively stable essence expressed and experienced by human bodies (e.g. in the case of the 'gay gene'). A view of sexuality as culture posits sexuality as the product of social meanings which overlay and shape a relatively passive human body. In the first account, social meanings about sexuality are considered impotent in the face of biology, or at the very least deemed subordinate to it. Biology here is not envisaged as agentic in the Baradian (2007) *intra*-active sense (detailed below), rather, this agency is born of scientific facts that humans know (not those elements they don't). Within the second account, the body (i.e. biology) is a pliable resource for social construction, a blank slate prone to the power and work of discourse/social meaning. Both explanations of what sexuality is posit humans as the site for its manifestation, setting nature and culture in a hierarchical dyad.

Within a new material feminist ontology, 'relationships of culture, history, discourse, technology, biology and the "environment" are explored without privileging any one of these elements' (Alaimo and Hekman 2008 p. 7). For new material feminism, matter and discourse (nature and culture) are co-constituted and neither is foundational (Taylor and Ivinson 2013). Following Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) I adopt this thinking to open up possibilities for understanding young people's sexuality at school as emergent in a relational field, where non-human forces are equally at play in constituting sexuality's becoming. In this sense then, sexuality is not the property of the individual—that is, as in having a sexual identity. Nor is sexuality something that is socially conceived via discourse which subjects 'take up' or are 'constituted by'. Sexuality is not nature *or* culture, or some kind of combination of both, where properties of each remain distinct. Instead, sexuality might be seen as *materialdiscursive*,[1] whereby nature and culture emerge in the moment of their coming into relation with each other. From this perspective, sexuality does not pre-exist this relation, it comes into being via it. These ideas draw on Barad's (2007) contention that 'Existence is not an individual affair'; there is no 'independent, self-contained existence' in the world (p. ix). We do not therefore pre-exist our interactions in the world, rather, we emerge as a result of them. Within this framework, sexuality at school *becomes* via entangled human and non-human intra-actions.

[1] Here I draw on the term *materialdiscursive* from the work of Lenz Taguchi (2013).

This is not an easy discussion. As others have noted, suggesting a shift in understanding the ontology of sexuality is a radical proposition (Fox and Alldred 2013; Taylor and Ivinson 2013). In an attempt to concretise these ideas and give them greater clarity, I draw on research around the sexual cultures of schooling (Allen 2009a). This project was originally conceived within the linguistic turn, taking as its theoretical premise, the view that sexual meanings and identities are predominately discursively constituted at school. Building on my previous research (see Allen 2005, 2011) concentrating on official meanings of sexuality as engendered through, for example, the sexuality education curriculum, it was concerned with unofficial meanings of sexuality and their production. Unofficial meanings about sexuality form part of the hidden curriculum of schooling, emerging in unsanctioned and often unintended ways. This focus necessitated a non-traditional methodology, as these meanings often inhere in schooling spaces other than classrooms, such as gym locker rooms, the sports field, peer group cultures and so on. Visual methods were subsequently adopted and included photo-diaries where students were invited to capture moments in which they learned about sexuality at school. Photo-diarists then engaged in a photo-elicitation interview, where they talked about photos they deemed important and why they had taken them. The study was located in two secondary schools in Aotearoa, New Zealand, involving 22 participants aged 16–17 years. I do not dwell on the finer details of project methodology here as my attention lies with the ontology of sexuality as it *becomes* in participant photographs. Information about project demographics and how images were produced are documented in Allen (2009a).

My aim is to offer four photographs from the sexual cultures project as a means of *seeing* this 'new'[2]ontology of sexuality. One of the allures of photographs is that they can help us to perceive how matter matters. This facility occurs because cameras capture how objects and bodies are materially positioned in relation to each other and 'convey real, flesh and blood life' (Becker cited in Rose 2007, p. 238). In terms of illustrating a new materialist ontology of sexuality, photographs can bring 'matter' to the fore, even when narrative explanation of an image fails to remark upon it. Using photographs from the sexual cultures project, I indicate how 'things' made their presence felt via their persistent appearance across photo-diaries. I also provide what might be understood as an example of object-agency (of the camera) in order

[2] That these ideas are 'new' is contested. As Jones and Hoskins (2013) argue, viewing the world as an entanglement of the human and natural, forms part of traditional Maori thought in Aotearoa-New Zealand where objects are perceived as alive and to be respected. As Taylor and Ivinson (2013) note, 'Jones and Hoskins remind us, that a nature/human split has been inflicted by western thinking (as per Descartes) and exported via colonialism' (p. 666).

to illuminate vital materiality (Bennett 2010). By drawing attention to non-human matter in these photographs and highlighting the vital materiality of objects, I endeavour to reveal how sexuality can be seen to emerge via the intra-active entanglement of human and non-human bodies. As Taylor and Ivinson (2013) suggest, 'this is a radical ontological move that decentres the human and emphasises the co-constitutive power of matter' (p. 666). To execute this conceptual shift, I draw on tools in new material feminism's kit, specifically 'diffractive analysis' (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010; Lenz Taguchi 2012; Lenz Taguchi and Palmer 2013), 'vibrant matter' (Bennett 2004, 2010) and 'intra-activity' (Barad 1999, 2003, 2007).

One Diffractive Analysis

To contribute to the mapping of a 'new' ontology of sexuality, it is necessary to engage in an alternative mode of seeing and thinking when analysing photographs (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010 p. 527). I have analysed the four photographs below copious times, as they represent for me what MacLure (2013a) identifies as 'data hotspots'. That is, pieces of data 'experienced……. as intensities of body as well as mind—a kind of glow…..[which] would continue to develop' (p. 173). The photos below provoke a reaction from me that is not simply of the mind, or totally articulable. For instance, when I first saw Fig. 30.1, a picture taken by Tama, I experienced (a physical) annoyance. On first anthropocentric glimpse, the picture revealed a gym locker room (empty) of human bodies and therefore considered by some researchers as 'useless' data about sexuality at school. It was not Tama's efforts to capture how he learned about sexuality at school that annoyed me though. Rather, this annoyance was directed at what I perceived as ethics committee interference in Tama's creative autonomy to capture his sexual learning as he might wish too (i.e. with human bodies present). In order for ethical approval to be granted, participants had to agree to only take photos of people in places where normal access was granted (see Allen 2009b). My annoyance stemmed from how I could say something productive about sexual meanings at school, if human bodies (as the primary site for sexuality) could not be captured?

In my repeated mining of the photographic data, the images below would resurface. Their persistence in capturing my attention, as they lay sprawled on the floor among other photos, or the way they seemed to perfectly match my needs as 'evidence' for something I wanted to argue, has been haunting. Within a new materialist feminist ontology, this a/effect of data can be understood in the following way.



Fig. 30.1 The Gym Locker Room

> In a materialist ontology, data cannot be seen as an inert and indifferent mass waiting to be in/formed and calibrated by our analytic acumen or our coding systems. We are no longer autonomous agents, choosing and disposing. Rather, we are obliged to acknowledge that data have their ways of making themselves intelligible to us. This can be seen, or rather felt, on occasions when one becomes especially 'interested' in a piece of data—such as a sarcastic comment in an interview, or a perplexing incident, or an observed event that makes you feel kind of peculiar. (MacLure 2013b, pp. 660–661)

Within a materialist ontology, data can be understood as a constitutive force, working upon the researcher in a way that disrupts their power to determine what it represents (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010). Barad (2007) suggests that we need to rid ourselves of thinking of ontology and epistemology as separated from each other. This means relinquishing our bird's-eye view that creates a hierarchical split between researcher and the object of our investigation. She writes that,

> …practices of knowing cannot fully be claimed as human practices, not simply because we use non-human elements in our practices but because knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part. Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know it because we are *of* the world. (Barad 2007 p. 185)

The example above of the resurfacing photos and their capacity to annoy and haunt me, might be understood as an example of matter making itself intelligible to the researcher. This thinking decentres the researcher as knowing subject and moves us beyond dominating subject/object, human/non-human, discourse/matter and nature/culture dichotomies. Within this framework, it becomes impossible to differentiate knowing from being, and discourse from matter, because they are 'mutually implicated'. Instead, we could think of epistemology and ontology 'as in a state of interdependence as *onto-epistemology*, which can be defined as 'the study of practices of knowing in being' (Barad 2007 p. 185).

A diffractive analysis operationalises such an onto-epistemology by recognising the researcher's messy, embodied, interconnected relationship with the data and their 'becoming-in-relation' to/with sexuality at school (Taylor and Ivinson 2013). The phenomenon of diffraction has been developed by Haraway (1997), Barad (2007) and Lenz Taguchi (2012) and is originally derived from classical and quantum physics. Barad (2007) explains that diffraction depicts the reconfiguration of ocean waves when they encounter an obstruction such as a rock opening. Diffraction describes the way waves pattern as they overlap, bend and spread. One of the interesting things about diffraction is that the wave *changes in itself* as a result of the obstruction, whereby the original wave remains partly in the new wave after its transformation, and this process continues, wave after wave after wave (see Barad 2007, 71–98).

What is important about this phenomenon for thinking about a diffractive analysis of photographs is that it offers a metaphor for understanding the production of knowledge about sexuality at school. Within a diffractive analysis, the photographic images from the sexual cultures project constitute an obstacle that overlaps with my affective, embodied theorising so that I read diffractively one through the other (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010 p. 536). In this model, it is not possible for the researcher to perform analysis of photographs from a position that is ontologically separated and at a distance from the data (Barad 2007). Instead, the researcher, photographs, discourses of sexuality, that is, all elements of the research are *intra*-connected. Ontologically then, it is impossible to see where in the production of knowledge about sexuality at school, the photograph and researcher (as two possible examples of matter implicated in this becoming) begin and end. Sexuality's a/effects are no longer what the researcher (or participants) deems these photographs to mean. Instead, sexuality (within this project) is now emergent in the same moment as the data-becomes with the researcher (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010) in an endless series of (waves) of becoming in which neither researcher nor photographs or sexuality is ontologically prior, but emerge via intra-active

entanglement. To illuminate the mechanisms of this diffractive process and how sexuality *becomes* further, it is necessary to turn to new materialist feminist concepts of 'matter' and 'intra-activity'.

Sexuality as Intra-Active Becomings

Traditional analysis of photographs has understood their meaning to reside in the image itself (as a reflection of reality) or as some combination of the image and the stories told about it by a (human narrator) (Banks 2001). A new materialist feminist understanding of sexuality, as emerging through co-constitutive entanglements of and between meaning, practices, material artefacts, humans and things of all kinds, requires a shift in thinking about the nature of matter. In order to understand matter as mutually constitutive of sexuality (with humans, practices etc.), a conceptualisation of it as somehow agentic is required. Within new feminist materialist thought, matter is not understood as inert, or forming a passive landscape upon which humans act. Instead, drawing on Jane Bennett's ideas around 'Thing-power', things are also vital players in the world with the capacity to act, engender effects and modify circumstances (Bennett 2004 p. 355). In Bennett's own words, 'Thing-power materialism is a speculative onto-story, a rather presumptuous attempt to depict the non-humanity that flows around but also through humans' (Bennett 2004: 349). Within this conceptualisation of matter and meaning as mutually articulated, the hierarchy between humans and things (in which things are subordinate to, and at the mercy of human agency) is flattened. In this sense, discourse and matter, human/non-human and nature/culture are mutually implicated in the unfolding emergence of the world (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010).

For Bennett (2004), Thing-power is a force which can act upon humans, that is not specifically human or organic. This is not a view of things as having an essential agency of their own forming part of their material composition. Nor is it a sense of agency, akin to human intentionality, where some external force is exercised by things. One way of understanding the nature of this agency is with reference to Barad's concept of *intra*-activity. Drawing again up on insights from physics, *intra*-activity refers to relationships between multiple bodies (both human and non-human) that are not seen to exhibit clear boundaries or be distinct entities (Lenz Taguchi 2012). According to Barad (2007), intra-activity works this way:

> Discursive practices and material phenomena do not stand in a relationship of externality to each other; rather, *the material and the discursive are mutually*

> *implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity.* The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither is reducible to the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other. Neither is articulated or articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated. (p. 152)

This view of *intra*-activity differs from the concept of *inter*-activity in the way it does not depict a relationship between what are understood as separate identities (e.g. humans and non-humans). Instead, non-human and human are always a/effecting or being a/effected by each other in an interdependent and mutual relationship—as a condition for their existence (Barad 2007; Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010). From this perspective, the production of knowledge about sexuality at school occurs on a 'two-way-track' between matter and discourse, with neither taking primacy (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012). This framework radically decentres humans as the site of sexuality's expression and meaning-making, enabling an acknowledgement of 'Things' as actively implicated in its becoming.

Thing-Power-Photographs-Sexuality

In this section, I seek to elucidate the conceptual discussion of a new materialist ontology of sexuality set out above. I begin by attempting to temporarily foreground matter in photograph analysis as a 'new' way of seeing and thinking about sexuality at school. Drawing matter to the fore here is purely for illustrative effect, as within a new materialist ontology of sexuality, neither non-humans nor humans are foundational in this process. In this way, the chapter develops my prior work seeking to acknowledge the material as an active element in the production of sexual meanings at school (Allen 2013a, b, 2014).

Previously, I have analysed the photographs below as human-produced data. This means viewing the photo-diarist as in control of data production via their handling of the camera and decisions about when to take a photograph, and what is captured. The act of research is seen to be human centred, the material artefacts that appear within the frame are not there of their own volition—they appear because the photo-diarist decides they should be. In this account, the material mechanism of the camera itself has no agency, it is purely the tool a human photo-diarist manipulates to collect data—compliant, passive and obliging. When the photographs are analysed, precedence is also given

to human interpretivism. Here the locus for understanding and explanation rests with the photo-diarist or myself as researcher who interprets the material image and the photo-diarist's interview narrative and subsequently writes the research up.

What happens though when we revisit Fig. 30.1 of the gym locker room and try to lose an anthropocentric gaze? The materiality of this so-called empty space with 'nothing' to convey about sexuality (due to its absence of human bodies) begins to come alive. I try to pay attention to matter in the image, attempting to let my annoyance over ethical regulations and the institutional discourses supporting this decision subside. A bar of white soap is lying on the hard concrete floor. I resist the temptation to think, *left behind by a hurried student*. There are wooden slat benches, marked white in places by unidentifiable substances and zigzagged with sunlight from a window out of photo frame. There are white concreted (I remember cold to the touch) walls, air, dust motes, steel hooks to hang paraphernalia. My own memories of being in the girls' locker rooms at school push in, the smell of 'Impulse' spray deodorant, mingled with warm moisture from the showers and the excitement of changing out of our uniforms into less restrictive PE gear. Then, I recall the photo-diarist Danny telling me, 'this photo is in the new gym, in the boys' changing rooms…… you learn a lot from just being with boys in that sort of environment…….. it's the conversations you can have because you're away from teachers and you're not sort of worried'. I think 'yes', that rings true for me too in relation to learning about (female) embodied sexuality, and then I wonder if you, the reader, have similar memories, or, if your own histories and experiences are far removed from these…….

MacLure (2013b) suggests that attending to data as 'sense-event' offers one way of operationalising a new materialist reading. In the example above, a sense-event is what orients me to engaging with this image further—that is, my annoyance the image might offer no insights about sexuality. 'Sense' also weaves its way through my engagement with the image, as I remember the smell of deodorant from my own school days and the coldness of the gym walls when they came into contact with my body. By letting human bodies recede, something the photo itself encourages via the absence of humans, and by paying attention to matter, 'things' rise to the surface. The effect is to flatten the picture's perceptual landscape so that in this non-hierarchical terrain of human–non-human knowledge production, matter is taken seriously and understood as alive. The soap, benches, steel hooks and concrete floor are individuated material objects entangled in this moment, making themselves intelligible to me. In a diffractive process, their materiality overlaps with the institutional discourses of ethics committees, my own memories

of gym locker rooms, smells, feelings and Danny's narrative about the image and how he learns about sexuality. In this process of diffraction, there are endless waves of knowledge of sexuality which extend beyond the camera, what is captured by the image, the research and the researcher and connect with you the reader, and your memories, feelings, world-relations. From this perspective, sexuality at school is a never-ending enfolding of non-human, human, practices, objects, affect, motility, discourse, nature, smells, sound and other earthly elements (including those that are unrepresentable in language and/or known to humans).

