

**(In)visibility and the Exercise of Power:
A Genealogy of the Politics of Drag Spectacles in a
Small City in South Africa**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the politics of homosexual visibility in dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performances that take place in a small city in South Africa over a period of sixty years, beginning in the 1950s and the inception of apartheid policy, through the socio-political changes in the 1990s to the 21st century post-apartheid context. The study draws on Butler's notion of performative resistance and adopts a Foucauldian genealogy to examine the conditions that make visibility possible and through which particular representations of homosexuality are articulated and read, or remain unread or misread. Information about dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance was obtained in interviews, from documentary evidence, and from audio-visual recordings of drag shows and gay and lesbian beauty pageant competitions. Semiotics and a Foucauldian approach to analysing discourse were used to interpret the written, spoken, and visual texts.

In this study I argue that the state prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid meant that people could not admit to knowing about it, and this 'not knowing' provided a cover for homosexual behaviour in public. At this time, the threat of being identified was associated with police raids on private parties. In the 1990s, homosexual visibility was more viable than it had been in the past. However, the strategies that were adopted to negotiate public visibility at this time were tailored to appease normative sentiments rather than challenge them. I argue that, historically, race and gender have played a role in diminishing and exacerbating homosexual visibility and its politics. Addressing the potential for harm that is associated with homosexual visibility in the 21st century post-apartheid context, this study considers the circumstances in which invisibility is desirable.

DECLARATION

I am the sole author of this thesis.

No part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

To the best of my knowledge, my thesis does not infringe upon anyone's copyright nor violate any proprietary rights. Any ideas, techniques, quotations, or any other material from the work of other people that I have included in my thesis, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines.

This is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my supervisor.

This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Marx', written over a horizontal line.

Jacqueline Marx

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
APA	American Psychiatric Association
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
GASA	Gay Association of South Africa
GID	Gender Identity Disorder
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
LGBTI	Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender
NCGLE	National Coalition of Gay and Lesbian Equality
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life. That art is something which is specialized or which is done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life?

— Michel Foucault

In the very act by which the subject reproduces the conditions of its own subordination, the subject exemplifies a temporally based vulnerability that belongs to those conditions, specifically, to the exigencies of their renewal.

— Judith Butler

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The following is an extract from a debate on homosexuality in the South African parliament in 1969:

The conclusion reached by legal and state authorities, based on the evidence of psychologists, was that homosexuality was usually the result of genetic abnormalities. However, it could not be excused (or accepted) and, with the necessary psychological intervention, spiritual guidance, and a ban on the sale of certain sexual objects, the social evil and embarrassment to white South Africa could be eradicated (South Africa, Parliament: House of Assembly 1969, Debates, col.4804, cited in Shefer & Potgieter, 2006, p.107).

The following is a letter to the City Press newspaper by the National House of Traditional Leaders in 2005:

Traditional leaders would like to categorically state that they do not support the legislation of same-sex marriages. We are of the belief that based on the viewpoints of rural communities, this will cause same-sex married couples to be ostracised and might lead to victimization and violence. This kind of marriage does not fulfil the notion of marriage in African culture, as only a man can pay lobola for a woman. The practice of same-sex marriages is against African beliefs, cultures and traditions...Traditional leaders have made it their mission for the coming five years to campaign against this wicked, decadent and immoral western practice (Nkosi, 2005).

The extracts above are taken from two very different periods in South African history. The first extract is taken from a period when South Africa was ruled by the National Party, a minority government dedicated to policies of apartheid and white supremacy. The National Party regulated and racialized sexuality by imposing laws criminalizing homosexuality and interracial sex. The second extract is taken from a debate that occurred in the post-

apartheid period. The post-apartheid period began in 1994 when the African National Congress (ANC) came into power and a new South African Constitution was ratified. The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in its Bill of Rights. This same Constitution recognizes customary law and traditional leadership in South Africa. In positions based on hereditary and patriarchal principles, traditional leaders uphold 'traditional African culture' in the new democracy.

In the debates from which the two extracts are taken homosexuality is variously described as an abnormality, a social evil, an embarrassment, a wicked, decadent and immoral practice. These descriptions position homosexuality as a threat to racial identity defined in patriarchal and heterosexist terms, and justifies why it should be eradicated, ostracised, or culminate in victimization and violence. Homophobia is a deeply entrenched characteristic of South African society, past and present.

What interests me about the sentiments expressed in the two extracts is that they frame responses to the visibility of homosexuality. The parliamentary debate in 1969 was the culmination of a report compiled by a Parliamentary Select Committee on homosexuality in South Africa. The report was to inform legislative changes that sought to make homosexuality an offence punishable by compulsory imprisonment of up to three years. The Parliamentary Select Committee on homosexuality was prompted by a number of incidents that had made homosexuality particularly visible. One of these incidents was a police raid on a party at a home in Forest Town, a suburb in Johannesburg, which was attended by over 300 gay men. The police arrested nine men who were dressed in drag. The rest of the partygoers were held for a few hours while police officers recorded their personal

information and took photographs. The ensuing media spectacle prompted the government to clamp down on what was viewed as a “decadent, upper-class import 'contaminating' the purity of [the] Afrikaner...race” (Gevisser, 1994, p.31).

The second extract is a response to a ruling by the Constitutional Court in 2005 that the common-law definition of marriage in The Marriage Act (25 of 1961) which excluded same-sex partners from marriage, had to be remedied because it was unfairly discriminatory and unjustifiable and therefore contrary to the provisions of the Bill of Rights in the new South African Constitution. The Constitutional Court suspended the declaration of invalidity of the Marriage Act for one year to give parliament time to amend the act or draft new legislation that would equally acknowledge gay and lesbian partnerships. This sparked a series of public debates and media reports on the issue.

My interest in homosexual visibility in South Africa pertains specifically to the conditions that make visibility possible and through which particular representations of homosexuality are articulated and read, or remain unread or misread. In this study I investigate homosexual visibility in dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance events that take place over a period of sixty years, from the 1950s and the inception of apartheid policy, through the socio-political changes in the 1990s to the 21st century post-apartheid context. The question framing this research is how does visibility operate in the exercise of power?

The study draws heavily on the work of Derrida, Foucault, and Butler. An in-depth, critical discussion of the theoretical contributions of each of these theorists is provided in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. In this chapter I provide an overview of the work of these theorists

in order to articulate the theoretical framework in which I locate the enquiry into the politics of homosexual visibility in this study. Literature pertaining to homosexual visibility in dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag practices is discussed in Chapter Four.

This chapter also provides a discussion of the genealogical method and its usefulness in this study in terms of taking a critical stance toward the conditions of possibility underwriting homosexual visibility. This discussion links the choice of genealogy to the research design and methodology. A detailed description of the research design and methodology is provided in Chapter Five. In this chapter I provide a sketch of the social and political background of the historic periods in which events that form part of this study occur and against which my theoretical, methodological and analytic observations can be read.

KNOWLEDGES, INSTITUTIONAL AND EVERYDAY PRACTICES

The responses to homosexual visibility in the extracts on page one illustrate that we cannot separate how we see from how we know. In Rajchman's (1988, p.92) words, "[t]o see is always to think ... and to think is always to see". To be critical about how we see and how we think requires an account of knowledge, not as a straightforward, transparent representation of the world, but as something that takes shape and is given form through social interaction. This inevitably leads to a discussion of language because it is the means through which ideas and concepts, our knowledge about the world, is formulated and exchanged. The extracts on page one illustrate this point.

In Chapter Two I discuss semiology and the work of Saussure and Barthes. The work of these semiologists is important, not only because it provides an account of the way in which socially constructed knowledge comes to operate under the guise of 'true' or 'real' knowledge (knowledge that pre-exists language), but also that meaning is produced in language through a system of differences.

Understanding language as a system of differences implies that the meaning of a particular word or iconic representation is contingent on its relation to a range of other possible meanings. According to Saussure (1974), the marking of difference is fundamental to the production of meaning because it is the differences between signs which produce meaning. The Male/Female signs in Figure 1 (below) are a good illustration of one of the most pervasive concepts in almost every society, the gender binary.



Figure 1: Male/Female

While semiologists have been concerned to uncover the system of differences that give sense to particular domains of meaning, poststructuralist scholars such as Derrida, Foucault and Butler have been critical of the political dimension in constructing meaning through difference. Their particular concern is that the conceptual dichotomies through which meaning in language is produced, such as the gender binary, do not consist of a set of

simple alternative oppositions but are characteristically hierarchical. One side of each opposition has a presumed privilege over the other.

Derrida's response to the problem posed by conceptual dichotomies was to trouble them. Derrida (1976; 1978) termed this strategy 'deconstruction'. Closer consideration of Derrida's strategy for deconstruction is provided in Chapter Two. For the purposes of this discussion it is important to emphasise that Derrida argues that the distinction between conceptual dichotomies is an illusion and that meaning can never be fully present in one or the other term. Derrida proposes that all meanings are therefore derived: citations for which there is no original. In addition, Derrida argues that there is always a possibility that, in subsequent uses, a particular term or concept will take on another meaning.

Derrida's critique of conceptual dichotomies provides a particularly useful theoretical framework for work that seeks to elucidate the politics of homosexual visibility. This is because the politics of homosexual visibility concerns its potential to trouble the terms privileging heteronormativity. Heteronormativity, "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality not only coherent – that is, organized as a sexuality – but also privileged" (Berlant & Warner, 1998, p.565) is contingent on maintaining a belief in a stable sex expressed through a stable gender that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality.

Derrida's concern with the historical contingency of meaning, the idea that terms or concepts can take on new meanings in subsequent use, is powerfully illustrated in

Foucault's work. By writing "the history of the present", Foucault (1977, p.31) provides an account of the conditions of emergence of particular types of knowledge. Central to Foucault's theoretical approach and to his methodology is the notion of discourse. Foucault uses the term to refer to groups of statements that structure the way a thing is thought, and the actions that follow on the basis of that thinking. Thus, discourse refers to a particular formation of knowledge and practice. Importantly, Foucault is not only concerned with the linguistic aspect of discourse, but discourse in the context of history, forms of institutional and everyday practices and materiality. Underpinning this focus is a strong commitment to exposing the intimate association between knowledge and power.

In Chapter Two I discuss Foucault's analysis of the way in which modern power operates through the control of sexuality. This aspect of Foucault's work is particularly relevant in the context of a history of apartheid in South Africa where the regulation of sexuality was integral to state control, and because of his observations of the role of categorization in the creation of visibility, which is essential for surveillance and self-regulation. Indeed, this observation is underscored in South Africa where race politics were written into the management of space in minute detail, determining where you may live, where you may work, study, and receive medical care, which bench you could sit on, and which beaches you could use. Underwriting this separateness was the need to keep identity categories distinct and pure; hence the legal codification of which intimacies could and could not be permitted.

Excavating the historic and culturally specific contingencies of formations of knowledge and practice in which particular relations of power cohere, is imperative for understanding the politics of homosexual visibility in South Africa. However, in much of Foucault's work the

subject is characteristically docile. This is because, theorizing the formation of the self as the effect of discourses that emerge out of particular conditions of possibility also provides an account of a self that is constrained by those same conditions (McNay, 1994). This presents a challenge for theorizing resistance.

Spivak (1988) argues that it is incongruous to afford the subject the critical consciousness required to articulate resistance. According to Spivak, oppression often takes the form of the domination of consciousness, which implies that people are not necessarily fully cognizant of the nature of their oppression. Recognition of this limitation problematizes and effectively closes down the opportunities for resisting heteronormativity. Concern about this limitation led me to Butler's work on performative resistance.

PERFORMATIVITY

In Chapter Three I turn to a discussion of Butler's theory of performativity. While Butler engages with Foucault's articulation of power, she seeks to open up the possibilities for theorizing resistance. At the centre of Butler's work is the idea of an inherent indeterminacy of symbolic systems (that builds on Derrida's notion of citationality), which she utilizes to theorise performative resistance.

Butler (1990/1999) argues that, as identity categories are contingent on their everyday enactment, there is always a chance that something can go wrong with these enactments and that this can have effects. In particular, actions can be done badly so that they

transgress conventions rather than reify them. These transgressions, Butler argues, can have the effect of troubling the conventions they endeavour to cite. Butler argues that when conventions are troubled, opportunities open up to rearticulate or extend identity categories. According to Butler, this could mean that previously marginalized subjectivities might become viable.

Importantly, Butler sees visibility as an essential part of the process of troubling. In her original formulation of resistance, Butler (1990/1999) draws on an iconic representation of homosexuality, the spectacle of the drag queen. Characterized by a form of hyperbolic excess, Butler argues that drag has the effect of making all gender performances seem theatrical. In doing so, drag troubles the assumed naturalness of the identity categories underpinning heterosexuality and, consequently, threatens to usurp its privileged status.

Butler's work is particularly popular among scholars who seek to queer conventional discourse on gender and sexuality. However, despite the popularity of her work, it has been critiqued for providing both an overly deterministic account that forecloses on possibilities for resistance and an overly voluntaristic notion of resistance. In Chapter Three I discuss Benhabib's (1994) critique of Butler's notion of performativity and the articulation of the subject as the effect of discourse. Consideration is also given to Butler's response to Benhabib.

Authors who read Butler's notion of performativity to provide an overly voluntaristic notion of resistance argue that little consideration is given to the position from which the spectacle is viewed and the conditions of reception. In Chapter Four I consider challenges that

confront Butler's notion of performativity in a discussion of the politics of parody. This discussion provides the background for the critique put forward by scholars (e.g. Bordo, 1992; Lloyd, 1999; Probyn, 1995; Rothenberg & Valente, 1997) who argue that a more robust account of performative resistance must take into account the specificities of the context in which it occurs. A critique that I read to imply that performative resistance requires a Foucauldian account of the conditions of possibility in which resistance is performed and read as such. In this study I draw on Butler's notion of performativity and adopt a Foucauldian genealogy.

Initiating an inquiry into performative resistance *vis-a-vis* homosexual visibility in dressing-up, cross-dressing, and drag performances that elucidates the implications of contextual specificities meant that I needed to identify an appropriate context in which to ground the study. Serendipitously, it was while I was contemplating this that I was introduced to the owner of Club Heaven¹. Club Heaven is a gay nightclub situated on the industrial periphery of the city in which this study is located, a small port city which is situated in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. A short history of the city is provided here in order to illustrate its working class character and race relations.

In the early to mid nineteenth century the British military used the natural port (a river mouth) to ship supplies during the frontier wars between British settlers and local isiXhosa inhabitants. By the end of the nineteenth century a small city had developed around the

¹ Club Heaven is a pseudonym.

harbour. This was in order to support the growing settler population (Nel & Rogerson, 1996).

When South Africa ceased to be a British colony and became an independent state, the National Party was voted into power in a white minority government. In 1961, as part of the National Party's policy of separate development, known as apartheid, large areas either side of the city in which this study is located were declared 'Bantu homelands'. Black South Africans were forced to relocate to the 'homeland' areas and were not permitted in white city spaces without a permit.

Currently, the Eastern Cape Province is home to approximately 14% of the South African population, but contributes less than 9% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Incomes in the Eastern Cape Province are significantly lower than the national average (about half). This is as a result of structural disadvantage. More than 80% of the people living in the province identify as 'black' and live in rural areas (Department of Economic Development & Environmental Affairs (DEDEA), 2010). These are the former 'Bantu homelands' which were incorporated into the formation of the Eastern Cape Province in 1994. Colloquially known as 'slummies', which is derived from the word 'slum', the city has a decidedly working class character that is variously shaped in relation to its inhabitants' histories of race-based privilege and oppression. A strong commitment to conservative Christian beliefs that are intolerant of homosexuality is pervasive (Rule & Mncwango, 2010).

Club Heaven is the only nightclub in the city that identifies as a 'gay club'. It was established in 2005 by a white lesbian woman who identifies as 'butch' and comes from a working class

background. Through my acquaintance with the owner of Club Heaven I was introduced to a group of people who participated in spectacles of cross-dressing, dressing-up and drag performance in the two annual shows produced by Club Heaven. Most of the participants in the Club Heaven shows are young people who are new to the 'scene'. However, through my contact with the participants in the Club Heaven shows, I met a number of older people who had participated in dressing-up, cross-dressing, and drag spectacles in previous decades. They, in turn, introduced me to others. Through these acquaintances I was able to obtain information about spectacles that have been a part of the city's homosexual subculture since the 1950s. This allowed me to analyse dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag spectacles that have been repeated over time and in different public and private spaces within the city. In doing so, I was able to take into account the conditions (material, discursive, institutional and everyday practices) underpinning homosexual visibility and through which particular representations of homosexuality were read or remained unread or misread.

IMPLICATIONS FOR METHODOLOGY

An examination of the politics of visibility was undertaken with a view to addressing the conditions that fashion how homosexuality is thought of and the implications of that way of thinking. In the extracts on page one, the way in which homosexuality is thought of becomes the premise upon which ostracism, violence, victimization, and eradication are prescribed. This is why Foucault (1977, p.154) argues that "knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting". It is an observation that knowledge is primarily a mechanism for the exercise of power.

This study takes the form of a counter discourse. A counter discourse is the result of a genealogical critique of knowledge. A genealogy is a scholarly investigation that does not approach the category of the subject as the locus of action, agency and knowledge, but rather pursues an exploration of the practices, instruments, technologies and apparatuses that conspire to forge that category and to uncover its effects (Hook, 2005). Genealogy provides a broad, rather than a deep analysis.

One implication of taking a broad rather than a deep approach is that it means that I am undertaking an inquiry that critiques a notion of the self that is put forward by the discipline in which I practice and in which this study is located. In this study I approach practices of dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag, not in order to interrogate the psyche of the subject, but because “the body is a privileged object of analysis for the genealogist” (Hook, 2005, p.18). The body is the point of inscription, a “ground in which various procedures of power come to be rooted” (p.18) and, consequently, for observing the materiality of power.

Hook (2005, p.18) argues that:

In emphasizing the materiality of power and the body’s recurring role in those relations of force that underlie all vectors of origin is exactly to explore the changes of the body as a *variable form* marked by differing groupings of historical and political force.

Access to information about performances that were repeated over time from the 1950s until 2009 provided the means to make observations about how these practices changed in relation to the context in which they occurred and their political implications. In Chapter Five I provide details of the sources of evidence and the methods of data collection and analysis that characterise this study. In the remainder of this chapter I shall provide a sketch

of the social and political background of the historic periods in which events that form part of this study occur and against which my theoretical, methodological and analytic observations can be read.

LOCATING THE STUDY IN SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY

In this section I discuss important historical events that are directly relevant to the negotiation of homosexual visibility in the South African context. The discussion is divided in three parts. The first part deals with the apartheid era, focusing specifically on the early period of apartheid in the 1950s. The second part of the discussion deals with socio-political transition in the 1990s, and the last part with the 21st century post-apartheid context. It is important to discuss this socio-political background because it provides an orientating framework for the current study.

The apartheid era

Foucault argues that the scientific attempt to define race and to ensure racial purity has been inextricably bound up with the construction of gender and sexuality. In Foucault's (1979a, p.149) words:

A whole politics of settlement, family, marriage, education, social hierarchization, and property, accompanied by a long series of permanent interventions at the level of the body, conduct, health, and everyday life, received their colour and their justification from the mythical concern with protecting the purity of the blood and ensuring the triumph of the race.

In the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company established a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope for vessels plying the shipping route to Asia. This was the beginning of the European settler populations in South Africa. It sparked a series of battles amongst European merchant powers for control of the strategic port and later the massive mineral resources, with the British ultimately gaining the upper hand in the early nineteenth century until after the second Anglo-Boer War. At the same time there were continued hostilities with the indigenous peoples over territorial expansion (Ross, 2008).

In 1910 the Union of South Africa, a dominion of the British Empire, came into being. The Union was granted independence in 1931. Racial segregation was a feature of British colonialism. However, it was only after the general election in 1948, when the National Party was voted into power, that racial segregation became the official government policy (Ross, 1988). The apartheid era, which reached its zenith in the 1980s and finally came to an end in the first half of the 1990s, is an important period for analysis in this study because the policing of sexuality was an integral component in the creation and support of the apartheid state. Importantly though, by the time that apartheid policy was implemented in the late 1940s, the policing of sexuality had long since been a feature of South African law.

Modern South African law evolved from Roman Dutch law. In Roman Dutch law the only sex acts that were permitted were those that were directed toward procreation. All other sex acts were deemed to be contrary to the order of nature. Among these was sex between men. Cameron (1994) argues that the prohibition of homosexual sex was carried over from Roman Dutch law to modern South African law in a number of court decisions handed down in the mid 1920s. For example, in *R v Gough and Narroway* (1926, cited in Cameron 1995)

the court upheld the criminalization of consensual sodomy and, in *R v Curtis* (1926, cited in Cameron, 1995), the court upheld the criminalization of masturbation between two consenting males. However, during apartheid, what did become a distinguishing feature in the policing of sexuality were the extremes that the state went to in an effort to regulate and control the lives of individuals.

Immoral acts

Overt efforts to control sexuality by apartheid legislators included the enforcement of a racially-based sexual regulation. In terms of apartheid, marriage and intimacy between black and white South Africans was outlawed under The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (55 of 1949), The Immorality Act (5 of 1927), and the Immorality Amendment Acts (21 of 1950; 23 of 1957). This state regulation of sexuality was done in the name of miscegenation. The proponents of apartheid argued this was necessary because in their view the white race was the benchmark of civility, intelligence and reason, and it stood for everything that the black race was not. This distinction served as their justification for racial segregation and the exploitation and marginalization of black South Africans during apartheid.

Importantly, while this legislation was primarily intended to criminalize sexual relations between white and black people, it also criminalized homosexuality. Legislating against homosexuality was part of the ideology of the 'purity' of race, and of the white race in particular. The assumed embarrassment of homosexuality for white South Africa that appears in the last line of the first extract on page one provides a good example of the slippage between race and sexuality and the anxiety of homosexuality for racial identity.

The policing of sexuality during apartheid drew, not only on the Christian ideology embedded in Roman Dutch law, which required that white society be kept sexually and morally pure, but nationalist and conservative discourses that cohered around the threat of black, communist onslaught (Tucker, 2009). Consequently, it was the state's concern for white Afrikaner nationalism in particular that led the state to respond differently to the issue of homosexuality depending on the racial identities of those involved (Elder, 1995; Retief, 1994; Tucker, 2009).

South African scholars have written about the practice of 'mine marriage' – same-sex sexual relations among black men living in single-sex hostels on mine compounds on the Reef (e.g. Moodie & Ndatshe, 1993; Moodie, Ndatshe, & Sibuyi, 1988; Ndatshe, 1993). One observation that has been made about the practice is that, although it was openly acknowledged by employers and employees alike, the authorities did little to discourage it (Moodie et al., 1988).

Elder (1995) argues that the apartheid state tolerated homosexuality when it occurred within the mine compounds because, within these spaces, it was (thought to be) controlled. Here Elder refers both to the issue of the construction of homosexuality and its spatial containment. Constructing homosexuality on the mine compounds – like homosexuality in prisons – as 'circumstantial', leads to the assumption that it does not occur ordinarily and, consequently, that it is not a phenomenon that occurs in the population in general. Furthermore, being spatially confined, there was little risk of it 'spilling over' into the general population.

However, white male homosexuality was more of a concern. This was partly because it could not be contained in the same way that black male (homo)sexuality was contained on the mine compounds, but also because there was a fear that homosexuality could be 'spread' among the white population by older homosexual men who targeted and corrupted young men (Gevisser, 1994). In the 1950s and 1960s, in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town, most of the 'rent' (male prostitutes) were young Afrikaners whose clients were older, wealthier, English-speaking men – a situation that did not bode well for the State's planned white, Afrikaner, moral conservatism (Elder, 1995; Gevisser, 1994; Retief, 1994).

In Durban, in 1956, the South African police mounted a raid on marijuana merchants who were known to be trading on the esplanade – a boulevard that runs adjacent to the Point Yacht Club and Durban harbour. However, in the course of the raid, the police also came upon Durban's pre-eminent cruising ground for homosexual sex. Thirty homosexual men were arrested and charged with indecent assault. In his judgement, the magistrate who presided over the case declared, "your type is a menace to society and likely to corrupt and bring about degradation to innocent and unsuspecting, decent-living young men and to spell ruin to their future"(Natal Daily News, 1956 cited in Gevisser, 1994, p.18). The magistrate handed down prison sentences of between six and fifteen months.

An important outcome of the police raid on the Durban esplanade in 1956 was an amendment to The Immorality Act. In an endeavour to protect 'innocent and unsuspecting' young men from homosexual 'perversion', state legislation was brought about for the purposes of stamping out homosexual visibility. Public decency was an important dimension of The Immorality Amendment Act (23 of 1957). Section 10 dealt specifically with the

protection of heterosexual men from homosexual men (and prostitutes) in public and stipulated that a mandatory jail term of two years must be handed down for homosexual behaviour in public. The spirit of the amended legislation was based on the assumption that if homosexual behaviour could not be altogether eradicated then it should at least not be seen to occur.

It is significant that lesbian sexuality was not specifically addressed in this legislation. Isaack (2005) argues that lesbian sexuality was largely invisible under the apartheid laws. Writing on the relative lack of representation of lesbian desire and lesbian sexuality in discourses on the erotic Grosz (1995) argues that sexuality, both gay and straight, is figured in terms that are fundamentally phallogentric, which lesbian sexuality is not. Consequently, in societies where the phallus is conflated with the male penis, lesbian sexuality, in the popular imagination, is not possible. Arguably, the focus on sodomy in The Immorality Act and The Immorality Amendment Act evidences the assumption that sex acts were understood to be penetrative acts (that required a penis), thus providing one explanation for the relative lack of representation of lesbian sexuality in this legislation.

The attempt to erase male homosexuality from the public consciousness through legislative amendments designed to keep it out of view of the public, and the erasure of lesbian desire in representations of homosexuality during apartheid provides an interesting backdrop, in this study, for analysing events that challenged this erasure. My analysis of homosexual visibility in the apartheid era is presented in Chapter Six. The focus of this chapter is on the complexities of homosexual visibility in public and private spaces in the context of state legislation that sought to erase it.

Socio-political transition in the 1990s

The African National Congress (ANC) was formed in 1912. Initially, the organization was chiefly concerned with constitutional issues, such as the pass laws, that unfairly discriminated against black South Africans. When apartheid policy became official government policy the ANC embarked on a Defiance Campaign that was characterized by non-violent mass mobilization in the form of protests, strikes and demonstrations.

Political tensions came to a head in 1960 when 69 people were killed by police who opened fire on anti-pass demonstrators in Sharpville, near Johannesburg. Following this incident the National Party government imposed a state of emergency that made it possible to detain protestors without trial and banned the black liberation movements. At this point the ANC abandoned its commitment to non-violent resistance and turned to armed struggle. In 1963 Nelson Mandela was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment for treason. The 1960s and 1970s were decades of overwhelming disarray as the National Party intensified its efforts to thwart the struggle for racial equality.

In the 1980s black labour unions organized a wave of strikes, intellectuals and student movements protested at schools and on university campuses around the country, while international solidarity in the form of financial, trade, sport and cultural sanctions put increasing pressure on the apartheid government. In 1990, FW de Klerk, who was to be the last head of state of the white minority government, announced the unbanning of the liberation movements and the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. After a long negotiation process, during which time a new South African Constitution was drafted,

South Africa's first democratic election was held in 1994. The ANC obtained 62% of the vote in this election and became the new governing party and Nelson Mandela became the state president of South Africa.

The early 1990s is an important period for analysis in this study because it marked the start of the dismantling of apartheid, both in policy and in practice. At this time, the democratization of public space was an important moment in South African history, especially for previously marginalized groups. For homosexual men and women, the claiming of public space and identity meant obtaining a degree of visibility that had, historically, been particularly problematic.

A Bill of Rights

Early in the 1990s political parties in South Africa (including the recently disbanded liberation movements) engaged in a process of negotiating a new South African constitution. A history of state-sanctioned discrimination and harassment of gay and lesbian people provided a strong case for homosexual rights to be given special constitutional protection (Cameron, 1993). In April 1994 an Interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993) came into effect. The Interim Constitution contained a Bill of Rights which stated that no person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly on one or more of the following grounds in particular: race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language. In May 1996 the final Constitution was adopted, entrenching the Bill of Rights.

The new South African Constitution and Bill of Rights and the entry into a phase of social and political transition meant that new spaces were opening up for gay and lesbian activity. Early on in the process, just after the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the liberation movements, the first gay and lesbian Pride march took to the streets in Johannesburg in 1990. While the constitutional protections just mentioned were not yet in place in 1990, the process of negotiating constitutional change had begun and people were swept up in celebrating the possibilities of the moment. For gay and lesbian people this meant coming out and claiming a space in the public realm.

However, the cultural taboos against homosexuality meant that homosexuality, and the visibility of homosexuality in particular, continued to be a contentious issue in South Africa. For example, it is worth noting that while senior ANC members sent messages of support to the first gay and lesbian Pride march that took place in Johannesburg in 1990, they evaded invitations to participate in the march or address the crowds (Gevisser, 1994). Gevisser argues that this is because they were aware of the fact that, for most South Africans, homosexuality was still a taboo – and winning an election meant being in tune with prevailing social attitudes. For this same reason, when the new South African Constitution was being drafted in the early 1990s, the ANC was also hesitant to include the express protection of unfair discrimination on the basis of ‘sexual orientation’ in their submission to the Constitutional Assembly on the draft Bill of Rights in the new South African Constitution (De Vos, 2000).

Cognizant of the hesitancy among political leaders in South Africa to pursue the express protection of gay and lesbian rights, a new organization called the National Coalition for Gay

and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) was formed in 1994. The NCGLE, commonly referred to as the 'Coalition', was formed specifically to coordinate the lobbying efforts to secure the express protection of sexual orientation in the draft Bill of Rights in the new South African Constitution (Cock, 2003).

The Coalition's strategy was to represent the issue of the protection of sexual orientation in the Bill of Rights as an 'equality' issue rather than a 'gay rights' issue (Cock, 2003). Because equality was equated with non-discrimination, it had much more appeal for political parties who were determined to articulate their support for a politics based on non-discrimination. The strategy was successful, and sexual orientation was given express protection in the Bill of Rights.

The Coalition's success in having sexual orientation included in the Bill of Rights in the new South African Constitution was, arguably, not only on account of the choice to adopt an 'equality' narrative. An umbrella organization of 74 gay and lesbian groups in South Africa, the Coalition reflected a degree of diversity in terms of the race, age, gender, and social and economic class of its members that the apartheid era organizations failed to achieve.

While the apartheid era legislation that regulated sexuality and interracial sex placed homosexuals in a precarious position in relation to the law, it also meant that closeted white homosexual men could claim the advantages of race and patriarchal privilege. Consequently, it was not surprising that, during the apartheid era, the predominantly white, male and middle-class membership of homosexual organizations such as the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) was not overly concerned with challenging the

oppressive race and gender politics of the state, and chose to organize around “parties, not politics” (Gevisser, 1994, p.43).

The Coalition, by contrast, in the post-apartheid context, worked to close the gap between progressive legal code and conservative social attitudes. Alongside a number of other non-governmental organizations the Coalition provided community workshops to educate citizens about their rights and assisted them in exercising those rights. In 1998, it was the Coalition that, acting on behalf of a group of mostly black homosexual men, successfully challenged the criminalization of consensual sodomy in South African law (Massoud, 2003). The success of the Coalition was, therefore, also largely on account of the fact that it actively sought to rearticulate gay and lesbian organization as political rather than social and by representing the interests of a diverse membership rather than exclusively white, male and middle-class interests.

The successes of the Coalition notwithstanding, Gevisser and Cameron (1994) argue that there is generally a lack of solidarity among gay and lesbian organizations in South Africa and that this is largely as a result of stratifications that are rooted in history. Consequently, while the democratic changes that have taken place in South Africa afford gay men and lesbian women opportunities for self-articulation and self-representation, old divisions make this a challenge. Therefore, there is a real need to address the question of the subject in South African gay and lesbian politics.

In this study I turn to performances in the Drag Revue show to analyse the politics of homosexual visibility in the 1990s. The Drag Revue was a drag show that was staged in a

commercial theatre in the city in which this study is located. The first Drag Revue show was staged in 1995, shortly after the first democratic elections, and was produced annually until 2001. The analysis of performances in the Drag Revue shows critiques the strategies that were used to legitimize and promote homosexual visibility, and to facilitate the assimilation of (white) homosexuals into (white) (hetero)normative society. This critique speaks to the limitations of parody as a politically progressive strategy for resistance.