Another example of matter making itself intelligible can be seen in Fig. 30.2, an image of Hannah taken by her friend Madison. I have analysed this photo on numerous occasions as an example of the way meanings about sexuality circulate at school via embodiment and sartorial address (see Allen 2013a). This analysis rested on Madison's explanation of the image where she remarked that her friend Hannah was known for her 'boobs'.

> So Hannah she's known for just, I mean her boobs and that's it and yeah I wanted to take that because that is sexuality because that's pretty much there. And its everyday like girls walk around with tops on like that and they think it's just a top, but really boys are talking about it all the time so it's like, this portrays that sexuality is expressed without you even knowing and that's what that picture is about basically. (Madison, 18 years)

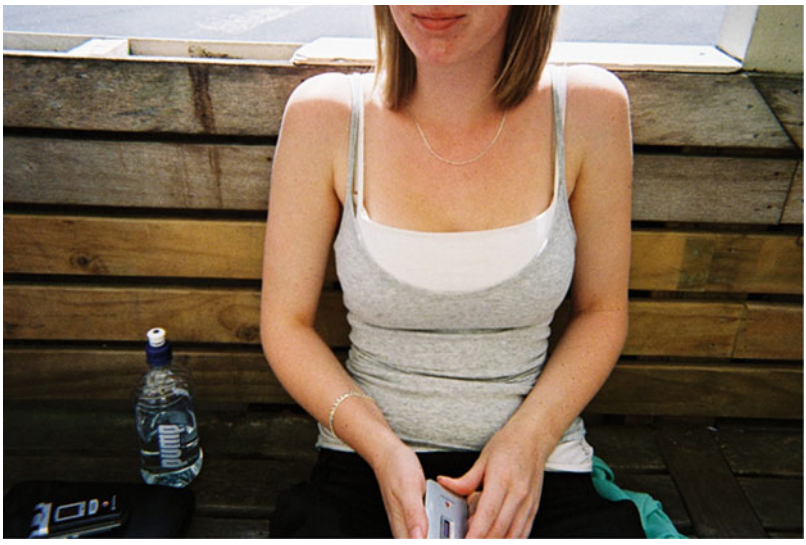


Fig. 30.2 Mobile phone 'Thing-Power'—Madison's image of Hannah

Employing an anthropocentric gaze, Hannah features large in this picture. Madison has composed the image so Hannah's body fills the picture and occupies centre frame. This human-centricism renders Hannah the only important element of data in the photo and Hannah's narrative explanation of it paramount. It is as if, as Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) coin it, the human body holds 'a magnetic power over our gazes' drawing the photo-diarist, researcher and reader's eye. In the picture then, Hannah's human body subsequently becomes the most important site for the manifestation of sexuality at school, subordinating the image's non-human elements.

A new materialist engagement with this photo makes it possible to decentre Hannah as the locus of sexuality and consider sexuality's making in an ontologically different manner. When matter is brought to the fore, *things* rise to the surface in this photo; the wooden bench Hannah sits on, a plastic bottle half filled with water, a concreted area and opening behind Hannah's head and two flip-top mobile phones, one silver in Hannah's hands and another next to the water bottle on the wooden seat. The mobile phones were not something I remember seeing, before practising an anti-humanism gaze. Neither did they feature in young people's interview talk before I became alerted to them and started questioning participants directly about them. Looking closely across all the photo-diaries, mobile phones were in fact everywhere in images; lying on desks beside student work, in hands as students walked through the school or sat on the sports field in peer groups at lunchtime, discarded on a bench outside a classroom, clutched by one young woman in a tangled embrace with her boyfriend. There was even one photo in which a mobile phone comprised the main subject (see Fig. 30.3), yet during her interview, the photo-diarist did not allude to it before my mentioning its presence.

Mobile phones were experienced as a mundane, everyday feature of human existence, a tool for human use that was unremarkable and therefore unacknowledged in sexuality's becoming. Their persistent appearance in photos (in Fig. 30.2 twice in one image) generated a forceful pattern that made their presence felt. Although mobile phones were not initially noticed by me as researcher, nor spontaneously remarked upon by participants, their recurrence in photographs and by implication their role in the production of sexuality at school could not be ignored. By attempting to relinquish an anthropocentric gaze and pay attention to matter in this photograph, it is possible to attend to the presence of mobile phones in sexuality's becoming. Understanding sexuality as something more than discourse or the preserve of human bodies and as occurring intra-actively via human and non-human entanglements means that the becoming of sexuality can be recognised as extending to incorporate 'things'—including mobile phones. More details of how phones are implicated in a new ontology



Fig. 30.3 The mobile phone

of sexuality have been delineated elsewhere (Allen 2013a). I draw attention to mobile phones here, as an example of how matter, previously considered passive and minor, can be considered as active and vital in the way it makes itself intelligible to others (including humans). The mechanism of this agency is explored next, through another example of intra-activity, highlighting object-agency.

The Camera Slip—An Example of Object-Agency

Returning to MacLure's proposition that a starting point for a 'new' materialist engagement with data is as sense-event, I want to rethink the way Madison's photo of Hannah seems to call me and demand my attention. The frequency

with which I show Fig. 30.2 in presentations and include it in my writing is interesting to me. What is it about this photo that I can't seem to let go of? Or should the question be, why won't this photo let me go? Bennett (2004) explains that one of the ways we might glimpse thing-power is that things are 'entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics' (p. 351). And this is 'the thing' about the image of Hannah, the sense-event in MacLure's conceptualisation that makes me susceptible to the possibility of matter's vibrancy. I have attempted to exhaust this picture in terms of semiotics. I have tried to wrestle control over it via analysis, but each time I try to tether its meaning, something more comes at me, some other way of engaging with it becomes possible—it constantly escapes my efforts to know it! I feel haunted and taunted by its ability to keep appearing in my presentations and publications—as if it's not done with me yet. I hear my students and colleagues saying, 'Louisa is showing *that photo again*'.

And so the *something more* (Blaise 2013) that comes at me in this engagement with the image is an object-agency via the camera. As indicated above, in an anthropocentric rendering, the human photo-diarist is centred as the active agent, who captures what sexuality is, via an object—the camera. As things, cameras are subordinate to humans whose agency is seen to make them useful. Cameras are seen to possess no intention, agency, vibrancy or force that isn't triggered by humans or attributable to their actions. Recently while writing a paper about the effects of photo anonymisation involving the cropping of participants' heads, I was again drawn to Madison's image of Hannah. In the following section of narrative, Madison explains how she attempted to adhere to ethical regulations about anonymising participants by leaving their heads out of images.

Madison: This is Hannah, she has the biggest boobs in the world and everyone knows it and she loves it.
Louisa: And so she's known for that?
Madison: She is, she's pretty known for her cup size and so I wanted to take that picture of her and I didn't want to get her face in but I did.
Louisa: She was happy for you to take the photo?
Madison: Yeah, she was fine, she was just like whatever, okay.
(Madison, 18 years)

I have read and used this particular extract more times than I can count. Each time I have understood the underlined phrase, 'I didn't want to get her face in but I did' as an example of *human error*. Despite her best intentions

to leave her friend's face out of the image completely, Madison mistakenly included a portion of it. In an anthropocentric reading of this image, the centrality of humanism is so entrenched that even inaction—the failure to execute ethical regulations successfully—is attributable to human agency. Writing of how 'Thing-power' is made visible, Bennett (2004) says it 'often first reveals itself as a negativity, a confounding or fouling up of an intention, desire, schema, or concept….such negativity is also the same stuff out of which positive things emerge. It is a negativity that is profoundly productive' (p. 361). In this instance, the 'fouling up of an intention' was Madison's inclusion of more of Hannah's head than she desired (see Fig. 30.2). One way of seeing this 'fouling of intention' as productive is that it opens possibilities for seeing matter as vibrant. When including this image in presentations and writing previously, I have abided by Madison's original intentions and in another example of human-centrism further cropped it so none of Hannah's face shows. My human-induced modification of the image is clearly not the final say on this *matter* however, because in order to illuminate matter's vitality in this chapter, I am forced to include the photo in its original entirety here. (In another example of matter's agency?)

What happens though if we were to understand this slip differently? Within a new materialist ontology of sexuality, we might see this as an example of intra-activity. Analysing the image diffractively, matter can be understood here as not simply that which we can see in the picture, that is, the wooden bench, mobile phones, a plastic water bottle, clothing material. Within a diffractive analysis, matter extends to the camera by which this photograph was taken, even though it is not visible within the image itself. When we understand the human(Madison)–non-human(camera) relationship as intra-activity and see the camera as vibrant matter, it becomes possible to decentre Madison as agentic subject. Drawing on Barad (2007) Lenz Taguchi explains,

> A radical rethinking of matter means that not only perceiving human body-subjects can act intentionally, orient themselves, and have agency to know themselves. In new materialist ontology, intention is something distributed and emerging in complex networks of human and nonhuman material agents that include historically specific sets of material conditions that are effects of *materialdiscursive* and *natureculture* intra-actions. (Lenz Taguchi 2013, p. 712)

The slip then is not Madison's alone, it can be understood as an example of the vitality of the camera, emergent within this instance of human–non-human intra-action. As delineated in the previous conceptual section, agency is the property of neither humans nor non-humans, but occurs via their

intra-actions. What this means for understanding the ontology of sexuality at school, is that sexuality's becoming is *materialdiscursive* (Lenz Taguchi 2013: 712). The ontology of sexuality is not derived from humans alone as the site for its expression and experience. Sexuality becomes in the entanglement of human and non-human intra-actions. Sexuality as captured by this research does not pre-exist either the camera or Madison, it comes into being via their relation. Diffractively of course, as researcher, I am also implicated in this becoming, with this chapter and its discussion forming part of the human–non-human entanglement of sexuality at school.

Concluding Matters

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, this discussion is experimental and as such I do not follow the usual conventions of closing here. My aim is not to produce a representational account that can be concluded by, this is what we thought sexuality *was* and in line with new material feminisms, this is what we now think sexuality *is*. Such a synopsis reinstates the very separation between researcher and the object of investigation that a new materialist ontology works to dislodge. This chapter has attempted to be less about fathoming what sexuality at school means and more a methodological experiment in how sexuality *becomes*. Within a new feminist materialist framework this implies a never-ending un/enfolding extending beyond this chapter, myself as researcher and you as reader—an open-endedness that sits uneasily with the tradition of closing comments. Therefore, I cease this particular moment of writing in a way that seeks to acknowledge this endless un/enfolding by providing a new materialist reading of another photograph. This photograph is particularly useful to view last because it fits with the chapter's aims of elucidating a new materialist ontology of sexuality at school while simultaneously conveying the possibility of sexuality's endless becoming……

Figure 30.4 is a photo of a human hand, holding another photo of a human hand, holding a picture of a penis. Part of what makes this sentence difficult to grasp is that the image provides a successful example of blurring the human/non-human divide. The collapse of a distinction between human and object occurs because of the repetition of subject and object in the image. That is, the photo-diarists have taken a picture of themselves (specifically their hand)—holding a picture—of someone else—holding a penis in their hand. Given this entanglement of humans (as hands and penis) and matter (photographs and pictures of hands and a penis), it becomes difficult to discern the object



Fig. 30.4 The hand holding the picture of the hand holding the penis

from the subject of this image. This confusion is part of the overlapping and enfolding of human–non-human in the photograph as described by Barad's (2007) notion of intra-activity.

Put another way, where do human and non-human begin and end in this photo? We can see various human parts in the image—two sets of hands and one penis. At an ontological level though, are these humans or are they pictures of humans (which would make them objects i.e. matter composed of photographic paper and ink). And what about the photo-diarist? Can we understand the subject–object distinction here, where the photo-diarist observes an object (the photo of the penis) at a distance? Can we really speak of an ontological distance between her as human subject and sexuality as the object of her picture, when she captures her own hand as part of the data about sexuality she collects? Where does the human start and the data finish if a (human) part of the photo-diarist as researcher literally appears in the image? Might this be a visual depiction of what MacLure (2013b) describes as the researcher-data-becoming in which neither is ontologically prior but occurs in co-constitutive emergence?

The composition of this picture and new materialist rendering of it mess with the mind. In their diffractive reading of photos in a Swedish pre-school, Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) remark on the difficulty of trying to throw

off their anthropocentric gaze. This difficulty lies in the fact that we are so human-centric that when we are without our bird's-eye view of the world things become unintelligible. If our seeing is reliant on a subject/object distinction in which humans hold a privileged position, then how can we understand when the human–non-human distinction disintegrates as it does in this image? This rupture with conventional academic writing will not be palatable for some who will feel it is a 'messy', loose way to finish a chapter. However, via this image we can *literally see* the decentring of the human and co-constitutive power of matter. Its blurring of boundaries between human/non-human, researcher/researched, subject/object, dead matter/living matter and nature/culture demonstrates the intra-active entanglements by which sexuality becomes. It is not that this picture represents what sexuality is, but that when read diffractively matter and discourse are co-constitutive in an endless un/enfolding…… wave after wave after wave which now includes you—the reader…….

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31

Pin-Balling and Boners: The Posthuman Phallus and Intra-Activist Sexuality Assemblages in Secondary School

Emma Renold and Jessica Ringrose

What Else Can Research on Sexual Violence Do?

This chapter and our own research trajectories are in dialogue with decades of qualitative research, which critically explore the complex formations and experiential accounts of how young people negotiate the daily tyranny of sexual regulation and harassment in schools. Like others in this section of the handbook, we have been experimenting with diverse and inventive methodologies that emerge from the 'post qualitative' (Lather and St. Pierre 2013), 'postconstructivist' (Lykke 2012), 'posthuman' (Taylor and Hughes forthcoming), and 'new material' (Ivinson and Taylor 2013) turns by exploring what else our research can do, be, and become. Part of this has been actively seeking out ways to connect more directly with how our research practices can traverse the threshold of research and activism, thus interrogating how our own research might respond to Karen Barad's (2007, p. 89) plea to take 'responsibility for the fact that our practices matter'. This has included an ethico-political examination of *what* we choose to write about (e.g. theoretical/methodological/substantive papers that pay attention to the regulation *and* rupture of gender and

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sexual norms and violence) and *how* and *where* we communicate our research (e.g. academic books and papers, professional and young people's conferences, street protests, on T-shirts, through image, and through poems). Throughout the process of attending to the what, how, and where of our research, we have also been pursuing opportunities to enliven change, from the micro-processes of research encounters through to explicitly activist, impact projects. This chapter is a combination of the two—a micro-analysis of explicitly activist feminist research into the making of young sexualities in secondary schools (see also Jackson and Weatherall 2010).

The data we explore is from a research project 'Feminism in Schools: Mapping Impact in Practice'[1] initially conceived as a cross-institutional engagement project between university researchers and *Elle* magazine. The *Elle* editorial team had approached us to help them develop and support (we thought!) a feminist resource pack for UK secondary schools. Keen to experiment with how our research expertise on gender relations and young feminisms might inform a wider public, the researchers seriously considered the potential of a partnership with this high-profile fashion magazine. Elsewhere, we have documented how the 'communication and impact' dimension of the project disintegrated as we became increasingly alert to *Elle*'s desire to market their product to teen girls, under the guise of 'feminism' (see Keller and Ringrose 2015 for a critique). However, the collaboration did spark a rare opportunity to mobilize an experimental feminist research collaboration where six[2] academics forged relationships with teachers across England and Wales to facilitate and/or run feminist lunch clubs and feminist after-school clubs in schools.[3] The groups occurred off-timetable and outside the formal curriculum. They were all pupil-led with sessions unfolding according to the young people's own experience of how sexism and sexual harassment mediated their own lives. Many of the groups facilitated a range of creative and participatory methods such as poems, word-maps, sculptures, and online social media posts (e.g. Facebook,

[1] The initial funding was a Cardiff University Research impact fund, which paid for the time of one final year undergraduate student to gain experience of qualitative methods and engagement work. We have since received support for web visibility and networking activities from GEA, through a project called GELS, Gender Equalities Leadership in Schools Network http://www.genderandeducation.com/6462-2/

[2] The academic team included Jessalynn Keller (University of East Anglia), Andy Phippen (Plymouth University), Emma Renold, Victoria Edwards, Gianna Tomassi (Cardiff University), Jessica Ringrose, Victoria Showunmi, and Hanna Retallack (UCL IOE).

[3] To date, ten diverse secondary schools across England and Wales, including mixed, single-sex, and fee-paying institutions and from a range of religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In this chapter, we consider the original pilot project which generated qualitative data with 75 young people, five academics, and five teachers, using a combination of semi-structured group and individual interviews (see Ringrose and Renold 2015 for further details). All young people's names presented throughout this paper are pseudonyms.

Tumblr, Twitter), through which young people could communicate their feelings on sensitive or taboo areas.

Pivotal to these sessions (as we map out below) was an ethico-political desire to create bendy structures which allowed for 'chance intrusions' (Massumi 2013) and the unpredictable to emerge (see Ringrose 2015; Ringrose and Renold 2014; Renold 2016). Crisscrossing this desire was an ongoing battle as we wrestled with the painful ethical striations of 'freedom' (to express) and 'protection' (from harm). Therefore, the case studies have been purposively selected not only for their difference (i.e. their contrasting locales, peer cultures, and institutional dynamics) but also for the way they provide a rare glimpse at young people's struggles with sexuality outside of conventional sex and relationship education lessons. Together they begin to illustrate what a feminist posthuman, new materialism approach to gender, sexuality, and also sexual violence can offer. We start then by fleshing out the entangled core concepts of *posthumanism*, *assemblages*, *phallogocentrism*, *diffraction*, *intra-activism*, and *space–time–matterings* that we bring to bear on our 'data'.

Posthuman Sexuality Assemblages

Some of the more recent and radical shifts in thinking otherwise about the pleasures and pains of young sexualities is the turn toward a posthumanizing of gendered and sexual power relations to rethink violence, bullying and harassment constituted through a psychological lens (Lenz Taguchi 2013, see also Huuki and Renold 2015; Schott and Søndergaard 2014; Ringrose and Rawlings 2015). This research is beginning to unsettle our understandings, through new onto-epistemologies, of the ways in which bodies, affect, objects, history, place, and discourse entangle and come to matter in and indeed make their mark on children and young people's everyday lives—and not always in the ways we might anticipate and imagine (Holford et al. 2013; Davies 2014). Central to the idea of the posthuman is a post-individual and non-anthropocentric theory of power. 'Sexual violence' is thus understood not as locked inside and emerging from the human, rational (masculine) individual (thus leading to pedagogies which charge the individual as the sole and responsible 'agent of change') but as emerging in configurations of power relations that include the more-than-human. What Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call 'assemblages' (see also Markus and Saka 2006) is a pivotal concept for exploring more-than-human *power relations*—that is, how 'individuals' become entangled within situated force relations that can pull in many directions at once—forces that include the corporeal, technological, mechanical, virtual, discursive, and imaginary.

Braidotti: Wither Now Phallogocentrism?

We are interested in 'sexuality assemblages' (see also Fox and Alldred 2013 and Chap. 11, this volume) but we wish to return to an older language of phallogocentrism, that is, sexual relations oriented around the phallic referent and/or the phallic gaze (Butler 2004) seeking to posthumanize this from the more-than-symbolic (see also Renold and Ringrose 2016). We explore assemblages, which render visible the human and more-than-human heteropatriarchal power relations that territorialize, capture, and contain the bodily capacities and expressions of young people. We are inspired by Braidotti's (2013, p. 80) vision in *The Posthuman* where she advocates that feminists shakeup 'the political economy of phallogocentrism and of anthropocentric humanism'. We aim to posthumanize and materialize the phallogocentrism we encounter and consider the *fleshy*, *material and penetrative* force of heteronormative and sexualized power relations in play. In doing so, we resist the move to a simply 'flat ontology' in non-representational theoretical frames (Grosz 1994). Although we understand the power of the cartographic move to document 'flat' affective flows and relations, these are *always* crosscut with hierarchical and stratified power relations. Expanding upon our earlier trajectory in this tack (Renold and Ringrose 2008, 2011, 2015), we wish to map young people's *capture within and rupturing of* what we are now calling phallogocentric territorializations (see Renold and Ringrose 2016).

Barad: Diffraction, Intra-Activism, and Space–Time–Matterings

In much of our previous writing, we have mapped micro-resistances in research data. Critically, here we move from a *traditional reporting of our substantive research findings* after a period of *data analysis*, to a messier form of engagement, where we attempt to *enact and theorize the possibilities for change through our research encounters*. Indeed, also, following Braidotti, our feminism in schools' project, explicitly sought to activate the 'affirmative politics' of 'putting the active back into activism' and facilitating ways of attuning to and creating the conditions through which the micro-political practices of daily activism can surface in more formal and organized ways in our research.

Significantly, this is a posthumanist activism where we combine Braidotti's philosophical calls to put the active back into activism (in part by dismantling phallogocentricism) with Barad's radical reconceptualization of causality

drawn from feminist science studies. Barad's notion of 'intra-action' encourages us to shift our representational thinking away from 'reflection' (i.e. seeing and observing from afar, and thus conceiving of change happening *to* or *from* something). She invites us instead to consider a 'diffractive' approach where meaning is always in process, always mattering, always unknown because 'with each intra-action, the manifold of entangled relations is reconfigured'. Indeed, her notion of 'intra-action' comes alive through her writing on 'posthuman performativity' to provide us with a radical revisioning of how change, empowerment, and the new are generated. As she suggests:

> With each intra-action, the manifold of entangled relations is reconfigured. And so, consequentially, responsibility, and accountability take on entirely new valences. There are no singular causes. And there are no individual agents of change. Responsibility is not ours alone. (Barad 2007, p. 394)

Barad's idea of intra-action offers us an ethico-political recognition that instead of viewing young people as either needing to be transformed or rerouted from the inside-out or outside-in, we start from how they and we are *always already entangled* in shifting and dynamic sexuality assemblages, we 'interfere' from there.

Combining Barad's notion of 'intra-action' with activism to make intra-activism is a lens that foregrounds unpicking researcher response-ability—that is, what is 'our ability to respond' including, what can and cannot be spoken about, what is shared, what is blocked, or rerouted, and what can transform. As researchers of sexualities in schools, we and research participants are captured within but also moving against phallogocentric relations that are assembled in specific ways, and that are not limited (as we set out above) to the human.

A final concept we want to enliven for this chapter is Barad's notion of *space-time-matterings* a mashing up of terms to get at the relational processes through which:

> time and space are produced through iterative intra-actions that materialise specific phenomena, where phenomena are not 'things' but relations. Mattering and materialising are dynamic processes through which temporality and spatiality are produced as something specific. (Juelskjaer 2013: 755)

As we demonstrate, this concept is methodologically useful for drawing attention to the more-than-human micro-relations—those space–time–matterings—

that unfold in our research assemblages in and around phallogocentric power relations. Returning back to diffraction, this concept is particularly useful for thinking about the diffracted waves of complexity of our research assemblage. Diffraction is where different elements entangle and crash together and something different emerges. Below, we bring together and set into dialogue two very different case studies from the feminism in schools' project. As well as we put diverse and perhaps unlikely pieces of 'data' into dialogue (see also Lenz Taguchi et al. 2013) to reanimate our understandings of gender and sexual power relations.

Stones, Yogurt, and Pin-Balling: Becoming Feminist/Sexual 'Outlaws' at School

For our first phallocentric sexuality assemblage, we turn to the semi-rural postindustrial landscape of an economically deprived Welsh valleys town, where heteronormative gendered and sexual historical legacies loom large in what girls and women, boys and men are expected to do and be (see Renold and Ivinson 2014, 2015). The stratification and 'dominant reality' (Deleuze and Guatarri 1987) of 'sexuality' at Cwm Valley High (pseudonym) was a visceral hyper-heterosexuality that traversed social, familial, mass media,[4] and political territories. Representations of sexuality as violence, as reproduction, as domestication, as spectacle, and as hetero-coupledom were the norm. For example, statistical representations of young pregnant 'at risk' bodies, or high sexually transmitted disease rates in public health documents, dominate and abjectify the youth population as the sexual objects of consumption and sexual exchange.

It was precisely this situated sexuality assemblage that sparked an invitation for Emma and Vicky Edwards (an undergraduate gender studies student) to bring the 'feminism in schools' project to Cwm Valley High by self-declared feminist teacher, Siwan (pseudonym). She had recently joined the school, and was very keen to facilitate a space which might make visible and transform the rigid sedimented gender relations that she was observing in her everyday practice among staff and students. The space offered was a small 'time out' room, routinely used for containing or disciplining unruly 'misbehaving' students. While other students could not see in, the room had two closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras that connected to the deputy head/head teacher's office.

[4] Indeed, this area features in the sensationalist sexpose reality MTV show 'The Valleys' http://www.mtv.co.uk/the-valleys.

We offered a six-week session of lunchtime meetings, through which to explore students' own experiences of everyday sexism, and Siwan (white Welsh) brought together a group of ten students (eight 'girls' and two 'boys', white Welsh). These students had never heard of the word 'feminism'. They assumed it was something about 'femininity' or 'being a bit feminine' which, for this group, was a term they had only heard spoken about to refer to boys and men. Consequently, they assumed that a 'feminist' group would be a group to explore 'gay sexuality':

> Rhiannon: when I think about feminine, I think of a boy that's being feminine
> Emma: so, you don't think about feminine in relation to girls at all?
> Rhys: No. No.
> Rhiannon: that's the thing … it's like, when you said feminism I thought we were going to talk about gay … about being gay

Perhaps this complex entanglement of how gender meets[5] sexuality was why in the very first sessions (and unbeknown to the teacher) we learned how the group had graduated from being semi-popular members of their school cohort to gender and sexual 'outlaws' in their transition from Year 8 (age 12–13) to Year 9 and Year 10 (they were 15 at the time of the project). Indeed, all were united in their abject status as working-class high achievers in an 'under-performing' school. They talked at length about the 'pressure' of having to carry the burden, and sheer affective weight of turning the school around, and 'put it on the map' (i.e. for its 'academic achievement' than its high 'school exclusion' rate). However, their investment in academic success, and their refusal to embody the hyper-heterosexuality discourse that they felt captured the majority of their peers, rendered them targets of routinized verbal and physical heterosexual and homophobic violence. Story after story flowed from their mouths and onto word–image–affect maps (see Figs. 31.1 and 31.2 below).[6] Below, we will put these maps into diffractive context with a poem generated from them during one lunchtime session.[7]

[5] 'Meet' is particularly apt here, as in the valleys, 'meet' means 'deep kissing'.

[6] The word–image–affect maps began with young people furiously scribbling all the events that happened to them in school which they wanted to stop. Jackson Pollock 'drip painting' style (see Renold 2016) the blank sheets were soon populated, and the group added new words, phrases, and illustrations during each session, including attaching their feelings in discourse or image to each experience (e.g. angry, upset, crying—see Figs. 31.1 and 31.2). We call them 'affective' because it draws attention to the spontaneity and unarticulated, unspoken affective intensities that were circulating during the process of producing the maps.

[7] Vicky introduced the group to the poem, 'Daughter' by Phoebe Struckes' to show young people that poems do not have to rhyme. This seemed to give them the confidence to develop their own poem from their word-maps.

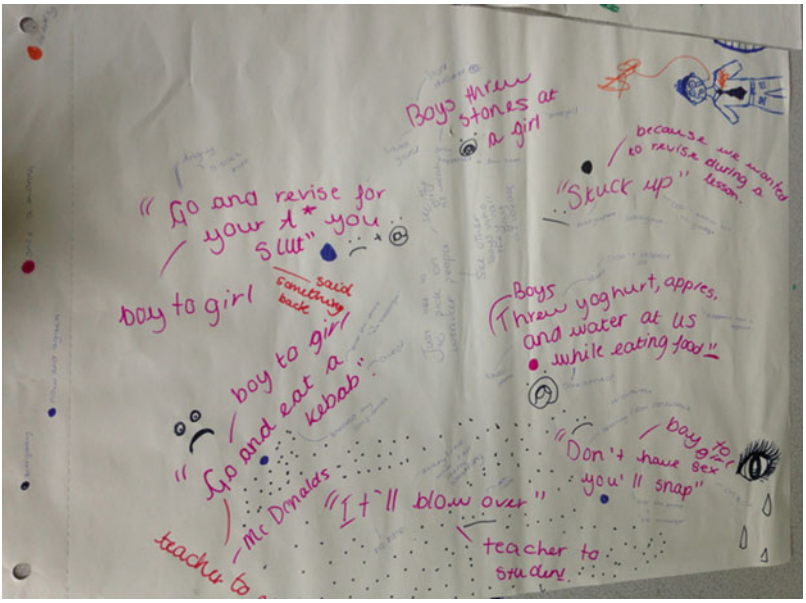


Fig. 31.1 Word–image–affect map 1

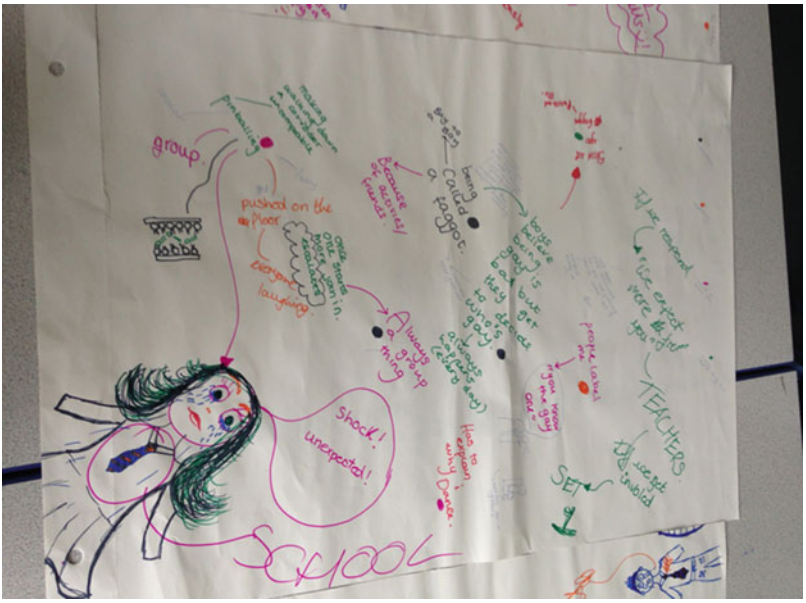


Fig. 31.2 Word–image–affect map 2

The word-image-maps are a mass of words and pictures that describe experiences of being routinely taunted for two years as 'gay' (boys) and 'sluts and slags' (girls) for being 'stuck up' 'little swots' or as Lilly recounted in the words of one young person: 'go and revise for your A* you slut'.

Poem 1: Boy threw stones at a girl

Boy threw stones at a girl
and others join in
Apples, water, yoghurt too
splatting against us,
making us black and blue.

Stone thrower!
Apple thrower!
Food throwers!

Boys believe being gay is bad
yet they're the ones that label
because of our interests
always happens, every day.

We are the targets,
our group.
Just because we do as we told
and work hard.
Only in order to achieve
our goals!!!

The word–image–affect maps and poem illuminate the 'proud moment' (full sarcasm) of two girls having yogurt 'splatted against' them by an ex-boyfriend and smeared on their school bags during break times (stains which remained some ten months later). Painful experiences of having stones and balls being hurled at them by 'rugby boys' who knew exactly how and where to target them come alive in the pictures. From being targeted by balls, they also related how they became ball, in a subcultural practice described as 'pin-balling', vividly documented in the close up below (Fig. 31.3), where groups of students line the narrow school corridors, facing each other in two rows and bat the body of the student who walks through, from row to row, thus creating a human-pin-ball machine (see Fig 31.3).