Homosexuality in South Africa in the 21st century post-apartheid context

South Africa in the 21st century post-apartheid context is the last epoch in my analysis of homosexual visibility in South Africa. In this epoch, the visibility of homosexuality in the public arena takes the form of a number of challenges to have homosexual relationships and families acknowledged in the same social and state institutions through which it had been previously prohibited. The contentiousness of these endeavours is evident in the light of the fact that where legislative changes have been effected, that this has often been the outcome of the concerted efforts of individuals and/or gay and lesbian political organizations (van Zyl, 2005) rather than the efforts of the government officers in charge of the portfolios governing the relevant areas of legislation.

More worryingly, while the battles over discriminatory legislation are being slowly won, old intolerances have re-emerged. The prevalence of social attitudes against homosexuality in South Africa is confirmed in survey research. Ten years after the first democratic elections in South Africa, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) published results of the South

African Social Attitudes Survey indicating that over 80% of the population hold negative attitudes toward homosexuals (Rule, 2004).

The salient changes in legislation with regard to the democratization of public space for homosexuals and the visibility of homosexuality is provided in the section titled 'in/justice'. In contrast to the advances of legislative amendments, this section concludes with a brief outline of some of the recent forms that homophobia has taken in post-apartheid South Africa in the 21st century.

In/justice

In 1985, the acts prohibiting sexual intimacy and marriage between black and white South African's were repealed. The Immorality Act was updated to reflect this. The act was also renamed The Sexual Offences Act (2 of 1988). While interracial sex and marriage were no longer deemed to be criminal acts, the prohibition on consensual sodomy was retained in the new Sexual Offences Act.

The battle over consensual sodomy was won a decade later, at the close of the last century. In 1998 the (NCGLE) Coalition took the then Minister of Justice to the Constitutional Court in an effort to affirm an earlier ruling by the Witwatersrand High Court that convictions for consensual sodomy were invalid in terms of the provisions of the new Constitution and Bill of Rights. In October 1998 the Constitutional Court declared that the common law crime of male homosexual sodomy was in violation of the new Constitution. The court held that

convictions for consensual sodomy dating back to the adoption of the Interim Constitution in 1993 were invalid.

Important as it is/was, the campaign to decriminalise consensual sodomy was a campaign that, arguably, was primarily concerned with male homosexual practice. Consequently, the visibility of homosexuality that was achieved through this campaign cast homosexuality in specifically male terms. This is problematic in light of the fact that female homosexuality has, historically, been occluded from public discourse in South Africa. Thus, although the decriminalization of consensual sodomy was an important milestone for homosexual rights, an unintended consequence was that it contributed to the continued marginalization of the visibility of homosexual women in South Africa.

This changed, however, with the expansion of the political campaign in the 21st century. The campaign to decriminalize consensual sodomy, which dealt with male sexual practice, focused on the right to privacy (in the bedroom). By contrast, in the 21st century political campaigns expanded beyond the right to privacy to incorporate relationship-based demands. This expansion marked a shift from a focus on sexual acts to sexual identities. This shift brought the visibility of lesbian women to the fore.

The battle for the recognition of same-sex adoptive parents was won early in the new century. In September 2002 a lesbian couple whose earlier application to the Pretoria High Court for the joint adoption of two children was dismissed on the grounds that The Child Care Act (74 of 1983) limited joint adoption to married couples only, took their case to the Constitutional Court, which ruled in their favour (da Costa, 2006). In 2003 the Constitutional

Court also confirmed an earlier ruling of the Durban High Court that sections of The Children's Status Act (82 of 1987) were invalid, because they prevented both parents in a same-sex relationship from being registered as the parents of their children. The ruling made it possible for a lesbian couple, a birth mother and her female partner to both register as the parents of their child (da Costa, 2006).

The legislative changes concerning the recognition of same-sex parenting and adoption in South Africa are illustrative of a new "politics of citizenship" (Casey, 2004, p. 387). According to Casey, this describes a feature of political campaigns in advanced democracies in the 21st century where gay and lesbian rights have been expanded to incorporate public recognition and validation of gay and lesbian families and partnerships. Casey argues that this move signals a shift from an earlier rights discourse that focused primarily on the sexual activity of individuals, to one that is increasingly relational, "centred upon the (public) good gay couple rather than the private 'sexual actor'" (p. 388). In South Africa, the recognition and public validation of gay and lesbian relationships has been a challenge. This is evident in the protracted battle over the public recognition of same-sex marriage.

In October 2002 a Pretoria High Court judge dismissed an application by a lesbian couple for same-sex marriage to be legalized and registered. In 2004 the couple took their case to the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein, and, although the court ruled in their favour, the couple could still not register their marriage as The Marriage Act (25 of 1961) only provides for the recognition of heterosexual marriage (between a 'husband' and a 'wife') (da Costa, 2006).

In 2005 the couple took their case to the Constitutional Court, which ruled in favour of same-sex marriage. In its ruling the court ordered that, within a year, the South African parliament was to draft new legislation for the legalization and registration of same-sex unions. The court ruled that if parliament did not attend to this within the year, the Marriage Act should then automatically be read to include the words 'or spouse' rather than specifying 'husband' and 'wife' (da Costa, 2006).

In the course of 2005, the South African parliament arranged a number of public debates to discuss the proposed legislative changes. At a joint meeting of the National and Provincial Houses of Traditional Leaders in Mpumalanga province, it was reported that, in the view of the traditional leaders who were present at the meeting, same-sex marriage "does not fulfil the notion of marriage in African culture, as only a man can pay lobola for a woman" (Nkosi, 2005).

Lobola is a custom that is practiced among black people in different ethnic groups in South Africa. Despite variances in the way in which the custom is practiced, a fundamental characteristic of the custom remains the transfer of the marital rights of a woman against the payment of cattle from her prospective husband. This part of the lobola custom is called *ikhazi*, or 'bride price' in English. *Ikhazi* is negotiated primarily by male representatives of the bride and groom's families (kaKuse, 2009).

Interestingly, it is precisely this aspect of lobola that has led feminist scholars to argue that the custom signifies male power through the right to wealth and ownership (which explains why male relatives take charge of negotiating the transaction) and is therefore instrumental

in perpetuating male privilege in heterosexual relationships (Campbell, Gibbs, Nair, & Maimane, 2009; kaKuse, 2009; Walker, 1992). According to kaKuse (2009), the guardians of this custom would never allow the tables to turn, and for a woman to pay lobola for a man, precisely because it would signify a loss of power.

Feminist critique of the relations of power that cohere in, and are supported by, the custom explains why lobola should be raised by the traditional leaders in the debate on same-sex marriage. After all, if a lesbian woman paid lobola for her prospective wife this would, arguably, elevate her to the position of a man. For a woman to occupy a man's position is to discount that position. Likewise, if two homosexual men incorporated the custom of lobola into their marriage contract, the payment of lobola for either spouse would, arguably, relegate that spouse to a position customarily reserved for women, which could also be seen to devalue masculinity.

Anxiety about the implications of same-sex marriage for cultural practices that work to sustain masculine hegemony explains why statements from traditional leaders on the issue of same-sex marriage have consistently been framed in such a way as to exclude homosexuality and homosexual partnerships from notions of African identity. In the Eastern Cape, the province in which this study is located, the chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, Chief Ngangomhlaba Matanzima responded to the proposed legislative changes that would allow homosexual men and women to marry by arguing that "[m]an-to-man marriage or woman-to-woman marriage is totally un-African, not in line with our norms and values and not applicable to African society" (Feni, 2006). By casting same-sex marriage as

“un-African”, Matanzima’s speech erases homosexuality, and homosexual partnerships, from notions of African identity.

Nagel (2000) argues that an important feature of racial and ethnic boundaries involves questions of membership. That is, who can and who cannot be counted as a *bona fide* member of the group. With regard to black identity, hooks and Julien (1991) argue that the incompatibility of blackness with homosexuality is well documented. In ‘White skin, black masks’, for example, Fanon (1963, p.84) argued that homosexuality was “an attribute of the white race”.

One explanation for the assumed incompatibility of homosexuality for black identity is that the racial power exercised by whites under colonialism denied masculine attributes to black men. Indeed, this is an issue that Biko (1978/1996) addressed in his book ‘I write what I like’. Recently, a number of theorists have picked up on this issue and argued that the incorporation of a code of macho behaviour in contemporary black male identity can be interpreted as a means of recuperating a degree of power denied under colonial rule (e.g. Epprecht, 1998; Kimmel, 1994; Mercer, 1994; Murray & Roscoe, 1998; Schiwy, 2007; Shohat, 1991; van Zyl, 2005). Further, it is argued that a history of colonial rule and the emasculation of black men can explain why contemporary black male homosexuality (commonly figured in terms of effeminacy) might be viewed as something that derails the endeavour to recuperate power that was denied under colonial rule.

Of course, anxiety around sexuality and race is not specific to black identity. The assumed embarrassment of homosexuality for white South Africa that appears in the last lines of the

extract from a debate that took place in the South African parliament in 1969 (in the first extract on page one) is a case in point. However, there is room to argue that homosexuality jeopardises identity differently for blacks and whites. Indeed, if, as these arguments allude, homosexuality can be viewed as a betrayal of race, then homosexuality in the context of black consciousness and apartheid policy is perhaps particularly problematic.

In November 2006, days before the deadline set by the Constitutional Court for the South African parliament to amend The Marriage Act, the National Assembly passed The Civil Union Bill (26 of 2006). The Civil Union Bill proposed a 'separate but equal' law that would make it possible for gays and lesbians to legalize and register their unions without disrupting the 'sanctity' of heterosexual marriage, which has remained the exclusive purview of The Marriage Act. The Civil Union Act (17 of 2006) was signed into law by acting president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on the 29th November 2006. The first gay 'marriage' (civil union) took place on the 1st December 2006.

Sadly, while legislative changes have been instrumental in affirming gay and lesbian subjectivity and rights, this affirmation is undermined by the growing visibility of violent homophobia in post-apartheid South Africa in the 21st century. In South Africa, the rape of lesbian women is colloquially known as 'corrective' rape (Action Aid, 2009). Some of the attacks on lesbian women in South Africa have received press coverage. In February 2006 it was reported that Zoliswa Nkonyana (19 years old) had been stabbed and stoned to death near her home in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. In July 2007 it was reported that Sizakele Sigasa and Salome Massoa were tortured, gang raped and shot in Soweto, Johannesburg. In the same month, twenty-three year old Thokozane Qwabe was stoned to death in Ladysmith,

KwaZulu-Natal. In 2008, the death of Eudy Simelane, a player on the national women's football team, was reported. Simelane died after a violent gang rape. In June 2009, Girly Nkosi died after being stabbed in Gauteng. In 2011 Noxolo Nogwaza was raped, stabbed, and stoned to death.

The rape of lesbian women in South Africa is understood by many to be a means of remedying what is perceived as the transgression of lesbians of their place in society (Muholi, 2004). Thus, there is room to argue that lesbian sexuality threatens heterosexuality differently to gay sexuality, making homophobia directed towards lesbian women qualitatively different. Indeed, if, as Grosz (1995) argues, lesbian sexuality, in contrast to heterosexuality and male homosexuality, is not defined by the phallus then it may present a unique challenge to phallic power.

However, what is to be made of Muholi's (2004) claim that black lesbians in particular are targets for 'corrective' rape in South Africa? Arguably, Muholi's claim is substantiated by the reports just mentioned. One observation that emerges from this claim is that constructions and enactments of homosexual identity are located in multiple relations of power that take on specific forms in localized contexts.

Gunkel (2010) argues that an unintended consequence of the ensuing debates on homosexuality and hate crime is that they have led to a narrow representation of black lesbian sexuality in South Africa that forecloses on the possibility of a more affirming discourse. Not wanting to perpetuate a narrow representation of black lesbians in South Africa through the discourses of hate crime, she is interested, instead, in asking why gay and

lesbian rights are so highly contested in contemporary South Africa, at a time when we “are in the process of constituting decolonised subjectivities” (p. 27). Gunkel argues that scholarship that seeks to address this must engage with the role of the ideologies pertaining to race (and nation), ethnicity, gender, and class (among others).

In previous decades, homosexuality in South Africa was thought of almost exclusively in white, male terms. However, in contemporary South African society, black homosexual men and lesbian women are also becoming visible. Arguably, this visibility has implications not only for traditional conceptualizations of homosexuality in South Africa (as white and male), but also for the way in which we think about other dimensions of identity and the implications of this for homosexual visibility. This is the topic of my analysis of the Club Heaven beauty pageants which is presented in Chapter Eight.

CONCLUSION

The topic of my thesis is the politics of homosexual visibility. In this chapter I argue that the politics of homosexual visibility pertains to its potential to trouble the identity categories upon which heterosexuality is privileged. Drawing on Foucault I argue that identity categories are primarily intended to render people visible so that they can be controlled. This has particular resonance in South Africa where, under colonial rule and apartheid policy, the classification of people in mutually exclusive and hierarchical binaries was endorsed, and where the policing of sexuality was a pivotal aspect of the maintenance of racial boundaries.

While South Africa has transitioned to democratic rule, in the 21st century the identity categories introduced under colonialism and apartheid are still in use, and the policing of sexuality remains a pivotal aspect in the maintenance of racial boundaries. Hence, the in/visibility of homosexuality is still intimately tied to the exercise of power. Consequently, to resist these categories is simultaneously to resist relations of power. In this study an analysis of the politics of homosexual visibility attends to visibility both as a means to exercise power and to resist it.

A Foucauldian genealogy is appropriate for analysing the conditions that make visibility possible and through which particular representations of homosexuality are articulated and read, or remain unread or misread. I have also chosen to draw on Butler's theory of performativity. This theoretical framework is particularly appropriate because Butler used drag performance as an example in her original formulation of performative resistance, and this study locates an inquiry into the politics of homosexual visibility in spectacles of dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance.

The study investigates dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance in events that take place over a period of sixty years, from the 1950s and the inception of apartheid policy, through the socio-political changes in the 1990s to the 21st century post-apartheid context. An overview of important historic events relevant to each epoch under study was provided in this chapter to orientate the reader to the context in which events that are presented for analysis in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight occur.

A discussion of the main findings of the study is presented in Chapter Nine. In this discussion, important analytic observations that emerge in each epoch are drawn together. This threading together of analytic themes provides an overview of the relations of power and resistance through which homosexual visibility is negotiated.

Language, meaning, and power are discussed in the next chapter. In Chapter Four I provide a detailed discussion of key theoretical contributions relevant to this study. This includes the work of semiologists Saussure and Barthes on language and the social construction of meaning, and Derrida's use of deconstruction to trouble signification. The main focus of the chapter is on Foucault's work on discourse and his endeavour to situate discourse in the context of history, materiality and forms of institutional and everyday practice.

CHAPTER 2: LANGUAGE, MEANING, AND POWER

Knowledge about ourselves and the world around us is developed through social interaction. Language makes communication in social interaction possible. Language involves the organization and use of a system of signs. Signs occur in linguistic (written and spoken) form and non-linguistic form (such as facial expressions, visual images and material objects). An important characteristic of signs is that they carry meaning. According to Hall (1997, p.19) “[a]ny sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system which is capable of carrying and expressing meaning is, from this point of view, ‘a language’”.

Language is a cultural artefact. The ideas or meanings that are assigned, negotiated and exchanged through social interaction are derived from the conceptual resources of a particular speech community. Through language, culture provides people with a particular commonality, a shared understanding of the world and their place in it. According to Hall (1997), the production of knowledge through everyday social interaction leads to an understanding of language as a form of action, as actively shaping the world and our place in it. Consequently, language and meaning-making is a necessary starting point for a discussion about identity and resistance.

In this chapter, a discussion of language and meaning-making begins with the work of Saussure. Saussure provides an account of the way in which meaning is produced within language through the marking of difference. In this chapter I also consider how meaning in

language can be reappropriated and rearticulated. To do this I draw on the work of Barthes and the concepts of denotation and connotation. The semiotic approach to language and meaning is then grounded in a discussion of dress codes and the fashioning of identity. This discussion describes some of the ways in which dress makes differences in gender, class, and sexual orientation identities visible.

In the second half of the chapter I discuss the critique that Derrida and Foucault's work offers to understanding language and meaning-making. In this discussion I consider Derrida's conceptualization of the work of citationality and deconstruction and Foucault's concept of disciplinary power. This lays the essential groundwork for a discussion, in the next chapter, on Butler's theorizing of performativity.

MARKING DIFFERENCE AND THE PRODUCTION OF MEANING

Semiology provides a critical starting point for a discussion about language and meaning. For Saussure (1974), language is understood as a system of signs, where each sign consists of a *signifier*, understood to be a sound or written word (although we can extend this to include visual signifiers) and a *signified*, the idea or concept with which it is associated. Importantly, Saussure argues that the relationship between these two components (signifier, signified) is purely arbitrary, meaning that there is no intrinsic connection between a word (or image) and the concept it identifies. Instead, Saussure argues that these associations are sustained by the conventions of a speech community. Importantly, as culture is fluid and changes over

time, the meaning a culture ascribes to one or other phenomenon, which is conveyed through language during social interaction, is also likely to be fluid and subject to change.

Although Saussure's work has been enthusiastically taken up by poststructuralist scholars who critique the notion of an ultimate or defining reality, it was, nevertheless, Saussure's endeavour to uncover a general framework for the way in which meaning is given in language, even if language cannot guarantee meaning (Kress & Mavers, 2005). In this regard, Saussure (1974) argued that words derive their meaning from sets of relationships or contrasts. So, for example, the concept 'Man', derives its meaning partly in relation to alternatives such as 'Woman' or 'Boy', as well as from the position it takes in an utterance, for example, when the words 'the younger' or 'the older' precede the word 'Man'.

For Saussure (1974), signs are members of a system and they are defined in relation to the other members of that system. Understanding language as a system of differences implies that the meaning of a sign (in an utterance, line of text, or visual representation) must be understood in relation to the range of other possible signifiers. According to Saussure, this marking of difference is fundamental to the production of meaning because it is the differences between signifiers which signify. Thus, the aim of semiology is to uncover the system of differences that give sense to particular domains of meaning (Potter, 1996).

SIGNIFICATION AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

Barthes took Saussure's linguistic model as a starting point but extended it in an important way. Barthes (1972) argued that the same process that allowed the combination of the concept and a sound, written word, or image to produce a meaningful sign could also allow that sign to be combined with a new concept at another level. Importantly, Barthes' work provides a more complex understanding of the social construction of meaning in language.

Barthes (1972) explained the slippage of the meaning of a sign by making a distinction between first level description which he termed *denotation*, and second level interpretation which he termed *connotation*. According to Barthes, denotation is what is commonly taken to be the primary, or literal, meaning of a sound or written image, while connotation refers to the parasitical meaning of words.

According to Barthes (1974, p.110), connotation is "made of a material that has already been worked on". What he means by this is that connotation takes the sign, which is the product of the signifier and the signified at the level of denotation, and attaches additional meaning to it. Essentially what happens is that, that which had the status of a sign (i.e. the associative total of a signifier and a signified) at the first level of interpretation, becomes a mere signifier in the second level of interpretation. Stated differently, the signifiers at the level of connotation are made up of the signs at the denotative level. In Barthes (1972, p.114) words, "[e]verything happens as if myth shifted the formal system of the first significations sideways". When this happens, the first level sign is drained of meaning and

becomes an empty signifier that can then be used to make a new association with another concept at the second level.

To make the distinction clear, Barthes (1972) proposed that what is termed the signifier at the level of denotation, should be called the form at the level of connotation, and what is termed the signified at the level of denotation, should be called the concept at the level of connotation. The product, which at the level of denotation is called the sign, is called signification at the connotative level. Therefore, at the level of denotation, the relation of the signifier to the signified generates a sign, whereas, at the level of connotation, the relation of form to concept generates signification.

According to Hall (1997, p.38-39), signification is not at the descriptive level of “obvious interpretation”. Instead, signification is at the level of interpretation where one begins “to interpret the completed signs in terms of the wider realms of social ideology. This includes the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems of society”.

Importantly, Barthes (1972) argued that signification is meaning that is utterly socially and culturally constructed. According to Barthes, while signs are customarily taken to provide the primary or original meaning, they do not. Signification imposes a socially constructed version of meaning over the primary or original meaning of the sign. Further, Barthes argues that because signification pollutes the primary or original meaning of a sign, signification and not the sign is what really gives a sense of meaning to an utterance, written word or visual image.

According to Barthes (1972), the inclination to treat signs as primary and signification as secondary is ideological. This is because Barthes viewed signification as a version of reality that is constructed through, and thus colludes, with particular relations of power (e.g. social, cultural, political, historic, and economic). Further, because signification itself imposes meaning on the first level of language, it makes deeply partisan meanings appear self-evident and well established.

With signification Barthes identifies an “extremely powerful, because covert, producer of meaning” (Hawkes, 2003, p. 109). According to Potter (1996, p. 76):

Denotation is a powerful image or story which misleads us about the way sense, and therefore factuality, is produced in descriptions. Its simplicity, its obviousness - ‘there is the word, and there the thing’, - beguile us into thinking that it is what guarantees realism.

Thus, when words (or images) are taken to stand, in a straightforward manner, for things in the world, it deflects attention from the subtle effects of signification.

At this point I digress, briefly, to consider how the dressed body conveys meaning. This is in order to ground an otherwise theoretical discussion on language and meaning. In the section titled ‘I speak through my clothes: Fashioning identity’, the focus on signs and the construction of meaning in semiology is linked to theories about fashion and, in particular, dress codes and the visibility of identity. After this, the discussion turns to consider the critique that Derrida and Foucault’s work offers to understanding language and meaning-making.

I SPEAK THROUGH MY CLOTHES: FASHIONING IDENTITY

Clothes are a cultural artefact. Like other forms of language, clothes draw on the symbolic conventions of a culture. Therefore, clothes are as capable of conveying meaning as written and spoken language. Because clothes are a material artefact and contain visual signs, clothing can be understood as a visual language (Hall, 1997). In the language of clothes, as with written and spoken language, meaning is derived from the way in which the signifiers are arranged, that is, in relations of similarity and difference. This is apparent in the role that clothes play in defining identity and making it visible on the body.

Entwistle (2000, p.141) argues that an individual's sex is signified through dress and clothing style, but that this visibility derives from the ability clothes have to "imbue the body with significance" and not because clothes accentuate bodily signs of difference. Babies, for example, are dressed in colours (pink or blue) and styles of clothing (with or without frills) in order to differentiate between the sexes at a time when sex differences are possibly least apparent.

Clothing is an aspect of culture that also plays an important role in the production of masculinity and femininity. Entwistle (2000) argues that the links that we make between items of clothing (skirts, trousers) and femaleness and maleness are an arbitrary set of associations that are culturally specific, yet the distinctions that they draw remain at the root of our everyday readings of bodies. Feminine appearance is taken to indicate female sex, while masculine appearance is taken to indicate male sex.

Interestingly, gender became more clearly differentiated in Western fashion in the nineteenth century (Entwistle, 2000; Garber, 1997). Davis (1992, p.38) argues that, prior to this, in the eighteenth century:

both men and women of the aristocracy, and of the upper bourgeoisie who emulated it, were equally partial to ample displays of lace, rich velvets, fine silks and embroideries, to highly ornamented footwear, to coiffures, wigs, and hats of rococo embellishment, and to lavish use of scented powders, rouge and other cosmetics.

Elaborate ornamentation and dress fell out of fashion in the west after the French Revolution. In the early nineteenth century a less decorated style came into fashion. According to Entwistle (2000), the 'country costume', fashionable in England and France in the early nineteenth century, pared men's fashion down to breeches and a riding jacket. This change in fashion coincided with the rise of the bourgeoisie. Entwistle argues that the nineteenth century marked the moment when men abandoned their claim to beauty and aimed only to be useful. The abandonment of elaborate costume on the part of the bourgeois male was a sign of "his commitment to a life of industry, sobriety and work" (Entwistle, 2000, p.154).

Women's dress was also pared down after the French Revolution, but this trend did not last very long (Entwistle, 2000). In the nineteenth century the corset made a comeback and new dyes discovered during the colonization of foreign nations brought bright colours into vogue. According to Entwistle, the increasing gender differentiation in fashion in the west after the eighteenth century resulted in the renunciation of decoration on the part of men to be contrasted with what was seen as "the increasing fussiness of women's dress" (p.157).

Davis (1992) argues that the restricted code of men's dress after the eighteenth century and the elaborated code of women's dress together comprised a coherent sign system. It reflected a culturally endorsed gender division of labour in society, which had become more apparent through industrialization.

According to Davis (1992, p.40), conventional middle class male dress, in narrowing its "symbolic allegiance" to values of work and career:

signals its privileged access to the source of economic and political power in industrial and post-industrial society, namely, occupational success and the income and prestige deriving therefrom.

Davis (1992) argues that the changes in women's fashion after the eighteenth century were not as radical as the changes in men's fashion because the social role of women had not changed to the same extent. Furthermore, because women's fashion had more scope for elaboration after the eighteenth century it came to signal the social status of a family, and its male breadwinner in particular. Consequently, Davis argues that gender signifiers in fashion are also always signifiers of economic and social status.

While contemporary writers such as Davis have interpreted gender differentiation in fashion as the effect of changing social and economic conditions in the west after the eighteenth century, a different approach was taken in earlier work on the topic. In 1930 Flügel published a book titled 'The psychology of clothes'. Flügel was a psychologist and member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. It is therefore unsurprising that Flügel chose to focus on intra-psychic processes in his account of gender differentiation in fashion. Flügel argued that women have a greater tendency to be narcissistic than their male counterparts and they also have a keener sense of sexual rivalry and competition and that these traits were at

the root of women's motivation to dress in more elaborate clothing. This account has since been referred to as the seduction principle (Entwistle, 2000).

The seduction principle provided an explanation for gender differentiation in fashion that focused on individual traits. Entwistle (2000) argues that Flügel's account for gender differentiation in fashion promoted the myth about women being the seducers of men and that this same myth had kept women's legs hidden under long skirts during the Victorian era, because of fears about sexual impropriety.

In Southern Africa, dressing African bodies in European clothes was an essential characteristic of missionary conversion in the early nineteenth century. This is because, in the eyes of the missionaries, "[t]raditional' body coverings were tantamount to nakedness" and signified "a flagrant lack of physical containment" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986, p.14). The conversion to European dress was coerced through a moral discourse about bodily shame and physical modesty. Thus, European missionaries sought to 'civilize' the 'primitive natives' by introducing and insisting on western dress and, consequently, the relinquishment of their African identities.

According to Packard (1989), by the early twentieth century a powerful stereotype had formed around the myth of the 'dressed native'. Packard argues that the myth of the dressed native:

placed responsibility for the apparent physical and moral failings of urban Africans, reflected in high morbidity rates, alcoholism, family separations and crime, on African inexperience with the conditions of urban industrial life...For many white South Africans, the Africans' wearing of European-style clothing,

which was ... worn in what appeared to be an indifferent manner, symbolized this difficult social and cultural adjustment (p.687).

The myth of the dressed native exemplifies the language that was employed to legitimise policies that served the economic interests of white South Africans at the expense of black South Africans and their families.

The link between dress codes and personal attributes has not been abandoned and can be traced in contemporary culture. For example, in South Africa today it is still permissible to allow as evidence in a court of law details of a woman's attire in rape cases because it is taken to be an indicator of her own culpability. This was a contentious issue in the rape trial of Jacob Zuma (Motsei, 2007), who later became the state president.

Entwistle (2000) argues that men's fashion, from tights and codpieces to the three piece suit, can also be read for narcissism, exhibitionism and erotic display, and the fact that it is not reflects a gender bias. According to Entwistle, this gender bias, while constructing women as trivial, vain, narcissistic, immoral (or as tempting immorality), and frivolous because of their association with the vanities of dress, constructs men as unaffected by these traits and consequently more concerned with the sober activities of the marketplace. According to Entwistle, these constructions are responsible for the ongoing association of fashion with femininity and not masculinity.

Davis (1992, p. 48) argues that the cultural linkage of "male=work, career, skill mastery, authority" is so well entrenched that its dress codes are appropriated by career women who want to 'dress for success'. Davis describes the 'dress for success' style as:

dark-hued, comparatively severe, man-styled jacket and straight, lowered-hemline skirt accompanied by attaché case; in all, a figure suggesting masculinity (p.48).

According to Davis, when women 'dress for success' they do so in order to convey the impression that because they dress like male counterparts, they also share the same "valued on-the-job attributes as ambition, determination, skill mastery, level headedness" (p.52), while at the same time signifying a disavowal of the "fickleness and capriciousness" associated with women's fashion (p.53).

Davis's elaboration of the 'dress for success' style adopted by women climbing the corporate ladder is an example of the way in which meaning can be appropriated and reworked, which Barthes describes as the work of connotation. At the level of denotation (the first level of interpretation), dark-hued jackets and attaché cases are a gendered dress code that symbolize the masculine. However, at the level of connotation (the second level of interpretation) the gendered dress codes symbolize the traits that a culture associates with masculinity (i.e. ambition, determination, and skill mastery). The work of connotation makes it possible for us to understand that business women who 'dress for success' are not men in the biological sense of the term, but that they are like men in that they share the same valued on-the-job attributes as their male counterparts.

In South Africa, the 'Mandela shirt' is a dress code that has become popular in the formal sector. The dress code was made famous by South Africa's first post-apartheid president, Nelson Mandela. The Mandela shirt is a casual, colourful, loose-fitting shirt that is worn without a tie, and not tucked in at the waist. The shirt is actually an Indonesian *batik* style. However, as a result of Nelson Mandela embracing the style so wholeheartedly, it has taken

on a new range of connotative meaning. The casual and cultural signs embedded in the style of the shirt, which Mandela wore to an array of formal business and political gatherings came to signify political and social change *vis-à-vis* a break with formality and cultural exclusivity (Aris, 2006). Grant and Nodoba (2009) argue that the Mandela shirt has become a popular dress code for black and white executives alike because it communicates the wearer's positive attitude toward social and political change in South Africa in the post-apartheid era.

The appropriation of dress codes takes many forms. The large body of literature on the symbolic meaning of dress, and on the signification of gender in dress codes in particular, makes it possible to understand why the language of fashion should be appropriated by homosexual men as a means to articulate sexual difference. In the case of 'cross' dressing, this is achieved *vis-à-vis* the notion of inversion. The homosexual man who dresses as a woman takes her place, via symbolic dress codes, in the dyad (male/female) through which hegemonic representations of desire are structured, that is, as an attraction to the *opposite* sex. However, in doing so, *same* sex desire also becomes visible.

'Drag' is a common term in contemporary western societies to describe cross-dressing. The term originated in England in the eighteenth century where it was used to describe a "theatrical petticoat or skirt used by [male] actors when playing female parts" (Ware, 1909 cited in Senelick, 1993, p.85). In this context, the term 'drag' was associated with a specifically public form of cross-dressing.

Although the term 'drag' has its origins in the theatre, it came to be associated with the cross-dressing practices of homosexual men in the 'molly houses', eighteenth century taverns in London where gay men met (Garber, 1997). However, unlike the male actors who impersonated women on stage, in the molly houses drag was not about deception: it had specifically homosexual connotations. In the context of the molly houses, drag was intended to make homosexual desire visible (albeit through the male/female dyad as an attraction to the opposite sex).

By the late eighteenth century, theatrical cross-dressing on stage had made the British public accustomed to seeing men portray women. However, it was a series of court trials (including that of Oscar Wilde), in which homosexual practices in London's molly houses were revealed, that resulted in the public association of cross-dressing with sexual relations between men (Senelick, 1993). Senelick argues that this association was transported to America in the nineteenth century.

Writing on the emergence of a homosexual sub-culture in New York at the turn of the twentieth century, Chauncey (1994) argues that homosexual men adopted a distinctive social style in order to signal their sexual desire. According to Chauncey, effeminate mannerisms and female impersonation was the dominant model available to men for forming a gay identity. Chauncey argues that this style set the tone for the drag balls which were the major social events for homosexual men in New York at this time.

Along with a newly conspicuous subculture, the medical professional also played a key role in the association of homosexuality with cross-dressing. The identification and classification

of sexual abnormality brought cross-dressing under scientific scrutiny, where it was understood to be a symptom of sexual inversion.

Sexual inversion is a term that is frequently associated with the work of early sexologists Krafft-Ebing (1895) and Ellis (1927), who viewed cross-dressing as a dysfunction in which affected men and women were not only compelled to adopt the sexual preferences of the opposite sex, but their appearance and behaviour too. Thus, homosexuality, understood as sexual inversion, was presented as an inborn reversal of gender traits. Importantly, by labelling the homosexual an 'invert', sexual inversion theory made homosexuality intelligible by interpreting it through the heterosexual framework in which desire is understood as attraction to the opposite sex.