While this pastime was spoken about as 'fun' for other students, for this group, the fear and hostility of pin-balling was palpable. They talked about 'everyone laughing' as they were verbally abused, pushed from behind, and thrown violently from side to side and 'on the floor', 'making walking down a

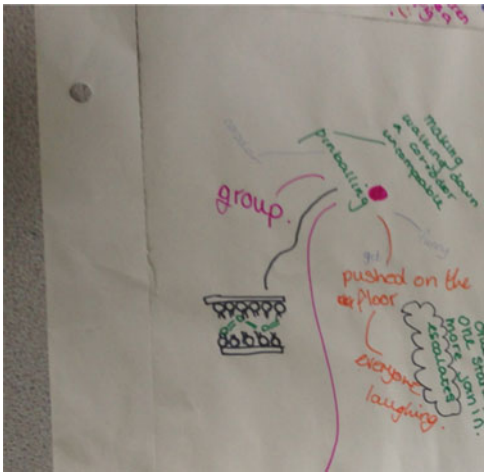


Fig. 31.3 Pin-balling

corridor uncomfortable'. So sedimented were the discursive–material practices of the gaming of violence and the violence of romance, that when some of the girls disclosed being physically attacked by boys to teachers on playground duty, they were met with the traditional heteronormative response given to girls about boys' unwanted 'advances': 'it's cos they fancy you'.

Perhaps this partly explains why the group was so keen to meet at lunchtimes rather than after school. Breaks and lunchtimes were when the group were at their most vulnerable and visible, as can be glimpsed in their complex lunchtime routine as they navigate the temporal and spatial flows of where and when they become targets for abuse across the school:

Emma: And where do you hang around?
Lilly: We literally we
Rhys: We don't go nowhere
Lilly: We're afraid to go on the yards
Rhiannon: Yeah it's like we can't go on the 7 and 8 yard where we sat to have food cos we get um yoghurt thrown at us … we can't go on our yard we have thrown, stones thrown at us or a ball kicked at our head
Rhys: That's where the boys are cos they purposely kick a ball like you see the top yard up there?
Emma: Yeah
Rhys: They kick the ball down at you and they target
Rhiannon: Yeah
Rhiannon: All the lads

Rhys: And they will hit you … (so) we normally have food in the hall we'll stay there till half the dinner time cos then (…) then we'll hang around by the lessons
Emma: So you don't go outside
Rhys: No
Lilly: Yeah I wouldn't never walk up those steps
Rhiannon: No you can't walk up that way cos you'll have a ball or something thrown at you aimed at you
Lilly: Or you'll just have like everyone staring at you and shouting something
Rhys: What would we do we go through this part of the school and then up the ramp and then up those steps and then if we're in that block we go this way not this way
Rhiannon: So in other words we go
Lilly: The long way round
Rhiannon: The long way inside school

By thinking through these accounts via a posthuman and new material lens, we consider the maps and poem produced in the 'time out' room as diffractive moments of 'data' that show us the operations of a territorializing 'phallogocentric sexuality assemblage' in which students are caught up in a web of human and more-than-human relations. Material bodies push and prod the feminist group through stares, words, balls, and food. Playground practices aimed to sexualize, humiliate, and shame are materially organized around a phallic bodily logic of penetration: from the 'splatting' ejaculate of the yogurt that smears the carrier of academic success (i.e. the school bag); to the honed sporting skills of the 'lads' whose stoning practices resemble the culling of Welsh witches in medieval times who dare to rupture gendered community norms.

However, we also witnessed an intense need and rebellious zest to begin to name and shame the routinized 'used to it' practices that they had, until now, considered a 'normal thing' through the speaking, sharing, and bonding that brought them close:

Rhiannon: It's like we couldn't, it's like if we hadn't had this group, nobody would have known about any of this
Lilly: (good) to speak about it
Rhiannon: yeah that's the thing
Rhys: yeah, I just feel better after
Lilly: I tell you cos literally, we've never said none of this stuff before, not even in front of each other

Rhiannon: no exactly … it's like we all know like … what's been said, but like, it's like, we are all in different places, we're never together
Lilly: but you never say like 'oh my god I felt like'
Rhys: crap after he said that
Lilly: yeah
Rhiannon: we never go into detail
[…]
Rhiannon: this has made it … closer, do you get what I mean?
Rhys: bonding together
[…]
Emma: a way of sharing?
Rhys: yeah
Rhiannon: Everything!

Thus while the events themselves came into view through gossip networks, (e.g. 'oh my god did you see what he said'), articulating the 'detail' or dwelling and sharing the affective 'felt' experience remained hidden and taboo. They also explained that it would be 'too risky' to articulate these experiences in a Personal Social and Education session or in a school assembly (as other 'feminist' groups in our project had). When it was suggested that perhaps the poems might be shared on the school website anonymously, they quickly rejected the idea, because 'they'd know it was us'. Indeed, in one session, they opened the door to find one of the boys who had stoned and pin-balled them waiting outside. Not unsurprisingly, the next session was punctuated with Vicky opening the door every few minutes to ensure no one was listening.

The specific location and time of day thus entangled within a particular set of space–time–mattering relations. Critically, the sessions were held in a 'time out' room used to contain and support students who presented severe behavioral problems—unruly 'challenging' 'under-achieving' students struggling to meet the exacting and impossible standards of neoliberal education systems. This was a room where 'bad affect' lingered, where troubled minds and bodies were monitored by virtual and physical surveillance systems (a CCTV camera, a teacher, behavior charts, etc.). As alluded to above, this was the room occupied by the 'very bad people' who populated their maps and poems. Perhaps an essential part of the assemblage was the time–space–mattering of how the students entangled and connected with the affective residue of the 'time out' room. This was a 'one chance only' (Rhys) space for unruly affects, a safe space for disclosure, a rupture to the phallocentric material relations of being balled and

pin-balled. Individual experiences 'come together' and become one body, a body where 'everything comes out as seen when feelings flowed out on the paper'. Thus, while the group explained at length the risks involved in ever being able to share their experiences or creative outputs in the school space, the process of sharing, creating, and bonding for them was important in its own right. As Rhys says, after each session, 'I just feel better after'. Each gathering seemed to leave an affective residue that lifted us all for a micro-moment and bonded the group in ways that enabled them to share in their rage of routinized misogyny and homophobia. We also perhaps sense a visceral fear in their poems, reminding us as Audre Lorde suggests that poetry is not a luxury but a necessity, 'for existence and survival'.

Challenging Sexism in a Single-Sex Catholic School

Where Cym Valley High was a hyper-heterosexualized context, where high achievement stood out as a direct punishable challenge to local heteronormative peer cultures, desexualized school girls were the assumed norm of one of Jessica's research contexts,[8] a high-performing 'single-sex' Catholic girls school, Holy Trinity High (HTH). HTH was located in a wealthy area of a capital city in the South East of England, but with intake from a range of areas, including economically marginalized girls who attend on the basis of their Catholic faith. The school is an old listed building, with stately demeanor, an imposing façade, and huge grounds that include tennis courts, green space, and in the summer, a makeshift pool that can be used by the neighborhood.

After putting out a message to the local Personal Social and Health Education committee in the borough, the researchers[9] were invited to facilitate a feminist group at HTH. Girls were invited to apply to join the group through an assembly delivered to the Year 9s (aged 13–14). The head teacher introduced the team and explicitly connected the project's focus on feminism with the ethos of the school, since 'God is a feminist if you think about it'. During the assembly, the girls sat on the floor cross-legged and were repeatedly told to be quiet ('shhh') and sit still. The level

[8] Jessica worked in four diverse schools in urban and suburban communities for the duration of the feminism in schools' project, for further details, see Retallack et al. (2016) and Ringrose (2015).

[9] The researchers in this school were Jessalynn Keller and Jessica Ringrose.

of understanding of the term feminism was variable with some girls completely unfamiliar with the term.

Of over 100 girls in the year group, 14 handed in application forms, and 11 regularly attended weekly meetings. This group was comprised two Somali, two mixed race British, one Latin American, two West Indian, two Black British, and two White British girls. A support teacher, Ms. Williams (pseudonym), in charge of e-safety in the school was assigned to accompany and 'supervise' the team, and participate during the feminism groups. Ms. Williams was an imposing tall, Black British woman who wore (every session) a long flowing black sweater coat that mimicked a cape (reminiscent of nuns who would have run the school in yesteryear).

Typically, eight to ten girls, the researchers, and Ms. Williams met for six successive weeks during the summer semester of 2014. Each week, the discussion was guided by the girls' interests along various topics. Perhaps because Ms. Williams' expertise lay in behavioral support and e-safety, her presence in the group appeared to create an atmosphere of openness, but with boundaries—a liminal space with bendy structures (outlined above). The girls started with historical issues of feminism as fighting for gender equality in wages and employment and gender biases in toys and sport. However, some of the girls insisted on pushing things into the more personal realm of sexuality and embodiment, through discussion of celebrities and media sexism, then puberty, periods, body hair, and relationships with the girls expressing outrage that they had received next to no information at school about these issues. We had blogging and poster-making sessions, where girls questioned heteropatriarchal, and phallic power relations, in their families (e.g. one Somali girl blogged around concerns about being pressured into an early forced marriage and her father's patriarchal view of women). In one poster-making session, the girls engaged particularly with sexual objectification in advertising and social media as seen for instance in Gloria's poster about men 'devouring' women's bodies (Fig. 31.4):

We will return to the compelling message of this poster of the man's grabbing of the woman's dismembered legs as 'devouring' in our next section. What we want to prioritize here is how during the first six-week run of the feminist group at HTH, feminist intra-activist encounters of sharing and disrupting through discussion, writing, and art were enabled through the construction of a relatively safe place to push the boundaries of what could be discussed in the context of a single-'sex' Catholic school.



Fig. 31.4 If I devour you, will that make me a man?

Skirting the Issue

After breaking for the summer,[10] the HTH feminist group resumed in the autumn semester, but with a newly appointed mainstream teacher (as opposed to teaching support). Ms. Anderson (white British) was assigned to running the group, which was now open to Years 10 and 11 students too. The group seemed to take a shift from an open and relatively safe and contained space of no more than usually ten girls, to a larger and changing group. For Ms. Anderson, the group had a clear mission: to promote feminism to a wider school public through the delivery of a whole-school assembly by the end of the autumn semester to explain what Feminism was and why it was important. She was less invested in creating space for the young women to discuss issues. This made the type of 'feminist fire' (see Ringrose and Renold 2014) sparked the previous year difficult to manage. Now in Year 10, the girls were increasingly igniting and applying feminist ideas *to their own lived experience* in the school context. Consequently, they quickly ditched abstract debates, such as 'sexism in the media' to animate their own outrage of the implicit and explicit sexism (and bodily regulation of their legs, for instance)

[10] At the end of the six weeks, we also held a feminist Saturday at HTH with three of the other research schools, where we continued larger group workshops on blogging, social media awareness, and intersectional feminism.

in the compulsory school uniform policy at HTH which was kilt, tights or socks (white or black), and flat black shoes. This concern was compounded by sixth formers being a part of the group who were no longer in compulsory uniform and wore jeans or trousers. In this context, the kilt–socks–tights became more of a marker of age ('childishness') and bodily control than the previous year where all the girls were dressed in the same uniform.

In November, Jessica brought along three doctoral students (all working in the area of feminism and education: two were former or current teachers) to assist with planning the assembly. The group that week was also unusual given the deputy head was also 'sitting in for fun' with the researchers. Under so much pressure to deliver content for the assembly, the girls decided that they now wanted to focus the entire event on the dress code and whether it could be modified. There was discussion of the kilt being either too hot or cold, generally uncomfortable and expensive. Sandra said 'my legs keep growing but the skirt doesn't!', a concern shared by the rest of the group about the burden on families rebuying £90 kilts. The deputy head was supportive and said they could look at the uniform policy. However, both the deputy head and Ms. Anderson had to leave part way through the session to assist with a concert being held that evening. In accordance with school safe-guarding policy, another teacher Mr. Y (white British) whom the team had not met before was tasked with sitting in an adjoining room so that there was a teacher 'supervising'.

The Boner Breakdown

Discussion continued with girls saying kilts were unflattering and 'prudish'. Some girls said they liked rolling it up so their legs 'looked better', but noted the 'sexist' teachers constantly told them that to 'cover up' as legs on show compromised their femininity and was 'un-ladylike'. Another girl suggested that they worried about being stared at by boys and men when their school skirts were decontextualized, from the school to the street (see Renold 2013). Girls complained of 'catcalling' but they sometimes didn't know whether to interfere because girls are 'competitive and jealous' of boys' attention too. One of the doctoral research students, Joanna, stepped in at this moment to suggest that what the girls were experiencing was a feminist issue because 'your bodies are not dangerous, not inherently suggestive. You do not have to carry that responsibility'. Kirsty accused some of the female teachers at school of supposedly using the girl students' 'provocative behavior' and rolling up of skirts to justify 'bad marks' and low achievement. At this point, Sabrina weighed in telling us about an experience that

happened last summer in class when some girls were hot and rolled up their skirts and rolled down their socks to cream their legs and a male teacher turned around and 'OMG he had a "boner"[11]!' Many of the girls burst out laughing with knowing looks, as if already quite familiar with the 'boner' story. It possessed all the ingredients of a school-based urban myth and a scandalous quality that could feed the underground economy of student sexual gossip for years. Aware of its potentiality, and mindful of the space, Jessica attempted to reorient the discussion back to the issue of how they might want to approach the assembly on feminism and school uniforms. However, no sooner had the 'boner' erupted into the sonic-atmosphere, when Mr. Y interrupted from the adjoining room, loudly declaring the girls to: 'STOP. GIRLS, I MUST INSIST. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE. WE DON'T MENTION NAMES, GIRLS. I JUST CAN'T ALLOW IT. I'M SORRY'. Mr. Y continued to insist that the girls 'rein in' their discussion. We all sat, stunned and stilled by the intrusion. Indeed, we had largely forgotten that there was a teacher sitting in the adjoining room, listening to our discussion! Used to the feminist spaces, we had cultivated in schools with both man and woman teachers, we were shocked at the ways in which the male teacher had burst in and shouted at the girls. There was an implicit assumption that the research team would not adequately address the issue and work with the girls to remind them of the importance of anonymity and confidentiality (as would be common practice, particularly in discussions of sensitive issues). Perhaps, most significant, was that from all of the issues the girls had raised, including public catcalling and sexual shaming by female teachers at school (who had also been named), what prompted intervention was mention of a male teacher's name. Given our time was nearly up, Jessica suggested we break till next week and we wrapped up, and Mr. Y escorted us out. However, in the space of walking us through the grounds to the front exit, Mr. Y became increasingly agitated about Sabrina's story, suggesting he must follow school protocol and raise the matter as a potential child protection and safe-guarding issue.

Our team left the school dismayed and deflated. Debating what to do, we went to a coffee shop to compile an email to the deputy head (white British), stating what had happened, and reassuring her that the story was probably no more than urban myth. However, rather than event being taken up as a child protection issue (which would involve exploring if the girls might be at risk of harm), we later learned that Ms. Anderson had accused the girls of 'teacher shaming'. As is often standard practice in schools, she also pressed the research team

[11] Boner is commonly slang for an erect penis.

to disclose the identity of the girl in question so that she could follow up with 'reporting the matter', thus individualizing the story.

Diffracting Bonerizing Desires?

We have offered the detailed ethnographic account above to illuminate a set of complex affective entanglements through which to explore our second phallogocentric sexuality assemblage. We began with the ways in which the safety and relative freedom of the space–time–matterings of the first feminist space (in the summer) nurtured and promoted critical expressions through which feminist becomings could flourish. However, come Autumn, with a different set of space–time–matterings, the very same feminist becomings erupt as a threat to a precarious and fragile sanitized school space (and one could argue, phallocentric male sexuality), in which assemblages of risk and protection dominate and territorialize.