Hamilton (1993) argues that all performance traditions bear some relation to the social reality in which they occur. Arguably, female impersonation as a signifier of homosexual identity was particularly suited in a world where men and women are assumed to be fundamentally different and biologically distinct. The pervasiveness of this way of thinking and the practices it informed can be traced in South Africa.

Writing on the phenomenon of '*moffie* drag'² among 'coloured'³ homosexual men in South Africa in the 1950s, Chetty (1994, p.118) argues that drag among homosexual men at

² *Moffie* is an Afrikaans name for a male homosexual. Like 'queer', *moffie* is a derogatory term that homosexual men now take up or cite themselves as a discursive strategy for opposing a range of meaning previously ascribed to it.

private house parties was a means to represent a desire that was both “unspeakable – and titillating”. According to Chetty, the personas that gay men chose to parody in drag were often influenced by the divas of Hollywood cinema, which had made a significant impact on popular concepts of gender in South Africa at that time.

Importantly, while the theatre stage created a very public platform for drag, in the context of the private house parties in South Africa in the 1950s, and the molly houses in eighteenth century London, gay drag was “wisely kept as unobtrusive as possible” (Bray 1988, cited in Garber 1997, p.131). This is because appropriating and reworking meaning is always a tricky endeavour, but even more so when it is caught up in the relations of power that cohere in particular notions of identity. While cross-dressing could find a sanctioned refuge on the theatre stage, this did not extend to the molly houses or private house parties in South Africa in the 1950s. In the introduction I wrote that the prohibition of homosexuality in South Africa in the apartheid era was tied to anxiety about racial purity. Thus, at the root of the policing of identity was a concern with the integrity of identity categories.

At this point I return briefly to Davis’s observations about the ‘dress for success’ style that many career women adopt because it relates to the issue of maintaining boundaries. Davis (1992) argues that when individuals borrow on the dress codes of the opposite sex, as career women do when they ‘dress for success’, there is a risk that the endeavour will be discredited by too blatant an appropriation. Therefore, Davis argues there is a trend in

³ Coloured is a race classification in South Africa applied to people of ‘mixed’ race heritage. ‘Coloured’ became an official race category during apartheid and continues to be an official race category in contemporary South Africa.

women's 'dress for success' styles to off-set masculine dress codes with "feminine touches [such] as silk blouses, soft bow ties, earrings, clutch handbags, manicured nails, and Chanel-style link necklaces and belts" (p.50). Davis argues that when career women do this, they are endeavouring to reassure others that no serious gender defection has occurred.

Davis (1992) argues that because fashion plays such a prominent role in the construction and articulation of identity, it is also caught up in the identity dialectics that ambivalence generates. This is an important observation. This issue is taken up in detail in the next chapter in a discussion of Butler's conceptualization of performativity and the work of parody in drag spectacles. In the remainder of this chapter, I consider the critique that Derrida and Foucault's work offers to understanding language and meaning-making.

TROUBLING THE EFFECTS OF SIGNIFICATION

Derrida shares Barthes' critique of the privilege of presence (which Barthes termed denotation) and the secondary status of representation (which Barthes termed connotation). However, Derrida argued that, because the notion of presence is the foundation upon which western thought is based, there is no reason in trying to get beyond it. Instead, Derrida sought to disrupt it by revealing the instability at its foundations. Derrida named this endeavour *deconstruction* which he described as a "force of dislocation" (1978, p.20) and "de-sedimentation" (1976, p.10).

Derrida's most famous tool, with regards to deconstruction, is *différance*. Derrida (1982) coined the term *différance* which he derived from the verb *différer* meaning both to differ and to defer. The reference to difference is intended to restate Saussure's argument that meaning is no more than the product of the differences between signs, while deferral deals with the time lag or gap that suspends the notion of a final, definitive meaning.

For Derrida (1982), meaning is an event that takes place in a citational chain with no beginning or end. This can be illustrated by referring to the idea of presence. Western thought assumes meaning is derived from the present. Presence implies an original state, a present moment. Thus, in the context of interpreting a text, presence must be the main predicate for meaning. However, presence in a text occurs precisely in the absence of the original. The words in the text are not the same as the thing they represent. This example illustrates that meaning is conveyed in a text not through an originary presence but through its re-presentation. Derrida read texts for paradoxes like this and other anomalies because, he argued, they unsettle the texts. He located *différance* at these junctures.

In a rather complicated piece of text Derrida (1982, p. 142-143) describes *différance*:

Différance is what makes the movement of signification possible only if each so-called 'present' element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of a past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what is not, to what it absolutely is not: that is, not even to a past or a future as a modified present. An interval must separate the present from what it is not, in order for the present to be itself, but this interval that constitutes it as present must, by the same token, divide the present in and of itself, thereby also dividing, along with the present, that is, in our

metaphysical language, every being, and in particular the substance or the subject.

In this description presence and absence are related to each other, not through their being separate, but by the one referring back to the other as a repetition of the same. If we assume that what presence *is* hinges on what it *is not* (absence), we must conclude that absence supplements presence (lends meaning to it), and to the degree that it does this, absence inhabits presence. However, while the present is inhabited by absence, it is not identical to it. This description implies that it is impossible to draw a dividing line between presence and absence.

Derrida (1982) argued that if it is not possible to draw a dividing line between presence and absence then the same must be true of all other oppositions (e.g. male/female, black/white, hetero/homo). Consequently, Derrida was suspicious of texts that used conceptual dichotomies to state a case. In Derrida's view, there is a political dimension to conceptual dichotomies. The logic of either/or, he argued, does not consist of a set of simple alternative oppositions but is characteristically hierarchical, with one side of each opposition having a presumed privilege over the other. Indeed, one side is often assumed to be the original, while the other side a derivative.

What Derrida's deconstruction of texts shows, is that to question oppositions and other textual strategies is to question taken-for-granted value judgments and expose hidden preconditions of symbolic power. Noting that politics concerns the maintenance of superiority or its destabilization, Boyne (1990) argues that the popularity of Derrida's

philosophical achievements with regard to the struggles against economic exploitation, sexual inequality and racial discrimination relate back to the fact that deconstruction has grasped the point that the binary oppositions characterizing structuralism represent a way of seeing that is typical of ideologies. Scholars employing critical methodologies have found a “critical interrogation of the exclusionary operations by which ‘positions’ are established” in deconstruction to be a useful tool (Butler & Scott, 1992, p. xiv).

I shall return to a discussion of Derrida and the political utility of troubling identity binaries in the next chapter when I consider Butler’s work on performativity. However, it is important to first consider Foucault’s contribution to the critique of language and meaning making. In the introduction I wrote that there is a link between Derrida’s notion of *deferral* in which meaning is historically contingent, and Foucault’s choice of genealogy as method. In the next section, I discuss Foucault’s genealogical method as a strategy to account for the conditions of emergence of particular types of knowledge and practice. Foucault’s work is important because it offers a critique of overly textual accounts of subject formation and resistance. This is a critique of Butler’s notion of performativity, which is discussed in the next chapter.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A ‘SCIENCE OF SEXUALITY’

Foucault explores how knowledge about individuals comes to be constituted, how this knowledge is maintained, what relations of power are supported by it, and its role in regulating human behaviour and social practice. To do this, Foucault (1984a) uses a method

called genealogy. According to Foucault (1977, p.31), genealogy involves “writing the history of the present”. It is a method that involves “excavat[ing] the past” (Arac, 1987, p.2) in order to trace “the conditions of emergence” (Salih, 2002, p.10) for the way things are at present. Two important theoretical advances derive from Foucault’s genealogical analyses. The first concerns the way in which Foucault links knowledge and power. The second is the way in which Foucault conceptualizes power.

Foucault focused on fairly minor events in order to uncover links between knowledge and power. One example is Foucault’s analysis of the genealogy of the homosexual subject. In the ‘History of Sexuality’ Foucault (1979a) explicates the centrality of sexuality as a locus of power in the constitution and control of individuals in modern western societies.

Contrary to the commonly held assumption that sexuality in the nineteenth century was repressed (i.e. the repressive hypothesis), Foucault (1979a, p.13) argued that talk about sex proliferated in the nineteenth century with the development of a “science of sexuality”. Foucault did not view this development as the outcome of simple curiosity. Instead, he identified the emergence, in the eighteenth century, of ‘population’ as an economic and political problem (concerning labour capacity on the one hand and the resources it commanded on the other) as the impetus for taking the sexual conduct of the population both as an object for analysis and as a target for intervention. According to Foucault (1979a), through the political economy of population there formed a whole grid of observations regarding sex around which institutional strategies and bodies of knowledge were deployed.

Foucault (1979a) argued that the most notable consequence of the urgency to speak about sex were the imperatives that speaking imposed. According to Foucault, in every institution, memberships, mandates and regulations determined what statements could be made regarding human sexuality. Across various institutions, the effect was the emergence of certain formations of discourse.

Foucault's view of discourse is not strictly textual. He does not view discourse simply as a group of signs or a stretch of text. Instead, Foucault (1972, p.49) understands discourses as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak". Thus, Foucault sees discourse as something which functions to produce something else, in other words, as having effects. Foucault argues that discourses can be detected when one becomes attuned to the systems of ideas, opinions, and concepts, of a particular way of thinking and behaving which is specific to a particular context, and by attending to the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving.

For example, in the medical discipline in the nineteenth century psychologists and psychiatrists claimed "a particular expertise" in identifying "idiosyncrasies", which had the effect of individualizing people by categorizing them, "inscribing their peculiarities in an ordered form, [and] managing their variability conceptually" (Rose, 1999, p.135). The evaluation of conduct made it possible to codify human behaviour and to establish norms against which all human behaviour could be compared in terms of the degree to which it conformed to those norms, or deviated from them. Rose (1999, p.136) argues that, for Foucault, medicine as a discipline was primarily concerned with controlling human behaviour, and that this was achieved through the development of techniques to "eliminate

certain habits, propensities, and morals and inculcate others” while at the same time making “visible the difference between those who did or did not, could or could not, would or would not learn the lessons of the institution”.

Using technologies designed for observing and recording human behaviour, institutions such as medicine became “machines for the registration of human differences” (Rose, 1999, p.136). Foucault (1979a, p.38) argues that in the nineteenth century the development of a science of sexuality made it possible to identify and to set apart the ‘unnatural’ as a specific dimension within the field of sexuality so that the “legitimate couple with its regular sexuality” was given more discretion while a range of “peripheral sexualities” were brought to the fore. Thus, in terms of discourse and domains of knowledge, Foucault insists that sexuality is *produced* and not a universal biological fact. For Foucault, sexuality is an historical product: a historically and culturally specific discourse. However, the inscription of systems of knowledge, such as the classification of sexual desire into categories of normal and deviant, allowed particular personalities and behavioural tendencies to be understood as essential or self-evident properties of individuals (Rajchman, 1988).

Within the medical institution, the administration and control of ‘deviants’ necessitated further separation of different types and degrees of deviance, and more schemas of classification and measurement. Through these processes, Foucault (1979a, p.43) traces the emergence of the homosexual in nineteenth century medicine as:

a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, a morphology, with a discreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his [*sic*] total composition was unaffected by his [*sic*] sexuality. It was everywhere present in him [*sic*]: at the root of all his [*sic*] actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active

principle: written immodestly on his [*sic*] face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away. It was consubstantial with him [*sic*], less a habitual sin than as a singular nature. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration: the homosexual was now a species.

In saying this, Foucault is not arguing that the practices that are now termed 'homosexual' did not exist prior to their classification as such. Indeed, in the west, churches and courts had prohibited acts such as sodomy on the grounds that they were sinful and unlawful. However, these prohibitions centred on the nature of the acts and not on the nature of the actors. Homosexuality did not function as an identity category until it entered into nineteenth century medical discourse.

The processes of classification of individuals within institutional discourses such as medicine created a "field of visibility" (Foucault, 1977, p.202) for observing the most mundane practices of the population. Foucault argues that this had not always been the case.

For a long time ordinary individuality – the everyday individuality of everybody – remained below the threshold of description. To be looked at, observed, described in detail, followed from day to day by an uninterrupted writing was a privilege (Foucault, 1979a, p.191) .

However, in the nineteenth century, institutional practices, in classifying and inscribing the body, "reversed this relation, [and] lowered the threshold of describable individuality" (Foucault, 1979a, p.191). Foucault linked this visibility with the exercise of a modern form of power. According to Foucault, sexuality became fundamental to the bio-political order of the modern nation state. Bio-politics is a term that Foucault used to refer to the concern of governments with 'population' – with birth, death and a whole series of related economic and political problems.

VISIBILITY AND THE EXERCISE OF POWER

Disciplinary power is a form of power that Foucault (1977) associates with the *modern régime*. Foucault differentiates disciplinary power and sovereign power. Foucault describes sovereign power as the form that power took in the *ancien régime* (old regime) which was characterized by an aristocratic social and political system. In the *ancien régime* power was in the hands of an entity such as “the state, political elites or the ruling class” (Crossley, 2005, p.23). It was a form of power that could be “possessed, given, seized, captured, relinquished or exchanged” (Grosz, 1990, p. 87). By contrast, disciplinary power “is the effect of a variety of different social technologies that function to administer, regulate, and mould human beings in a variety of ways” (Crossley, 2005, p.25). Disciplinary power is not a form of power that is exerted from above, but is exercised in everyday encounters involving “the smallest elements” (Foucault, 1979b, p.59), including the family and other forms of social relations, that is, in encounters structured by socio-cultural expectations about doing and appropriate doing. Foucault argues that bio-power emerged alongside the development of disciplinary power.

According to Foucault (1984b), modern societies promote the notion of democratic rule because the social order in these societies is secured by a network of practices and institutions that mould individuals in a variety of ways. In Foucault’s (1984b, p.64) words, “far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations, ... the state can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations”. What Foucault is referring to here is the link between power and knowledge in modern societies which is used to regulate human behaviour.

The problem is that modern forms of power obtain a degree of invisibility that makes them difficult to counter. Processes of “proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way” (Foucault, 1980, p.107) progressively made the body a target for power, but this was a subtle colonization of the body. Modern forms of power are not obvious because, unlike sovereign power, they do not have a locus. The technologies that reduce and contain human multiplicities in tight identity categories facilitates the imposition of particular codes of conduct that while “shape[ing] the conduct of everybody ... belong to nobody” (Crossley, 2005, p. 220). In Foucault’s (1977, p.170) words, disciplinary power:

[i]nstead of bending all its subjects into a single, uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units ... It is not a triumphant power, which because of its own excess can pride itself on its omnipotence; it is a modest, suspicious power, which functions as a calculated, but permanent, economy. These are humble modalities, minor procedures, as compared with the majestic rituals of sovereignty or the great apparatuses of the state.

What modern forms of power do make visible, however, are those who are subjected to it. According to Foucault (1977), this visibility is managed through surveillance, but it can also take the form of self-policing and self-regulation. The panopticon is Foucault’s (1977) archetype for surveillance. Taking Bentham’s prison as an example, Foucault explains how blinds on a central tower have the effect of rendering the guard invisible whilst simultaneously creating a sense for the prisoners of being constantly watched. He argues that power works by making individuals visible so that they can be corrected when they step out of line.

An example of this process of making visible and correcting is how, between 1969 and 1987, the South African defence force attempted to cure homosexual conscripts. At this time conscription into military service was compulsory for white men. According to Kaplan (2004), new conscripts were screened for homosexuals by military doctors and chaplains. Conscripts who were identified as homosexuals were admitted for treatment at a Military hospital in Pretoria. The treatment ranged from a crude version of behaviour aversion therapy that involved electric shocks, to chemical castration with massive doses of hormones, to sexual reassignment surgery. Treatment was administered without obtaining informed consent and the casualty rates were high, both as a result of patients dying during treatment and as a result of numerous suicides both during treatment and after discharge.

While the panopticon is characteristic of what Foucault (1977, p.231) termed “complete and austere institutions” such as prisons, hospitals and army barracks, he extended the panoptic principle to more diffuse forms of social control. In ‘Discipline and Punish’ Foucault (1977) describes the attention a schoolboy is made to pay to the placement of his feet, the extension of his spine, the grip of his pencil, and to the way in which he forms his letters. According to Foucault, these movements are corporeal signs that attest to the attention of power. However, as these movements become habit for the schoolboy, he performs them unaware of the relation of power to which they attest. Thus, Foucault argues that people come to act as if they are being watched, whether or not they really are being watched or believe that they are being watched. Over time, they may even forget that their choices and decisions to act in particular ways are restricted by social and cultural expectations about doing and appropriate doing, as these actions are folded into their way of being.

As the defining characteristic of homosexuality is an erotic attraction to the opposite sex, it is not discernible or externally visible in the way that race and gender usually are. Cameron (1993, p.459) argues that, in the context of pervasive discrimination and stigmatization, the non-obviousness of homosexuality “provides a potent stimulus for homosexual men and women to closet their orientation from outsiders – or to repress it totally” which, Cameron argues, also “makes it possible for others to deny that gay or lesbians exist or that they are a significant or necessary part of society”. Self-regulation and the closeting of homosexual desire is an important mechanism in the exercise of power. Indeed, Sedgwick (1990) has argued that ‘the closet’ is the defining structure of gay oppression.

As being ‘in the closet’ is often a matter of watching how one behaves or dresses, or what one says, it illustrates Foucault’s contention that the body is the most specific point at which the micro strategies of power can be observed. Foucault (1984a, p.83) describes the body as:

the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration.

Foucault’s description of the body aptly captures his argument that the body is produced through processes of categorization and inscription that are connected to regimes of knowledge and power. However, it has implications for theorizing resistance. Foucault’s concept of a subject constructed in discourse implies that it has no essence or foundational core. Shilling (2003, p.71) argues that, in Foucault’s work, “bodies are produced, but their own powers of production, where they have any, are limited to those invested in them by

discourse". Foucault's description of the body presents the antithesis of an autonomous and volitional subject.

Arguing that "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power", Foucault (1979a, p.101) draws on the notion of reverse discourse to theorize the possibilities for resistance. One example is the discursive production of the homosexual subject. In Foucault's (1979a, p.101) words:

[t]here is no question that the appearance in the nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality ... made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of "perversity"; but also made possible the formulation of a "reverse" discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or "naturalness" be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified.

Here Foucault (1979a, p.101) illustrates how:

[a] discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy.

In this instance the construction of the homosexual subject in medical discourse is appropriated in order that the "subjected subject" (Weedon, 1997, p.106) can speak. Importantly, Foucault does not propose a notion of the subject that can step outside of the grid within which power operates, only that subjects can reclaim particular identities for political gain. Acknowledging that discourses offer preferred subject positions (heterosexual, white, male), Foucault (1979a) argued that the very articulation of preferred subject positions makes other subject positions possible (homosexual, black, female) and these positions can be appropriated to challenge traditional relations of power.

While the category 'homosexual' has, historically, been used to subject people so classified to various strategies of control, such as medical interventions, this same category can also be the basis of a shared social identity around which people can organize and resist their collective oppression. This was certainly the case in South Africa in 1990 when the first Pride march took place in Johannesburg, an event that Berlant and Freeman (1993, p.210) describe as "an enormous closet door opening." The public visibility of homosexuality during the Pride march signified resistance to the mandate to conceal homosexuality and, in doing so, contested the exclusionary norms dominating public visibility. Interestingly, it was the mandate to conceal homosexuality that made homosexual visibility interpretable as a form of resistance.

In the context of a history of homosexual oppression, the Pride march event in 1990 raises questions about the conditions that made such resistance possible. This is where Foucault's work offers a clear strategy for analysing the conditions of possibility through which particular discourses and opportunities for resistance emerge. However, he does not deal adequately with the implications of theorizing resistance as the taking up of a subject position by a subject that is also an effect of the same relation of knowledge and power that provides the position from which to resist. This is Butler's concern. In the next chapter I discuss Butler's theory of performativity.

CHAPTER 3: POSSIBILITIES FOR RESISTANCE

Tracing the processes by which individuals become subjects when they assume the identities society makes available, Butler endeavours to theorize the possibilities for subversive reconstruction of those identities. Like Foucault, Butler is cognizant of the formations of knowledge and power that cohere in identity categories. This is illustrated, for example, in her critique of the pervasive social practice of identifying and categorizing individuals in accordance with their sex. On this issue, Butler (1993, p.1) argues:

Sex is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault called a 'regulatory ideal'. In this sense, then, sex not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces ... the bodies it *governs*, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce – demarcate, circulate, differentiate – the bodies it controls... 'sex' is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time.

Furthermore, Foucault's genealogical analysis of the variable constructions of sex and sexuality in different societies and historical contexts provides Butler with the theoretical groundwork for her own formulations of sex, gender and sexuality as unfixed and constructed entities. However, Butler's concern with the discursive construction of the subject pertains to the possibilities that excavating the inherent instability of symbolic systems provide for theorizing resistance.

This chapter begins with a discussion of Butler's notion of performativity and the implications for theorizing resistance. This discussion addresses Butler's concern about taking the subject as a requirement for politics. It also provides an in-depth discussion of the

way in which Derrida's notion of citationality is drawn into her articulation of performativity. This rejoins observations in the previous chapter about Derrida's troubling of conceptual dichotomies and the political potential in doing that.

Discussion of Butler's conceptualization of performativity proceeds to a consideration of her use of parody in drag to illustrate how resistance can be formulated. This provides the groundwork for the next chapter in which a critique of the politics of parody is presented. This critique presents an argument for contextualizing resistance.

CULTURAL POLITICS AND THE PROCESS OF BECOMING

Drawing on Derrida's (1982) concept of *différance* in which meaning is never fully present, Butler argues that the subject constituted in language must be similarly characterized. In this regard, Butler extends Derrida's (1982) notion of a sign-in-process, to the notion of a subject-in-process. Butler (1990/1999) outlines this argument in the first chapter of her book titled 'Gender Trouble' where she comments on de Beauvoir's now famous statement that "[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (de Beauvoir, 1973, p.38).

Butler (1990/1999, p.12) argues that de Beauvoir's description of 'woman' as a term in process figures "a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end". For Butler, this is significant because it implies an identity characterized by a form of doing rather than a type of being. Butler's concern with doing rather than being is a shift away from the idea of definition and fixidity to a concern with fluidity and transition.

In relation to the notion of becoming, Butler raises the question of who is in charge of the ongoing process. In an article entitled 'Variations on sex and gender', Butler (1987) claims that gender is a choice, but this idea is not as straightforward as it seems. For Butler, the notion of choice does not figure the subject as a free agent who stands somewhere outside of discourse and the reach of power and selects a gender. Instead, Butler asserts that:

[T]o choose a gender is to interpret received gender norms in a way that organizes them anew. Less a radical act of creation, gender is a tacit project to renew one's cultural history in one's own terms (p.131).

According to Butler (1987), the discursively constituted subject is always already gendered by the language through which it is brought into being. Figured in terms that are intelligible within a particular culture and historical moment, Butler argues the range of possibilities is delimited from the start. This leads Butler to conclude that gender is "not a prescriptive task we must endeavour to do, but one in which we have been endeavouring all along" (1987, 131). This means that while we perform our gender we do not choose to: gender is always and inevitably occurring because it is impossible to exist as a social agent outside of the terms of gender. In this instance, Butler draws on Foucault's notion of the subject as an *effect* of discourse. The implication is that there is no substantive subject or agent lying behind the discursive act. Butler elaborates on this by making a distinction between performance and performativity. For Butler, performance presumes a subject, whereas performativity contests the very notion of a subject. In Butler's (1991, p.24) words:

Gender is not a performance that a prior subject elects to do, but gender is *performative* in the sense that it constitutes as an effect the very subject it appears to express.

Gender performativity is a strategy, at the level of theory, which opposes the pervasive notion of an essential gender identity. According to Moi (2005, p.55) “[t]o say that one performs one’s gender is to say that gender is an act, and not a thing”. Based on this assumption, an individual’s gestures, tastes, desires and ways of acting in the world are not the expression of the individual’s gender character, but a process through which the self is produced. According to Butler (1990/1999, p. 43-44):

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.

The doing that gender performativity figures is not a doing by a subject who pre-exists the deed. Without a “doer behind the deed”, there can be no prior intention (Butler, 1990/1999, p.33). Indeed, Butler describes gender performativity as a process that occurs “within a highly rigid regulatory frame” (p.33). By this Butler means that gender is not scripted by the subject, but that gender scripts are always already determined within the regulatory frame that constrains the subject’s choice of gender style. Butler termed the regulatory frame to which she refers the “heterosexual matrix”. According to Butler, the heterosexual matrix:

designate[s] that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized . . . a hegemonic discursive/epistemological model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality (p.151).

For Butler, the heterosexual matrix articulates a specific relationship between sex, gender and desire, where gender follows from sex, and desire follows from gender. Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix has resonance in the work of other feminist scholars. It is similar to Rich's (1980, p. 632) notion of "compulsory heterosexuality" and what Wittig (1992, p.28) referred to as "the straight mind".

Butler (1990/1999) argues that the heterosexual matrix operates as a regulating and regulatory mechanism. It produces and categorizes individuals as 'men' and 'women', 'male' and 'female'. On the basis of these identities, the heterosexual matrix then prescribes how individuals should act and it enforces those prescriptions.

Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix has been very influential in the social sciences. A number of authors have drawn on the concept in research that illustrates how young people's normative gender identities are inextricably embedded and produced within hegemonic representations of heterosexuality (e.g. Blaise, 2009; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; Renold & Ringrose, 2008).

Understanding the heterosexual matrix as a regulatory ideal, a "cultural intelligibility" (Butler, 2004, p.48) through which heteronormativity is perpetuated as a timeless and inalterable ideal means that it is akin to the ensembles of power and knowledge described by Foucault. Ingraham draws on Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix and Foucault's observation about the invisibility of the modern (disciplinary) form that power takes, to describe what she calls the heterosexual imaginary. According to Ingraham (1996, p.196) the heterosexual imaginary is:

a way of thinking which conceals the operation of heterosexuality in structuring gender and closes off any critical analysis of heterosexuality as an organizing institution. The effect is that heterosexuality circulates as taken for granted, naturally occurring, and unquestioned.

Butler (1990/1999) argues that the notion of gender essentialism put forward in disciplines such as psychiatry (e.g. Stoller, 1985), has effectively displaced an analysis of the political and discursive roots of gender identity onto the psyche of the individual. By contrast, Butler's notion of gender performativity contributes a radical critique of the idea of interiority, and engages with the ideology underpinning notions of gender normativity. Like Foucault, Butler's articulation of the subject in her notion of performativity raises questions about the possibilities for resistance.

THE PROBLEM WITH TAKING THE SUBJECT AS A REQUIREMENT FOR POLITICS

Benhabib (1994) has taken issue with Butler's notion of performativity. In particular, she questions the political utility of bidding farewell to the notion of a doer behind the deed. According to Benhabib the assumption that we are no more than the sum total of the gendered expressions we perform leaves no room for the possibility of transforming those expressions. The debunking of the concepts selfhood, agency and autonomy essentially forecloses on the possibilities for resistance. In Benhabib's (1994, p.80) words:

If we are no more than the sum of the gendered expressions we perform, is there ever any chance to stop the performance for a while, to pull the curtain down, and only let it rise if one can have a say in the production of the play itself? Isn't this what the struggle over gender is all about?

Essentially, Benhabib is claiming that politics requires a subject. Butler has responded to this criticism. In an essay entitled 'Contingent foundations', Butler (1992b) argues that refusing to assume a subject (that is, not to require a notion of the subject from the start) is not the same as negating the subject altogether. Instead, refusing to assume a subject means being critical about the processes through which the subject is constructed as well as the political meaning and consequences of taking the subject as a requirement for politics. In doing this, Butler is endeavouring to interrogate some of the unexamined constraints in identity politics.

In an earlier publication Butler (1991, p.13) argued that:

identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression.

This observation is grounded in a discussion on the politics of homosexual visibility. In this discussion Butler (1991, p.14) acknowledges that homosexual visibility is a political issue precisely because gay men and lesbian women have, historically, been "threatened by the violence of public erasure". However, Butler argues that, in countering that violence, we should be careful not to reinstall another in its place.

According to Butler (1991), the consolidation of identity (even as a rallying point for liberatory contestation) always necessitates some set of differentiations and exclusions, which inevitably problematize the sufficiency of the visibility of identity as a political strategy. Butler argues that any endeavour to destabilize dominant ideology can only make use of an identity category in a way that is politically progressive if the category is called into question and made to account for what it excludes.

Butler's observation is particularly relevant in the light of the fact that, historically, homosexuality in South Africa has been represented primarily as white, middle-class and male. In the introduction I argued that the privileging of white men under apartheid meant that closeted white homosexual men could enjoy race-based privilege and that this accounted to some degree for the "parties, not politics" attitude of GASA. Consequently, it is particularly important in the in the post-apartheid context to interrogate the subject in gay and lesbian politics in South Africa.

Literature that deals with the issue of exclusion and its implications for the politics of visibility is the focus of the next chapter. However, before proceeding to that discussion it is necessary to consider how Butler incorporates Derrida's notion of citationality in her conceptualization of performativity and the centrality of this aspect of performativity for theorizing the possibility for resistance.

THINKING PERFORMATIVITY THROUGH CITATIONALITY

Salih (2002) argues that Benhabib's insistence on a subjective entity (on a doer behind the deed) in her critique of Butler's notion of performativity indicates that Benhabib has collapsed performativity into performance. This is a common misinterpretation of performativity, and one that Butler (1992a) has dismissed as overly voluntarist.

Repetition is a useful dimension for distinguishing between performativity and performance. According to Butler (1993, p.227), the process of becoming is inaugurated and

structured by an illocutionary force that is accumulated “through repetition and citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices”. Thus, when Butler (1993, p.33) refers to identity as a performative, she is referring to an identity that emerges in and through “a set of *repeated acts*”, which are the “compulsory *recitation*” of a norm or set of norms. Butler elaborates on what it means to repeat or recite an identity by drawing on the concept of *interpellation*.

Interpellation is a term that Althusser (1971, 2000) coined to describe the subordination of the subject through the action of *hailing*. Hailing is the calling of a person to assume a subject position that is designated to them in society by a figure of authority. According to Althusser, one becomes a subject when one recognizes and responds to this hailing.

Butler (1993) argues that interpellation begins at birth. In the case of gender identity, interpellation begins when we are assigned a sex. Butler theorizes how this process unfolds by extending Althusser’s notion of interpellation and by drawing on Austin’s notion of the performative utterance.

Austin (1962) describes performative utterances as words that not only describe things, but which actually constitute or enact that which they describe. Butler (1993) contends that when doctors declare the sex of a child at birth, they are not merely reporting on what they see, but are actually assigning the child’s body with a sex. Thus the declaration “it’s a girl!” is not a statement of fact, but an interpellation that initiates the process of “girling” (Butler, 1993, p.232). It compels the girl to recite behavioural norms consistent with the sex and gender she is assigned in order to qualify for subjecthood within the heterosexual matrix that hails her. Thus Butler, like Foucault, understands that power cannot be escaped

because it is the very means by which the subject is constituted. Nevertheless, Butler is determined to investigate what possibilities remain for theorizing resistance.

Austin's notion of performative utterances is useful to Butler because it serves her argument against the ontological presentations of sex and gender (Hood-Williams & Harrison, 1998). Importantly though, it also helps her to theorize the possibilities for resistance. To do this, Butler expands upon Derrida's critique of Austin's formulation of performative force. Each of these theoretical formulations is discussed below.

Austin (1962) argued that performative utterances could only succeed in enacting that which they name if they remain within the constraints of context and authorial intention. Specifically, to have performative force, Austin argued, the words must: be uttered by a person designated to do so in an appropriate context; adhere to certain conventions; take the intentions of the person uttering the words into account. By outlining the conditions that give performative utterances their force, Austin sought to distinguish between serious, true, and genuine utterances (e.g. a priest standing before a couple at the altar and announcing, 'I now pronounce you man and wife') and citational, parodic, or non-serious utterances (e.g. the same enunciation, 'I now pronounce you man and wife', in the context of a mock wedding involving a homosexual couple in a bar).

In making the distinction between true and citational performatives, Austin acknowledges that there is always the possibility that something could go wrong in the enunciation of utterances that were intended to generate effects (e.g. formalize a marriage), but didn't.

Austin called these performatives unhappy performatives. Austin (1962, p.22) describes an unhappy performative as follows:

A performative utterance will, for example, be in a peculiar way hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy. This applies in a similar manner to any and every utterance – a sea-change in special circumstances. Language in such circumstances is in special ways – intelligibly – used not seriously, but in ways parasitic upon its normal use – ways which fall under the doctrine of the etiolations of language.

Austin's (1962) distinction between successful performative utterances and unhappy performative utterances seems to be straightforward. This is because Austin describes unhappy performatives in theatrical terms – as performance, parody, an insincere copy – which can be contrasted with the sincerity with which successful performatives adhere to convention. However, the distinction is really far more complicated than this, and I shall return to it shortly.

Austin's (1962) distinction between the two types of performative utterances appears to reflect the distinction that Butler (1990/1999) endeavours to draw between gender as a performance and gender performativity. This is because the notion of gender as a performance, like unhappy performatives, invokes a theatrics in which an individual knowingly acts out (recites) a scripted gender role. However, the analogy is trickier to maintain with regard to successful performatives. This is because Butler's theory of performativity departs, in important ways, from Austin's notion of the performative. In order to understand how Butler's theory of performativity departs from Austin's notion of the performative, it is necessary to first consider Derrida's (1972/1992) critique of Austin's notion of the performative (which Butler draws upon).

In an essay entitled 'Signature event context', Derrida (1972/1991) argues that what Austin identifies as a weakness in language – the possibility that words could be spoken out of context and used in ways that the original speakers did not intend them to be used – is in fact a basic feature of all linguistic signs. This is because, Derrida argues, the meaning of a sign is derived through a process of exclusion (of separating it from what it is not) which nevertheless remains present (haunts the sign), because what is excluded gives the sign its meaning (i.e. the absent present). If one meaning always implies that there is another excluded meaning, then meaning can never be fixed. Derrida (1972/1991, p.93) calls this the "essential iterability of [a] sign". Thus, for Derrida, the possibility that words can be used in ways not originally intended is an intrinsic character of language. Iterability suggests that all utterances are citations, the meaning of which cannot be fixed by context, convention or authorial intention, but which is always capable of appropriation, reiteration, and recitation.

Gender performativity, read through Derrida's notion of citationality, makes the notion of a fixed or essential gender identity seem quite tenuous. This is because, in Butler's conceptualization of gender performativity, the idea of a foundational ground is dismissed along with the notion of interiority or essence so that the repeated acts that constitute a gender identity are understood to approximate an ideal that never existed. Butler recognises political utility in this, particularly with regard to the space that it opens up for resistance to dominant gender norms.

Rethinking performativity through citationality, Butler (1990/1999a, p.179) argues that as re-enactments are never fully identical, there are likely to be discontinuities and where these occur they threaten to "reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this

‘ground’”. It is here that Butler (1993, p.15) locates resistance, which she formulates as “a reiterative or rearticulatory practice”, meaning that gender may be re-enacted in ways that undermine the notion of its ‘reality’. In Butler’s (1990/1999, p. xxvi) words, “[t]here is no political position purified of power, and perhaps that impurity is what produces agency as the potential interruption and reversal of regulatory regimes”.

Importantly, Butler is not suggesting that because gender performatives are susceptible to failure, or re-articulation, this necessarily occurs. Indeed, in this regard Butler (1993, p.187) returns to her reading of Foucault to argue that performativity is constrained by a “specific modality of power as discourse” in which certain reiterative chains of discursive production have become norms. Consequently, “[t]he power in discourse to materialize its effects is thus consonant with the power of discourse to circumscribe the domain of intelligibility”. This means that while gender performatives are always prone to disruption and rearticulation, disruption and rearticulation have to be read as such within a context (of historically and culturally specific discourses and norms) and that already circumscribes what is possible or intelligible and what is not.

Like Foucault, Butler (1993, p.15) sees resistance as “immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power”. Arguably, this is because emancipation and liberation are problematic terms. Foucault’s denunciation of the repressive hypothesis illustrated the point that to speak of oppression and liberation assumes that there is a true or essential human nature which can be oppressed and liberated (Moi, 2005). The notion of an essential human nature is untenable for theorists like Foucault and Butler who conceive of the subject as an effect of power and language rather than something that exists prior to it. This

also explains why Butler prefers to think of resistance in terms of the subversion of normative conceptions of the self. Given that power cannot be escaped because it is the very means by which the subject is constituted, she assumes that it must be undermined from within.

Thus Butler is interested in the way in which discourse produces subjects and, in particular, the space that it opens up to theorize destabilisation and the possibilities for the subversion of hegemonic conceptions of the self. In her formulation of performativity, Butler argues that the productive aspect of discourse always happens through a mode of repetition and recitation and she sees this contingency in discursive productions as a space for theorizing destabilisation. However, because this process of production always occurs within the parameters of discursive formulations which precede the subject, and through which the subject is interpolated, subjectification and the construction of agency (and the possibilities for resistance) are both parts of the productive process.

The difference between performance and performativity is that performativity must be understood through the more limited notion of resignification. For Butler, performatives are acts that have the force to bring into being that which they name. Indeed, it is this productive aspect that gives performatives their special force and it derives from the way in which performatives trade with discursive formulations. Performances can emulate performatives but, without their force, they remain mere performances. However, performances can be performatives when they speak with the same force – in other words, when they are productive in the way that performatives are productive.

PARODY AND SUBVERSION

Drawing on the failure of the sign to fix meaning and the assumption that power must be undermined from within; Butler articulates resistance as the subversion of normative conceptions of the self. In 'Gender Trouble', Butler (1990/1999) invokes the male drag artist as a particularly subversive figure. According to Butler, drag is subversive because it exploits the foundations upon which (hetero)normativity centres. Newton (1984, cited in Butler, 1990/1999, p.174) argued that:

[a]t its most complex [drag] is a double inversion that says, "appearance is an illusion". Drag says "my 'outside' appearance is feminine, but my essence 'inside' is masculine." At the same time it symbolizes the opposite inversion; "my appearance 'outside' is masculine but my essence 'inside' is feminine.

In Butler's (1990/1999) argument for the subversiveness of drag, drag performance is presented as a challenge to the conventions upon which masculinity and femininity operate. This is because, contrary to the conventions of heteronormativity, drag performers dress in attire designated for what is assumed to be the 'opposite sex' and their gendered behaviour does not correspond with their sex (male/female) category. The disassociation between sex and gender that drag signifies scrambles the codes upon which heteronormativity operates. Drag also exposes the arbitrariness of these conventions. This is because drag involves femininity being 'put on' by men or masculinity being 'put on' by women, and this strips gender of its naturalness and shows it up as a set of culturally regulated styles, rather than the necessary outcome of biological sex.

Hebdige (1979, p.102) argues that the principle characteristic of culture is:

to masquerade as nature ... to substitute 'normalized' for historical forms, to translate the reality of the world into an image of the world which in turn presents itself as if composed according to the evident laws of the natural order.

By disrupting the conventions of culture through the subversion of dress codes, drag reveals the ideology of naturality and normalcy that culture fashions and creates an ironic distance from it. It unsettles what Althusser (1970, p.96) terms the "false obviousness of everyday practice".

Importantly, the subversion of convention that drag represents is made possible by convention itself, because drag borrows on the stylistic ensembles of gendered dress codes. Eco (1986, p.135) terms the subversive use of codes "semiotic guerrilla warfare". The term describes resistance tactics employed by subordinate groups in countering hegemonic meanings.

Luckhurst (1994, p.333) writes that to queer "is to perform a catachrestic operation on terms that have accrued a sedimentation of connotative range". According to Butler, the hyperbolic gesture is imperative for a politics of subversion, because it signals the failure of discursive conventions to control meaning. Butler (1993) argues that the political value of queering normative conceptions of the self is that it has the potential to weaken the impact of those conceptions, for example, by showing them up as being as contrived as the drag performances that parody them. Importantly, when identity categories are understood to be contrived there is an opportunity to open them up and extend those categories in order to make the subjectivities that cohere in relation to those categories viable.

LOCATING THE BODY-IN-DRAG IN CONTEXT

Subversion, like dissonance, transgression and resistance carries connotations of oppositionality (Kleese, 2007), because it seeks to “dislocate and displace the dominant” (Glick, 2000, p.24). For Butler, parody has subversive potential because its hyperbolic exhibitionism of the ‘natural’ induces a troubling of normative conceptions of the self. Butler’s utilization of drag to illustrate this point is useful because drag is a form of irony that is easy to read.

The visual markers in drag performances are easy to decode because dress is one of the most common forms of bodily practice that distinguishes men from women (Davies, 2003; Entwistle, 2000). In drag, “known signifiers of women: breasts, elaborately coiffured hair, exaggerated make-up and mannerisms” are juxtaposed with masculine signifiers: broad shoulders, height, muscle, and deep voice (Hawkes, 1995, p.267). This juxtapositioning of male and female signifiers accentuates the contradiction upon which drag is defined. However, while drag may be easy to read, whether or not it is politically progressive depends upon the message that it conveys.

In response to Butler’s formulation of parody as a form of identity subversion, Lloyd (1999) argues that it assumes that parody is necessarily read as troubling normative conceptions of the self. However, “[a] particular instance of parody may provoke simultaneous yet contradictory responses being seen as both transgressive and recuperable at the same time” (Lloyd, 1999, p.207). Kleese (2007) argues that in order for a parodic spectacle to transgress in a manner that is politically progressive, it has to engage critically with the

relations of power it invokes. When this is not attended to, it is possible that hegemonic power relations will be reproduced rather than undermined by the spectacle.

There is a need to be cautious of the means by which subversion is made visible and the sorts of crossings that make ironic distances readable as such. Tyler (1991) argues that irony hinges on one term being fixed, that is, on a term that has acquired a sedimented range of connotative meaning against which another is juxtapositioned. Tyler's concern is not so much that irony is crafted in the distance between two terms – without the distance irony would not be possible – but what we make of that difference.

The boundaries between different subject positions are not boundaries between equivalent categories. In the previous chapter, I discussed Foucault's analysis of the historical emergence of homosexuality as a category in relation to which heterosexuality became the norm, which illustrated that identity categories emerge through specific histories and relations of power. This has important implications for parody as a politics of subversion. Figured in terms of an act of crossing boundaries demarcated by identity categories, parody must be understood as being structured in the same relations of power that divide those categories in the first place. In this regard, Kleese (2007) argues that it is important to consider which boundaries are crossed and which identities are opened up for deconstruction and/or appropriation and, I would add, those that are not. In order to do this one must read parody in the context in which it occurs.

Butler (1993, p.118) is cognizant of this; she argues that:

Doubtlessly crucial is the ability to wield the signs of subordinated identity in a public domain that constitutes its own homophobic and racist hegemonies through the erasure or domestication of culturally and politically constituted identities.

However, as Glick (2000) observes, Butler's commitment to discourse as foundational and the body as textual effectively leads to a theory of performativity in which resistance is figured in terms of "textualize[d] transgressive practices" (p.37) that "tend to promote an individualistic concept of agency" (p.40) and resistance. Thus, while Butler acknowledges "the social dimension of signification" (Rothenberg & Valente, 1997, p.298), parody as a form of resistance only works if the "body-in-drag" remains an "abstract, unsituated linguistic structure" (Bordo, 1992, p. 171). Without providing an adequate account of the context in which a text appears, that is, without giving consideration to the conditions of its reception, the assertion that parody mocks and displaces conventional notions of the self is not adequately supported.

Bordo (1992) concedes that the inherent instability of symbolic systems and the creative agency of individuals are important sites for theorizing possibilities for resistance. While contexts are also important, these sites are neither "static nor seamless" and "resistance and transformation are indeed continual". However, Bordo cautions that:

as we rightfully insist on recognition of the creative responses that are open within even the most oppressive regimes, we [should] neither over romanticize the degree of actual cultural disruption and change that these responses represent or allow emphasis on individual choice and creativity to obscure continued patterns of systemic subordination (p.172-173).

In the next chapter I discuss the literature on parody as it pertains to the fashioning of gay and lesbian identities. This discussion is useful both because it highlights the politics of parody for the fashioning of gay and lesbian identities that are relevant to this study, and because it illuminates some of the challenges that confront Butler's articulation of performative resistance.

CHAPTER 4: THE POLITICS OF PARODY

There are two issues which emerge in the scholarship on parody and subversion that are central to this study and which are illustrated in the discussions on parody and drag in this chapter. The first issue is the means through which parodic crossings are made visible and legible as such and the implications for reading irony as politically progressive. In this chapter this issue is illustrated in discussions about female impersonation in gay male drag, sexual inversion theory and its implications for articulating homosexual desire, and in a discussion on the politics of butch-femme and female masculinity.

The second issue pertains to the interpretation of performative resistance as the fashioning of excess in which the intentions of the performing subject are privileged. Davis (1999, p.27) argues that irony is “not merely a static message coded in the text”, but contingent on it being received and interpreted as such. This means that one cannot attribute parodic effects to performing subjects and not take into account who reads it and the conditions of its reception. In this chapter I argue that it is within the context of pervasive patriarchy, heteronormative privilege, and the assumed normalcy of middle-class whiteness that female impersonation, theories of inversion, and butch-femme is read, misread, or not read by audiences who are differently positioned in the relations of power that various crossings invoke.

THE PHALLIC WOMAN

In Butler's (1990/1999) initial formulation of parody as a politics of subversion, she uses the example of a male drag artist who impersonates women. In her account of the subversiveness of the performance, Butler is uncritical of the male drag artist's identification with a female subject position. This oversight is significant because, as Butler is aware, signifiers of identity, while freed from biological anchors, can still express identifications and dis-identifications that are closely associated with relations of power.

In theorizing identity as a performative, Butler (1993, p.227) argues that the illocutionary force, the force that inaugurates and structures one's becoming, is a force that is accumulated "through repetition and citation of a prior, *authoritative* set of practices". The authority that Butler refers to is the symbolic order. The symbolic order is the domain of culture. It is the system of intelligibility, which encompasses language, which we are compelled to enter into in order to claim our subjecthood.

In patriarchal societies, the phallus is the master signifier of power and control within the symbolic order (Fuss, 1989). Cultural interpretations link the phallus with the penis (Cixous & Kuhn, 1981). A good example of this can be found in traditional psychoanalytic theorizing of gender identity development in which the penis is conceptualized as the primary (and fixed) signifier of difference (e.g. Lacan, 1949/2000). Thus, Butler (1990/1999, p. 135) argues, "the phallus, though clearly not identical to the penis, deploys the penis as its naturalized instrument and sign". One implication of defining the subject in relation to the phallus is that the subject is positioned in relation to a primary/fixed source of power.

It is argued that many homosexual cross-dressers are inclined to dress to the extremes of femininity in order to depict highly selective feminine identities which focus on surface aesthetics such as hairstyle, cosmetics and dress, which reproduces a stereotype that conflates femininity with overt sexuality (Hegland & Nelson, 2002; Jacob & Cerny, 2004; Tyler, 1991). In this reading, cross-dressing in drag performs and sustains forms of femininity that have traditionally served patriarchal interests. Mackinnon (1982, p.541) formulates this as follows: “man fucks woman; subject verb object”.

Tyler (1991, p.41) argues that the reproduction of a specifically sexualized feminine identity which reflects persistent hierarchies of desire and desirability, “en-genders differences that supports man’s illusion of wholeness through a fantasy of woman’s lack”. Tyler uses the term “phallic woman” to refer to men who use drag defensively, “to hold femininity and the lack that it signifies at a distance” (p.40). According to Tyler, masquerading as the phallic woman allows the drag artist “to have (the illusion of having) the phallus” (p.40). Tyler argues that this can be read as a defence against the loss of power that the link, in western culture, between femininity and homosexual men signifies. Thus, she argues, it is a defence of masculinity from masculinity.

UN/NATURAL GENDER

In Chapter Two I wrote that homosexuality, understood as sexual inversion, was presented as an inborn reversal of gender traits by early sexologists. By labelling the homosexual an ‘invert’, sexual inversion theory made homosexuality intelligible by interpreting it through

the heterosexual framework in which desire is structured as an attraction to the opposite sex. Thus, a homosexual man who is attracted to another man is attracted to that man as a woman.

However, as Butler (1990/1999) has pointed out, this explanation did not account for the apparently normally or correctly gendered partner. If an effeminate gay man desires a masculine homosexual man for his masculinity, and a butch lesbian woman desires a feminine lesbian woman for her femininity, then the masculine homosexual man and the feminine lesbian woman cannot be inverts. Indeed, this was Freud's (1975) dilemma when he concluded that a conceptual distinction should be drawn according to whether the sexual character of the *object* of desire or that of the *subject* of desire was inverted. In either event, homosexuality was interpreted in heterosexual terms.

The emphasis on sex role reversal in sexual inversion theory resembles what is now more commonly termed *transgender* or *transsexual*, rather than homosexual (Prosser, 1997). Watney (1986) argues that gender identity (inversion) is only one axis of sexual difference, and that sexual difference should also be understood in terms of object choice. Object choice is a framework for sexual difference that accounts more appropriately for the feminine lesbian woman or the masculine homosexual man, because it accounts for sexual difference beyond gender inversion.

In America in the 1970s, there was a growing concern in gay and lesbian politics to align with an explanation for homosexuality that focused on sexual object choice rather than on gender identity (Tyler, 1991). Tyler argues that this was because of the complicity of the

gender identity model with sexual inversion theory, from which gay men and lesbian women were endeavouring to distance themselves. In America in the 1970s, gay and lesbian groups lobbied for equal rights claiming that, despite their object choices, gay men and lesbian women were the same as heterosexual men and women with respect to 'natural' gender identities.

Sedgwick (1989) argues that the imperative, in gay and lesbian politics in America, to articulate homosexuality in terms of object choice has evoked a devaluation of drag because it symbolizes a gender confusion that is out of sync with a gay and lesbian political agenda that has successfully rallied against the pathologization of homosexuality. Homosexuality has not been classified as a mental disorder in the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) since 1973. However, Butler (2004) argues that the diagnosis of other 'disorders' such as Gender Identity Disorder (GID), which some gay men and lesbian women are diagnosed with as children and young adolescents when they exhibit 'abnormal' gender behaviour, constitute the on-going pathologization of non-hetero sexuality. Interestingly, GID also illustrates the ongoing pathologization of gender inversion in particular.

Thus, cross-dressing practices among homosexual men can be read not only as signifying an antiquated and limiting framework for understanding homosexual desire, but also as carrying connotations of a certain type of pathology. This is also true of the South African context. In Chapter Two I wrote that in South Africa during apartheid the South African Defence Force attempted to cure homosexual conscripts, and that this treatment (including

sex reassignment surgery) was done without obtaining consent and had far reaching consequences for the health of the conscripts.

LESBIAN BUTCH-FEMME

Cameron and Kulick (2006, p.6-8) argue that:

The conflation of gender deviance and homosexuality comes about because heterosexuality is in fact an indispensable element in the dominant ideology of gender. This ideology holds that real men axiomatically desire women, and true women want men to desire them. Hence, if you are not heterosexual you cannot be a real man or a true woman; and if you not a real man or a true woman then you cannot be heterosexual. What this means is that sexuality and gender have a 'special relationship', a particular kind of mutual dependence which no analysis of either can overlook.

The implication of non-hetero sexuality for the gender identity of lesbian women is captured in the term 'lesbian gender'. Rubin (1992) coined this term to describe lesbian butch and femme identities. Rubin provides a definition of butch and femme identities that situates them within the broader cultural context of dominant gender norms. According to Rubin (1992, p.467):

Butch and femme are ways of coding identities and behaviours that are both connected to and distinct from standard societal roles for men and women ... 'Femmes' identify as feminine within the larger culture; 'butches' identify primarily as masculine or prefer masculine signals, personal appearance, and styles.

It is argued that lesbian butch and femme identities developed during the emerging visibility of lesbian women in the semi-public space of inner city bars in America in the 1940s and

1950s (e.g. Faderman, 1991; Nestle, 1981; Rubin, 1992). According to Rubin (1992), in the 1940s and 1950s, femme lesbians, apart from the fact that they chose to form intimate emotional and sexual relationships with other women, conformed to the dominant gender norms for women, while butch lesbians conformed to gender norms for men, both in terms of their dress and behaviour, and in terms of their sexual relationships. In the 1940s and 1950s it was fashionable for lesbian women to adopt either a butch or a femme style and couple with an 'opposite' partner (Faderman, 1991; Nestle, 1981; Rubin, 1992).

In South Africa, in the 1940s and 1950s, white lesbian women organized in small cliques that were often organized by profession. Entry to these cliques was by word of mouth as professional lesbian women could not afford to disclose their sexual identities. Nonetheless, the butch and femme styles described above were also characteristic of lesbians in South Africa. According to Gevisser (1994, p.21):

In those days the butch scene was far more entrenched than it is now, and gendered rituals were *de rigueur*: the butches wore slacks, kept their hair short, and were expected to get drunk; the femmes wore dresses, bobbed their hair, and were in great demand.

While butch and femme styles have, historically, been a characteristic of lesbian subcultures, they have also been the subject of feminist critique.

Antifeminist

In the 1970s and 1980s, feminists critiqued lesbian butch and femme styles for imitating patriarchal gender roles (e.g. Abbot & Love, 1972; Stein, 1988). Jeffreys (1989, p.176) argues that some feminists interpreted butch and femme styles to be:

the same as, if not reproduced from, patriarchal norms constructed to oppress women or fems [sic] by giving power to men or butches.

Feminist critique of lesbian butch and femme styles dovetailed with feminist scholarship on women's fashion, which argued that feminine clothing was about creating a representation of femininity for the male gaze (e.g. Bartky, 1990). Consequently, Bruce Pratt (1995) argues that many feminists assumed that lesbian butch and femme styles signified that femme lesbian women had not been liberated and that butch lesbian women were chauvinists who wielded power over their femme partners.

Arguably, like sexual inversion theory, this interpretation overlooked the possibility that lesbian butch and femme styles, like the cross-dressing practices of homosexual men in the molly houses in London in the eighteenth century and in private house parties in South Africa in the 1950s, was simply a means to make homosexual desire visible and interpretable as such. Indeed, this line of argument is taken up by Martin (1992, p.111) who, contrary to the earlier feminist critique, asserts that lesbian butch-femme relationships were part of a strategy for "the both public and private construction of sexual differences, not gender differences between women". Faderman (1991) argues that, because sexual inversion was a prominent framework for understanding homosexuality in the first half of the twentieth century, it gave lesbian women a visual vocabulary (in the form of dress and behavioural codes) that they could use to identify themselves and each other by.

It has also been suggested that lesbian butch-femme relationships did not imitate traditional heterosexual relationships, because in butch-femme relationships power was more fluid. According to Blackman and Perry (1990, p.72), butch lesbians' appropriation of

masculine style put them on display for femme lesbians to view and this was a “reversal of expectation of where the dominant ‘male gaze’ should reside”. Nestle (1981) and Faderman (1991) have also argued that lesbian women adopted different roles at different times and in different spaces. Nestle (1981) argues that, in the 1950s, she changed from a butch to a femme style – achieved through dress – depending on whom she was hoping to date, or depending on which bar or nightclub she intended to visit.

Newton’s (1996) observation that, in the 1940s and 1950s, butch and femme styles were markedly absent of theatricality provides one explanation why butch and femme styles were seen by some – who were perhaps not ‘in the know’ – as a heterosexual imitation. Without *appearing* to engage critically with the hegemonic relations of power they invoked, lesbian butch and femme styles were interpreted to be reproducing rather than undermining gender norms and the heterosexual ideal.

Camp agent

Reading transgression in butch and femme styles is tricky. Butler (1991) has equated butch and femme styles with drag, but not as theatrical performances. Rather, Butler argues that butch and femme styles, as well as drag, are performative in the way that all gender is performative. In the previous chapter I discussed Butler’s argument that all gender is a constant and repetitive imitation of an ideal that does not exist. For Butler (1991, p.21), “*gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original*”, gender is simply the “*effect and consequence of the imitation itself*” (emphasis in the original). Troubling the

original/imitation dichotomy upon which heterosexual versions of masculinity and femininity are privileged, Butler writes:

Reconsider then the homophobic charge that queens and butches and femmes are imitations of the heterosexual ideal. Here "imitation" carries the meaning of "derivative" or "secondary," a copy of an origin which is itself the ground of all copies, *but which is itself a copy of nothing* ... if it were not for the notion of the homosexual *as* copy, there would be no construct of heterosexuality *as* origin (p.22 emphasis added).

Consequently, butch and femme styles, like drag:

are not the putting on of a gender which belongs properly to some or other group, i.e. an act of expropriation or appropriation that assumes that gender is the rightful property of sex, that 'masculine' belongs to 'male' and 'feminine' belongs to 'female'...all gendering is a kind of impersonation (p.21).

Butler's (1990/1999) example of gender parody and subversion in drag evokes a notion of resistance as a performative. In the previous chapter I discussed Butler's view that the reiterative structure of subject formation, which is constitutive of constraining conceptions of the self, also provides the potential for their subversion. Butler locates resistance in citations which exceed the law. That is, in citations in which symbolic norms are turned against themselves which, Butler argues, can result in destabilizing processes of resignification. Butler's use of drag to describe parody and subversion as a form of performative that resists normative conceptions of the self has been read by some scholars to suggest that contemporary butch-femme styles are queer performances that exemplify Butler's notion of performative resistance (Case, 1989; e.g. de Lauretis, 1994). Case (1989, p.298), for example, argues that:

In recuperating the space for seduction, the butch-femme couple can, through their own agency, move through a field of symbols,...playfully inhabiting the

camp space of irony and wit, free from biological determinism, elitist essentialism, and the heterosexist cleavage of sexual difference.

The idea that all butch-femme, like all dressing-up, are performances that have performative force is articulated by Hawkes (1995, p.269), who argues that:

[d]ressing-up as performance allows rereading of all dressing-up as playful...in which the playfulness operates in the game of 'guess the sexuality(ies)'. The readings of the male/masculine/heterosexual, female/butch/lesbian, male/camp/homosexual are not reversed but deliberately scrambled.

The idea that dressing-up is a performance that necessarily has performative force is a popular interpretation of Butler's theorizing of parody and subversion. Probyn (1995, p.75) argues that this "appropriation" of Butlers' conceptualization of performativity suggests that "we can be whatever type of gender we want, and that there are as many genders as there are people, and that we wear our genders as drag." The focus on playfulness and dressing-up in scholarship that draws on Butler's theorizing of parody and subversion can be understood in the context of queer scholarship, where camp and the fashioning of irony have been interpreted as identity play.

Camp, while not a theatre performance, shares with drag elements of "irony, aestheticism, theatricality, and humour" (Babuscio, 2002, p.119). Babuscio argues that "camp emphasises style as a means of self-projection, a conveyor of meaning"; it "signifies performance rather than existence" and shifts the emphasis "from what a thing or person is to what it looks like; from what is being done to how it is being done" (p.122).

While parody is potentially subversive, Kennedy and Davis (1992) argue that butch lesbian women are less inclined to parody masculinity, because of the imbalance of patriarchal power in society. According to the authors:

Gay male camp is based not simply on the incongruous juxtaposition of femininity and maleness, but also on the reordering of particular power relationships inherent in our society's version of masculinity and femininity. The most obvious cause for the minimum development of camp among lesbians was that masculinity was not and still isn't as incongruous as femininity in twentieth-century American culture and therefore not as easily used as a basis for humor [*sic*] (p. 77).

In the conclusion of the previous chapter I drew on Kleese (2007), who argues that, in order for parody to transgress in a manner that is politically progressive, it has to engage critically with the relations of power it invokes, otherwise there is a risk that hegemonic power relations will be reproduced rather than undermined. Therefore, it is necessary to be critical of the means by which subversion is made visible and the sorts of crossings that make ironic distances readable. The boundaries between different subject positions are not boundaries between equivalent categories. In the next section I consider the implications of dominant gender ideologies for women's appropriations of masculinity both in performance and performatively.

Queer/ing masculinity

Whether to recuperate phallic power or signify homosexual desire, gay men have appropriated feminine positions in cross-dressing spectacles with relative ease. This has not been the case for lesbian women's appropriations of masculinity. In this section I discuss the

different implications for lesbian women of dominant gender ideology for masculinity as a performance and performative masculinity.

Writing on female masculinity, Halberstam (1998) makes a distinction between male impersonation (women who put on a serious performance of maleness), drag king performances (performances in which women parody maleness), and drag butch (women who incorporate masculinity into their everyday gender expression). According to Halberstam, male impersonation and drag king performances are both performances. However, male impersonation is intended to be a convincing performance of maleness, whereas drag king performances are intended to make the theatricality of masculinity explicit by performing it parodically. Key to Halberstam's distinction between impersonation and drag performance is the degree of exaggeration that each employs. Impersonation is successful to the degree that it approximates an 'original', that is, in so far as it appears to be real rather than performed. By contrast, exaggeration actually defines drag as such.

According to Halberstam (1997), drag kings find that masculinity is particularly difficult to parody. Halberstam argues that it is the perceived non-theatricality of masculinity that stems from a "relatively stable notion of the realness and naturalness of both the male body and its signifying effects" (p.111) which perpetuates the idea that "masculinity 'just is', that makes it so difficult to parody" (p.112). Halberstam argues that the assumption that masculinity adheres naturally to men implies that it cannot be impersonated and that "men derive enormous power from assuming and confirming the non-performative nature of masculinity" (p. 112).

The relative difficulty of parodying masculinity notwithstanding, Halberstam's (1997) research on drag kings shows that masculinity is not impenetrable. According to Halberstam, drag king performers have made masculinity visible through parodic performances of Elvis and 'gangsta rap' and that the key to the success of these performances is the degree to which they employ theatricality through elaborate dance moves, donning bedazzled suits, oversized jewellery, wigs, and prosthetics.

In contrast to drag kings, that is, in contrast to masculinity as a performance, drag butch is a term that Halberstam (1998, p.232) uses to describe "a masculine woman who wears male attire as part of her *quotidian* gender expression" (emphasis in the original). Thus, while impersonators and drag artists 'put on' gender (a putting on that drag artists endeavour to make visible and impersonators work to conceal), masculinity, for the butch lesbian, is, by contrast, a part of her everyday gender expression. Butch masculinity does not take the form of a theatrical performance. Arguably, the relative seriousness of female masculinity predisposes it to be read as a failed imitation of heteronormative male masculinity (i.e. an unhappy performative). However, Maltz (1998) offers another reading of lesbian butch that positions it, not as a failed imitation, but as the quintessential challenge to male masculinity.

Maltz (1998), like Halberstam, distinguishes between women for whom masculinity is part of their everyday gender expression and those for whom masculinity is only a performance. Maltz's concept of the 'stone butch' is similar to Halberstam's concept of the drag butch. According to Maltz, the traits of stone butch women are "masculine appearance, erotics, and mannerisms that signify a deep investment in masculinity" (p. 275). However, as stone butches achieve this without reliance on surgical or hormonal intervention "they are not

seamlessly similar to a male” (p. 277) in the way that many female to male transsexuals are. Furthermore, while stone butches constantly perform masculinity, they do not valorise manhood. Although they “may enjoy passing unwittingly or momentarily” they would not consider passing as male as a lifestyle (p. 277). Stone butches have an “investment in queer femaleness for reasons such as a political allegiance to women and erotic appeal, while at the same time bearing a fraught relationship to the term 'lesbian' and eschewing the term 'woman'”(p. 277).

Maltz (1998, p. 274-275) positions the stone butch as:

a historical and contemporary...subjectivity which upholds ‘uncompromising’ versions of masculinity; uncompromising, meaning a relationship to masculinity that feels integral to the subject; a masculinity that is unambiguously readable and does not have a ‘womanly’ flipside, and one that has not bottomed to the persistent charge from lesbian feminists over the decades that manliness in a female is a degraded state of colluding with ‘the enemy.’

This description of the stone butch is different to, and can be contrasted with, the butch-femme styles in some work that draws on Butler’s notion of performativity in which masculinity is put on and taken off in dressing-up and erotic gender play (e.g. Case, 1989; de Lauretis, 1994). A “visibility of sexual identity” that, Hennessy (1995, p.31) argues, “is often a matter of commodification”.

Maltz (1998) argues that, while the stone butch has been a historically persistent lesbian identity, it remains outside of mainstream representation. This can be contrasted with the growing visibility and popularity of contemporary drag king performances in the mainstream media and popular culture in America. Maltz argues that contemporary drag king performances are finding acceptance in the mainstream because, as a “non-threatening,

humorous performance of girls dressing up as boys”, they do not present a serious challenge to the dominant belief that masculinity is the exclusive purview of men (p. 284).

Dréd (shortened from Mildred), a popular drag king performer in America whose performances have been the subject of discussion and debate among a number of queer scholars (e.g. Braziel, 2005; Chinn & Franklin, 1998; Pauliny, 2002; Volcano & Halberstam, 2000), describes her performances as “gender bending” (Chinn & Franklin, 1998, p.153).

However, any subversiveness that this might imply dissipates when she adds:

like I'll put my face in drag but then I'll have my shirt open and show the bra ... I like to ... show them myself as a woman ... And I do it because if I don't, a lot of people think I'm a man ... I ... like people to know I'm a woman in drag (p.153).