Creating a space with an in-built and affective desire to enable feminist lines of flight to flow, it was not perhaps surprising that discussions of compulsory kilt wearing immediately connected girls to an embodied knowing of what it means to negotiate what we have theorized elsewhere as a highly schizoid desexualized and simultaneously hyper-heterosexualized assemblage (Renold and Ringrose 2011). If we diffractively return to the poster, from another space–time–mattering of the research assemblage and consider how the poster profiles the power of female legs to turn men into devouring creatures, and if we fold this media assemblage back into the events above, we can see how the kilt–socks–legs take on a visceral object ontology where subjectivity and materiality intra-act in ways that ignite an explosion of the girls' desire to name and ride the precarious wave of their presumed sexual power. However, in this case, it is now their capacity to 'bonerize' the adult male teacher. Through laughter and comedy they surface, through the haptic[12] vision of the 'boner/phallus', as response to their exposed legs, an enduring sexual taboo in ways that may have had the potential to enable the girls to ridicule, rage, critique, and/or transform the phallogocentric assemblages they find themselves caught up in—posthuman intra-actions which produce them as victims of predators to a throbbing hetero-male sexuality.

[12] Referring to the 'haptic' quality of the image (i.e. the boner) conjured through discourse enables us to emphasize the ways in which the materiality of image touches us—how it is physically felt.

However, calling out the ubiquitous phallocentric culture in the ways that they did in this context—was met with renewed phallogocentric force, sapping their desire, damning their flow, and blocking their feminist becomings. This was a territorializing force which (unlike the newly formed feminist group) connected to established, institutionalized, and historical assemblages which can call upon the regulatory frameworks of protection, seeking to re-sanitize/desexualize the school space. Unleashing and nurturing feminist becomings (and the power of the erotic Audre Lorde might remind us) is a risky business in the school context, and moments like these (which are not uncommon in any sexuality research project) cross the threshold of what can be raised—literally!

Working creatively and diffractively with this encounter through our feminist posthuman lens, indicates how words can take on a weighty and visceral haptic materiality, releasing affective forces that can still bodies, stun us into silence, and territorialize the space. We can also think about the messy intra-action between the anatomical penis and the symbolic phallus—that is, their entangled inseparability. A refusal to bifurcate the symbolic from the anatomical allows us to explore the teacher's intrusion ('STOP') into the feminist space as an embodied, sonic, and spatial phallic burst—that connects to centuries of phallocentric assemblages which have long been territorializing feminist lines of flight. Here we can see that posthuman *is not non-human or anti-human*, it enables a rereading of the human body to think about its mediation through many diverse processes. We can rethink the relation of the girls legs to the phallus and phallic desires through the enormous nature–culture complexities at work in this group (from the dismembered woman's legs in a mass-circulated ladies mag advert, rewritten through a feminist group poster that questions the desire to devour women, to the memory of the powerful desire to bring up and devour the phallus of the teacher in the context of a hot summer day at this girl's school).

A posthuman lens enables this type of playful rethinking of the material, fleshy and the mediated. It helps us to move beyond an individualization of this encounter as an episode which blames and shames the male teacher or deputy head teacher, the girls and the research team [from the school's point of view through psychologically driven victim/perpetrator safe-guarding and bully policies (see also Ringrose and Rawlings 2015)]. Responsibility, as Barad argues, is 'never ours alone'. However, responsibility can be felt 'as ours alone', since the researchers felt accountable for the difficult set of events in which the group, unsupported by the school, became untenable, and disintegrated. Moving forward from melancholic reflection to diffraction, however, requires that we think beyond the individual instances to the wider research assemblage connections in ways that depersonalize (Braidotti 2010: 50) and create potentialities (*potentia*) that move in ways not known in advance.

After-Affects: Affirmative Politics, Responsibility, and Posthuman Possibilities

> The pursuit of collective projects aimed at the affirmation of hope, rooted in the ordinary micro-practices of everyday life is a strategy to set up, sustain, and map out sustainable transformations (Braidotti 2010:193)

> Accountability and responsibility must be thought of in terms of what matters and what is excluded from mattering (Barad 2007: 394)

In this chapter, we have enlivened a diffractive mapping of the micro-processes of critical moments in two vividly different contexts from our intra-activist Feminism in schools' project. Taking seriously Braidotti's affirmative politics and joining Barad's 'intra' with our 'activism', we have shown how a diffractive lens can open up new ways to theorize further what it means to become entangled with/facilitate projects which are explicit in their agendas to shake-up and dismantle phallogocentricism. The project rippled and quivered as each feminist group negotiated the risky practices of encouraging young people to speak up and back to their everyday experiences of sexism and sexual violence. Through many a rupture and suture, we strove to connect to and create assemblages which opened up crevices and cracks, some of which we and our participants fell through, or peered out of, and some of which enabled feminist becomings to be dis/embodied and escape.

We wish to emphasize that change and transformation are always unpredictable and operate in specific and situated time–space–affect dynamics, and where the inclusion and exclusion of what matters, is also partly out of our control. As Massumi (2013, p. 50) writes on creating spaces for 'chance intrusions', 'the thing felt is fringed by an expanding thought-pool of potential that shades of in all directions'. One schools' 'boner' incident might, as it did in HTH, ignite assemblages of child protection and safeguarding policies which blame and shame teachers and pupils in uneven ways. At another school or at another moment in time, the same playful phallic banter might provide an opportunity for young people to tackle uniform policies through myriad creative forces such as tweeting your peer group and the head teacher about sexist uniform dress codes inside school space as we have witnessed in other school spaces (see Keller et al. 2016). Moreover, some intra-activist assemblages might leap seamlessly into public and policy spheres of research 'impact' (see Renold 2016) others may

never leave the room, but may temporarily bolster them from the violence of penetrative phallic force relations in ways that make them 'feel a little better'. Indeed while the poems from the Welsh feminist group were too risky to share locally, tied as they were to the individual, they have since, broken free. With the full consent of the group, their poems and word-maps have traveled into and affected other feminist groups, young people's events and conferences, and chapters like this (in image, in text, in materiality).

Moreover, girls from inside HTH have connected with other feminist groups in the project and wider through Twitter[13] and formed strong alliances beyond the stifling policies and practices inside the school. Our posthuman feminist and diffractive lens illuminates how the objects created through human and more-than-human assemblages 'detach and deterritorialise a segment of the real' (Guatarri 1995/2005, p. 131) safely releasing feminist becomings to flow out.

What we need to keep considering is what kind of intra-activist projects can effectively harness processes of indeterminacy open to change that do not actually implode the research assemblage itself (see Guattari in Ringrose 2015). We have documented how much it hurts when we become entangled and trapped in assemblages which territorialize bodies in ways that constrain, shame, blame, and pathologize, in ways that can make research journeys tailspin out of our control. But we share the stories in order to hold onto and invest in the promise of the not-yet. Following Braidotti and Barad, as we have throughout this chapter, we also, however, take response-ability for where our intra-activist assemblages might takes us next—we acknowledge our deep desires to keep igniting feminist fires and we believe that our mapping out of 'micro-practices of everyday life' (as feminists documenting young sexualities) is part of what will enable more collective and 'sustainable transformations' to gender and sexual power relations.

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[13] For more on Twitter, Instagram, and other forms of social media feminism and digital activism emergent from the Feminism in Schools' project, see Retallack et al. (2016) and Ringrose and Renold (forthcoming).

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32

Materialism and Micropolitics in Sexualities Education Research

Pam Alldred and Nick J. Fox

The Materiality of Both Sexuality and Research

In this chapter, we offer some novel insights into sexuality, research, and their intersection in sexualities education research, emerging from our recent work developing and applying the 'new materialisms' (Coole and Frost 2010) and consequent 'turn to matter' in social theory (Alldred and Fox 2015a, b; Fox and Alldred 2013, 2014, 2015). While building on insights into power and bodies from post-structuralist theory (Game 1991), particularly as applied in feminist, post-colonial, and queer theory (Braidotti 2011: 140–142; Butler 1990: 139), the new materialism that has emerged over the past 20 years shifts focus away from concerns with textuality and discourse (Coole and Frost 2010: 7; Taylor and Ivinson 2013: 666). Instead, it establishes an ontology that asserts a central role for matter (Barad 2003; DeLanda 2006), in the process dissolving the traditional mind/matter dualism in social theory (Braidotti 2013: 4–5). However, it is in no way a simple return to historical materialism's unitary analysis of power working through social and economic macro-structures such as capitalism and patriarchy.

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New materialist ontologies, by contrast, are plural and open, complex and contingent, and 'understand materiality in a relational, emergent sense' (Coole and Frost 2010: 29), with a focus that extends from globalisation to issues of identity, and that

> foregrounds an appreciation of just what it means to exist as a material individual with biological needs yet inhabiting a world of natural and artificial objects, well-honed micro-powers of governmentality, but no less compelling effects of international economic structures. (ibid: 28)

New materialism draws on a wide range of influences, though several of the leading advocates have drawn their ontology from Deleuze and Guattari's (1988: 253–4) 'monist' (as opposed to dualist) philosophy that aims to transcend distinctions between mind/body (Braidotti 2011: 311), appearance/essence (Widder 2012: 23), and consequently, between objectivity and subjectivity, between 'reality' and 'social construction'. Rather than assessing a body, a thing or a thought in terms of such dichotomies, often valorising one pole of a duality over the other, the focus of attention turns to an entity's capacities or 'becomings'; or to put it another way: to what it can do, rather than what it is: consequently, this monism is also a pluralism, a philosophy of multiplicity (Deleuze 2001: 95). This shift in DeleuzoGuattarian materialist ontology away from the essential character of a thing also collapses some favourite dualisms of the social sciences, such as nature/culture, mind/matter, and human/non-human (Barad 1997: 181; Braidotti 2013: 2; Coole and Frost 2010: 26; van der Tuin and Dolphijn 2010). In this schema, elements as disparate as a mountain, the wind, a tiger, a human, a thought, desire or feeling, a 'discourse', or an ideology may all be regarded as constituent parts of a relational material universe that interacts, assembles, and disassembles continually to produce the flow of events that comprise the world, history, and lives—including human sexualities.

Our own efforts to develop a new materialist approach to empirical social study of sexuality and sexualities education have used the powerful toolbox of concepts developed in Deleuze and Guattari's work, such as assemblages, affects, territorialisation, and aggregation (each of which we will explain in what follows). We have drawn also on insights from Barad's (1997) materialist 'onto-epistemology' of the interaction (or 'intra-action') between events and observations of events, and Braidotti's (2011, 2013) development of a posthuman philosophy and ethics of engagement that steps beyond the dualisms of nature/culture, man/woman, human/non-human to recognise the inherent self-organising properties of matter itself (Braidotti 2013: 35), and opens up all kinds of possibilities for 'becoming-other' (ibid: 190), including possibilities for sexualities.

In the next section, we develop a (new) materialist approach to sexuality. From a materialist perspective, sexuality is understood as not an attribute of an individual human body, but an impersonal web of intensities and flows of matter, powers, and desires within and between bodies, things, ideas, and social institutions, producing sexual (and other) capacities in these different materialities. Then, in the second part of the chapter, we extend the materialist perspective on assemblages to consider social inquiry. We develop a model of social research as a machine-like assemblage of things, people, ideas, social collectivities, and institutions, possessing a specific micropolitics that affects what knowledge is produced by social inquiry methods and designs. We will conclude by considering the implications of these novel perspectives on sexualities and sexualities education research.

Sexuality as Assemblage

Sexual desire, sexual arousal, and sexual pleasure can seem so personal, so *interior* to a body, so typically focused 'outwards' on to external objects of desire, that it has appeared self-evident to many (biologists, psychologists, doctors, therapists) that sexuality is an attribute of an organism, be it plant, animal, or human. Historically, practitioners of non-normative (heterosexual, monogamous) sexuality have been labelled as bad, mad, or ill, and punished/analysed/treated according to essentialist perspectives by the law, medicine, psychotherapy, and other social agents (Alldred and Fox 2015a); while arguments that religion represses sexuality posit an essentialist subject whose sexuality is buried by convention but may be released or emancipated by Western liberalism or secularisation (Rasmussen 2012).

Sexual essentialism has been widely criticised from strands within post-structuralism, post-colonial studies, feminist and queer theory, psychoanalysis, and critical psychology (Flax 1990; Henriques et al. 1998; Jagose 1996; Sedgwick 1990; Spivak 1988). Foucault's histories of sexuality (1981, 1987, 1990) revealed how an individualised understanding of sexuality was differently understood at various points throughout history; so, for instance, specific discourses on female sexuality, childhood sexuality, human reproduction, and the nature of sexual instincts together shaped sexuality in the contemporary period (Foucault 1981: 103–5). Queer theory has built on post-structuralist analyses (Butler 1990, 1999; Eng et al. 2005; Grosz 1994), replacing an emphasis on desire (which may constrain or regulate identity) with 'pleasure', which is diffuse, intense, and opens up possibilities (Allen and Carmody 2012: 462; Butler 1999: 11; Jagose 2010: 523–4), and highlighting how gender identity and a notion of an essential sexual subject are 'performatively' fabricated from acts, gestures, and desires (Butler 1990: 136).

Arguably, while these more critical readings of sexual ontology displace focus from physiology and psychology, and establish a 'sexual subject' socially constituted by forces in a body's immediate and general contexts, they do not in themselves counter the human-centeredness or 'anthropocentrism' that sustains a view of the human body as the location of sexuality, as manifested by sexual desires, attractions, embodied responses, and experiences. An outcome of sexual anthropocentrism has been to define quite narrowly what counts as sexuality and sexual identity, for instance, in a simplistic classification of sexualities in terms of gendered objects of desire (Lambevski 2004: 306). Meanwhile, the sciences and social sciences have reified Foucault's (1981) societal problematisations of sexuality, establishing individualistic norms for gender roles, child sexuality, sexual identity, monogamy, and gendered mental health. Biomedicine and health technologies have also contributed to a narrowing of sexuality, for example, through the development of treatments for 'erectile dysfunction' (Potts 2004) and aesthetic plastic surgery, while consumerism and communication technologies have added to the commodification of pornified bodies and body parts (Bale 2011; Gordo Lopez and Cleminson 2004: 106).

Against this anthropocentric backcloth, some authors have offered an alternative conceptualisation of sexuality.[1] So, for example, Braidotti (2011: 148) describes it as a 'complex, multi-layered force that produces encounters, resonances and relations of all sorts', while Deleuze and Guattari (1984: 293) state quite bluntly that 'sexuality is everywhere': in a wide range of interactions between bodies and what affects them physically, cognitively, or emotionally, from dancing or shopping to state violence or authority. Inspired by these arguments, we have used the materialist perspective that underpinned them to develop an approach (and ontology) that situates sexuality not as an attribute of a body (albeit one that is consistently trammelled by social forces) but within a new materialist understanding of a 'sexuality-assemblage' (Alldred and Fox 2015b; Fox and Alldred 2013). This assemblage comprises not just human bodies but the whole range of physical, biological, social and cultural, economic, political, or abstract forces with which they interact: as such, sexuality-assemblages bridge 'micro' and 'macro', private and public, intimacy and polity. In this view, it is not an individual body but the sexuality-assemblage that is productive of all phenomena associated with the physical and social manifestations of sex and sexuality, and that establish the capacities of individual bodies to do, feel, and desire. They shape the eroticism, sexual codes, customs, and conduct of a society's members, as well as the categories

[1] See, for example, Beckman (2011), Braidotti (2006), Holmes et al. (2010), Lambevski (2004), Probyn (1995), Renold and Ringrose (2011), Ringrose (2011).

of sexuality such as 'hetero', 'homo', and so forth (Linstead and Pullen 2006: 1299), with sexuality defined as 'an impersonal affective flow within assemblages of bodies, things, ideas and social institutions, which produces sexual (and other) capacities in bodies' (Fox and Alldred 2013: 769). We will now swiftly consider the conceptual framework required to establish this materialist perspective of the sexuality-assemblage.