In the context of pervasive patriarchy, is it unlikely that mainstream audiences would interpret Dréd's performance, in which she exposes her breasts, as particularly troubling. This is because Dréd's bra/breasts do much the same work as the phallic woman's penis. Except that, when gay men perform the phallic woman they return to the ground of the body in order to reclaim the phallus, while Dréd's bra/breasts signify its lack.

For many drag king performers, the performance of masculinity does not continue off-stage.

According to Dréd:

[S]ome of the drag kings are butch out of drag, but not everybody. Mo B. Dick, when she's not in drag, she's not butch. She sometimes wears skirts and make-up and everything ... And then Buster Hymen, she does drag, but she also performs as a woman (Chinn & Franklin, 1998, p.155).

Maltz (1998, p.275) contrasts the “womanly flipside” of many drag king performers, both on and off stage, with the integral masculinity of stone butch women which, she argues, exhibits a qualitatively different relation to masculinity.

According to Maltz (1998), the integral masculinity of stone butch lesbian women has more potential to trouble the idea that masculinity is the privileged gender expression of males than masculinity that is put on and taken off in a performance. Maltz argues that it is the challenge to masculinity that stone butches signify that accounts for their occlusion from mainstream representations. I argue that, in South Africa, it may be because the integral masculinity of a stone butch woman makes the troubling of the exclusivity of masculinity for men legible on her body that there is a special risk attached to her queer visibility. I refer here to the growing incidence of the so called 'corrective' rape of lesbian women in South Africa which, Muholi (2004) argues, is viewed by many as a means to put lesbian women back in their place.

Having presented an argument for the challenge that stone butch lesbians present to conventional notions of masculinity which, Maltz (1998) argues, accounts for their absence from mainstream representations, I shall very briefly consider a critique of how lesbian desire is represented in the mainstream media. This is the topic of the following short section.

A dark matter in representations of lesbian desire

Writing on contemporary cinematic representations of lesbian desire, Martin (1994) argues that racial markers are often used to make lesbian desire more visible. Martin argues that, for lesbian desire to be visible, the lesbian couple needs to strike the same sort of contrast as the heterosexual couple, and this is harder to achieve when the couple is two women. In

these situations, casting a black actor and a white actor as a couple in a lesbian relationship is a strategy that makes their sexual difference more apparent. However, Martin argues that when race is used to make lesbian desire visible, lesbian desire becomes visible at the expense of the visibility of race.

Martin (1994) is particularly interested in the tendency, in cinematic representations of lesbian desire, for white actors to be cast in femme roles and black actors in butch roles. One example is an American television show about lesbian relationships called the L Word, which aired in South Africa. Two interracial lesbian couples were depicted on the show and, in both instances, the butch roles were portrayed by black actors, while the femme roles were portrayed by white actors. Martin argues that, in these instances, race becomes the primary signifier of difference. According to Martin, the “femme’s indifference or lack of difference from heterosexual women is often represented in terms of whiteness”, whereas the “disidentification from assigned gender”, in the butch woman, “is accomplished through darkness... as if blackness were pure difference” (p. 115). Negra (2001, p.17) argues that race is often used in contemporary film to establish “a plane on which to enact crises of difference far less volatile than crises of race and class, in the end working to conceal them”.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discussed two issues which emerge in the scholarship on parody and subversion that are central to this study. The first issue is the means through which parodic crossings are made visible and legible as such and the implications for reading irony as

politically progressive. In the section titled 'The phallic woman,' I discussed a feminist psychoanalytic critique of sexualized representations of women in gay male drag in which the re-inscription of patriarchal gender hierarchies is interpreted as a strategy for gay men to recuperate phallic power. When this strategy is adopted the visibility of male power is achieved through the misrecognition of woman as lack. In the section titled 'Un/natural gender' I discussed the implications of the heteronormative conception of desire as an attraction to the opposite sex for homosexuality. In particular, in the first half of the twentieth century this led to an articulation of the homosexual as an 'invert', which, while providing gay men and lesbian women with a visible code that could be read by others 'in the know', in the second half of the twentieth century, its status as a pathological gender expression made the iconic drag queen a particularly problematic representation of homosexuality for gays and lesbians lobbying for equal rights on the grounds of 'sameness'. In the section titled 'Camp agent' I discussed butch-femme 'aesthetics' and the implications for reading subversion in female masculinity as a performative.

The second issue pertains to the interpretation of performative resistance as the fashioning of excess in which the intentions of the performing subject are privileged. In this chapter I argue that it is within the context of pervasive patriarchy, heteronormative privilege, and the assumed normalcy of middle-class whiteness that female impersonation, theories of inversion, and butch-femme is read, misread, or not read by audiences who are differently positioned in the relations of power that various crossings invoke.

In the previous chapter I argued that in theorizing performativity Butler identifies opportunities for resistance that resonate in practices that have, historically, characterized

homosexual subcultures in the west. Arguably, this accounts for some of the popularity that her work enjoys. Unfortunately, Butler's example of the work of parody in drag performance in her theorizing of the possibilities for resistance reduces the complexity of her conceptualization of performativity. This has led some scholars to interpret performativity as providing an overly voluntaristic account of agency and resistance.

I have read critics' arguments that a more robust account of performative resistance needs to take into account the specificities of the context to imply that performative resistance requires a Foucauldian account of the conditions of possibility underpinning homosexual visibility and its politics. Therefore, in this study, I draw on Butler's notion of performative resistance, but have also chosen to adopt a Foucauldian genealogy in order to take into account the conditions of possibility underpinning homosexual visibility and its politics. In the next chapter I provide details of the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 5: GENEALOGY AS METHOD

This study investigates dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance in events that take place over a period of sixty years, from the 1950s and the inception of apartheid policy, through the socio-political changes in the 1990s to the 21st century post-apartheid context. This is done in order to analyse the politics of homosexual visibility. The study draws on Butler's notion of performative resistance and adopts a Foucauldian genealogy.

The question framing this research is: how does visibility operate in the exercise of power? In relation to this orientating question and the nature of the study a number of sub-questions were identified: Who does drag make visible, and to whom? How are they made visible? What does the performance include and/or exclude, and how is this achieved? What are the conditions that make visibility possible? What are the conditions of reception? Formulating these research questions was an important step in conceptualising the research design. In this chapter the methodological implications of the paradigmatic position and nature of the research inquiry are addressed.

CHOOSING TO DO A GENEALOGY

Genealogy is the term that Foucault gives to his method for studying the nature and development of modern power. A key insight that Foucault takes from his reading of Nietzsche is that knowledge cannot be separated from the procedures of its production.

Therefore, Foucault is not concerned with determining which knowledges are reliable and which are not. Instead, a Foucauldian genealogy “pose[s] the question of which kinds of practices tied to which kinds of external conditions determine the different knowledges in which we ourselves figure” (Tamboukou, 1999, p.202). It traces the historical and cultural practices through which events are produced. This is what Foucault is referring to when he describes genealogy as “writing the history of the present” (1977, p.31).

Genealogy traces the conditions of possibility. In doing so, it aims to generate a counter knowledge. For example, Foucault’s analysis of the genealogy of the homosexual subject, which I discuss in Chapter Two, leads to an understanding of homosexuality as the effect of particular discourses rather than a phenomenon that brought about those discourses. In doing so, Foucault troubles the apparent continuity of a body of knowledge on the origins of homosexuality.

In this study I present an analysis of the genealogy of drag performance in order to elucidate the role of visibility as a mechanism in the exercise of power. The genealogical method is particularly appropriate for this study, because it allows for an analysis not only of a particular cultural practice over time, but of the role of socio-political events at particular points in history and their role in creating gaps for the exploitation of hegemonic conceptions of identity.

Consideration of the role of contextual specificities for the politics of homosexual visibility is an important feature of this study, because a key area of debate with regard to Butler’s theorizing of performative resistance has been the tendency to focus on what Lloyd (1999,

p.210) terms “the historicity of a particular subject’s construction as a gendered being”. This occludes the role of important contextual specificities such as historicity, materiality and the politics of institutional and everyday practices within which performative resistance occurs and is read, misread or remains unread.

In order to better understand the role of contextual specificities for the politics of homosexual visibility in spectacles of dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance, I decided to ground my study in a particular geographic location. This made it possible to attend to the specificities of the practices, history, and materiality of a particular context.

This chapter begins with an overview of the different epochs within which events that are analysed in this study occur. This leads to a discussion of the important characteristics in each epoch and the sources of evidence and methods of data collection that were employed in this study. Consideration is given to key ethical considerations that arise in relation to the type of data that is collected and the manner in which it is collected, analysed and presented. This chapter also provides a discussion of the various strategies for analysis that I draw on in this study. Consideration is given to the implications of working within a poststructuralist paradigm for incorporating strategies for verification.

Epochs within the genealogy

In the introduction I discussed significant historic events and the implications of these events for negotiating homosexual visibility in South Africa. This information is essential for

the current study, which presents a genealogical analysis of the politics of homosexual visibility in spectacles of dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance that span from the apartheid era, through the negotiation of socio-political transition in the 1990s, to the 21st century post-apartheid context. Importantly, each epoch within this study is identified and defined by the specificities of its socio-political climate.

In this study, the first epoch (Epoch One) refers to the apartheid era. It spans from the early days of the apartheid era in the 1950s to its demise in the late 1980s. The second epoch (Epoch Two) spans a decade from the early to the late 1990s, a short but very interesting period of time in South African history that is characterized by rapid social and political transition. The third epoch (Epoch Three) analyses the cultural politics of homosexual visibility in the first decade of the 21st century.

In addition to providing the criteria for delimiting each epoch, the socio-political specificities of each epoch also validate the importance of doing a genealogical analysis in a study exploring the politics of homosexual visibility in such a way as to contextualize Butler's theorizing of performative resistance. In the next section I outline important characteristics of the epochs and the sources of data and methods of data collection.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPOCHS

Figure 2 (on page 111) is a diagrammatic representation of the relationship between important characteristics of the epochs and sources of data and methods of data collection.

The socio-political context of each epoch (discussed in the previous section) provided the background against which my analysis of drag spectacles in each epoch proceeded. However, while this information was an important orientating factor in my analysis, it was not the substance of my analysis. To illustrate this, in Figure 2, the socio-political context is contained in a light blue ring signifying that it is limited to the periphery. The socio-political context worked to delimit each epoch by providing a timeline of significant events that make it possible to distinguish between one epoch and the next.

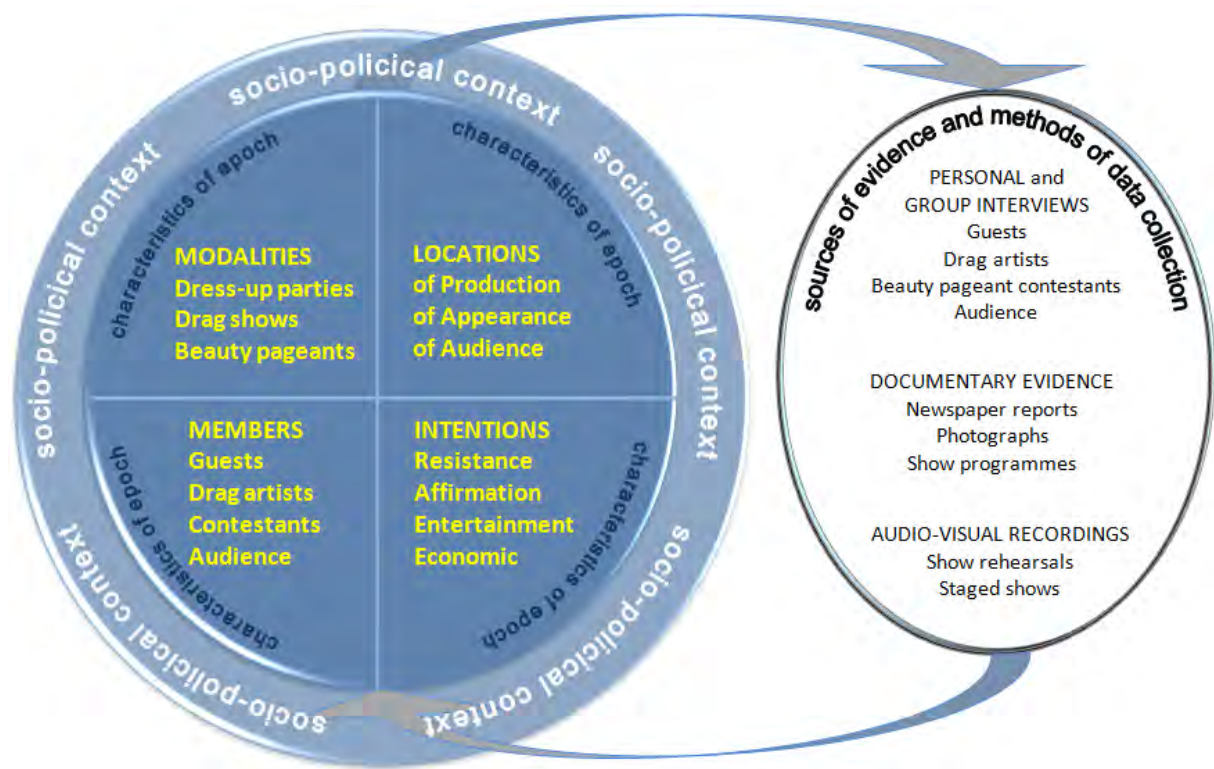


Figure 2: Characteristics of epochs, sources of data and methods of data collection

The important characteristics of the epochs appear in the darker, inner-circle in Figure 2 (above). The characteristics are: modalities, locations, activities, and intentions. Each of the characteristics which I identified will be discussed shortly. Adjacent to the circle containing

details of the important characteristics of the epochs is an oval containing a list of the various sources of evidence and methods of data collection, which are also discussed in this chapter.

Modalities of practice

In this study I analyse the politics of homosexual visibility in spectacles of dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance. The analysis draws on Butler's notion of performative resistance, but takes the form of a Foucauldian genealogy in order to consider the conditions in which resistance is performed and read, misread or not read. The expectation is that materiality, history, and institutional and everyday practices have implications for homosexual visibility and its politics.

In the preceding chapters I discussed the origin of the term 'drag' and traced cross-dressing practices among homosexual men and lesbian butch and femme styles. References to the historical use of dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag are useful, because they highlight a number of interrelated issues that are relevant to my study. The first is that the different forms that cross-dressing takes point to different objectives for engaging in the practice. For example, the objective of drag performance on the nineteenth century English stage was the impersonation of female characters. By contrast, the objective of cross-dressing in the molly houses was the representation of homosexual desire.

Secondly, different forms of cross-dressing can indicate that there are different relations of power at work. For example, drag on the nineteenth century English stage can be seen as symbolic of the power that men have over the representation of women, while cross-dressing in the molly houses exemplifies heterosexual hegemony in the structuring of homosexual desire.

The third observation is that different forms of cross-dressing are related to the politics of public and private visibility. For example, in nineteenth century England drag performances appeared on stage in view of the public, while cross-dressing in the molly houses and private house parties in South Africa remained a private affair. These observations justify the importance of taking into consideration the different forms that cross-dressing takes. In this study these included dressing-up and cross-dressing at private house parties in the apartheid era, staged drag performances in an era of socio-political transition, and contemporary gay and lesbian beauty pageants. Each of these modalities of practice occurred in different kinds of public and private spaces. In the next section I elaborate on the importance of analysing public and private visibility in the South African context.

Locating the spectacles

Locations were an important feature for analysis in each epoch. In the introduction I wrote that the prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid presented a challenge to its visibility because behaviour that was prohibited by the State could not be seen to occur. Consequently, homosexuals could not establish public meeting places that were explicitly

gay locations and behaviour that was explicitly homosexual could not occur in view of the public without risking a term in jail and the personal costs associated with that. Thus, the management of space was a pivotal aspect of the policing of sexuality and, as such, constitutes an important dimension for analysis – not only for the politics of visibility in the apartheid era, but also of the democratization of space in the post-apartheid context.

In this study I draw on Visser's (2008, p.1345) description of space as that which "constitutes and is constituted by social relations", and place as "the locales and locations in which social relations are inscribed". The focus on social relations in these conceptualizations of space and place are useful, because they are consistent with a Foucauldian understanding of space and place as sites where identity and the politics of identity unfold.

The analysis of location proceeded by taking into account the locations where the spectacles were produced, the locations where the spectacles appeared, and the locations where the spectacles were viewed. The decision to focus on these different locations was informed by Rose's (2001) work on visual methodologies.

According to Rose (2001), the site of production is an important location for analysis because it is here that we can learn something about the technologies of production and the relations of power embedded in those technologies. Cross-dressing, for example, can be read as one type of technology of production: a genre – the traditional form of expression through which homosexual desire becomes visible. Moreover, this tradition is historically and culturally located, opening up space to analyse particular relations of power that cohere around this technology of production.

I have commented on the relations of power at play when the visibility of homosexual desire is contingent upon it being structured through the heterosexual dyad as attraction to the opposite sex. However, this is certainly not the limit of such an analysis. It would also be interesting to analyse the ease with which men appropriate the feminine for the purposes of making homosexual desire visible, or how that articulation is complicated when lesbian women dress in men's clothing.

The second location is the site of the appearance of the spectacles. I was interested to identify the different locations where the spectacle appeared, because the politics of visibility make it important to differentiate between spectacles that appeared in public and private spaces, as well as the different kinds of public and private spaces in which they appeared. Different kinds of spaces raise questions about technologies of production and relations of power which cohere in those technologies.

The third location is the site of audiencing. This location deals with the different ways of seeing and the different kinds of knowledges that are brought to bear on the spectacles. Rose (2001) argues that the formal elements of an image – its composition – have an effect on the spectator, but that meaning is contingent on the spectator's interpretation of those elements. Consequently, what cross-dressing spectacles are taken to represent will differ from one audience to the next. Certainly, from the literature it is apparent that while cross-dressing has traditionally been a strategy for homosexual men to make homosexual desire visible, it has been read, within medical and psychiatric discourses as the manifestation of gender inversion and, by the state authorities, as criminal deviance. Importantly, different

types of audiences are present depending on where the spectacle is produced and where it appears.

Member roles

The role of the spectator in attributing meaning to the spectacle and what the spectacle is taken to represent led me to consider, as another important characteristic of each epoch, which people participated in the construction of the spectacles in each of the epochs under study, and the different forms that participation took. A focus on member roles provided an opportunity to explore the implications, for participation, of different technologies of production and different locations of the appearance of the spectacles.

Intentions

The focus on member roles was also expected to shed light on the various intentions informing individuals' decisions to participate in the construction of the spectacles. Importantly, in seeking to explore the various intentions of the participants I did not seek to obtain a better grasp of the 'true' meaning of the spectacles but, rather, to use this as a means to reflect on the conditions informing those intentions. It was expected that the specifics of each context would play a role in shaping the participants motivation for participating in the construction of the spectacles.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

In this study, the decision to investigate the implications of the socio-political context for performative resistance *vis-à-vis* the negotiation of homosexual visibility in spectacles of cross-dressing, dressing-up, and drag performance meant that information relevant to this focus had to be collected. Furthermore, because the inquiry spanned a period of time, from the inception of apartheid policy in the early 1950s to the contemporary post-apartheid context, data relevant to historically important epochs within this time-span had to be included in the study. Grounding the study in a particular geographic location where there was a history of negotiating homosexual visibility through spectacles of cross-dressing, dressing-up, and drag performance provided access to the sort of data that would make this study possible.

The sampling strategy that informed both the decision to locate the study in a particular geographic location and which data should be collected for each epoch within the timeframe of the study, was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling involves the selection of data based on its availability and the willingness of individuals to participate in the research as well as their ability to provide information relevant to the study (Flick, 2002). This method of sampling was appropriate in the light of the fact that the data that were required for this study pertained to a particular set of practices, involving a particular group of people, and which, in many instances, had occurred a long time ago. This meant that all of the information that could be accessed was incorporated in the data corpus.

The decision to ground the study in practices that were geographically located meant that I would be analysing the implications of contextual specificities for homosexual visibility in one particular context. The usefulness of this, from a theoretical perspective, is that it allowed me to trace the specificities of contextual factors and their implications for homosexual visibility. However, an obvious limitation is that I cannot make claims about the generalisability of the findings of this study. For example, one of the arguments that I make in the analysis is that there is a trend, currently, for spectacles of homosexuality to become more private than they have been in the recent past. This argument is based on an analysis of the different forms that the spectacles of homosexuality that were observed in this study have taken over the years. However, when I presented a paper based on this research at an international conference, this observation was questioned. Arguably, this is because contexts are highly variable, as are their implications for homosexual visibility.

The point about research that is informed by poststructuralist theory is that it aims to excavate the nuances and specificities of events. While this has limitations with regard to making claims about the generalisability of research findings, it is possible to argue for the transferability of findings (van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006). This means that the findings of this study can provide a useful framework for observing performative resistance in other contexts. For example, it would be interesting to compare the observations about the contextual implications for homosexual visibility in this study with observations about homosexual visibility in other studies where similar conditions prevail.

Another important limitation of this study is that, in choosing to ground the study in one specific location so as to analyse the implications of contextual specificities for the politics of

homosexual visibility, I was compelled to draw on a personal rather than a formal archive (i.e. individuals' recollections of events that took place in the periods under study). One implication of drawing on a personal archive is that the information is not collected in a systematic or formalized way. This has limitations for the amount of information available and the range of the available data. This is particularly relevant to the data pertaining to the first epoch under study (the early apartheid era). The data collected on this epoch, which is presented in Chapter Six is based on a single focus group discussion. This discussion concerns events such as the Palm Springs party that took place in the 1950s, which at the time were considered criminal. Consequently, participants did not record these events (i.e. photographs) much less submit them to any formal archive. Furthermore, considering the time at which these events took place, there are now very few participants alive to testify to these events. While the limitations of drawing on a personal archive also applied to the data pertaining to the second epoch under study, which deals socio-political changes in the 1990s, these events are more recent and participants personal accounts are supplemented by visual materials and documents. The broadest range of data collected in this study pertains to the last epoch, this is because I could observe the events directly and record them as they occurred. Thus, while a lot of data was collected for this study, it is not evenly distributed across the three epochs.

Despite these limitations, a personal archive provides rich data and insight into the complexities of the context and peoples lived experiences. In this study, drawing on a personal archive to conduct a genealogical analysis of cross-dressing, dressing-up and drag spectacles provided useful observations about the politics of visibility and the exercise of power across important historic periods that would not otherwise have been possible.

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Across all three epochs the personal accounts of individuals were an invaluable source of evidence, but this was especially true for the first epoch. I found that information about cross-dressing spectacles in the apartheid era was limited both because these events took place a long time ago – as far back as the 1950s – and because, in general, these events were not documented. Arguably, this is because it would not have been prudent to document behaviour that was deemed to be criminal. In the absence of documentary evidence such as personal memoirs or photographs, it became important to access the personal recollections of the individuals who witnessed the events.

In the second and third epochs (1990 to 2009), personal recollections were also an important source of evidence. However, rapid socio-political change and the recognition of gay and lesbian rights in these epochs meant that homosexual visibility was no longer prohibited by the state. The importance of the socio-political context for homosexual visibility is evident in the large amount of documentary evidence that emerges in this period. In addition to personal recollections, information about drag spectacles in the latter epochs is augmented with documentary evidence in the form of show programmes, sketches, newspaper clippings and photographs, as well as audio-visual recordings. To this I added my own field notes and written observations.

Drawing on these different sources of evidence necessitated the use of different methods of data collection. Table 1 (on page 121) provides details of the methods of data collection in

each epoch. In the section that follows I provide details of the methods of data collection for each of these sources of evidence.

Methods of data collection in each epoch			
	Interviews	Documentary Evidence	Audio-Visual Recordings
Epoch 1 (1950s-1980s) Apartheid period	• Group Interview with Guests	×	×
Epoch 2 (1990s) Transition period	• Personal Interviews with Drag Performers	• Show Programmes • Newspaper Reports • Photographs • Sketches	• Staged Shows
Epoch 3 (21st century) Later post-apartheid period	• Group Interview with Audience Members • Personal Interviews with Drag Performers and Pageant Contestants	• Show Programmes	• Staged Shows • Show Rehearsals

Table 1: Methods of data collection in each epoch

Photo-elicited personal interviews

Qualitative research interviews are a useful methodology for obtaining participants descriptions of their experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences (Kvale, 1996). In this study I conducted photo-elicited personal interviews with individuals who performed in drag or participated in other cross-dressing spectacles on stage. The interviews focused on the intentions informing participants' decisions to engage in these spectacles. Importantly, this was not done with the aim of reaching an empathetic

understanding of an individual's experiences, but to critically analyse the politics of those experiences and the implications of this for performative resistance.

I used photographs to provoke discussion during the interviews. This strategy is called photo-elicitation. Heisley and Levy (1991) argue that photographs stimulate discussion because participants feel compelled to explain what is going on in the photograph. Photo-elicitation is a strategy that uses the participant's motivation to explain what is going on in a photograph to elicit richer qualitative information concerning events. Open-ended interview questions were designed to tap into aspects of the drag performances and these were presented along with the photographs to the participants during the interview.

The photographs were obtained from documentary evidence that had been made available for the purposes of this study and from stills created from the video recordings of staged shows. The photographs that were obtained from documentary evidence were limited to performances that had occurred in the 1990s, in the era of the Drag Revue. These photographs were useful for structuring interviews with participants who had participated in those shows. These photographs were not exhaustive – not every performance had been photographed, but they did provide a useful prompt to talk about performances that had been staged a long time ago and which I had never seen. Details of costume and other aspects depicted in the photographs also stimulated discussion about the performance.

The photographs created from video recordings of contemporary shows were more exhaustive in the sense that I could ensure that a still was created for each performance, thereby eliminating the risk of accidentally omitting a particular performance from

discussion. Further details of the way in which the photographs that were used for the purposes of these interviews were obtained are discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. Details of the procedure for conducting photo-elicited personal interviews are provided below.

Procedure for conducting photo-elicited personal interviews

An interview location was decided upon in discussion with each participant. Connie was interviewed at Club Heaven one afternoon after a show rehearsal. Olivia, Leila, Sally and Gayboy were interviewed in their own homes. Joel was interviewed in my home one afternoon on his way home from work. The main consideration informing the choice of interview location was that it should offer adequate privacy. An additional concern was that the sound environment should be quiet enough not to interfere with the audio-recording of the interview discussion. All of the interviews were scheduled at a time that suited the participants. The length of the interviews varied, lasting between forty-five minutes and an hour and a half. The interviews were audio-recorded using a small digital voice recorder.

The interviews were semi-structured as an interview guide was used to structure the discussion. A copy of the interview guide is provided in Appendix I (on page 333). The interviews proceeded by showing the participants photographs of their performances. Participants were asked to choose one of the photographs and to talk about that performance. The interview questions were designed to elicit discussion on the intended meaning and representation made in the performance via the appropriation of various personas and the strategies employed to achieve those representations. Participants were

also asked whether they thought their performances were successful (achieved what the performer intended to achieve) and whether they had other ideas about how their performance might have been choreographed to achieve those aims.

The interview questions were intended to provide a space for participants to reflect critically on their performances. Space for critical reflection was also provided by asking participants to compare representations made in one performance with representations in their other performances. These questions constituted the core of the interview discussions. Questions about the participants' decisions to perform in drag brought the interviews to a close.

A brief summary of the profiles of each interview participant is provided in Table 2 (below). In this table the participants' names have been replaced by pseudonyms. The pseudonyms were chosen by the participants. In most cases participants chose their stage names as pseudonyms. The participants' ages are also provided.

Profiles of the interview participants		
Pseudonym	Age	Identifies as
Connie	54	white gay man
Olivia	56	white gay man
Joel	46	white gay man
Leila	21	Indian/coloured gay man
Gayboy	14 [†]	coloured gay man
Sally	43	white lesbian woman
[†] The ethical considerations with regard to interviewing a participant under the age of 18 years are discussed in this chapter in the section titled 'Ethical Considerations'.		

Table 2: Participants in photo-elicited personal interviews

The older men: Connie, Olivia, and Joel, have performed in drag on stage for many years and were a part of the Drag Revue (an annual drag show that took place in the 1990s). The younger men, Leila and Gayboy, were new to the scene when I interviewed them about their participation in the Club Heaven beauty pageants in 2008 and 2009. Sally is the proprietor of Club Heaven and has been participating in the beauty pageants hosted by her club since 2006. Interviewing people who had been dragging for many years as well as those who were new to the scene and who cross-dressed in the gay and lesbian beauty pageants hosted by Club Heaven was a strategy that was intended to make it possible to compare participants intentions and motivations for participating in cross-dressing spectacles at different periods of time.

In addition to the participants' ages, I have also provided details of their racial and sexual identities. The salience of this information pertains to the implications it has for the way in which their narratives can be read. These racial and sexual markers are markers that the participants themselves use. The decision to incorporate these data in the participant profiles is elaborated upon later on in this chapter under the section titled 'Ethical considerations'.

Group interviews

Two group interviews were conducted. The first group interview was conducted with the intention of collecting information about spectacles of cross-dressing in the apartheid era. This group interview was the first interview that was conducted. It took place in the

beginning stages of data collection because it was expected that it would provide important orientating information. Knowing about cross-dressing spectacles in previous decades provided a perspective from which contemporary spectacles could be viewed.

The second group interview was conducted with the intention of collecting information about contemporary spectacles of cross dressing and in order to consider the implications of different sites of viewing for the way in which spectacles are read. This interview was conducted with a group of people who were in the audience at the Club Heaven beauty pageants and the interview was conducted toward the end of the data collection process.

Group interviews are advantageous for a number of reasons. One advantage of group interviews is the participant interaction that takes place. In group interviews participants have the opportunity to respond to, and build upon, each other's statements. The "synergistic effect" in group interviews can lead to a discussion of issues or events that might otherwise not have come to light (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1998, p.509). This advantage of group interviewing meant that group interviews were especially useful in this study for obtaining information about events that had occurred a long time ago.

In the first focus group discussion, individuals who had participated in cross-dressing spectacles many decades previously – in the early years of apartheid – shared their memories with the group. The recollections of one participant sparked the recall of other participants and vice versa. This resulted in wonderfully rich descriptions of an event that had taken place many years ago. This discussion was especially valuable in light of the fact that personal recollections were the only source of data that was available for this epoch.

The last epoch of the genealogy looked at contemporary spectacles of cross-dressing. These spectacles took the form of gay and lesbian beauty pageants in which the participants cross-dressed. The pageants were staged before a paying audience and a group of people who had attended the shows were interviewed in order to explore how they interpreted cross-dressing among the gay and lesbian beauty pageant contestants. In the context of this group interview the 'synergistic effect' provided an excellent opportunity to observe how various interpretations were negotiated by the discussants in the course of the interview. Details of the procedure for each group interview are provided below.

Group interview 1: Talking about homosexuality during apartheid

This group interview took place in the home of Olivia, who invited two other men to participate in the discussion. Olivia had known Vera and Edward for many years, having first made their acquaintance at private house parties. Private house parties were a central feature of the 'gay scene' during apartheid and are discussed in detail in the analysis chapters. Table 3 (below) provides a summary of the salient profiles of the participants in this group discussion.

Participants in a group interview on homosexuality during apartheid		
Pseudonym	Age	Identifies as
Olivia	56	white gay man
Vera	55	white gay man
Edward	76	white gay man

Table 3: Participants in a group interview about homosexuality during apartheid.

A copy of the interview guide for this group discussion appears in Appendix II (on page 334) of this document. In this interview I asked participants to describe an event that they could remember having occurred at about the time they first entered into the 'gay scene'. By way of a prompt I suggested they might describe one of the parties they attended. This question was intended to open discussion and help the participants to feel comfortable about talking about past events. It was also intended to locate the discussion in a particular moment in history. It was important to know what the implications of the context were for homosexual visibility during apartheid.

Participants' descriptions were probed for information about the location, descriptions of the spectacles, information about the people participating in the spectacles (and those who were excluded), as well as the perceived risks associated with participating in the spectacles at that time. These probes were intended to obtain information that was relevant to the important characteristics of each epoch. Questions pertaining to the participants' perceptions of the role of cross-dressing spectacles in the past compared to what it might mean in the present day brought this interview to a close. The discussion took three hours.

Group interview 2: Talking about cross-dressing in contemporary gay and lesbian beauty pageants

A second group interview was conducted with individuals who were a part of the audience during the staging of the Club Heaven gay and lesbian beauty pageants. The Club Heaven beauty pageants were important events for analysis because they provided an opportunity to observe contemporary spectacles of homosexual visibility. At this point in the data

collection process I had already conducted photo-elicited personal interviews with individuals who had participated in the pageants as contestants. The data obtained from those interviews was useful for analysing the politics underwriting the participants' involvement. This was expanded upon by conducting a group interview with members of the audience in order to view the politics of contemporary spectacles of homosexual visibility from another perspective.

Six people who had attended the Club Heaven beauty pageants and were willing to participate in a group interview were contacted. Their contact details were obtained from the proprietor of Club Heaven with the participants' permission. A summary of the profiles of the participants in this discussion appears in Table 4 (below). Although the participants in this discussion were marginally involved in the staging of the pageants, none had more than a passing acquaintance with any of the contestants.

Audience members who participated in a group interview			
Pseudonym	Age	Identifies as	Nature of involvement in the show
Louise	42	straight white woman	pageant judge
Glenda	49	straight white woman	pageant judge
Walt	43	white gay man	member of the theatre board
Yves	63	white gay man	stage-lights operator
Kyle	27	white gay man	stage-lights operator
Hank	44	white gay man	pageant judge

Table 4: Audience members who participated in a group interview

The group interview took place in the basement of a theatre. It was the same theatre where the Drag Revue had been staged in previous decades. The format for this group interview was different to the first group interview because photo-elicitation was used to structure the discussion. The discussants sat around a table upon which photographs of the contestants of a recent Club Heaven gay and lesbian beauty pageant were arranged. Details of the procedure for obtaining the photographs is discussed in detail later on in this chapter in a section titled 'the collection of audio-visual data'. In this interview the photographs were used for the purposes of memory recall and to stimulate discussion about the audience's interpretations of the contestants' performances.

The format for this group interview also departed from the format of the previous group interview because I chose not to pose the interview questions directly to the participants. Instead, each question was typed up on a separate piece of paper and these were distributed among the group. Participants were then asked to pose each of their questions to the group for discussion. This strategy had the effect of making the participants partly responsible for the management of the discussion, freeing me up to observe what was happening in the conversation and take notes. A copy of the interview schedule appears in Appendix III (on page 335) of this document.

Both group interviews were audio recorded using a small digital voice recorder. In addition to the voice recorder a video camera was used to make a visual recording of the interviews. The interviews were filmed because they needed to be transcribed and group interviews can be difficult to transcribe when the voices of different speakers cannot be differentiated. Video recording the interviews made it possible to keep track of the speakers in the group

discussions. The transcription conventions that were used in the transcription of both personal and group interviews are provided in Appendix XIII (on page 345).

Documentary evidence of the Drag Revue shows

Documentary evidence took the form of photographs, show programmes, newspaper articles, and sketches. This documentary evidence was provided by Olivia. The documentary evidence came from her personal collection of show memorabilia. The collection constituted an extensive documentation of the Drag Revue shows. The Drag Revue shows are discussed in detail in the analysis chapters. First staged in 1995, and produced annually until 2001, the Drag Revue shows were an important era for analysis because homosexuality became visible in the Drag Revue in a way that it had never been before. The Drag Revue shows were staged in a commercial theatre and were open to the paying public. Importantly, for this study, this visibility emerged at a time of rapid socio-political change. Therefore, these documents provided evidence for a significant epoch in the genealogical analysis. A summary table of the documentary evidence obtained for the Drag Revue shows appears in Table 5 (on page 132).

Documentary evidence of the Drag Revue Shows		
Quantity	Type	Description
30	Photographs	Still photographs of Drag Revue performances. The photographs are not labelled. I cross-referenced the photographs with performances listed in the Drag Revue show programmes. Further details of the performances were obtained during a personal interview with Olivia Neutron Bomb.
6	Show Programmes	The show programmes are for Drag Revue shows staged in 1995; 1996; 1997; 1998; 1999 and 2001. The show programmes provide details of the performances, the drag artists, and the production of the shows.
23	Newspaper Articles	The newspaper articles were published in local and provincial newspapers. Only three newspaper articles appeared without an accompanying photograph. The articles promote the Drag Revue shows by advertising details of the dates, times, and venue of the Drag Revue shows.
3	Sketches	The sketches are for a costume design. The costume appears in a photograph of a performance in one of the Drag Revue shows.

Table 5: List of documentary evidence of the Drag Revue shows

The documentary evidence was obtained at the end of the first group interview, which was conducted at Olivia's home. It was agreed that Olivia's memorabilia would be returned to him at a date that had been set aside for a personal photo-elicited interview. Each document was scanned using a high resolution colour scanner and stored digitally. Transforming the documentary evidence into digital format meant that the visual data could be manipulated in order to protect anonymity (e.g. blurring a face in a photograph) and that this data could be stored and analysed using software developed for the management of digital data. Details about the ethical imperative to protect participant's identities are provided in the section on 'ethical consideration'. Details of the software used to manage the analysis of digital data are provided in the section on data management under the title 'reliability'.

Audiovisual recordings

Olivia lent me three VHS cassettes on which audio-visual clips of Drag Revue shows were recorded. The audio-visual data were valuable because it provided a different modality for obtaining information about the drag spectacles, which could be used both to augment information obtained from the interviews and to guide discussion in the photo-elicited personal interviews. Importantly though, the audio-visual data provided me with an opportunity to make my own observations about the performances without relying on participants recollections. This included making observations about the appropriation of non-linguistic signs (facial expressions, gestures, costume, and music) in the construction of the spectacles.

Although access to audio-visual data provided a wider variety of information for analysis it also had its limitations. The VHS cassettes were old enough that their sound and picture quality were compromised. In addition, the editing was very rough. For example, a recording of a show began after the show being recorded had started. Shows were recorded over each other making it difficult to keep track of which Drag Revue show was being viewed and, in one instance, a television show had been accidentally recorded over part of a show.

However, even if the shows had been filmed by a professional and were well preserved, they would still only provide a very limited view of the Drag Revue shows. This is because the videos would still only show the staged performances and not their processes of production. The camera would still have been positioned on the side of the audience, omitting from view the events backstage. And, the camera lens would still have been

focused on-stage, with the audience largely out of sight. Therefore, an important benefit that was derived from the poor quality of the video recordings was that they made the limitations of the technology more apparent than it might have otherwise been.

It is important to be aware of the limitations of this technology because, Barthes (1977) argues, photographic images are often, and mistakenly, taken to be more truthful representations than those obtained in written or verbal texts. This is because, although we know that a performance and the (re)presentation of the performance in a photograph or video are not one and the same thing, the degree of transformation appears to be minimal. The (re)presentation of the performance in a photograph or amateur video still looks something like the actual performance whereas the transformation that takes place in a written or verbal account is very different because the words look and sound nothing like the thing they describe.

According to Barthes (1977), the illusion that photographic images are a direct representation of reality quickly dissipates when consideration is given to the processes through which they are produced and the perspectives that an audience brings to their reading. Thus, one should not dismiss the importance of what is included or excluded from the frame, which photographs and/or videos were kept and which were discarded, which were provided to me and which were not, the nature of their composition – the aesthetic, cultural, or ideological norms informing their production, for whom the images are produced, how they are interpreted and what connections to other texts might be made in doing so. In addition to the audio-visual data that was provided to me for the purposes of

this study, I created my own audio-visual data. Details of this are provided in the next section.

Producing audio-visual data

Cognizant of the limitations of the audio-visual data but also excited about its potential, I decided to expand the corpus of audio-visual data by producing my own. One advantage of collecting data of contemporary spectacles of cross-dressing is that I had access to the spectacles as they occurred and could consequently make my own recordings.

I produced audio-visual data by recording the Club Heaven gay and lesbian beauty pageants. Drag performances, which are referred to by the participants in these shows as *cabaret*, formed a part of the entertainment in each pageant. However, the main focus of these shows was the beauty pageant competitions in which contestants cross-dress. 'Female' contestants (lesbian women) dress in traditionally male attire such as evening suits, while 'male' contestants (gay men) dress in traditionally female attire that include glamorous evening gowns.

The Club Heaven gay and lesbian pageants were rehearsed and these rehearsals were also recorded in order to observe the processes through which the spectacles were produced. The collection of audio-visual data from show rehearsals and the final show performances were collected during the production of the beauty pageants in 2008 and 2009. In total, twenty-four (24) show rehearsals were recorded – thirteen (13) in 2008 and eleven (11) in 2009, and four staged shows were recorded – two each in 2008 and 2009.

Procedure for collecting audiovisual recordings of shows and show rehearsals

Video recordings of show rehearsals and the final show performances were made using a small digital video camera. In the beginning, during the first few show rehearsals, data were collected as unobtrusively as possible. During these rehearsals the video camera was placed in a fixed position some distance away from the activities of the performers.

One shortcoming of having the camera in a fixed position is that the activities and talk occurring off-space, outside of the frame, could not be captured. However, over time the performers became accustomed to being filmed and it was then possible to move the camera and be more selective about what was being filmed, or to place the camera on a tripod in full view of the performers. Heisley and Levy (1991) have argued that audio-visual documentation becomes less intrusive over time as participants become more accustomed to being filmed. However, an important limitation that remained was my own hand in selecting what to focus the camera on and deciding what to film and what not to film.

The collection of audio visual data during the show rehearsals was a time consuming exercise. Many hours of audio-visual data were captured during this time and catalogued along with my own notes and observations. There was very little structure to the collection of these data. It involved setting up the video camera in a position from which most of the activities during rehearsal could be recorded, and sometimes zooming in or out or shifting the position of the camera to get a better view.

Every rehearsal was recorded in its entirety. This data provided a backdrop to the more polished performances staged in front of paying audiences, but it was also an opportunity to record the participants' unsolicited, impromptu and naturally occurring talk on a range of issues that were central to this research. As it was not possible to determine in advance when phenomena relevant to the study would occur, there was little point in structuring these observations. A summary of the profiles of the participants who consented to being filmed during the show rehearsals is provided in Table 6 (below).

Participants filmed during show rehearsals		
Pseudonym	Age	Identifies as
Gayboy	14 [†]	coloured gay man
Leila	21	Indian/coloured gay man
Sally	43	white lesbian woman
Alice	32	straight white woman
Connie	54	white gay man
Olivia	56	white gay man
Joel	46	white gay man
Anthony	58	white gay man
[†] Ethical considerations relating to the participation of an individual under the age of 18 years is discussed in detail in the section titled 'Ethical considerations' in this chapter.		

Table 6: Participants filmed during show rehearsals

During the final staged performances, the video camera was set up at the back of the theatre. The video camera was set up in this position because it was important to have a view of the stage that would not be obstructed during the show and in order to connect to a nearby power source. Locating the camera in this way meant that it was not possible to record most of the activities occurring backstage and behind the scenes. However, before

the start of each show brief recordings of some of the activities of the performers and contestants were recorded backstage.

Most of the video footage recorded backstage is of costume changes and talk about the application of make-up and wigs. Although interspersed with this are some rather valuable comments on the participants' views on cross-dressing. These comments were transcribed and analysed along with the other (audio-visual) texts. Profiles of the 2008 Club Heaven beauty pageant contestants appear in Table 7 (on page 139) and the profiles of the 2009 Club Heaven beauty pageant contestants appear in Table 8 (on page 140). The audio-visual recordings were produced for the purposes of collecting information about contemporary spectacles of homosexuality.

Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant (3 rd May 2008)				
Pseudonym	Age	Identifies as	Competing in the category	
Karen	30	straight white woman	Ms Femme	
Tracey	22	white lesbian woman	Ms Butch	
Olivia	56	white gay man	Miss Heaven	Only contestants in “Ms Heaven” category competed for the pageant title.
Jasmine	34	white gay man	Miss Heaven	
Violet	23	white gay man	Miss Heaven	
Clare	32	white gay man	Miss Heaven	
Carla [⌘]	27	white gay man	Mr Butch	
Total number of contestants: 7				
[⌘] Carla entered the first beauty pageant (Miss & Mr Heaven) as the only contestant in the male butch category in which he was required to wear traditionally male attire. He entered the second pageant, Miss & Mr Gay Sunshine Coast, in the Miss Sunshine Coast category in which participants were required to wear traditionally female attire. His pseudonym is the stage name he used while participating in the second pageant.				

Miss & Mr Gay Sunshine Coast beauty pageant (4 th October 2008)				
Pseudonym	Age	Identifies as	Competing in the category	
Leo	20	white lesbian woman	Ms Butch	
Erin	25	white lesbian woman	Ms Butch	
Jamie	22	white lesbian woman	Ms Butch	
John	21	white lesbian woman	Ms Butch	
Giselle	24	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	Only contestants in the “Miss Sunshine Coast” category competed for the pageant title.
Nikki	33	coloured gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Leila	21	Indian/coloured gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Carla [⌘]	27	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Cecelia	33	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Roxy	23	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Kiara	31	coloured gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Celeste	37	coloured gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Clare	35	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Violet	28	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast	
Total number of beauty pageant contestants: 14				

Table 7: Contestants in the 2008 Club Heaven beauty pageants

Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant (18 th May 2009)				
Pseudonym	Age	Identifies as	Competing in the category	
Linda	22	black lesbian woman	Ms Butch	
Zinhle	20	black lesbian woman	Ms Butch	
Leo	21	white lesbian woman	Ms Butch	
Ginger	21	black gay man	Miss Heaven	Only contestants in the “Miss Heaven” category competed for the pageant title.
Giselle	25	white gay man	Miss Heaven	
Leila	22	Indian/coloured gay man	Miss Heaven	
Acacia	25	black gay man	Miss Heaven	
Nikki	33	coloured gay man	Miss Heaven	
Mitch	21	white gay man	Mr Butch	
Xavier	28	black gay man	Mr Butch	
Total number of beauty pageant contestants: 10				

Miss Gay Sunshine Coast beauty pageant (27th October 2009)			
Pseudonym	Age	Identifies as	Competing in the category[‡]
Ginger	22	black gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast
Leila	22	Indian/coloured gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast
Shanda	21	black gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast
Cecelia	33	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast
Olivia	57	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast
Anna	36	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast
Cookie	25	white gay man	Miss Sunshine Coast
Total number of beauty pageant contestants: 7			
[‡] In 2009 ‘Miss Sunshine Coast’ was the only category for constants to enter under.			

Table 8: Contestants in the 2009 Club Heaven beauty pageants

Filming a meeting between Club Heaven and a gay and lesbian organization

In August 2008 the proprietor of Club Heaven informed me of a meeting that was to take place with a local, and predominantly black, gay and lesbian organization. The meeting had been scheduled with a view to identifying common issues and the possibilities for collaboration. The proprietor invited me to film the meeting. Although I did not know precisely what benefit would be derived from observing this event, I attended the meeting and filmed the proceedings. The data obtained from filming this event proved to be useful because it allowed me to make observations about contemporary socio-political issues and their implications, from the participants' perspectives, for homosexual visibility in the post-apartheid context. Neither the proprietor of Club Heaven nor the members of the gay and lesbian organization requested a copy of the recording of the meeting. However, a year later, the gay and lesbian organization contacted me with a request to record another event.

Filming a black lesbian forum workshop

In February 2009 I received a request from a member of the same gay and lesbian organization that had met with the management of Club Heaven in 2008, to film a workshop that they had organized with the help of a Non Governmental Organization (NGO). The workshop was intended to bring lesbian groups from around the province together to identify and discuss pertinent issues facing black lesbian women in this part of the country. The data obtained from this meeting were particularly useful because it afforded me access to an event from which I might otherwise have been excluded. This is because the workshop

was conducted with the explicit purpose of discussing black lesbian women's issues. This information also provided insight into contemporary socio-political issues and their implications for lesbian visibility. A copy of the recording was provided to the organization and I obtained permission to retain a copy for the purposes of this study.

The importance of collecting different types of data

Genealogy, for Foucault (1984a, p.76), "depends on a vast accumulation of source material". Although Foucault spent a lot of time in library archives, he drew on a wide variety of source material. This included works of art, political rallies, and even his own experiences in the bathes of San Francisco (Tamboukou, 1999). The endeavour to engage a wide range of source material stems from a commitment to counter "established regimes of thought" (Foucault, 1980, p.81), which is the aim of genealogy.

This study involved collecting data from personal accounts, group discussions, documentary evidence in the form of newspaper clippings, photographs, and sketches, and various audio-visual recordings. This data were collected with a view to analysing the contextual implications for resistance. Therefore, interview data were not collected with a view to analysing the participants' unique, subjective realms of experience. Instead, the interviews were seen as texts in which participants' experiences of negotiating visibility were constructed and enacted through particular discursive frameworks.

In Chapter Two I drew on the work of Derrida and Foucault to argue that discourses are tools that can be used strategically to make human action intelligible and meaningful, but also to discount particular kinds of action. Thus, an important assumption underlying my approach to the analysis of the interview data was that, by identifying fragments of discourse in the participants talk, I could analyse how particular discursive regimes work to police homosexual visibility. Interviewing participants of different ages, and asking them to talk about negotiating homosexual visibility at different, historically significant periods of time, made it possible to track discursive strategies over time and under particular conditions.

Documentary evidence in the form of newspaper clippings were approached in much the same way as the interview data. Newspapers are important cultural artefacts because they play a crucial role in constructing, circulating, and reflecting representations that have a particular currency in the socio-cultural context (Bignell, 1997). Thus, the modes of representation at work in the newspaper texts provided additional material for analysing the politics of homosexual visibility.

Language, in its written and spoken form, is an important feature of our cultural milieu, but there are aspects of culture that are intrinsically visual (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005). In drag performance, and other forms of visual culture, meaning is constructed through an array of non-linguistic signs, which can also be 'read'. However, rather than attending to words, visual discourse is 'read' by attending to the composition of specific non-linguistic signs. In drag performance this can include choice of costume, bodily gestures, facial expressions, stage props and music.

Cognizant of Barthes (1977) critique of the assumed innocence of visual language I did not approach the visual data as a direct or reliable form of evidence. Instead, I viewed it as just another feature of the social milieu and another (textual) mode for investigating the politics of homosexual visibility. What this mode added to the analysis was that it enabled me to observe how visual language could be appropriated in the negotiation of homosexual visibility. It also allowed me to make some observations about the way in which the audiences read the spectacles *vis-a-vis* responses such as laughter or applause.

Finally, with regard to the production of audio-visual data in this study, Atkinson and Delamont (2005) argue that video recording the activities and interactions of individuals allows for the complexity of particular events to be subjected to detailed and repeated observation. This was indeed a useful feature of the audio-visual data collected in this study.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section provides an overview of the salient ethical considerations pertaining to the way in which information was accessed, stored, analysed, and presented in this study. This includes a discussion of common ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality, as well as poststructuralist concerns with the interpretation of data.

Informed consent

At the start of this chapter I wrote that it was my acquaintance with individuals who participated in the tradition of making homosexuality visible through practices of cross-dressing, dressing-up and drag performance that made this study possible. However, prior to the commencement of this research I had never talked about my work. Consequently, the first step was to make my identity as researcher explicit. The first part of this process was a meeting with the proprietor of Club Heaven.

The meeting with the proprietor of Club Heaven took place at the start of 2008, some months before the first 2008 Club Heaven beauty pageant. At this meeting I explained that I was a researcher and that I was interested in doing research about the Club Heaven beauty pageants. I gave a brief description of my research interests, and the nature of my inquiry. The proprietor undertook (verbal consent) to allow me to conduct the research. However, this consent had to be formalized. Furthermore, as the pageants involved many other participants, I needed to obtain their consent too. The proprietor of Club Heaven invited me to a rehearsal that had been scheduled later that week with a view to talking to the other individuals about my research and obtaining formal consent.

Obtaining consent to film show rehearsals and stage performances

Before seeking consent from the individuals involved in the Club Heaven beauty pageants to film the show rehearsals I met with them to tell them about the research and what their participation in the study would entail. Details of the way in which participants' identities

would be protected were also provided. This information was provided verbally and in writing. A copy of the written information, which was provided in a covering letter, appears in Appendix IV (on page 336).

In both the verbal and written explanations of participation in this study I was careful to point out that participation was entirely voluntary. The individuals who consented to be filmed during the rehearsals signed a Consent Form, a copy of this form is provided in Appendix V (on page 337), as well as a Permission and Release Form, a copy of this form is provided in Appendix VI (on page 338). The purpose of the Permission and Release form is that it provides written evidence of the participants consent for me to retain ownership of the information gathered during this stage of the data collection process. One individual declined to participate in the audio-visual recordings of the show rehearsals. As it was not feasible to remove all the instances in which this individual appeared in the audio-visual recordings of the show rehearsals, I undertook not to include any of this individual's contributions in the analysis.

The individuals who attended the show rehearsals did not enter the Club Heaven beauty pageants as contestants. Their role was to provide some of the evening's entertainment, by performing in drag. However, the drag performances, or 'cabaret' as the participants referred to it, was not the main focus of the Club Heaven beauty pageants. Nevertheless, a lot of time was spent on rehearsing these performances. This afforded many opportunities to make contact with the performers and gather data. The pageant contestants, on the other hand, did not attend the show rehearsals. Their participation was limited to the night on which the pageant was staged.

I did not obtain written consent from the beauty pageant contestants to film them on the night on which the pageant was staged. This was partly due to the fact that, by entering the pageant as contestants, they had already consented to making their performances public. In addition to this, their participation in the beauty pageants consisted of fairly brief appearances on stage during which time they introduced themselves to the emcee and took questions from the judges.

Compared with other forms of participation, such as interviews or the filming of show rehearsals, the beauty pageant contestants' participation was brief, and there was little risk that information that was sensitive enough to warrant written consent would come to light. This is particularly true in light of the fact that the reproduction of all visual data has been managed in such a way as to make the visual identification of participants highly unlikely. Amdur (cited in Wassenaar, 2006) argues that signed consent is not necessary if the risks of harm are very low. This was certainly the case with regards to the Club Heaven beauty pageant contestants.

Consent was obtained from the proprietor of Club Heaven, who was also the producer of the Club Heaven beauty pageants to record the shows and to use this data for the purposes of this study. The proprietor consented with the provision that I provide a digital copy of the audio-visual recordings of each beauty pageant show for her to utilize for her own purposes. A copy of the release form is provided in Appendix VII (on page 339).

Participant consent for the collection of interview data

Photo-elicited personal interviews were conducted with individuals who were involved in the Club Heaven beauty pageants and individuals who had been involved in the Drag Revue shows in the 1990s. As this data collection processes involved the collection and/or use of visual data in addition to the collection of information from the participants' personal accounts, it was important to discuss how this information would be reproduced in my research. Thus, in addition to the information about the study and what was required in terms of participation in photo-elicited personal interviews, participants were also given details of the protocols in place for the protection of their identities and what this entailed in terms of the reproduction and use of these data. A copy of the Permission and Release Form is provided in Appendix XII (on page 344).

One of the participants in this study was fourteen years old at the time of data collection. Under South African law the age of majority is eighteen years of age. However, there are inconsistencies across different pieces of legislation. Under The Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act (92 of 1996), for example, majority status is awarded to "women of any age", and The Children's Act (38 of 2005) allows young people over the age of twelve years to consent to their own medical treatment, including surgical operations. Nonetheless, ethics committees tend, for legal reasons, to favour a more conservative approach to the age of consent for young people to consent to participate in research, setting the bar at eighteen years of age. I therefore obtained written consent from both the participant and the participant's parents.

The ethical considerations relevant to the participants in group interviews were drafted in Covering Letters and provided to the participants prior to the commencement of the group interviews. A copy of the Covering Letter provided to the group who were interviewed about homosexuality during apartheid is provided in Appendix VII (on page 341) and a copy of Covering Letter provided to the audience members who participated in the group interview is provided in Appendix IX (on page 342).

Confidentiality

All of the participants in this study are identified by a pseudonym rather than their real name and this is done in order to protect their true identities. Participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms. It was explained to participants that if they did not choose their own pseudonym one would be assigned to them. Most participants chose to use their stage names. In addition to replacing participants' real names with pseudonyms other information that would potentially identify individual participants has also been changed or omitted. This includes, for example, place names or personal peculiarities, which, if disclosed, would identify certain participants.

In addition to replacing participant's real names with pseudonyms and changing other identifying information in the text, some of the visual data that appears in this document also had to be modified. It is important to note that not all visual data needed to be modified. Men in drag wear wigs and heavy make-up, which provides sufficient disguise of their real identities. The poor quality of some of the visual data also meant that special

manipulation was not always required. Visual data that has been included in this document and which has been modified to disguise the identities of the participants is listed in Table 9 (below), along with details of the nature of the modifications.

Modifications to visual data for the protection of identity		
Document	Page	Nature of changes
Figure 4	201	The original name of show has been changed to “Drag Revue”, which is the name that is given to the show in this research.
Figure 5	207	Erased the original name of the show in article text. Faces not smudged because already sufficiently disguised.
Figure 7	228	Performers’ original names replaced with pseudonyms.
Photograph 2	229	The women’s faces have been smudged. Olivia’s face is sufficiently disguised.
Figure 9	253	The original name of show has been changed to “Club Heaven”, which is the name that is given to the show in this research.
Photograph 5	254	Contestants’ faces smudged.
Photograph 7	260	Contestants’ faces smudged.
Photograph 9	282	Emcee and contestant’s faces smudged.
Photograph 10	294	Contestant’s face smudged.

Table 9: Modifications to visual data for the protection of identity

While the participants’ names have been changed to protect their identities, information about their gender and sexual orientation are provided in the summary tables in this chapter. This information is included because it cannot be used to identify participants individually. It also allows the reader to make observations about the changing profile of the individuals negotiating homosexual visibility through spectacles of cross-dressing, dressing-up, and drag.

On the use of race categories in this study, it should be noted that it is a trend in research in South Africa to profile research participants in this way. 'Black', 'white', 'coloured' and 'Indian' are population group categories instituted in the past for the purposes of instigating and maintaining segregation along racial lines. However, these population group categories are still in use today and the saliency of racial identity in South Africa means that most of the population ascribe to these race categories unproblematically.

Furthermore, against the backdrop of the socio-historical significance of the concept of 'race' in South Africa the racial profiles of the participants are salient because constructions of race and racial identity are a significant aspect of the spectacles of homosexuality discussed in this study. Nevertheless, I am aware that the continued use of such descriptors has the effect of reinforcing the perception that these categories actually exist. Therefore, in the analysis chapters, where constructions of race and racial identity are explored, 'race' is inserted in inverted commas to indicate that it is a construct that does not exist independently of the way in which it is observed. Gender and sexual orientation is similarly approached.

In Table 7 (on page 139) and Table 8 (on page 140) the category in which the Club Heaven beauty pageant contestants competed in is also noted. The categories "Ms Femme", "Ms Butch", and "Miss Heaven" were decided on by the proprietor of Club Heaven who is the producer of the beauty pageants. This information is reported on because it evidences the negotiation of gender and sexual orientation constructs. For example, in the first Club Heaven pageant in 2008, both male and female contestants were invited to compete in the "Femme" and "Butch" categories. However, male and female contestants did not compete

in the same “femme” and “butch” categories. There were two “femme” categories, one each for male and female contestants, and two “butch” categories, one each for male and female contestants. Arguably, this evidences an endeavour to reinstate traditional gender categories, against which cross-dressing can be interpreted as such. The negotiation of gender and sexual identities is dealt with in detail in the analysis chapters.

In the tables summarizing the participant’s profiles I have used the terms ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’ and ‘straight’ to describe the participants sexual identities. My observation is that these terms are commonly (and unproblematically) used by the individuals who participated in this study to describe their own and others sexual identities. The use of these terms in the summary tables is intended to reflect this.

In the analysis chapters I use the terms gay and homosexual interchangeably. I am aware of the differences that these identity categories imply. Nevertheless, there are instances in the text when using the more formal term ‘homosexual’ or less formal term ‘gay’ provides a better reading. At times it has also been expedient to use the word gay or homosexual rather than elaborating on the fact that I am referring to both gay/homosexual men and lesbian women. I have tried to keep these instances to a minimum. Although it is expedient to use a term consistently in a discussion, this can be at odds with the terms the participants use themselves. In particular, lesbian women who participated in this study prefer to identify themselves as lesbians (foregrounding gender) rather than as gay or homosexual women. Use of the term queer is infrequent and is reserved for references to queer literature or politics. In South Africa the term moffie is more commonly used, and

sometimes also appears in this text. Again, this is in order to reflect the participants' use of terminology.

Data protection

The data, in its original form, is stored in a protected electronic file on my personal computer. With the exception of the interviews, most of the source material collected in this study had already circulated in public. Therefore, the possible breach that using this material in my research poses is not serious enough to warrant special protections. The performances which were recorded for the purposes of this study and which were the subject of newspaper reports were produced with the intention of gaining public attention. This argument was sufficient to gain ethical approval, but there is room to argue for a distinction between the scrutiny one expects from an audience, in the theatrical sense, and the sort of scrutiny an academic audience affords. In mitigation of this concern I think that it highlights an important aspect of the process of gaining consent. In this study, obtaining written consent was a process that allowed me to make my position as researcher clear, as well as alerting the participants to my intention with regards to my engagement with them.

Reflexive accounting

"Let the data speak for themselves, these scientists demand. The trouble with that argument is, of course, that data never do speak for themselves" (Keller, 1992, p.27). Formulating validity as a truthful representation is problematic. From a poststructuralist

perspective truth is a construct, a partial view of the world which is the negotiated outcome of social interactions. Truth is a version of the world that exists alongside, and interfaces with, alternate ideas about the world. Thus, poststructuralism debunks the notion that full knowledge of the world is possible, or that there is an external or fixed reality.

Altheide and Johnson (1994) argue that an implication of working within this paradigm is that it cannot be the researcher's task to obtain 'true' knowledge, but rather, to create room for observing the processes through which knowledge is produced. In the context of this study, this leads to an acknowledgement of the fact that, as a consequence of my engagement in the field, I am implicated in those processes I came to observe. Frosh and Saville Young (2008) argue that this means that my study cannot be evaluated without taking into account what I have brought to it. This is not a new argument. Many writers have drawn attention to the relational aspects of field research and the interactional construction of meaning in the research context.

In this study, shared identities created a sense of common ground and facilitated the research process. For example, I was familiar to the queer community in which this research is located long before the study began. Through my involvement in the community I got to know many of the drag performers and beauty pageant contestants, and through my involvement in their activities I found an appropriate context in which to ground this inquiry. Indeed, this familiarity made me feel confident about asking for permission to access the setting for the purposes of my research. However, a sense of familiarity can evaporate easily. On the first day that I arrived to record a show rehearsal, my recording equipment and the obligatory consent forms that I had brought along had the effect of

foregrounding dimensions of difference, by making the dichotomous nature of our relationship explicit - researcher/researched, observer/observed.

The issue of power is central to any discussion of relationships within the research context, and this issue has been taken up more recently by feminist and post-colonial writers (e.g. Mohanty, 1991). I take two important points from this scholarship. Firstly, it is important to be critical of idealized notions of connection and unity between researchers and research subjects. Gilbert (1994) argues that it dismisses the inevitable object status of the researched. Secondly, and this follows on from the first, it is appropriate to lay bare relations of privilege and exploitation. Katz (1992) argues that this makes us more honest and responsible regarding our relations to the people we research.

I have borne both of these arguments in mind, but I think that they are easier to attend to in research contexts where power differentials remain relatively clear. It is more difficult to remain clear about relations of power in research that is undertaken within one's own sphere of existence and/or deals with a topic in which one has a vested interest: in other words, when it is not easy to distinguish 'them' and 'me.' This point is taken up by Kobayashi (1994, p. 78) who reflects critically on the multiple ways in which she is positioned - as researcher, activist, and community member - in research which she describes as "a basis for struggles of which I am a part." Gillian (1997, p.308) refers to reflexivity, in this mode, as a "technology" for situating the production of knowledge.

Macleod and Bhatia (2008) acknowledge that the politics of location in terms of knowledge production is complex. They also argue that an analysis of power extends beyond simply

recognizing differences in social location. The politics of location and the politics of representation are linked because power intersects with processes of knowledge production.

Gillian (1997) identifies the *interpretive act* as a key site of academic power. McLafferty (1995, cited in Gillian 1997) argues that this is because the researcher decides what questions to ask, directs the flow of talk, interprets data, and decides where and in what form to present it. This is certainly true of this research. Flick (2002) argues that, in this way, researchers “contribute to the construction of the very reality they seek to analyse” (p. 159). The solution that Arnott (1991) proffers is to make the processes of representation visible by constantly interrogating the positionality of ourselves and our research subjects. Arnott does not believe that through this we can transcend all limitations, but at least our work will not be (mis)recognised as such.

Working within a discursive framework means that one cannot focus singularly on the object under study, but must always include the process and/or means by which it is constituted, and this includes acknowledging the ways in which we are implicated in that. The imperative to acknowledge the impossibility of value-free knowledge departs quite radically from claims of neutrality and distanciation in the dominant research tradition - the view from nowhere that Haraway (1991, p.189) calls the “God trick”. Acknowledging the politics of location and representation invites a degree of self-reflexivity and compels us to make our position explicit.