First, the sexuality-assemblage asserts the fundamental *relationality* of all matter: bodies, things, and social formations gain their apparent 'is-ness' only when in relation. Rather than taking the body or thing or the social organisation as a pre-existing unit of analysis, we look instead at the fluctuating assemblages that coalesce to produce both events and the apparent reality of the relations that they comprise. For example, a sexuality-assemblage accrues around an event such as an erotic kiss, which comprises not just two pairs of lips but also physiological processes, personal and cultural contexts, aspects of the setting, memories and experiences, sexual codes and norms of conduct, and potentially many other relations particular to that event (Fox and Alldred 2013: 775).

Second, a sexuality-assemblage must be analysed not in terms of human or other agency but by considering the assembled relations' ability to *affect* or *be affected* (Deleuze 1988: 101). Within a sexuality-assemblage, human and non-human relations affect (and are affected by) each other to produce material effects, including sexual capacities and desires, sexual identities, and the many 'discourses' on sexualities; these affects are qualitatively equivalent regardless of whether a relation is human or non-human. Importantly, for the study of sexuality, desire is understood in this ontology as an affect (rather than some essential quality of a body, no matter how culturally shaped), to the extent that it produces specific capacities to act or feel in a body or bodies, be it arousal, attraction, sexual activity, rejection, or whatever. An assemblage's 'affect economy' (Clough 2004: 15) can be understood as the forces shifting bodies and other relations 'from one mode to another, in terms of attention, arousal, interest, receptivity, stimulation, attentiveness, action, reaction, and inaction'.

This emphasis on affect economies and the changes they produce in relations and assemblages provides a dynamic focus for the study of sexuality and sexualities education-assemblages. We may ask what a body can do within its relational assemblage, what it cannot do, and what it can become. What capacities might be produced in students and sexualities education teacher by a sexualities education-assemblage comprising classes, students, parents, parental assumptions and perceptions, local communities, education policy and politics, and so forth? To study these 'micropolitics' of the sexuality-assemblage, we have applied two DeleuzoGuattarian concepts: 'territorialisation' and 'aggregation' that describe the effects of forces within assemblages. Territorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari

1988: 88–89) may be understood as 'ecological' specification: affects in assemblages specify or 'localise' the capacities of a body or other relation, while other affects may then 'de-territorialise' and 're-territorialise', re-shaping the possibilities and limits of what a body can do continuously and unendingly. Sexual arousal, attraction, preferences, and conduct can be understood as specific territorialisations produced by affects and desires in a sexuality-assemblage. So a kiss may territorialise a body into sexual arousal. Yet that same kiss—say from a new lover, might open up a radically de-territorialising 'line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 277), propelling a body into possibilities such as polyamory or a new life begun elsewhere. In the sexualities education class referred to above, an innuendo might affect the mood of the classroom by producing shared laughter and/or specific exclusions, de-territorialising the classroom's educational agenda but re-territorialising it into heterosexual flirtation and heteronormativity (Alldred and Fox 2015b).

Deleuze and Guattari (1984: 286–8) applied the obscure terminology of 'molar' and 'molecular' (deriving from physical chemistry) to make a further qualification of affects; we have re-defined these, respectively, as 'aggregative' and 'singular' affects (Fox and Alldred 2014). Aggregating affects act similarly on multiple bodies, organising or categorising them to create converging identities or capacities. In the field of sexuality, ideas and concepts such as love, monogamy, chastity or sexual liberation, prejudices and biases, conceptual categories such as 'women', 'heterosexual', or 'perverted', along with the discourses on human sexuality documented by Foucault (1981: 103–5) all aggregate bodies, producing (among other outputs) the pervasive social relations between bodies traditionally summarised and problematised as 'patriarchy', 'heteronormativity', and 'hegemonic masculinity'. By contrast, other affects (for instance, a gift from a lover or a smile from a stranger) produce a singular outcome or capacity in just one body, with no significance beyond itself, and without aggregating consequences. Singular affects may be micropolitical drivers of de-territorialisation, enabling bodies to resist aggregating or constraining forces, and opening up new capacities to act, feel, or desire.

Together, these micropolitical processes provide the basis for a materialist exploration of sexuality and the sexualities education-assemblage. In this perspective, how sexuality manifests has little to do with personal preferences or dispositions, and everything to do with how bodies, things, ideas, and social institutions assemble; a sexualities education class will not simply recapitulate the lesson planned by a teacher but will be the product of all the relations in the sexualities education-assemblage and the micropolitics between them. Territorialising forces produce body comportments, identities and subjectivities, 'masculinity', and 'femininity'; and shape sexual desires, attractions,

preferences, and proclivities according to the particular mix of relations and affects in an assemblage. Sexual codes are culture-specific aggregating affects that establish the limits of what individual bodies can do, feel, and desire in specific sociocultural settings, and shape the eroticism, sexual codes, customs, and conduct of a society's members, as well as the categories of sexual identity such as 'hetero', 'homo', polyamorous, queer, and so forth (Barker 2005; Linstead and Pullen 2006: 1299). It follows that the sexualities thus produced in most cultures are conventional and prescriptive (Beckman 2011: 9; Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 294).

In anthropocentric social theory, sexuality is regarded almost synonymously with 'sexual identity'. From a new materialist perspective, sexuality must be understood differently, at the level of the assemblage. As has been noted, a sexuality-assemblage is not a stable entity, but one that is constantly in flux, awash with flows of affect that aggregate and dis-aggregate relations, that territorialise bodies this or that way, but may conceivably also lose them on a singular, de-territorialising sexual line of flight. Sexuality, as a powerful affective force, consequently has two manifestations. First, it is a de-territorialising, multiplying, branching flow of affect between and around bodies and other relations. As such, it has the potential to produce any and all capacities in bodies: different sexual desires, attractions and identities, and those not normally considered sexual at all: this 'nomadic' and 'rhizomatic' sexuality has nothing to do with reproduction or even genitality (Bogue 2011: 34), and consequently may produce 'subversive and unforeseeable expressions of sexuality' (Beckman 2011: 11).

However, in a second manifestation, the flow of affect in the sexuality-assemblage is continuously subject to restrictions and blockages (Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 293), often produced by aggregating affects that codify, categorise, and organise the assemblage and its relations. Thus territorialised, sexuality loses its potential, channelling desire into a relatively narrow range of sexual capacities, specifying its capacities by linking it to conventional desires, though still with the possibility of de-territorialisation or a line of flight. Whereas humanist and anthropocentric understandings might lament instances of essential and 'authentic' sexualities lost or ground down by social and cultural forces (Kitzinger 1987: 37), in this materialist perspective the production of every individual 'sexy' body is the product of territorialisation and aggregation of an impersonal, non-human, and nomadic sexuality.

So far in this chapter, we have explored how a new materialist, 'assemblage' ontology has re-made the very stuff of which sexuality comprises, replacing essentialist and/or anthropocentric conceptions of embodied sexualities with a relational perspective that regards sexuality as comprised entirely by affective flows within an assemblage of human and non-human. While this ontology

might have some intrinsic post-humanist appeal, from our perspective as social scientists, the value of adopting such a radical ontology derives from the possibilities it can supply to explore sexuality and sexualities education by unpacking the assemblages and their micropolitics through the methods of social inquiry. In the second part of this chapter, we turn to consider what a new materialist approach can offer in terms of undertaking empirical research into sexualities and sexualities education. As we will show, this ontological turn to matter also has significant implications for epistemological and methodological considerations when we wish to explore it using the designs and methods of social inquiry.

Research as Assemblage

Our point of entry into an exploration of research from within new materialist ontology is once again to adopt the DeleuzoGuattarian conceptual toolbox, and to consider research as assemblage. Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 4) described assemblages as 'machines' that link affects together to produce or do something. With this in mind, a 'research-assemblage' (Coleman and Ringrose 2013: 17; Fox and Alldred 2014; Masny 2013: 340) can be defined in terms of the multiplicity of affective relations in the research process, including the 'events' to be researched (these can be any instance of bodies, things, settings or social formations, or of assemblages of these); research tools such as questionnaires, interview schedules, or other apparatus; recording and analysis technologies, computer software and hardware; theoretical frameworks and hypotheses; research literatures and findings from earlier studies; the 'data' generated by these methods and techniques; and of course, researchers. To this list may be added contextual relations such as the physical spaces and establishments where research takes place; the frameworks, philosophies, cultures, and traditions that surround scientific research; ethical principles and ethics committees; research assessment exercises; and all the paraphernalia of academic research outputs: libraries, journals, editors and reviewers, and readers.

While this long list of elements in the research-assemblage is of interest, more importantly, we need to seek out the affects that bind the assemblage together, and we will use Deleuze and Guattari's machine metaphor as the basis for our analysis. Jackson and Mazzei (2013) talk of 'plugging in' elements of the research process to achieve specific methodological objectives, and we can develop this notion to analyse the research process as if it were a series of interconnected 'machines' that do specified tasks such as data collection, data

analysis, and so forth, via the affective flows they establish between event, instruments, and researchers. Thus, a 'data collection machine' would take aspects of an event as its raw materials, and by the means specific to its design, generates 'data'. An analysis machine processes data according to specific rules of logic, deduction, or inference to produce 'findings' in the form of generalities or summaries, and so forth.

Identifying the affects in the research-assemblage opens to scrutiny the *micropolitics* inherent in the research-machines that do data collection, data analysis, and so on. These in turn reveal the micropolitics of the research process itself, of what happens when events are transformed into 'data', and who gains and who loses in the process. To give an example, in a randomised trial, controlling the experimental conditions and use of statistical techniques together limit the affective capacities of 'confounding' relations found in 'real-world' settings, empowering a researcher to model the 'uncontaminated' affect of an 'independent' upon a 'dependent' variable. By contrast, in qualitative studies, a 'naturalistic' approach limits the affective capacities of a researcher, while enhancing the affectivity of respondents' accounts. The micropolitics of these research-assemblages differ because of the affects that hold them together, and what they do to the relations in the research-assemblage.

This micropolitical assessment is the means to assess more explicitly from within the materialist perspective what happens when an event is subject to social inquiry. Consider an event—in the context of this Handbook, an event might be a sexualities education class, as described by students in Pam's mixed-method study of sex and relationship education (SRE) in secondary schools (Alldred and David 2007). This event can be treated as an assemblage '*E*' comprising a set of relations 'ABC'—in this example, the students, teachers, the SRE curriculum, experiences of sexuality, perhaps props such as contraceptive devices, and so forth—linked by affects such as peer group dynamics or experiences of 'bullying and being picked on by teachers' that make this event do whatever it does (which might be a successful SRE lesson or a heteronormative display of macho behaviour). The aim of a research study would be to apply methods that can somehow identify the ABC relations within the *E* assemblage, explore the affects between these relations, and from this offer an explanation of what *E* does within its particular social context, for instance, producing heteronormativity in that school.

However, the research study itself must also be considered as an event in its own right: as an assemblage *R. R* will have its own set of relations 'XYZ', which are all the paraphernalia of academic inquiry listed earlier, such as the researcher, methodologies, research instruments, theories, and so on, as deployed in a particular circumstances of the research study. These XYZ relations have been

purposively assembled by the researcher in order to engineer specific affective flows within the research-assemblage, with the objective of taking the event-assemblage *E* or other similar events, and producing a textual or other output that will form the research 'knowledge' of *E*. Importantly, for this new materialist analysis, if *R* is to document, analyse, and eventually turn *E* into knowledge, *the research-assemblage must also be capable of being affected by the affects between the relations ABC in the event being studied*.

What happens when the event and research-assemblages interact during the research process? When *E* becomes the subject of the research-assemblage *R*, the consequent interaction between *E* and *R* affects generates a third, *hybrid* assemblage, which we will designate *R/E*, with its own affect economy that links relations A, B, C, X, Y, and Z. This economy will be distinct from those in either *E* or *R*, though it is the affects in *R* that will actually produce the research outputs, 'knowledge' of the *E* assemblage, or the altered sensibilities in the researcher and the research's audience that a constructionist would describe as 'social constructions' of *E*. It may also produce effects in *E*, for instance, changes in the quality or quantity of interactions between teachers and students during the study (a 'Hawthorne' effect) or when findings were fed back to participants.

These interactions between the affect economies of *E* and *R* (within a hybrid *R/E* assemblage) supply a new materialist understanding of the *micropolitics* of social inquiry, as may be apprehended by considering two opposing 'hazards' often discussed in research. The first of these occurs when the 'research' relations XYZ within *R/E* dominate the flow, asserting a powerful effect over the relations ABC of the event-assemblage *E*. This may happen in various ways: for example, by a sampling strategy that excludes key aspects of *E*; by controlling out naturalistic contexts; by imposing a theoretical framework on data; by use of statistics to summarise or generalise; or by textual (mis)representation of *E*. These affects radically re-territorialise the affective flow between ABC relations, to the extent that the 'knowledge' produced by *R/E* no longer reflects the flow within *E*, distorting its representation in research outputs. This is the situation highlighted in radical social constructionism, which has argued that modernist sexualities research has constructed rather than described its objects (e.g. in Foucault's (1981) and Kitzinger's (1987) studies discussed earlier).

The opposing hazard occurs when the XYZ relations in the research-assemblage have so little affective capacity that the ABC relations are dominant within the *R/E* assemblage. Now the research process becomes a machine whose outputs are descriptive or journalistic rather than critical or analytical. This may result when affects in the research-assemblage are weak, for instance, if the research design lacks a powerful (affective) analytical machine

or is theoretically uninformed, or the research instruments do not possess the capacity to differentiate the relations or affects in the event. An example would be the 'surveys' of sexualities to be found in popular magazines that offer trivial insights into sexual behaviour, with little or no critical analysis or methodological rigour. Occasionally, of course, this affective weakness is seen as an opportunity, for example, in case studies that set out to describe specific events; or in 'Delphi' methodologies, where the aim is to gain consensus among experts with little analytical or theoretical framing.

Between these extremes, however, there will be many research situations where neither ABC nor XYZ affects establish overwhelming control over the affective flow in the *R/E* assemblage. Rather, the affective flows of *E* and *R* will be held in dynamic tension: influencing the capacities of the *R/E* assemblage to produce knowledge and representations of the world it is researching. This insight into research micropolitics is significant for a new materialist ontology of social inquiry, as it means that—epistemologically—it adopts neither realist optimism that meticulous and astute methodology and theory-building can reveal an objective reality independent of observer perspectives, nor the pessimism of constructionism that considers all research findings as reflections of the social contexts of the researchers. Instead, a materialist analysis in terms of *E* and *R* assemblages supplies a means to reveal a far more nuanced micropolitics of the hybrid *R/E* assemblage, which will inevitably incorporate affects from both event and research process, cutting across simplistic notions of objectivity and subjectivity.[2]

To reveal the specific micropolitics of research designs, and hence to assess the consequences for knowledge production, requires that each of the techniques, methods, and methodologies used in social inquiry is subjected to analysis in terms of its affect economy. Elsewhere (Fox and Alldred 2015), we systematically assessed the affects in a wide range of research tools (for instance, a sampling technique or ethics procedures), methods, and designs; in each case considering the micropolitics between the event-assemblage and research-assemblage that the method or design produces. Here there is only space to consider briefly two social inquiry designs frequently applied in sexualities education research: the survey and the qualitative interview.

The survey is a social research design assemblage that uses a series of research-machines to produce a quantitative summary of specific aspects of an event or events (as defined by a research question), for instance, to assess participants'

[2] This analysis of research-assemblages and affects is congruent with Barad's (1997) materialist analysis of epistemology in terms of quantum mechanics, which concludes that observations affect events and the two must be considered together.

views on sexuality education classes. Affects in the survey's sampling machine allocate events to the sample; those in the questionnaire machine select aspects of an event to be studied and categorise findings; affects in the statistical analysis machine aggregate and manipulate the data mathematically to supply summaries such as means or ranges, and estimates of confidence to generalise from sample to population; the result-writing machine presents these aggregated and de-contextualised findings to answer the study's research questions. Micropolitically, all these machines are highly aggregative, restricting which affects from the event can become part of the *R/E* assemblage; effacing complexities and divergences in the events, and simplifying and thereby reducing the granularity of the event affects represented in the research outputs.