Finally, writing on reflexivity can be viewed as a rhetorical practice because writing is the site where validity practices are performed in text. Richardson (1993, p.699) describes the genre of the research report as having a “truth-constituting, legitimating, and deeply hidden validifying function.” Again, this problematizes the practice of reflexivity for a researcher working with the poststructuralist paradigm because it means being caught between the imperative to strive for legitimacy (by writing on reflexivity) while at the same time being compelled to challenge practices of knowledge legitimation (a theoretical requirement).

In an attempt to aggregate these positions and still maintain a degree of coherence I have drawn on Lenzo’s (1995) idea of the *researcher-as-selves*, where ‘selves’ indicates the multiple and shifting positions of the researcher. In this study, writing the researcher-as-selves takes the form of variable self-referencing. Lenzo argues that attending to the use of self-referencing is an interesting way to probe the complications of rhetorical practice.

According to Lenzo (1995) this involves avoiding using “I” in the apologetic or confessional sense, but rather to indicate positioning and the exercise of agency at particular junctures. First person plurals “we” and “our” are pronouns that are used to identify myself as part of a group (a community of researchers, or a social group – i.e. homosexuals). The use of third-person singular self-references such as “the researcher” are used to describe my various roles both generally speaking and in terms of this study.

The use of third person references to the self are rejected in much openly ideological inquiry as artificial, alienating, and a relic of positivist models of disinterested research. However, there is precedent for researchers informed by post-structuralism to refer to themselves in

the third person. Jones (1992, cited in Lenzo 1995) argues that the third person can be used as a strategy for emphasising one's own position as another voice among other authors in a text. The third person can also be used in a deconstructive move in which the author's voice is objectified, which has the effect of foregrounding its power to interpret people's lives (Woodbrooks, 1991 cited in Lenzo, 1995). These strategies are employed in this study because they open up space for acknowledging that what is presented in this study as knowledge is constructed from particular authorial positions and that while these representations of knowledge are under scrutiny, they are also at work.

STRATEGIES FOR ANALYSIS

Two criteria informed the choice of analytic strategies. The first criterion was that the strategies had to be appropriate for analysing the type of data that had been collected. In other words, they had to be suited to analysing written and spoken texts as well as visual texts that included photographs and audio-visual data. The second criterion was that the strategies had to fit in with the broad aim of the research, which was a genealogical analysis of the politics of homosexual visibility. In this section, concerns relating to each criterion are discussed. I then argue that semiotics and a Foucauldian approach to analysing discourse are appropriate strategies for analysis. The section includes a brief discussion of the limitations of each of these strategies.

Semiotics and the analysis of visual texts

My first concern in approaching an analysis of visual data was to decide on a method of analysis that would allow me to 'read' visual texts. This is not to say that I intended to limit the analysis of visual texts to a simple account of their content, but it was apparent that this would be a necessary first step. However, the problem with reading visual texts is that there are no words. Visual texts communicate through the use of non-linguistic signs. For this reason it seemed appropriate to employ a method of analysis that is specifically suited to analysing data in this form.

There are a wide range of methods of analysis that can be employed for the purpose of analysing visual data (cf. G. Rose, 2001). However, one of the most popular approaches to the analysis of visual data is semiotics. This is because semiotics pays enormous attention to language in non-linguistic form.

In Chapter Two I wrote that semiotics focuses on signs, and that a sign is the fusion of signifier (symbol) and signified (concept). When working with visual data from a semiotic approach, there is an iconic relation between the signifier and the signified. This means that the signifier is assumed to look like the thing it signifies. Arguably, reading signs in this way provides a very limited analysis of visual texts. However, this is only the first level of analysis in semiotics, the level that Barthes (1977) termed denotation. In Chapter Two I wrote that denotation is an interpretation of the primary, or literal, meaning of a sign.

At the second level, the level of connotation, a semiotic analysis shifts to focus to the way in which signs are appropriated and transformed in order to make other kinds of associations: to give them another meaning. According to Barthes (1977), connotation is the signification of something other than what is shown. Meaning, at the level of connotation, is not apparent. It involves identifying the way in which existing cultural materials are appropriated and reworked to communicate new meaning. In this study, analysing the parasitic work of second order language, which in semiotics is called practices of signification, provided an appropriate method for analysing the work of parody in spectacles of homosexual visibility.

Focus on the appropriation and transformation of cultural material, was particularly useful for analysing culturally specific aspects of drag performance. For example, reading parodic performances of a South African folk music genre, at the level of connotation, allowed me to make observations about its political critique that added significantly to the analysis.

However, while practices of signification were an important aspect of the analysis of visual texts, the focus was also limiting in terms of the broader aim of the study. In semiotics, reading visual images requires one to stay quite close to the text. It certainly does not allow for an analysis of the conditions under which certain practices of signification became possible in spectacles of homosexual visibility and others not. The importance of addressing this issue is addressed in more detail in the discussion of Foucauldian discourse analysis.

Analysing discursive practices from a Foucauldian perspective

At the start of this chapter I drew on Foucault's description of genealogy as a "writing the history of the present", as a strategy for making sense of the present by going back in time and tracing the conditions that made it possible for the current circumstances to emerge. For Foucault, the inquiry into the "conditions of possibility" is an inquiry into the production of knowledge, into the realm of discourse.

At the level of discourse, Foucault analyses discursive practices, that is, the rules governing what can be said or written or thought. Thus, his concern is to make overt certain contingencies underlying knowledge. This focus allows for an analysis of the material effects of discourse to be traced, that is, the role of discursive practices in determining, among other things, which relationships, or family structures, or sexual practices, or gender performatives are viable and which are not as well as the implications, in material terms, for contravening those 'norms'. This inevitably leads to an analysis of relations of power. Thus, three themes for analytic interrogation are indicated in the genealogical method: historical contextualization, the will to knowledge/power, and the material effects of discursive practices. Arguably, the endeavour to interrogate these themes requires not only a close reading of the text, but reference to contextual factors too.

Unfortunately, while Foucault's work has been a central influence in the development of various methods for doing a discourse analysis, (e.g. Parker, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) he never developed a particular method for doing a discourse analysis himself. In considering the merits of adopting methods of discourse analysis that are informed by the

work of Foucault, I became aware of some of the limitations of these methods for this study.

One limitation is the tendency to retain a largely linguistic concept of discourse (Hook, 2001). An example of this is Potter and Wetherell's (1987) work on discursive repertoires which focuses on the linguistic resources structuring participants' talk. While this focus would be appropriate for a study endeavouring to delve into a deeply textual analysis of talk, it is not appropriate for a genealogical analysis that focuses on breadth. In other words, that seeks to situate discourse within a matrix of historical, socio-political and material circumstances. Furthermore, even when the importance of contextual circumstances is identified, as in Parker's (1992) methods for a discourse analysis, directions for incorporating this into the analysis are not adequately elaborated upon (Hook, 2001).

In light of the limitations just mentioned, Hook (2001) revisits Foucault's seminal text 'The order of discourse' to provide four principles to guide a discourse analysis. These principles re-characterize discourse from a firmly Foucauldian perspective and, as such, provide guidelines for doing a discourse analysis that retain Foucault's interest in the role of contextual circumstances underwriting discursive practice. Collectively, these principles provided a strategy for analysing data that was appropriate for the aims of a genealogical study of the politics of visibility and the implications for performative resistance. A brief description of each principle for a Foucauldian discourse analysis, as identified by Hook, is provided below, along with an explanation of its appropriateness for this study.

The principle of reversal

The principle of reversal is the imperative to refute and invert assumptions of origin (Hook, 2001). It is articulated in Foucault's (1981 cited in Hook, 2001) notion of discourse as *event*. It is an approach to discourse analysis that seeks to critique the self-evidences (universal and necessary assumptions) upon which knowledge and practices are based (Hook, 2001).

In this study, this allowed me to analyse, for example, how discourses pertaining to masculinity, femininity, marriage, and the family, which are grounded in notions of nature and religion, came to the fore in particular moments in history and in particular sets of circumstances. Hook (2001, p.531) argues that this strategy makes it easier tie discourses to motives and operations of power and interest which, in turn, makes the analysis more "politically (and ontologically) robust".

The principle of discontinuity

The principle of discontinuity refers to the imperative, in a genealogical analysis, to examine the discourses of the present with recourse to the past. It is closely related to the principle of reversal in that it refers to the destabilizing effect that comes from uprooting the 'ahistory' upon which particular 'truths' are reliant (Hook, 2001). However, an important operation of discontinuity is that it provides access to a font of critical "counter knowledges" (Foucault, 1980, cited in Hook 2001, p.534), which cohere in instances of discontinuity or contradiction. The usefulness of focusing on the contestation of

contemporary knowledges cannot be understated in a study that draws on Butler's notion of performative resistance which examines exactly this phenomenon.

The principle of specificity

The principle of specificity refers to the endeavour to extend a discourse analysis beyond the markings of textuality to the physicality of its effects and the materiality of its practices. Hook (2001) argues that the discourse analyst must map lateral (horizontal) rather than vertical patterns of development in the use of discourse and its functions and that this cannot be done adequately when focusing exclusively on written and spoken text. In line with Foucault, Hook argues that discourse has many points of realization and a discourse analysis that does not take this into account is necessarily impoverished. In this study, the principle of specificity was realised in the decision to engage with a range of sources of evidence which provided different types of data. This made it possible to analyse discourses at the level of written and spoken texts, but also in the form of material practices over different periods of time.

The principle of exteriority

The principle of exteriority refers to an imperative in Foucault's theorizing of discourse to move beyond a simple analysis of practices of signification within the text and to interrogate the conditions that give rise to them, in other words, to interrogate the external conditions of possibility (Hook, 2001). The problem with staying within the text, Foucault argues, is that

it inevitably leads to textual relativism, and this diminishes the political utility of a critical analysis. To counter this, Hook (2001) argues that an appropriately Foucauldian strategy is to appeal to reference points outside of the text. Hook (2001) is not suggesting that this should take the form of an appeal to some or other 'truth', but that, wherever possible, one should anchor one's analytical conclusions not only to instances within the text, but to extra-textual dimensions such as space (geography), time (history) and material forms of practice.

In this study, the principle of exteriority alerted me to, among other things, the politics of location in the negotiation of homosexual visibility, which became a prominent dimension for analysis across all three epochs.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH

Methodological decisions informing the study are reported on in this chapter in order to provide the information required to assess the reliability of the methods used and the validity of the conclusions. In the social sciences 'validity' is taken to mean *truth* and it is interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomenon to which it refers (Hammersley, 1990 cited in Silverman, 2000). 'Reliability' on the other and is most often taken to refer to the degree to which the results of a study are replicable (van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006). There are many arguments about what constitutes a claim to validity or reliability in social science research. In this section I discuss approaches to validity

and reliability in qualitative research that are relevant to the features of my study and the theoretical perspective informing it.

New perspectives on old techniques: Triangulation and constant comparison

The usefulness of the different sources of evidence and the different methods of data collection that were employed in this study can be viewed as strategies for triangulation (Silverman, 2000) which substantiate the findings of the study. However, the value of triangulation depends very much upon the nature of the research inquiry. Certainly, when operating from a poststructuralist perspective, the valorisation of triangulation as a method of validation can be misplaced. To avoid this, I had to abandon some of the assumptions about triangulation. These included the simple or optimistic version of triangulation that treats the relationship between the social world and the methods used to investigate it as transparent, and the assumption of a unitary or stable social world against which triangulation as a method of verification allows me to simply view that reality from different perspectives or standpoints.

On the contrary, I used triangulation as a means to observe the negotiation of homosexual visibility in different types of social action. One of the requirements for doing this was to consider how negotiations of visibility were implied or were dependant upon particular kinds of social action and what descriptions or versions of events were generated from this. Approaching the use of multiple methods and sources of evidence in this way paved the path for another strategy of verification, the constant comparative method.

Constant comparison is a method of verification that involves repeated attempts to find other instances through which to test out provisional or emerging observations in the data (Silverman, 2000). It involves inspecting and comparing all data fragments that arise from the data corpus. In this study, constant comparison proceeded by first analysing only a small part of the data. Then, having generated a set of observations from this small body of data, these emerging observations were expanded by steadily drawing on the larger body of data. Importantly, as the analytic methods employed in this study were informed by the work of Foucault, constant comparison was used to contrast and compare various workings of discourse and social practices and to make observations about the relations of power underlying these processes.

Reliability

Reliability is most often taken to refer to the degree to which the results of a study are replicable (van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006). Replicability is viewed as the bedrock of quantitative methodology (Giles, 2002). It requires that the method section of a report carry sufficient detail to enable another researcher to conduct the same study using a different sample. The function of reliability requires that a study be designed so rigorously that the second researcher obtains nearly identical results to the first. However, this approach is only possible when operating from a positivist perspective that assumes the existence of a stable and unchanging reality.

Researchers operating with the poststructuralist paradigm do not assume that they are investigating a stable unchanging reality and therefore do not expect to find the same results repeatedly (van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006). Nevertheless, Silverman (2000) argues that poststructuralist assumptions of a shifting and unstable reality should not rule out the need for systematic research. Silverman prefers to conceptualize reliability as the consistency with which observations are identified and assigned to a particular analytic category by different researchers or by the same researcher on different occasions.

The issue of reliability was addressed in a number of ways in this study. At the level of analysing and presenting the data, reliability was addressed through rigorous data management and the inclusion of verbatim data extracts in the results section of this document. I also kept a research diary in which I documented each step of the project. Notes on theoretical or methodological aspects of the study, references to literature, and my field observations were added to this.

Data management

Computers make data management easier. Initial data management involved downloading digital data from the audio-visual equipment to my personal computer, labelling those files, and cataloguing them in appropriately labelled folders in a dedicated databank. The next stage of data management involved the transformation of audio data collected from the interview and focus group discussions into text.

The process of transcribing interview discussions is a laborious task, but it was a good opportunity to become more familiar with the content of the interviews. One main advantage to transcribing the interviews is that the texts that are created in the process of transcription form an account of what was said during the interview that can be subjected a thorough analysis (Silverman, 2000). Collecting data in electronic format made it possible to use a computer programme to manage the large corpus of data collected for this study. Computer assisted management of data offers great support in the analytic process.

Computer programmes have been developed to support particular data management techniques that the analysis of data involves, and which are tedious and susceptible to error when done manually (Silver & Fielding, 2008). A basic feature of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) programmes is that they facilitate the coding and retrieval of text segments, essentially acting as an electronic filing cabinet. This is very useful for managing and keeping track of the coding of a large corpus of data. It makes it possible, for example, to retrieve segments of data tagged with a particular code, or group of codes, or retrieval based on how codes relate to one another.

While different CAQDAS programmes (e.g. NUD●IST, ATLAS.ti, and NVivo) share a number of basic features, there is some variation with regards to their sophistication. This is largely because different CAQDAS programmes are developed with particular analytic strategies in mind (Silver & Fielding, 2008). ATLAS.ti, in particular, offers more features for theory development than most other CAQDAS programmes.

My decision to use ATLAS.ti was informed by a particular set of considerations. Endeavouring to approach the analysis of data from a discourse analytic perspective, I was pleased to discover that this approach could be supported by ATLAS.ti. Most immediately, this is because it is possible, for example, to annotate individual passages of text which draw on discursive constructions that are relevant to the study and for comparing how different speakers draw on these constructions or how different constructions are drawn upon in different settings (Silver & Fielding, 2008).

ATLAS.ti also allows quotations identified by the researcher to be treated in isolation or together with other annotations. This is an important feature because an implicit assumption of discourse analytic work is that what is not said is as important as what is said. In ATLAS.ti annotation tools provide places to write about these absences and to consider their implications, with the facility to return to the original transcript or document at any point (Silver & Fielding, 2008). In addition, these quotations can be linked to one another, as well as to memos in which commonalities and differences are observed. These features support the strategy of constant comparison.

The facilitation of conceptual linking and theory development is supported by a function in ATLAS.ti that creates conceptual diagrams called Network Views. Network Views are visual diagrams that provide graphic representations of important analytic links between emerging ideas or observations in the data. This feature is very useful for the conceptual work a discourse analytic approach entails. It was also invaluable in this study because it facilitated the management and analysis of a very large data corpus. An example Network View generated in the analytic process is provided in Figure 3 (on page 171).

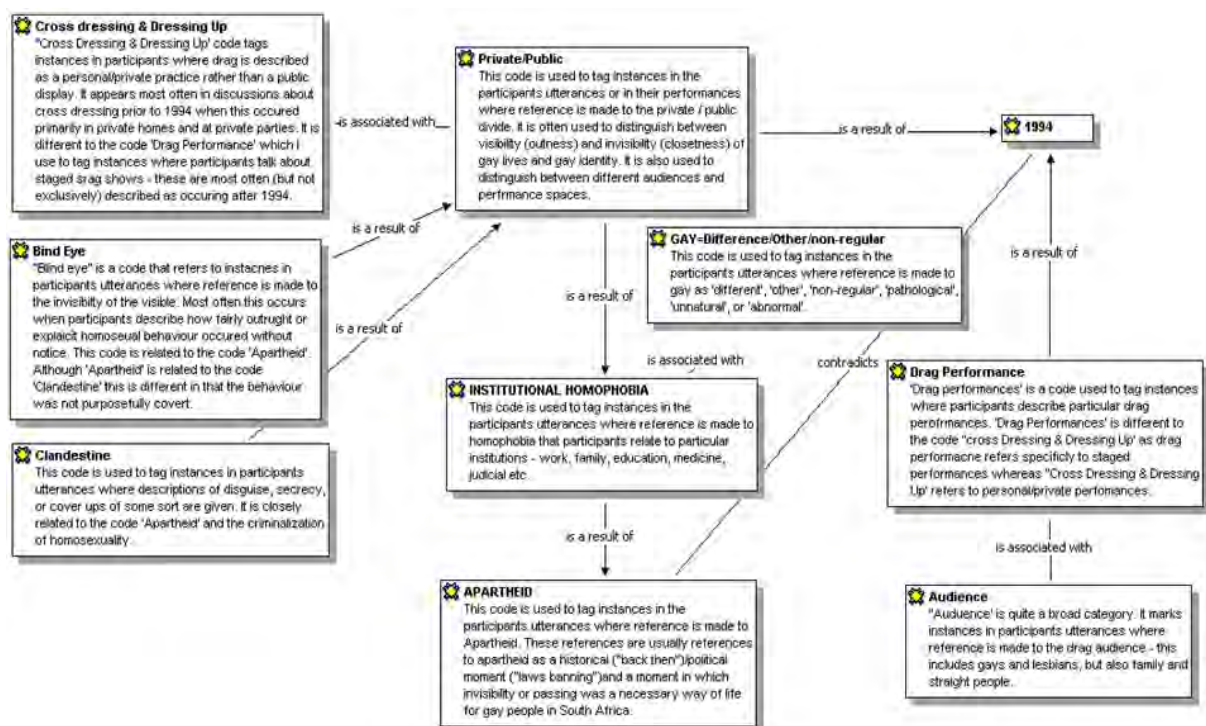


Figure 3: A 'Network View' showing links between important analytic observations

Another advantage of ATLAS.ti is that it supports the use of audio-visual data. In fact, in ATLAS.ti audio-visual data has the same status as data in the form of text. For example, audio-visual files constitute source documents in the same way as text files, and still images can be coded in the same way that text is coded. And all of these sources can be incorporated in the conceptual diagrams (Network Views).

The range of support that ATLAS.ti offers in terms of data management does not mean that this computer software takes over the analysis. The support that CAQDAS offers for analytic work is modest and does not substitute the need to think hard about the meaning of data (Silverman, 2000). Coffey and Atkinson (1996, cited in Silverman 2000, p.164) have stated

that CAQDAS software “generally is more valuable for the organization and retrieval of content than the discovery of form and structure”. The use of CAQDAS was therefore limited to the management of data in the analytic process rather than constituting the analysis itself.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discussed Foucault’s approach to genealogy and its appropriateness for this study. The chapter provided details of the important characteristics of each epoch and tied these characteristics to the sources of evidence and methods of data collection. Key ethical considerations arising from the type of data that was collected and the manner in which it is collected, analysed and presented are discussed. This chapter also provided a discussion of the various strategies for analysis and consideration was given to the implications of working within a poststructuralist paradigm for incorporating traditional strategies for verification. An analysis of the events that occurred in the first epoch is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CROSS-DRESSING AND DRESSING-UP IN AN ERA OF CONCEALMENT

In this chapter I present the results of the analysis of the first epoch, which deals with homosexual visibility during apartheid. The analysis focuses on the 1950s. This is an important period for analysis because it marks the inception of apartheid policy. In Chapter One I wrote that apartheid era legislation, which was primarily intended to criminalize sexual relations between white and black people, also criminalized homosexuality. In this chapter, I discuss the implications of this legislation for homosexual visibility.

OFFICIAL/UNOFFICIAL KNOWING

One significant implication of the state's prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid was that homosexual behaviour had to be concealed. The closeted nature of homosexual encounters reflects in the participants' talk about social interactions at this time. Extract 1 (on page 174) is taken from a group interview with elderly homosexual men about homosexuality during apartheid. The extract is taken from a point in the discussion when the men spoke about negotiating homosexual visibility in public spaces. In this extract, the participants talk about the Station Bar. According to the participants, in the 1950s, the Station Bar was a popular venue, in the city in which this research takes place, for men who were looking to meet other men for sex.

Extract 1: They came in 'officially' to have a drink

- Edward um (10) that went on for many years (5) ah. (.) the boss of the place (.) the owner of the (.) Station Bar (5) officially didn't know what was going on (.) but seeing he and (.) the rest of the staff were in there (2) ahhh (.) the restaurant next door which is also his (.) he must have been blind and deaf if he didn't know
- Vera ((laughs))
- Edward so (.) and (.) but of course >it was good for business< it was the busiest pub in town
- Jacqui so were there a lot of (.) there was a gay scene then (.) in the 1950s?
- Edward I suppose there must have been (5) because people walked in there to have a drink (.) um ... they came in officially to have a drink ((shows inverted commas)) you understand
- Jacqui [oh:: so this was all]
- Edward [and what happened] while they were there sorry
- Jacqui so this was all (.) what's the word
- Edward it was hidden (.) it was
- Vera clandestine
- Jacqui clandestine
- Edward clandestine (.) good word yes (3) and of course in those days everything was
- Jacqui why?
- Edward we dared not (3) um (9) do anything that wasn't clandestine

The answer to the question I pose in the second last line in Extract 1 (above) is that, in the 1950s, homosexual behaviour had to be clandestine because even if it was just a kiss it could land you in jail. The 'closet' is a colloquial term for the endeavour to be 'clandestine' about homosexual behaviour. In 'Epistemology of the closet' Sedgwick (1990, p.3) describes "closetedness" as "a performance initiated ... by the speech act of a silence" which accrues "in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differently constitutes it." Arguably, in the context of the state sanctioned prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid, it is important to analyse acts constituting a refusal to be identified.

In the discussion, from which Extract 1 is taken, the participants described a strange disjuncture that emerged between what people could know "officially", and what they knew

unofficially. Thus, the laws against homosexual behaviour at this time, far from preventing it from happening, made it, instead, into a rather intriguing game of (not) knowing.

The participant's talk about official and unofficial knowing reflects exactly the type of conceptual dichotomy that Derrida (1982) describes. In Chapter Two I discuss Derrida's (1982) critique of conceptual dichotomies. Drawing on Derrida's framework for troubling conceptual dichotomies, I argue that it is impossible to draw a dividing line between the 'official' and the 'unofficial'. Official knowing, having knowledge about behaviour that is state sanctioned, is a type of knowing that is immediately haunted by the unofficial. This is because one must know about the unofficial in order to tell the official apart from it. Thus, knowledge about unofficial behaviour, behaviour that is prohibited by the state, is what enables one to set aside the official from the unofficial in the first place. In other words, the unofficial makes the official possible and, because the unofficial gives the official meaning, it is present in it. During apartheid, knowledge that was disclosed was simultaneously and inevitably the effect of what had been concealed.

In the context of the state imposed prohibition on homosexuality, official and unofficial become shorthand for heterosexuality and homosexuality. In reference to my argument above about how the unofficial inhabits the official, in the context of Extract 1, this is what makes it possible to make reference to "it", and for others to know that one is referring to homosexuality, without actually having to say the word. In this sense then, homosexuality is, to invoke Derrida (1982) again, the absent present.

Apartheid legislation privileged heterosexuality (state sanctioned sexuality) over homosexuality (state prohibited sexuality). Consequently, I read the participants' use of the official/unofficial dichotomy in Extract 1 (on Page 174) as a means to communicate the way in which state power structured social interaction at the time, and how this structuring of social relations gave public space its character. It also explains the impetus, at that time, to keep homosexual behaviour closeted (out of the view of the public). After all, maintaining a guise of officialdom meant that homosexuality had to maintain a degree of invisibility. Consequently, "they came in *officially* to have a drink" (my emphasis).

FUCKING STATE IDEOLOGY

It is easy to turn a blind eye and claim not to know anything about 'it' (homosexual behaviour) when all the men at the Station Bar did was come into the bar to have 'a drink'. Thus, turning a blind eye was contingent on the homosexual activities at the Station Bar remaining somewhat invisible. That homosexual behaviour at the Station Bar was possible only under the conditions of its own erasure evidences a peculiar dynamic characterized by both agency and restraint. However, this was not the limit of performative resistance. Homosexual behaviour was sometimes also very explicit. Extract 2 (on page 177) is taken from the same group discussion as the previous extract. In this extract participants talk about public sex acts.

Extract 2: Sex at the Station Bar

- Edward their favourite victims (11) were (4) the train staff (3) the guards (.) and stokers and firemen and (2) the dirtier and rougher looking they were the better (3) and they loved it
- Jacqui what did they do (.) flirt?
- Edward yea and outrageously he used to (3) (send) them up something terrible (2) and as I say they loved it and (3) the number of times (.) of course everybody (.) in there (.) got (3) involved with the same kind of scene (5) Paul and Willie (5) or at least one of them was stuck behind the counter (3) the other one (.) or (.) more usually (.) with one of the other customers (.) um (.)...(3) with these ahhh (6) scruffy looking firemen types ((Olivia brings Edward a stool to put his drink on)) thank you ... (.) and the fireman would disappear (3) for a (.) private a::: (.) interview (.) somewhere or other (2) in the station buildings
- Vera the fireman not being somebody who puts fires out but the one who shovels the coal into the steam engine!
- All ((laugh))

A number of things made sex at the railway station thrilling. Quite obviously, the criminalization of homosexuality made homosexual sex taboo so that for both heterosexual and homosexual men homosexual sex amounted to breaking the law and the conventions of society. And, for some, dangerous sex can be quite sexy.

Arguably though, homosexual sex with heterosexual men also troubles the heterosexual/homosexual binary. Troubling this binary, in the apartheid era, was significant in the light of the fact that this distinction was central to deciding what was normal and what was not, and thus to justifying the prohibition of homosexuality.

Homosexual sex acts at the railway station also had implications for the politics of space. In South Africa, railway stations are state-owned properties. In the 1950s, the ideology of the state would have been present everywhere in the railway buildings. Signage in the station building would have pointed to “whites only” platforms, “whites only” ticket offices and

“whites only” restrooms. Even the Station Bar, while leased to a private individual, would have been designated a “whites only” bar. In other words, it was a space that was saturated with the symbolic presence of the state, and not only in terms of the fixed property.

The men, with whom they engaged, the train staff, guards, stokers, and firemen, were themselves symbolic of the state apparatus. In the 1950s the Nationalist government reserved jobs, and particularly those that required little formal education, for whites. Thus, these men were the beneficiaries of protected employment and therefore invariably strong supporters of the Nationalist government (who they depended upon for their livelihood) and under whose rule homosexuality had been criminalized. The notion of homosexual men engaging intimately with heterosexual men who were strong supporters of the Nationalist government in sex acts that occurred in a public space, invokes, for me, an image of fucking, quite literally, with state ideology.

Public sex at the railway station was a subversive strategy that homosexual men used to challenge a state ideology that sought to erase them. However, an obvious limitation of its subversiveness is that, although there was a risk of being discovered, these scenes occurred out of sight of the hustle and bustle of the crowds on the station platform and in the bar. And, because they remained private acts, their subversiveness was contained. These acts remained stolen pleasures that were derived from fucking with a system that sought to erase them.

PROHIBITED DESIRE TAKING THE FORM OF THE PARODIC SPECTACLE

During apartheid, homosexual visibility in public space invited a degree of danger and the imperative to be 'clandestine' meant that there was a limit to the sort of things that one could get up to, or, at least, that one was prepared to get up to in public. Therefore, homosexual visibility, between the 1950s and 1980s, was most often limited to private spaces and to private house parties in particular. Initially, when the participants told me about the private house parties, I viewed the house parties as private spaces because they were owned by individuals rather than the state and because access to them was relatively limited (to invited guests only). However, on closer examination, I realized that the social relations that took place within these spaces also played a significant role in characterizing the house parties as private spaces.

The Palm Springs party

In the relative safety of private spaces gay men explored their sexuality more overtly. In this section I present the participants' recollections of the Palm Springs party. The Palm Springs party was a private house party that was held in the 1950s in the city in which this research is located.

In Extract 3 (on page 180) Edward describes a scene at the Palm Springs party. The description continues in Extract 5 (on Page 186). It is presented in two parts for the purpose

of ease of discussion. In Extract 3 Edward describes a private spectacle that was constructed through cross-dressing.

Extract 3: The 'Belle of St Trinian's'

Edward I've seen a couple of the (4) Drag Revues (10) but long before that (5) there was no such thing as an audience (.) everybody participated (2) I'm talking about (5) that Palm Springs party that was in the late 50s (2) about '58 or so (4) and um (25) it was definitely not the first gay party I'd ever been to (.) but it was the first (15) gay drag party

... (utterances presented in the first half of Extract 5 occur here) ...

Edward ... and people there had fun (7) um (16) John came (.) >turned up< (6) in a:: (5) school gym (5) I think St Trinian's had just (.) he did the the the movie scene (.) 'The Belles of St Trinian's' and John was in a (3) rather short gym (5) with black stockings (5) and his packet of cigarettes in the top of that one ((stocking)) and the his lighter in the top of that one ((indicating the other stocking))

All ((laugh))

Edward and he would run around (.) everybody in the place was offered a cigarette (3) if they got it out for themselves (.) ... and ah (6) he asked them to *besteek my asseblief*

Jacqui *besteek my?*

Olivia ((laughs))

Edward ((laughs))

Jacqui I can imagine it's=

Olivia =light me (.) *pomp* ((fuck)) me please

... (utterances presented in the second half of Extract 5 occur here)

'The Belles of St Trinian's', which is referred to in this extract, is a British movie that was released in 1954. The movie is a comedy about a girls' school. The comedy was originally created by cartoonist Ronald Searle. In the movie, the headmistress of the girl's school is played by a male actor (Alastair Sim) who is dressed in women's clothing.

Writing on the phenomena of 'moffie drag' at private house parties in South Africa in the 1950s, Chetty (1994, p.118) notes that the persona's that gay men chose to parody were influenced by the divas of Hollywood cinema which were "beginning to make a major impact on popular concepts of gender in South Africa" at that time. While Chetty's remarks

pertain to drag among coloured homosexual men in particular, it appears that the influences of the silver screen also took root among white homosexual men.

I drew on semiology, and Barthes (1972) distinction between denotation and connotation, to begin interpreting the work of the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' at the Palm Springs party that Edward describes in Extract 3. At the level of denotation, the "school gym" is symbolic of the feminine (derived from a gendered dress code), and of youth (schoolgirls). However, in the spectacle that Edward describes it is not any schoolgirl that is parodied but a 'belle' from 'St Trinian's'.

At the level of connotation, the farce of the St Trinian's comedy carries over to the spectacle Edward describes. Barthes (1972) notion of myth, which is discussed in Chapter Two, explains how the concept of farce is carried over from one scene to another. Using this framework, I interpret the spectacle as follows: in the movie, 'The belles of St Trinians', the schoolgirls and the male headmistress, a man dressed in women's clothing, are signifiers for the genre of the movie – a comedy, or farce, (the signified). However, in the context of the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' at the Palm Springs party farce simply becomes the *signifier*. The question is, of what?

An important observation that Bray (1988) makes about the transvestic practices of homosexual men frequenting molly houses in eighteenth-century England was that, in the context of the molly houses, cross-dressing was not intended to deceive. For Bray (1988) cross-dressing among homosexual men, has, historically, been a means to signify non-heterosexual desire within the heterosexual matrix.