The qualitative interview is a research methodology that uses sampling, data collection, and analytical machines to produce 'rich descriptions' of an event or events (e.g. homophobic bullying) from accounts elicited from humans in the event-assemblage. Affects in the purposive sampling machine select subjects, often seeking diversity rather than representativeness. An interview schedule is a simple affect that determines which elements of the subjects' affective engagements with the topic can be reported; the qualitative analysis machine organises, aggregates, and reduces the textual materials within 'themes'; writing produces a second-order account of the events being studied, as interpreted first by interviewees and then by the researcher. Micropolitically, while the question/answer format in this design governs the material gathered, the interview does enable respondents more control over the accounts they offer than in a survey. However, the thematic analysis machine systematises and aggregates responses according to a framework either that is pre-defined, or that emerges during analysis based on patterns and relationships within the textual material gathered. Extracts from interviewees' accounts are used selectively to justify the researcher's answer to the research question.

These descriptions of two research designs reveal the power relations inherent between researchers and research events, in terms of the affects within the various machines that comprise a research methodology, rather than by recourse to abstracted conceptions such as power/knowledge or ideology. Though research techniques, methods, and designs have differing affective flows and consequent micropolitics, we would draw a general conclusion that most of the machines in social inquiry aggregate event affects in one way or another, tending to produce simplicity where there was complexity, definition in place of indeterminacy, and evenness rather than variability, with consequences for the knowledge social inquiry produces (Fox and Alldred 2015).

Despite this insight into the aggregating character of social research, we would re-affirm that—from our analysis of the affect economy of social inquiry earlier—this does not amount to a thorough rejection of the possibility

of gaining understanding of the social world through research. And significantly, if it is possible to reverse engineer a research technique or design to understand its affect economy, then it is also possible to forward engineer methods and designs to maximise or minimise certain political consequences. Manipulating the affective flows between researcher and the event within a research-machine (a technique or a method) supplies the means to shift the micropolitics in favour of one or the other. We look at this again in the discussion, specifically in relation to sexualities education research.

Discussion: The Sexualities-Educating Assemblage

The new materialist perspective on sexuality that we developed earlier offers an understanding of sexuality as an impersonal, nomadic flux of multiple desires, and materialities, involving a mix of human and non-human relations; a vital, rhizomatic *jouissance*. While this sexual flux produces intensities, flows, and desires in bodies, the latter are also progressively territorialised, aggregated, and restricted by many other affectivities in the sexuality-assemblage, many of them deriving from the sociocultural baggage that surrounds contemporary sexualities. This should not, however, be taken as a re-statement of a 'repressive hypothesis' of sexuality (Foucault 1981), in which a once-free body has been ground into submission by the forces of culture; a position sometimes employed in suggestions that 'sexuality' and 'education' are contradictory or antagonistic.[3]

Such a conclusion would miss the implications of the ontology of sexuality-assemblages developed here. Sexualities are, and always will be, post-human concatenations that meld bodies with all the other stuff in the natural and cultural worlds. By re-locating sexuality outside of the human body, the de-essentialising of sexuality initiated by post-structuralism and queer theory is fully achieved, and the gothic spectacle of a prior and essential sexual body tragically trammelled and inscribed by the powers of society and culture is finally banished. Though this materialist understanding recognises both the inevitability and ineluctability of sexuality's bodily territorialisation by the panoply of natural and cultural materiality, at the same time, the sexuality-assemblage also contains within it the potential for novel fluxes and intensities that can at any moment de-territorialise and dis-aggregate sexuality, and set a body off on a sexual line of flight to who knows where.

[3] Sexualities education has been criticised as a disciplinary technique of body governance (Fine 1988; Thorogood 2000), or for being compromised by neoconservative or neo-liberal educational agendas (Johnson 1996; Thomson 1994). This approach has been influential in developing our own and others' critiques.

If this ontology de-privileges the body as the site of sexuality, it also steps back from a structural analysis of power. While not underplaying the territorialising forces of pervasive social forms such as patriarchy and heteronormativity, in this ontology, these forces are understood as produced and reproduced locally via actions and events, as are the forces that resist the territorialisation and aggregation of sexualities (Fox and Alldred, 2016). These territorialisations and de-territorialisations both derive from the materialities, affective flows, intensities, and fluxes within the sexuality-assemblage of which bodies are a part. Consequently, sexualities education necessarily is part of the micropolitics of embodied sexuality, in which there is an endless dance of territorialisation and de-territorialisation, affect and desire. We might conjecture that in this dance, effective sexualities education should foster de-territorialisation and dis-aggregation, through the deployment of practical, cognitive, and emotional affectivities that counter normativity, encourage difference, and espouse social justice. It would thereby open up possibilities for sexualities far beyond the narrow constraints of genitalised sex, familialisation of sexuality, and conventional conceptions of 'the sexual', while encouraging capacities to avoid some of the more gross outcomes of territorialisation, including sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancy, or sexual victimisation.

Turning to the second part of the chapter, we have set out what might be described as a 'microphysics' of research processes, which recognised the inevitable interactions between research-assemblages and event-assemblages. While the revelation that almost all research techniques, methods, and designs re-territorialise and aggregate the very events they are seeking to describe could be regarded as further evidence for constructionist relativism, we offer a more nuanced conclusion. The materialist analysis of research process micropolitics indicates that while these territorialisations and aggregations are widespread and endemic, these cannot entirely eradicate event-assemblage affects within the hybrid assemblage that generates knowledge, even in the most aggregating designs such as experiments. Pulling apart a research-assemblage to interrogate its machines and their affects can specify and evaluate precisely what aggregations and territorialisations a research-assemblage has wrought upon its subject-matter, and hence the extent to which research outputs provide useable knowledge of events. This offers us a critical framework to evaluate research on sexualities education.

Significantly, for applied research into sexualities education, by stepping outside the epistemological row between realism and constructionism over 'objective' knowledge, the new materialist analysis that we have set out permits a forward engineering of methods, deliberately to manipulate the territorialisations and aggregations produced by the research process. To research

sexualities education, methods may be combined productively, mixing highly aggregative but analytically powerful techniques or designs with others that are less analytical but intentionally non- or even dis-aggregative.

For instance, a study that sought to explore heteronormative biases in sexualities education might combine a (minimally aggregative) descriptive case study that produces a rich picture of the concerns and values of school students with a highly aggregative intervention that tested how a change in curriculum addressed these concerns and values. A subsequent evaluation might combine aggregative quantitative measures with opportunities for participants to offer their own unmediated assessments of any improvements, and even use the research outputs to challenge sexualities education policy. Mixing methods and methodologies in this way does not mean that the aggregations of particular methods are cancelled out, but rather that the consequences of aggregating research methods upon knowledge production can be accurately predicted, and acknowledged when reporting findings and drawing conclusions.

The DeleuzoGuattarian ontology of assemblages and affects applied in this chapter suggests how the new materialism can radically shift understanding of both sexualities and educational practices and research thereon. The turn to matter in the new materialism provides an ontology that can cut across dualisms such as nature/culture, human/environment, mind/body, individual/society that many phenomena—including sexualities—seem to straddle uncomfortably. However, for us, new materialism's value is not only as an alternative metaphysics of matter or academic theory of society but also as a practical tool both to research and to transform the unfolding, fluctuating becomings of the world.

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33

‘Not Better, Just Different’: Reassembling Sexuality Education Research Through the Deleuzian ‘Posts’

Ian Thomas

This chapter draws on the works of Deleuze and Guattari (2000, 2005) to explore approaches to sexuality education research, with a particular emphasis on its post-human future. While there is an established and varied literature exploring young people’s sexuality education (Alldred and David 2007; Allen 2004, 2013; Epstein and Johnson 1998; Fine 1988; Hillier and Mitchell 2008; Kehily 2002; Measor 2004; Mellanby et al. 2001; Spencer et al. 2008), post-human enquiry into the topic is still in nascent form. Several of the papers within this handbook are, however, examples of this emergent academic field (see also Allen 2015). Within childhood studies, however, the alternative ontologies of post-humanism, particularly ‘new materialism’, have flourished (e.g. Blaise 2013; Lenz Taguchi 2011; Taylor and Blaise 2014; Taylor et al. 2013). Much of this new wave represents a backlash against developmentalism in education policy and practice (Blaise 2005, 2009, 2013), which has led to childhood studies having an anthropocentric (human) focus at the relative expense of its more-than-human elements (Prout 2005). This chapter is premised on the extension of post-humanisms’ critique of developmentalism and anthropocentricism to sexuality education, and its study.

The ‘posts’ in the title of this chapter collectively refer to post-human ontologies (Lather 2013), ways of viewing the (social) world that decentre human

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agency, and draw attention to the material world as agents of change (Barad 2003, 2007; Bennett 2010; Braidotti 1994, 2013; DeLanda 2006; Haraway 2008; Latour 2005). Through their attention to materiality, the 'posts' have methodological implications for qualitative research, having their historical basis within humanist studies of meaning-making and experience (Lather 2013, pp. 634–635). It has therefore been suggested that working through the 'posts' entails thinking 'post-qualitatively', beyond their human subject centred-ness (Lather 2013; MacLure 2013a). Along similar lines of 'posting' qualitative research, and following the general tone of experimenting with methods in this chapter, I discuss quantitative sexuality education research through a post-human framework. Informed by Deleuzian theory, part of this discussion attempts to think 'post-quantitatively', in order to explore the different knowledge of sexual education these methods may generate.

Deleuzian theory is marked by a shift in ontology from thinking about the (social) world as a set of fixed stable entities, for example, the categories of pupil–teacher, to considering the world in terms of flows and instability (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 2005). By focusing on flows, Deleuzian ontology is based on assemblages; being the coming together of heterogeneous elements. As an example, a Deleuzian ontology locates sexuality in the interrelationship between bodies, words, and things, rather than being solely within the (human) body—as a sexuality-assemblage (Fox and Alldred 2013). This chapter draws specifically on Deleuze and Guattari's (2005) concepts of Royal and minor sciences, which is the application of their ontology to 'science', as a way of diffracting the 'enticements' to write only with regard to the human when researching sexuality (Grosz and Probyn 1995, p. xiii). In decentring the human, the 'posts' can be transformative of sexuality education via their potential to create and intervene in different possible realities (Lenz Taguchi 2014, p. 87). Having outlined my aims, the following discussion provides a more detailed account of Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical perspective, as it underpins the argument of this chapter.

From Ontology to Epistemology: The Royal and Minor Scientific Approach

Within the relational ontology of Deleuze and Guattari (2005), identities and stability are epiphenomena through which life courses as an unfolding series of events. Deleuze and Guattari refer to this continual coming together of events as 'becoming' as they see assemblages as always in the process of forming, and are never just so (Bonta and Protevi 2006, p. 59). Therefore, in

thinking through assemblages, it is not a case of talking about what something is, concretely, but what it does, what it becomes, in relation to other things. Ontology and epistemology are intimately interwoven (Barad 2003) and as a result, thinking through 'post' ontologies leads to shifts in epistemology and how we go about 'science' (Bonta and Protevi 2006, p. 81). Therefore, as staging for the 'social scientific encounter with Deleuze' (Brown 2010, p. 112) in this chapter, we need to understand a bit more about Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisation of 'science' as it relates to their ontology.

Across the works of Deleuze and Guattari, there is a constant interplay between the forces of the molar and the molecular, or the aggregative and the singular (Fox and Alldred 2015a). The molar represents static aggregations, institutions of the school or state, which are aligned with apparatus of governing (Conley 2010, p. 176). In the case of sexuality education, this apparatus of governing dictates the 'proper' and 'good' form that young people's sexuality should take (Thorogood 2000). The molecular, rather than denoting a difference in the size of force, is a difference in kind, being always in motion. Fox and Alldred (2015a, p. 402) use the term singular in place of the molecular, suggestive of the ability of the molecular to shake a system free and move into a different set of relations. On the aggregative molar level, the social field appears as a series of representations that come before the researcher and are interpreted in terms of their meaning. In contrast, the molecular is a field of multiplicity, where 'objects' appear in terms of duration—'everything is diffuse movement and affect' (Mahler 2008, p. 55). The same forces of the molar and molecular are at play in the scientific enterprise, being the Royal and minor sciences, respectively, and it is these conceptualisations of science that will now be explored.

Just as the molar categorises and governs, Royal science is a mode of science that relates to the creation and affirmation of statements—theory testing and building. Most research draws on theory, for example, theory building in ethnographic practice (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) or hypothesis testing in statistical analysis. However, Royal science maintains and reproduces these aggregates of theory through the production of universal laws (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, p. 372). These laws take unified objects as their 'object' of study, for example, the category of child or the act of 'learning'. Treating the social world as a series aggregates evacuates the potential for understanding difference as anything other than through the contradistinction between a thing and what it is not (Malatino 2014, p. 139). In the case of sexuality education, 'learning' about sexuality is usually distinguished from 'play', however, play has important aspects of sexuality (Kehily 2002; Renold 2005). Science in the Royal mode is therefore top heavy, starting from a priori abstractions

such as theoretical constructs of what constitutes sexual learning, and then working research materials through these.

Minor science however relates to singularities, meaning a focus on the singular changing nature of phenomenon, their fluidity. '[W]hen one investigates fluid phenomena, one asks what a fluid is doing in any given situation' (Malatino 2014, p. 139), and as a result, the process of scientific knowledge construction within a minor mode is one of following the flows (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, p. 372). Rather than starting from aggregates, minor science implies placing variables in continuous variation as a way of understanding the process of how these aggregates become constituted (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, p. 372). In terms of sexuality education, the minor implies entering into the research process without any a priori assumptions regarding what constitutes a sexuality education. As already indicated, focusing on the singular has the potential to shift a system—social, technological, scientific—out of its steady state (Bonta and Protevi 2006, p. 81). This transformative potential of a minor mode therefore makes it particularly attractive when attempting to enact a change within sexuality education policy and practice. Despite these and other characteristics of the Royal and minor that Deleuze and Guattari highlight (2005, pp. 361–362), the main point of departure between the two modes is that the Royal consists in 'reproducing', the minor through the process of 'following' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, p. 372). Following flows has potential in generating new spaces for sexuality education, which, up until now, has largely been dominated by the Royal mode, as I will now map out.

Mapping Out Royal and Minor Sexuality Education Research

Having outlined the general distinction between the Royal (reproduction) and minor (following), the following section maps out this distinction through sexuality education research in order to highlight its post-human (minor) future. Thinking through assemblages calls into question the use of binarisms the Royal and minor included, as it is opposed to the use of unitary entities which binarisms imply. Therefore, rather than existing as distinct forms, research displays tendencies towards certain modes—becoming Royal or minor—which can be mapped through the literature. The Royal mode to sexuality education research starts from assumptions regarding the body and sexuality that tend to be highly medicalised and aggregative (Kirby 2007; Stephenson et al. 2004). Through the use of these aggregations, Royal science reproduces the logics of disciplining 'unruly bodies' underpinning the states'

moral regulation of young people's sexuality (Thorogood 2000, p. 429). For example, assessing the effectiveness of sexuality education based on sexual health indicators and rates of early sexual activity (Weaver et al. 2005), replicates the importance placed on regulating 'early' and 'risky' sexual activities underpinning sexuality education (Department of Education 2010).

In comparison, minor sexuality education research starts from the molecular or the singular and follows these singular instances as they unfold. An excellent example of sexuality education research in a minor mode comes from Allen's (2013) study exploring the discourse of desire in schools. Rather than starting from the dominant discourse within sexuality education research that highlights the lack of female desire in schools (Fine 1988), Allen's research 'started from the premise that female desire is an everyday (unofficial) presence at school' (2013, p. 295). Working from the molecular—desire is everywhere—to the molar—desire is absent—Allen enacts a minor mode which follows the flows of desire as it is dammed up and evacuated from the school. In addition to these tangible differences in the ways in which the Royal and minor are instantiated within research practices (epistemology), there are more subtle differences that relate to assumptions regarding the nature of learning—its ontology. Here, Deleuze and Guattari can offer a critique of learning practices by viewing them as a multiplicity, or assemblage (Aoki 1993).

Much of the Royal research explored in this chapter is heavily invested in developmental discourses in which learning takes place 'within the child' (Walkerdine 2004, p. 105). From a developmental standpoint, 'knowledge' is internalised and accrued by children as part of their socialisation in relation to various molar others, that is, 'the school', 'the family', 'the media', and peers (Dilorio et al. 2003; Walker and Milton 2006). For example, Masanet and Buckingham (2015) examined online fan forums in terms of their pedagogical possibilities as informal avenues for sexuality education. The focus within their study was whether 'genuine learning and debate' was taking place via these media (Masanet and Buckingham 2015, p. 489). However in starting from the position of there being 'genuine learning', this frames the study within a Royal mode by dichotomising online practices as either learning or not-learning. As a result, engagement with the media itself was not given consideration as a form of learning in itself, merely the technologies' potential for the sharing of information (Masanet and Buckingham 2015, p. 497).

The corollary of starting from the transfer and transmission of knowledge is that learning then takes place within the child. This leads to anthropocentric research, exploring (big 'D') discourses, attitudes towards, and the effectiveness of sexuality education (Smith 2012). However it has been suggested that such anthropocentrism is inadequate in response 'to the challenges of growing

up in an increasingly complex, mixed-up, boundary blurring, heterogeneous, interdependent and ethically confronting world' (Taylor et al. 2012, p. 81). Lee (2001), for example, in his overview of the changing nature of childhood and childhood studies, suggests that children are increasingly forming into assemblages with non-human others—computers and television were used in his example, to which we could add social media (Ringrose 2011) and mobile phones (Allen 2015). Children and childhood effectively become a distributed phenomenon resulting in a loosening of the grip that 'adults' and institutions had over children's becomings (Lee 2001, p. 116). Furthermore, in childhood studies in general, research suggests that childhood and learning have always been complex and more-than-human (see e.g. Ivinson and Renold 2013; Rautio 2013; Taylor et al. 2013). Post-human ontologies can therefore aid in the study of sexuality education in light of these technological and social changes, and young people's everyday material becomings, by attending to its more-than-human complexity (Prout 2005, p. 144).

Working through sexuality education as an assemblage of bodies, discourses, and things questions the pre-existence of subjects and knowledge. Instead, attention is paid to the polymorphous nature of young people's learning in their more-than-human engagements (Atkinson 2015, p. 34). Rather than starting from the sexuality education curriculum and working outwards, this mode of research is more aligned to ethnographic studies into young people's sexual cultures. Ethnographies of sexual cultures start from general settings, the school for example, and examine flows that compose these (Hey 1997; Kehily 2002; Pascoe 2007; Quinlivan 2014; Renold 2005). One of the important implications of starting from this perspective of 'learning-as-assemblage' is that sexuality education research will not work from a pre-established criteria of what counts as sexuality education, instead being 'open to the potentialities and working with what happens' (Atkinson 2015, p. 54). Such a meandering approach to research is exemplified in Ringrose (2015) who highlights the deployment of following flows of sexuality through various on/offline venues. Within this work, the researcher structures their methods to explore phenomena of interest, for example, sexuality, gender, and education, as existing as a flux across numerous domains. These domains include the cultural, aesthetic, subjective, and material; therefore research methods and designs should be adaptive, in order to attend to this complexity.

In addition to highlighting the more-than-human of sexuality education, a minor mode of researching through the 'posts' also changes how researchers encounter materiality itself as research 'object'. Within the 'posts', materiality has a sense of 'liveliness' (Bennett 2010). For Deleuze and Guattari, this is because life originates from the assemblage of elements rather than being

an inherent quality (Dema 2007, para. 3). The liveliness of the inorganic has been articulated in Allen's (2015) study of sexual cultures in schools. Here, images derived from young people's photo-diaries were used to explore the material generation of sexuality in school, which included the use of mobile phones. Viewing materials as 'alive' when studying sexuality education, sexuality education policy, and classroom resources take on a sense of vibrancy. When thought of as assemblages, these materials are animated by something in addition to the semantic meaning of words and images used.

Within a Royal mode, policy documents have previously been analysed by 'reading' them in terms of the discourses they represent (Farrelly et al. 2007; Goldman 2010). By comparison, a minor mode concerns itself with what composes a text, and what it does (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, p. 4). As an example, Thanem (2010) uses the concept of assemblages to explore what types of 'virtual' bodies are discursively produced in Swedish sexuality education booklets and leaflets—bodies which are then inhabited by young people themselves and affect the sexual spaces of male and female embodiment. Rather than discourses being either present or absent, sexuality education materials and policies can be seen as the active interplay between discourses in the assemblage of something immanent (more than its parts). Honan and Sellers (2008, p. 115) address such a discursive assemblage through their 'rhizomatic discourse analysis', used to map discourses across a text and plot their interactions.

The Becoming Minor of Quantitative Research

The previous section plotted a minor way through sexuality education research that followed flows. The proceeding section applies this practice of following to quantitative methods in order to see what alternative knowledge of sexuality education they can provide. Quantitative research and methods are relatively underused within post-human studies. As highlighted by Fox and Alldred (2015a, p. 407) in their review of 'new materialist' research, all 30 studies identified by the authors used qualitative designs, with the majority favouring ethnographic methods. Quantitative designs are either explicitly ruled out of post-human research for their historically positivist basis, or, where used, are operationalised in a simplified way as a means of counting phenomena through descriptive statistics (Fox and Alldred 2015a). However, despite their scant use in post-human empirical research, several key theoreticians from within the 'posts' have engaged in mathematically informed explorations of the 'social' (Barad 2007; Guattari 2005). Deleuze and Guattari themselves

say, 'Look at mathematics: it's not a science, it's a monster slang, it's nomadic' (2005, p. 24); to them, mathematics is minor because it is a schizophrenic mass of concepts and formulae poised to go off in any direction. Limiting the use of quantitative methods to counting misses out on this 'mad' element of mathematics.

Within sexuality education studies, the use of quantitative methods is equally as limited in scope. Quantitative data on sexuality education are predominantly generated through surveys, with analysis falling into three categories: (1) frequency distributions; (2) between-group comparisons; and (3) predictive analysis, for example, regression. In Newby et al. (2012) study of English teenagers' experiences of school-based sexuality education, all three forms of analysis are perfectly illustrated. Frequencies are used to describe the population; group comparisons compare sexual experiences between demographic groups; whilst regressions are used to predict experiences and preferences (Newby et al. 2012). These methods are used deftly within the Royal sciences study of sexuality education in order to test and produce theory; in the case of Newby et al. (2012, p. 233), analysis aimed to test and provide data on 'risk behaviour'. However the limited repertoire with which quantitative methods are applied in the study of sexuality education may not be to do with the methods themselves, 'but the normativities that are attached to them in discourses about method' (Law 2004, p. 4).

Methodological normativities are the hegemonic and dominant accounts of how methods get done, such that '[w]e are being told how we must see and what we must do when we investigate' (Law 2004, pp. 4–5). An example of such normativities in sexuality research are the stock of validated survey instruments that are then drawn upon in order to measure sexualities—see Davis' (1998) handbook of sexualities measures for use in surveys. However, the contention of this section is that a minor mode can challenge normativities, including those attached to quantitative methods. Breaking with normativities diversifies methods in studying sexuality education, with potentially positive outcomes for young people. There are numerous ways of reconfiguring quantitative social sciences within the 'posts', for example, through Tarde's monads (Didier 2010; Latour 2010). However, for consistency with the rest of the chapter, I focus on examples of the deployment of Deleuzian network-assemblages as a framework for a minor quantitative study of sexuality education. The following examples demonstrate the operationalisation of network-assemblages through various forms of network analysis.

In my own research into gay male digital sexual cultures, I have drawn on a 'network perspective' (Markham and Lindgren 2014) in using network-text analysis (NTA) to deconstruct the language used in a large text-based corpus

of digital materials. The procedure that NTA uses to analyse a corpus is to search for word or concept co-occurrences, concept-word-things, either across a series of texts or simply within a text (Carley 1997). The multi-modal elements of a text can be converted into text-based codes so that the procedure can look for co-occurrences across a range of media/modes. For example, the inclusion of images in a document can be coded simply as 'image_included', or more specifically by describing the image, that is, 'image_included_happy_child'. The outcome of NTA is a visual map of a corpus as a network of concept-word-things whose relations can then be explored by the researcher as a whole, with regards to the network-assemblages 'structure', or in relation to the micro level. Words can also be grouped into Discourses (Lindgren 2012), with this method being particularly useful for examining the assemblage of Discourses through sexuality education policy documents.

Figure 33.1 is an example of a network-assemblage produced from a text corpus of over 1000 sex-seeking advertisements posted online by men who have sex with men. This map shows the linkages between concept-word-things

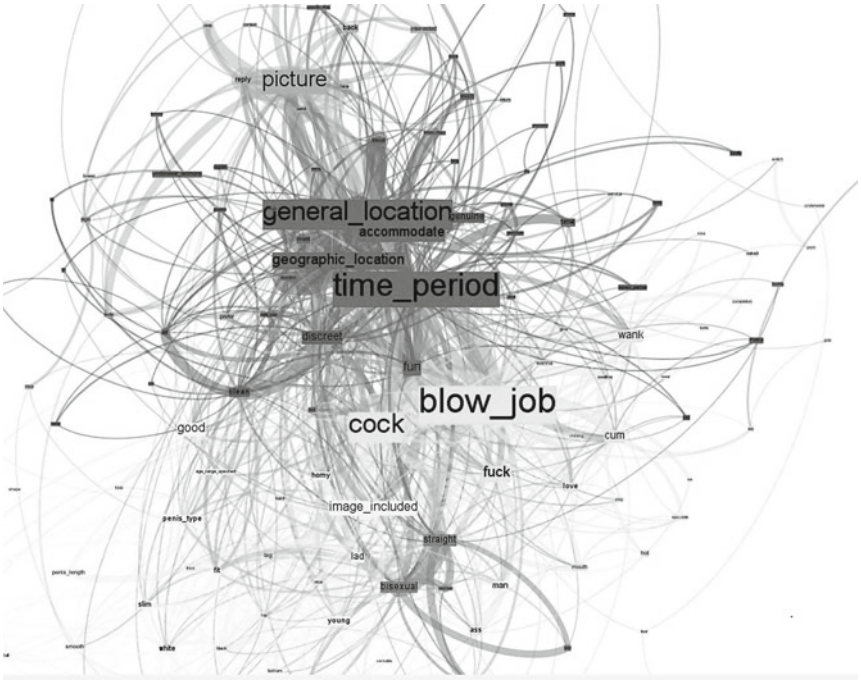


Fig. 33.1 Network-assemblage produced from a text corpus of male for male sex-seeking advertisements; *different shading* highlights groupings of concept-word-things (clustering), whilst the size of the concept-word-thing indicates their importance in terms of desire flows (centrality)

produced via the NTA method. The network-assemblage has been shaded to highlight the grouping (clustering) of concept-word-things, and therefore the main conceptual elements that drive the desiring machine of digital sexuality within this sexual venue. The size of the concept-word-things indicates their importance in making desire and affect flow (their centrality), as well as being the main concept-word-things within their associated conceptual clusters. Time ('Time_period'), sex acts ('Blow_job', 'cock'), and the importance of the visual ('Image_included', 'picture') are the largest clusters within the network-assemblage. However, a more micro-level analysis can be used to look at the circulation of language-affect along specific pathways through this network, between specific concept-word-things. For example, by zooming in on the map we can begin to understand how sexuality identity labels, bottom right of Fig. 33.1, relate to the conceptual cluster centring on the provision of images in sex-seeking posts ('Image included'). This brief example illustrates how qualitative data, in this case documents, can be analysed using statistical procedures to explore the network-assemblage map as a whole, whilst also being amenable to interpretation via qualitative analysis that focus on pathways and relations within the map.

At the level of micro interactions, Grunspan et al. (2014) urge educational researchers to use social network analysis (SNA) to map out relational data in educational settings (see Carolan 2013 for a primer on SNA in educational research). SNA could be deployed to map out affective events as they flow through and between young people, and constitute their sexual 'learning'. For example, SNA could be used to map the circulation of 'sexting' images amongst peer groups on and offline (Dobson and Ringrose 2016). Qualitative studies currently achieve such maps, for example, Albrecht-Crane and Slack (2007) use Deleuzian theory to map out the affective space of classroom 'learning'. However, the use of network analysis allows for several advantages as ways of apprehending the complexity of phenomena.

Adopting a network perspective offers the ability to visualise the links and flows between elements, and in doing so moves away from the tendency to represent research events through extended prose. This discursive rendering of events undoes some of the work engendered in post-humanist perspectives that attempt to move away from representation in language (Barad 2003; MacLure 2013a). Network visualisations map out assemblages and therefore aid in analysis by drawing attention to the relations between elements as a whole. In addition to their visual impact as a source of wonder (MacLure 2013b), network analysis also has the potential for critiquing assumptions regarding sex and sexuality underpinning sexuality education provision. For example, O'Byrne et al. (2008) adopt the paradigm of networks in order to

critique the 'promiscuity paradigm' that suggests increased numbers of partners lead to increased 'risk'. Through a network perspective, the authors illustrate that it is the relationship between individuals—the sexual acts that occur between them—and the number of concurrent connections that exist across the network which influence the 'risk' of contracting a sexually transmitted infection. The network-assemblages presented here have the potential for a becoming minor of quantitative research into sexuality education through their attention to complexity. However, as with all methods, there is the potential for them to be swept up into Royal science if used in the reproduction of a priori theoretical abstractions.

Despite Royal sciences' imposition of itself over minor science, it borrows from the minor sciences its vibrancy and movement in order to propagate itself (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, p. 372). Furthermore, in attending to movement and flows, the minor sciences disrupt the stability of molar aggregates (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, p. 367). In highlighting research that attends to complexity and rationality, this section and the previous have illustrated the ways in which such a minor approach calls into question the developmental understandings of sexuality education. It is the minor's potential for critique that can be transformative of sexuality education and forms the main attraction of using the method for sexuality education research. However in order to avoid creating a new set of normativities, the last section of this chapter balances out my advocation of 'innovation' through the 'posts'.

Not Better, Just Different

This chapter has worked with Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of Royal and minor science as different ways of researching sexuality education. Underpinning these modes of science are different ontologies of learning sexualities. Conducted in a minor mode, studies problematise learning about sexualities based on the internalisation and accumulation of external knowledge (Walkerdine 2004, p. 105). The minor mode proceeds from the view that 'sexuality education' takes place in the interrelationship or assemblage of words and things, which includes the curriculum, but also materiality in general. Attention to more-than-human engagements through a minor mode has the potential to change pedagogical practices that remain 'constant and unchanging in these times of unprecedented changes'—changes which are economic, social, technological, and ultimately global in scale (Lenz Taguchi 2011, p. 36). Engaging in research through the 'posts', specifically network-assemblages explored in this chapter,

offers a way of apprehending this change and complexity (Lee 2001; Prout 2005). However, as the extended discussion of quantitative methods highlights, the 'posts' also provide a way of challenging the normativities that seep into research methods and hamper its transformative capacity.

At the outset of their discussion of the Royal and minor, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that neither science is better, just different (2005, p. 372). Rather than representing a replacement of knowledge with 'better' forms, a minor mode is a paradigm shift and a way of highlighting a different kind of knowledge. The example of the network-assemblage drawn from my own work highlighted a different, more network-orientated way of 'reading' the digital sexual practices of men who have sex with men. Though minor modes are sufficient, and in many ways more efficient, at generating change within sexuality education practice, this is not necessarily so in all cases. We can plan forward research, to an extent, in order to achieve certain ends (Fox and Alldred 2015b). However, how our research machines hook up to those of educators and policy(makers) is part of the ongoing and contingent assemblage of the world, and therefore open to chance encounters. The minor and the 'posts' offer an attractive way to make change in sexuality education. But, we should be weary of fetishising methods in the study of sexuality education so that they do not become a new set of normativities. The interpretation of the Deleuzian 'posts' and the invocation of a minor science in this chapter is a call for experimentation and playfulness in ways of thinking and doing sexuality education research, drawing on different disciplines, to see what difference they can make in the lives of young people.

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