Literature on the symbolic meaning of dress and on the signification of gender in dress codes (e.g. Entwistle, 2000; Garber, 1997; Halberstam, 1997; Senelick, 1993, 2000) makes it possible to understand why the language of fashion should be appropriated by homosexual men as a means to articulate sexual difference. In the case of cross-dressing, this is achieved *vis-a-vis* the notion of inversion. The homosexual man who dresses as a woman takes her place, via symbolic dress codes, in the dyad (male/female) through which hegemonic representations of desire are structured – i.e. as an attraction to the *opposite* sex. Interpreted in this way, Edward is describing how prohibited desire takes form and is articulated through the parodic spectacle of the ‘belle of St Trinian’s’ at the Palm Springs party.

While the articulation of homosexual desire through the parodic spectacle of the ‘belle of St Trinian’s’ at the Palm Springs party countered the threat of erasure in the apartheid era, the idea of homosexual desire being interpreted through the notion of farce is troubling. Again, drawing on Derrida’s (1982) critique of conceptual dichotomies, it is arguable that articulating homosexuality through the notion of farce situates it in a dichotomy in which the other dimension, heterosexuality, is articulated as the original, or natural. However, the troubling conclusion that this interpretation culminates in hinges on the assumption that farce must necessarily be read as troubling in the negative sense.

The argument can be reformulated. Sontag (1999, p.53) argues that transvestic spectacles participate in a distinctive mode of aestheticism, the essence of which is a “love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration”. Indeed, Butler (1990/1999, p.174) argues that it is this aspect of drag that gives it its operation; that makes it say, “appearance is an illusion”.

In her formulation of the political utility of visibility in drag Butler (1990/1999) exploits the way in which drag, to quote Christian (2001, p.118), “inserts the signifier into quotation marks, theatricalizing it at the expense of the signified”.

For Butler (1990/1999), dramatization is a dimension of drag that works to reveal the artificiality of heteronormativity. By “catching gender in the act – as an act” it shows heteronormativity up as being as contrived, and so provides a critical or ironic distance to it (Tyler, 1991, p.32). In this sense then, farce is not simply a signifier of homosexual desire but the queering of heteronormativity. At this level of interpretation farce appears to be more comfortably unsettling than it was at first.

THE ‘PRIVATE CODE’ OF SPECTACULAR SUBCULTURE

Another observation about the spectacle of the belle of St Trinian’s at the Palm Springs party is that the parody of dress overflowed into the parody of invitation. Sontag (1999, p.54) argues that transvestic spectacles engage people in “a way of looking at things”. Returning to Extract 3 (on Page 180), the ‘belle’ in the school gym invites the men at the Palm Springs party to “*besteek my asseblief*”. The invitation has two meanings. It is an invitation to light up his cigarette and it is also an invitation to have sex. To read the invitation for its second meaning, hinges, in the first instance, on being able to decode the spectacle of the ‘belle of St Trinian’s’ for its signification of (non-hetero)sexual desire. However, there are additional cultural tools that lend to the double reading of the invitation.

An understanding of Afrikaans is required in order to understand the utterance, “*besteek my asseblief*”. Afrikaans is a language that is associated with the Afrikaners, a particular cultural grouping in South Africa. However, the language is not limited to this social group. During apartheid the state adopted Afrikaans as an official language in South Africa. As such, children were compelled to study it at school and most South Africans therefore have some degree of proficiency in Afrikaans. However, for this reason, there are also ideological connotations to the language. Consequently, articulating an invitation for homosexual sex in the official language of a state that condemns it can be read as parodic play with power (which is similar to the sex acts with heterosexual train staff in the station buildings).

Importantly though, the invitation for sex that is performed in Extract 3 (on page 180) occurs within the context of the Palm Springs party. In the next extract (Extract 4, below) Edward explains that, at the Palm Springs party, “everybody there knew everybody else”. From this I understand that the invitation for sex is addressed to a specific audience, an audience which is ‘in the know’ and, consequently, an audience who will not only be able to decode the invitation, but who are also likely to appreciate its play on meaning.

Extract 4: Everybody there knew everybody else

- Jacqui so drag was just something that gay people did in their own (.) parties (.) private parties
- Edward yes yes
- Jacqui It wasn't something =
- Edward it wasn't something the public was admitted to
- Jacqui okay
- Edward to get in (5) you had to know somebody who was in (.) ah (.) like this Palm Springs party (7) possibly Yves (.) I don't know who invited me (3) but everybody there knew everybody else from previous meetings
- Jacqui okay
- Edward ah (.) ... if anybody who was unknown (4) gate crashed or walked in (4) >they didn't last< (.) they were quietly asked to leave

Sontag's (1999, p.54) point about this shared familiarity of "a way of looking at things" is that it gives this subculture its "private code" or "badge of identity." In other words, one must be initiated into the group to understand the code. Thus, the code works to exclude the uninitiated. In Edward's words, "anybody who was unknown [did not know the code]" was "quietly asked to leave". Arguably, it is this exclusivity that accounts for the absence of the train staff, guards, stokers, and firemen, the "favourite victims" of the antics at the Station Bar. While those men were involved in acts involving parodic play on power, it is doubtful that they were 'in' on the code (interpreted the acts as such). I argue that practices of inclusion (*vis-a-vis* private codes) and recognition at the Palm Springs party gave this space its character and marked it in relation to public space in which inclusion and recognition for homosexuality was not possible during apartheid.

THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTING HOMOSEXUALITY WITHIN HOMOSEXUAL TERMS

I have presented arguments that support various interpretations of the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' at the Palm Springs party. Various, these arguments build a description of a spectacular scene in which parody is employed to signify homosexual desire, trouble heteronormativity, flaunt resistance of the state censure of homosexuality, and foster a sense of acceptance and recognition. Sometimes, however, strategies for visibility could be problematic. This is illustrated in Edward's own encounter with the limitations that the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' inheres.

Extract 5 (below), which is labelled the ‘masculine homosexual man’, is taken from the same discussion about the Palm Springs party as Extract 3 ‘the belle of St Trinian’s’ (on page 180). This part of the narrative was separated out because it pertains to an issue that requires further discussion. In the original transcript, the utterances in the first half of this extract occur directly before the narrative presented in Extract 3, while the utterances in the second half of this extract occur directly after the narrative in Extract 3.

Extract 5: The Masculine Homosexual man

- Edward (6) and I was so much of a coward I wasn’t in drag
 Vera ((laughs))
 Edward because I was still pretending that a (.) no well certain things (.) um (15)
 Jacqui what were you scared of?
 Edward sorry?
 Jacqui what were you scared of? (3) o::r (.) ja
 Edward hhhh (5) I didn’t want to admit that (5) I still don’t (10) I still consider myself completely male (.) in every way except one (4)
 Vera ((short laugh))
 Edward ((short laugh)) so (.) ahh (.) ((cough)) that’s the way it was then
... (utterances presented in Extract 3 occur here) ...
 Edward and ahh (9) I scared the hell out of these people (5) because I knew I had to (5) dress up in some way or other (5) and (.) I had recently discovered (4) most of my:: fathers (3) army uniform (2) complete with pith helmet
 Jacqui hm
 Edward and this is what I rocked up in
 All ((laugh))
 Edward very long shorts (1) long Khaki shorts (5) and this pith helmet and everybody thought I was police ((laughs)) the panic was=
 Olivia = you must have scared the shit out of them
 Edward absolutely (.) I mean John was just running around trying to find a backdoor to run away
 All ((laugh))

In Extract 5 (above) Edward recounts his own ambivalence to the spectacle of cross-dressing. In particular, his ambivalence speaks to the difficulty of articulating homosexual desire outside of the heterosexual matrix. In the third line from the top of Extract 5, Edward recalls, “and I was so much of a coward I wasn’t in drag”. When Edward said this I

immediately assumed that he would be scared to dress in drag in case he was caught by the police.

Referring again to Bray's (1988) argument that cross-dressing has, historically, been the mode in which homosexual desire is made *visible*, the implication of being caught out in drag is that it identifies one as a homosexual. Thus, while one could always make excuses about how one came to be at a particular party, being caught out in drag was a bit like being caught with one's hand in the cookie jar. As an aside, the association of homosexuality with cross-dressing was not lost on the authorities. Later on in the apartheid era gay men who were caught cross-dressing were prosecuted under the Prohibition of Disguises Act (16 of 1969) (Cameron, 1994).

However, the police were not Edward's concern and his response provides, instead, a useful example of the limitations of understanding sexual difference in terms of sexual inversion. For Edward, the problem was how to represent homosexuality within homosexual rather than heterosexual terms. That is, as a man who is attracted to other men as a *man*. The difficulty in doing this lies in its challenge to what Butler (1990/1999) terms the heterosexual matrix, the ideological grid of intelligibility that conceals the operation of heterosexuality in structuring gender, and consequently, desire.

The question that the articulation of homosexual desire poses for Edward's gender identity is revealed in his statements in Lines 7 and 8 of Extract 5 (on Page 186) in which he argues "I didn't want to admit that. I still don't. I still consider myself *completely male*, in every way except one" (my emphasis). In this instance it is apparent how embedded normative gender

identities are in hegemonic representations of (hetero)sexuality and the implications of this for interpreting homosexual desire.

One implication of the traditional (heterosexual) structuring of desire as an attraction to the *opposite* sex is that it implies that a man who is attracted to another man is attracted to him as a woman. As a result, homosexuality has commonly been associated with femininity and, consequently, with a lack of manliness. For Edward, this is a difficult association to counter.

Garber (1997) argues that the trend to represent homosexuality in transvestic terms (and transvestism in homosexual terms) is rooted in a desire in contemporary culture to make difference visible and interpretable. In other words, we expect that where there are differences that they should be visible, and where we see differences we should be able know what they mean. According to Garber (1997), our desire to tell the difference is rooted in a need to tell ourselves apart. Garber (1997) asserts that it is the implications for one's own identity that fuels the desire for legibility. Arguably, homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is contingent on an other.

The desire for legibility presents a strong argument for the impetus behind cross-dressing in the apartheid era because it presented homosexuals with a way of saying 'we exist'. The importance of making this statement is understood in the context of an era in which the state ordered that homosexuality may not exist. Indeed, the criminalization of homosexuality meant that they could not make this statement in public (at least not without risking a jail sentence). So it was said privately instead.

Recognition of the fact that cross-dressing is a mode through which homosexual desire can be signified appears in an earlier statement by Edward. His statement was a response to a question about what had compelled him to attend the house parties. Edward's response appears in the Extract 6 (below).

Extract 6: I thought I was the only one in the world

Edward but ah (.) ahh (.) let's think now (5) what helped me (2) what started (.) look (6) what started me going was not (5) nothing to do with drag (6) but (7) to get you to understand (5) or to get me to understand where it started (5) like most (.) gay people (8) there was a time when I thought I was the only one in the world (5)

In this extract Edward argues that it was not cross-dressing *per se* (i.e. a transvestic fetish) that compelled him to attend the parties. I argue that the representations of homosexual desire, which were achieved through spectacles of *cross-dressing*, provided Edward with an alternative to the hegemonic representations of (hetero)sexuality. Edward points to the exclusionary effects of hegemonic representations of (hetero)sexuality when he describes feeling alone in the world. In this context then, the significations of homosexual desire can be understood as countering hegemonic and exclusionary representations of (hetero)sexuality. However, as I have already stated, this was not unproblematic for Edward.

In the second half of Extract 5 Edward provides an amusing anecdote about how he arrived at the Palm Springs party dressed-up in his father's military uniform. In doing so, Edward portrays himself as a *masculine* homosexual man. He does this because he is endeavouring to construct an alternate spectacle of homosexual desire. That is, as a man who is attracted to other men as a man. However, Edward inadvertently represents the very authority that the other guests were endeavouring to signify their difference (and escape!) from.

The humour in this anecdote reflects on the difficulty of (re)articulating desire when one is compelled to use the same symbolic resources. At first it invoked, for me, Audre Lorde's (1984, p.112) observation that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." However, it is in contrast to this very thinking that Butler (1990/1999) argues, "[t]here is only the taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very 'taking up' is enabled by the tool lying there".

In the context of the scene described in Extract 3 (on Page 180) I argue that the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' has performative force because it is recognized as a reformulation of (hetero)sexuality through which the articulation of homosexual desire can be read. However, whether it can be read as *subversive* is contingent on the reading of the spectacle as *troubling* normative formulations of (hetero)sexuality.

In response to Butler's formulation of drag (gender parody) as a form of gender subversion, Lloyd (1999) argues that this assumes that parody is necessarily read as troubling. Whereas, for Lloyd (1999, p.207), "[a] particular instance of parody may provoke simultaneous yet contradictory *responses* being seen as both transgressive and recuperable at the same time" (my emphasis). In this statement Lloyd highlights the implications of the audience's reception of the spectacle. This implies that the meaning of an act cannot be guaranteed by the person(s) performing it but that meaning also trades with an audience's interpretation of it.

In relation to the issue of the interpretation of parody as troubling, Edward's critique of the limitations of the formulation of heterosexuality through the heterosexual matrix shows

that there was indeed more than one reading of the spectacle. Edward's critique is particularly significant because the representation of homosexuality in the form of sexual inversion that Edward identifies in the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' and which writers such as Chetty (1994) and Bray (1988) describe, albeit in quite different contexts, is a model for homosexuality that has been sustained by popular cultural interpretations. It is a model that can be traced in early academic writing on the topic (e.g. Ellis, 1927; Krafft-Ebing, 1895).

Arguably, it is precisely because it had become convention to understand homosexuality in the form of sexual inversion that Edward's attempt to re-articulate homosexuality can more appropriately be read as potentially subversive. Endeavouring to reinterpret homosexual desire, Edward re-appropriated the symbolic resources at his disposal and *dressed-up* in masculinity rather than cross-dressing in femininity. However, rather than presenting an alternate construction of homosexual desire, Edward, dressed in his father's military uniform chose to parody masculinity through a military metaphor, thereby invoking the very institution (albeit the police rather than the military) that shut down possibilities around homosexual spectacles. It is interesting to consider whether Edward would have received the same reaction had he dressed up as a bodybuilder or a popular rugby player.

Edward's failed attempt to rearticulate homosexual desire shows that while his father's military uniform invoked a notion of masculinity, *vis-a-vis* signs of authority and power, these same signs opened up dimensions of meaning that were beyond what Edward had intended, or was in control of. In Chapter Four I draw on Martin (1994, p.112) who argues that "endeavours to highlight difference and defy norms are undermined when obvious

(and consequently, *visible*) differences are excluded, and allowed to remain invisible". And Kleese (2007), who argues that for a parodic spectacle to be subversive it has to engage critically with the relations of power that it invokes otherwise there is a risk that hegemonic power relations will be reproduced rather than undermined by it. Indeed, the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' occludes the articulation of homosexuality outside of heterosexual terms, and while Edward's spectacle of the 'masculine homosexual man' does not deal explicitly with the issue of race, race is partly responsible for understanding its failure to rearticulate homosexual desire.

Halberstam (1997) argues that masculinity is difficult to parody precisely because of its presumed naturalness. This is in relation to the perceived artificiality of femininity which, presumably, accounts for the greater ease with which the feminine position is appropriated in the spectacle of the belle of St Trinian's. At this point I would like to refer back to my comments on the St Trinian's girls and the signification of farce. In the context of this discussion, femininity acted, at the first level, as a sign for *farce* which was then re-appropriated, at the second level, in the resignification of (hetero)sexuality. However, while the feminine sign is emptied of meaning and reappropriated in the spectacle of the belle of St Trinian's, masculinity remains untouched.

Halberstam (1997, p.112) argues that the "assumed non-performative nature of masculinity" lends power to it. In the first instance it reaffirms the notion of the naturalness of masculinity that forecloses on the feasibility of re-appropriating it. Secondly, if masculinity cannot be re-appropriated in the way that femininity can be then there is little opportunity to interrogate it in the same way.

Edward's spectacle of the masculine homosexual man positioned masculinity as both the object and subject of desire. By placing masculinity in the position of the *object* of desire, masculinity was put in a position which is customarily relegated to the feminine. Given that the feminine position is also, customarily, a discounted position (i.e. a position that can be interrogated or re-appropriated) means that Edward's spectacle of the 'masculine homosexual man' could be read as undermining the masculine position.

Furthermore, Edward's father's military uniform was as much a signifier of whiteness as it was a signifier of masculinity. This conflation works to lend whiteness to masculinity so as to underscore it. Consequently, by bringing masculinity into view Edward implicates whiteness too. In light of the fact that Edward's audience were all white men it is not surprising that they were not receptive to this spectacle in the same way that they were receptive to the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's'. McClintock (1995, p.68) argues that "privileged groups display their privilege precisely through their right to ambiguity". Indeed, understanding privilege as a right to ambiguity seems to provide the most compelling account for the failure of Edward's spectacle of the masculine homosexual man.

THE PUBLIC SPECTACLE: INVESTIGATIONS AND FRONT PAGE NEWS

In Chapter One I discussed the efforts made by apartheid era legislators to control the population through the enforcement of a racially-based sexual regulation which, while primarily intended to keep black and white people apart, also criminalized homosexuality. In this discussion I argued that the attempt to erase homosexuality from the public conscious

through legislative amendments that were designed to keep it out of the public view was akin to closeting it.

According to Retief (1994), the consequences of the clampdown on homosexuality during apartheid is not been fully documented. There is evidence in my data of the implications of the clampdown on homosexuality during apartheid for the men who participated in this study, particularly in participants' talk about police raids on private homes, which was characteristic of this period.

Extract 7: Then everyone knew what was going on

- Vera ninety percent of the time they ((the police)) were invited in (.) they looked around (.) had a drink and left
- Edward ((laughs))
- Vera but that was in (.) the eighties (.) certainly not earlier (.) then there was (.) investigations and (2) prosecutions and (.) front pages of the newspapers and things like that
- Edward I think that was a bigger problem than the prosecutions
- Olivia ja
- Edward is the threat of publicity
- Jacqui outing the person?
- Vera well (.) th- the court case was (5) in the newspaper (.) and then everyone knew what was going on (3)
- Olivia hm:: about this indiscretion
- Vera yea
- Olivia and uh (.) because (.) because it was (3) illegal (.) so you went through the whole thing (10) and there were nights that I used to go to bed (.) ... that I used to be absolutely terrified (5) how I went to sleep I don't know (.) I was terrified of being (.) found in bed with a man
- Edward yes in those days there were two (8) two kinds of people you did not find in bed with (5) black (5) and your own (.) gender (3) that was definitely a no no
- Olivia mm (.) ja
- Vera and I think your gender was almost worse=
- Edward =it was

In Extract 7 (above) the participants describe a spectacle of homosexuality that is different to the ones described at the Palm Springs party. In this extract participants describe

spectacles of homosexuality that are constructed by media exposés of police raids on private house parties. Unlike the spectacle of the ‘belle of St Trinian’s’ and the ‘Masculine homosexual man’ at the Palm Springs party, the spectacle of the police raid has a different site of production and different sites of viewing.

The spectacles of homosexuality at the Palm Springs Party, the spectacle of the belle of St Trinian’s and Edward’s spectacle of the masculine homosexual man, were constructed by the participants themselves. As such, homosexual men were the subject of the spectacle. Further, there was little distinction between participant and audience. As Edward explained, “everyone participated”, thus, the participants were their own audience. Further, the constructions of the spectacles of homosexuality at the Palm Springs party involved a degree of inter-subjectivity and engagement that were intended to articulate and affirm homosexual desire.

By contrast, the media and the police are the sites of production of the spectacles of homosexuality that were constructed by media exposés of police raids. And, while the partygoers were involved in these constructions (the photographs and stories were about them), they had no hand in the way these spectacles were articulated. As such, they were the object of the spectacle. Further, because the news media is a public enterprise, the site of viewing was dragged out from the safety of the private realm and paraded before the public.

In Extract 7 (on page 194) participants describe the media spectacle as “more of a problem” than the prosecutions. While the participants do not clarify why this should be, my guess is

that it is precisely because the media made the spectacle a public affair. Thus, even when a case did not make it to court, or only resulted in a fine, information about the “indiscretion” would still have reached the public domain so that “everyone knew what was going on”. In the context of the times, public exposure would have invited criticism and condemnation – the antithesis of the construction of the spectacle in the context of the Palm Springs party.

EXACERBATING AND DIMINISHING THE PUBLIC SPECTACLE: BLACK MEN AND LESBIAN WOMEN

Extract 7 (on Page 194) concludes with brief references to race and gender. Extract 8 (below) is taken from a later point in the conversation and is presented here for the purposes of discussing the invisibility of black men and lesbian women in the context of the private house parties.

Extract 8: What are you doing there?

Olivia Klaus ... (3) he was the first one that I had come across ever to have a black boyfriend
Vera mm
Olivia Tonkie
Vera that's right
Olivia and (2) and those parties (.) oh for heavens sake if there was a (.) hint of a police raid
Edward mm
Olivia Tonkie was (.) out into
Edward ja
Olivia the back garden into the maids
Edward ja ja
Olivia room and locked away
Edward for a very good reason
Olivia Tonkie was out (.) I mean (3) firstly (.) to have a black in your company
Edward ja

Olivia was illegal (4) secondly (3) you were all men at this party (.) what are you doing there (11) all men (.) u::m (.) I th- I think that is why the the parties with (3) lesbians coming into it (.) afterwards (3) became (.) very popular and in (.) because you needed that woman over there

Talk about Tonkie, a black homosexual man, in the extract above is significant because it is the only mention of a differently raced person in the participant's talk about the private house parties. Therefore, it is interesting to observe that the house parties, which provided the opportunity to transgress sexual conventions, also made it possible to transgress racial conventions. However, Tonkie and Klaus's relationship was clearly exceptional. No doubt, this was as a result of the fact that, during apartheid, black South Africans could not travel to the city or live in the city without a special permit. Even when black South Africans obtained the requisite permission to be in the city, forced segregation in public and private spaces within the city eliminated opportunities for contact.

Midway through Extract 8 the participants make reference to "the maid's room". In white city suburbs, homes were designed with racial segregation in mind. Quarters for live-in domestic workers were built separate from the main residence. Thus, even within the intimate space of the domestic sphere structures were in place to keep black and white people apart. Arguably, the ideology underpinning spatial segregation also characterized the house parties and this also accounts for why Klaus and Tonkie's relationship was exceptional.

The participant's talk about Tonkie evidences how the anxiety around race and sexuality is heightened in the context of interracial homosexual intimacy. Arguably this is because interracial homosexual intimacy transgresses both racial and sexual boundaries. In the last

lines of the previous extract (Extract 7) the participants debate whether interracial intimacy or homosexual intimacy was more transgressive in the apartheid years. The participants conclude that homosexual intimacy was “definitely worse”. According to Hoad (2010, p.121), “the apartheid state was generally more concerned with sex between rather within its classification of racial groups”. However, it is arguable that when homosexual intimacy also takes the form of interracial intimacy it exacerbates the transgression. Consequently, Tonkie’s presence intensified the threat of a police raid and ensuing media exposé.

In contrast to the intensification of threat associated with the presence of a black man, the presence of lesbian women had the effect of diminishing the threat. On the issue of media exposés of police raids on private house parties, Olivia argues (in the last lines of Extract 8) that “lesbians...became very popular, because you need that woman”. Having lesbians on the scene meant that, in the event of a police raid, gay men and lesbian women could parody heterosexual coupling. Thus, in the context of the private house parties, parody was not only a strategy for making homosexuality visible, but could also be a strategy for making it invisible.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was on the complexities of homosexual visibility in public and private spaces during apartheid. My observations in this chapter illustrate that, in the context of apartheid, homosexual visibility in South Africa was problematic both because pervasive heterosexuality obscured difference and because normative conceptions of

sexuality played a central role in determining the manner in which homosexuality was made visible in the public realm. It also explicates the role of race and gender in exacerbating and diminishing homosexual visibility.

Hennessey (1995, p.31) describes visibility as a “struggle term” in gay and lesbian politics. According to Hennessey, for some, the struggle has been “a matter of display” while, for others, it is “the effect of discourses or of complex social conditions”. In this chapter, my analysis of public and private in/visibility during apartheid underscores the two dimensions upon which Hennessey articulates visibility as a struggle term.

CHAPTER 7: DRAG PERFORMANCE

This chapter deals with changes in the construction of spectacles of homosexuality that emerged along with socio-political changes and the dismantling of apartheid era legislation in the early and mid-1990s. A discussion of the constitutional changes that began in the early 1990s is provided in Chapter One. These changes meant that, for the first time in South African history, gay men and lesbian women could claim space in the public realm. This chapter focuses on the strategies that were employed by a group of white homosexual men to negotiate homosexual visibility at this time.

NEGOTIATING VISIBILITY IN A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

In the analysis, a distinction emerged between 'cross-dressing and dressing-up' and 'drag performance'. 'Cross-dressing and dressing-up' was a code that was used to tag participants' talk about private spectacles such as the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' and the spectacle of 'masculine homosexual man' at the Palm Springs party in the apartheid era, which were presented in the previous chapter. By contrast, 'Drag performance' was a code that I used to tag participants talk about public spectacles. In contrast to the spectacles of the 'belle of St Trinian's' and the 'masculine homosexual man', public spectacles were staged spectacles that appeared in commercial theatres. Descriptions of public spectacles appeared in participants' talk of homosexual visibility in the post-apartheid era.

The year 1995 marked the start of the Drag Revue in the city in which this study is located. The Drag Revue was a drag show that was staged in a commercial theatre where entrance was open to the paying public. The Drag Revue was produced annually from 1995 until 2001. In 2005 a special performance of the Drag Revue was staged at the behest of a charity.

The cover-page of the programme of the first Drag Revue show appears in Figure 4 (below). Alongside the cover is a short narrative titled “About Drag Revue”. The narrative appeared as an insert in the programme. The narrative “About Drag Revue” is presented here because it provides a useful description of drag in the 1990s, which can be used to compare it with the form it had taken previously.



Figure 4: About Drag Revue

The most immediate difference between the spectacles at the Palm Springs party and the spectacles constructed for the Drag Revue was that the Drag revue spectacles were staged in a public theatre. Prior to this, spectacles of cross-dressing had been limited to private performances at house parties, such as the spectacle of the 'belle of St Trinian's' and the 'masculine homosexual man' at the Palm Springs party. Thus, the Drag Revue marked an important shift in the site of the appearance of spectacles of homosexuality in the 1990s.

Arguably, this shift from the private into the public realm was a reflection of broader socio-political changes that were afoot at this time. In particular, that the constitutional protections that were being tabled at this time meant that the visibility of homosexuality was more viable than it had been in the past, meaning that it was less likely to attract the same negative attention from the state authorities. However, if the visibility of homosexuality was more viable at this time then it is difficult to make sense of the fact that the references to homosexuality in the narrative "About Drag Revue" are coded (implicit rather than explicit). The words homosexual, homosexuality or gay do not appear anywhere in the narrative "About Drag Revue" (in Figure 4 on page 201).

One explanation for the reason why homosexual, homosexuality, or gay, do not appear in the narrative "About Drag Revue" could be that an explicit reference to homosexuality was not necessary. The theatre is situated in an urban area and in South Africa in the 1990s urban areas were still almost exclusively 'white areas'. Consequently, the conflation, in (white) Western culture, of homosexuality with cross-dressing could then have been presumed to be familiar to the audience the Drag Revue was intending to address.

In the opening lines of the narrative "About Drag Revue" the author states that the Drag Revue "is about fellows in frocks". In addition, the writer uses feminine rather than masculine markers of identity to describe a cast who like to "gossip" rather than converse, are creative rather than inspired, and a little jealous rather than competitive. This can be read as a strategy for articulating homosexuality through the notion of sexual inversion. In previous chapters I have argued that homosexuality has, historically, been conceptualized in terms of sexual inversion. Indeed, it is this notion of homosexuality that gives cross-dressing its ability to signify homosexual desire. Here, again, homosexuality becomes visible through the appropriation of feminine markers in the narrative "About Drag Revue".

However feasible it is to argue that explicit references to homosexuality were unnecessary, the juxtapositioning of presence and absence in the second paragraph of the narrative, "About Drag Revue", is still ironic. In the second paragraph of the narrative the writer refers to "the individual", rather than the gay or the homosexual man. Perhaps the writer assumes that the reader has already worked this out from the coded references to homosexuality in the opening paragraph. Decoding "the individual" to mean the gay or the homosexual man is also key to understanding the statements that follow.

The writer states that for "the individual"/gay/homosexual the Drag Revue provides a "sense that I do matter after all." Here the word, "I", personifies "the individual", so the reference is to an individual person, and not to an individual thing. Further, it is an "individual" for whom "[a]ffirmation" is important because it "helps to heal the hurt of intolerance and hatred". In the context of a history of state-sanctioned prohibitions against homosexuality the statements pertaining to mattering and affirmation, in the context of the

Drag Revue, can be read as referring to the marginalization and exclusion of homosexuality under apartheid. However, it is ironic that an explicit reference should be made to this exclusion in a narrative that itself excludes any explicit mention of the word homosexual or gay.

The implied rather than explicit nature of the references to homosexuality in the narrative “About Drag Revue” is comparable to the official and unofficial knowing of the antics at the Station Bar, which I described in the previous chapter. In Chapter Six I drew on Derrida (1982) to complicate the notion of official and unofficial knowing. In particular, I argued that because official knowing derives its meaning from that which it is not, unofficial knowing, consequently, inhabits it. Similarly, in the context of the narrative “About Drag Revue”, I argue that while homosexuality is not present in terms of explicit reference to it, it underwrites the narrative and gives it meaning and, to the degree that it does this, it is present in the narrative. While the strategies of official and unofficial knowing were responses to the state censure of homosexuality under apartheid, it is interesting that this strategy was still being used in the context of the 1990s when apartheid ideologies were being challenged.

Perhaps this is because while the state prohibitions of homosexuality were being lifted, there was still concern about negative social attitudes toward homosexuality. In Chapter One I drew on Gevisser (1994) who argued that senior ANC members who sent messages of support to the first gay and lesbian Pride march that took place in Johannesburg in 1990 evaded invitations to participate in the marches because the first democratic elections were about to take place (in 1994) and the senior ANC members were aware that, for most South

Africans, homosexuality was still a taboo – and winning the election meant being in tune with prevailing social attitudes.

Therefore, it is arguable that the tactic to make homosexuality only marginally visible (implicitly rather than explicitly) in the narrative “About Drag Revue” was a deliberate strategy to manage its emerging visibility in a public sphere where homosexuality was still perceived to be taboo. Consequently, while the shift from the private to the public realm had the potential to open up space for democratic participation, in the context of prevailing social attitudes, it also meant that the visibility within the public realm had to be negotiated. In the remainder of this chapter I focus on strategies to negotiate visibility that were adopted by the white homosexual men who performed in the Drag Revue.

BORROWING LEGITIMACY

The importance of negotiating visibility impacted upon the objective of the drag spectacles. In Chapter Six I argued that in spectacles of cross-dressing at the Palm Springs party parody was variously employed to signify homosexual desire, trouble heteronormativity, and flaunt resistance to the state censure of homosexuality. However, in the 1990s, a new objective emerged. In the last lines of the narrative “About Drag Revue” it is stated that, “the objective, apart from providing entertainment, is to raise as much money for charity as possible.” I argue that the charitable objective of the Drag Revue was a strategy that was employed to position drag, and, by association, homosexuality, as a legitimate endeavour.

The charitable objective of the Drag Revue was a strategy to legitimize drag which was structured on the same principle of thinking that threatened to de-legitimize it. Either/or thinking is illustrative of thinking in terms of conceptual dichotomies. In this mode of thinking it is that it is assumed that each dimension of the dichotomy is mutually exclusive, and one dimension is given preference over the other.

In the context of the social attitudes against homosexuality, the conflation of homosexuality with drag performance meant that the Drag Revue risked being cast as an illegitimate enterprise. Therefore, it is interesting that in the narrative “About Drag Revue”, drag becomes conflated with charity. (They are conflated because charity is identified as one of the main objectives of the Drag Revue). By conflating the Drag Revue show with charity the Drag Revue becomes more than just a drag show, it becomes a charitable enterprise.

There are foreseeable implications of the drag-charity conflation. In thinking that is structured in terms of either/or dichotomies, the drag-charity enterprise must *either* be legitimate *or* illegitimate, but not both. Further, in the light of the moral imperatives of charitable work it would, arguably, be quite difficult to de-legitimize that endeavour – particularly in the context of the post-apartheid imperative for nation-building. Consequently, I argue that the manoeuvre to conflate drag and charity is a strategy that works to extend the legitimacy of the charitable enterprise to the Drag Revue shows – and homosexual visibility.

There were references to charity in all of the public notices about the Drag Revue shows that were accessed in the data collection phase of the study. These public notices took the

form of narratives in the various show programmes as well as in newspaper reports. References to charity also featured in the participants' talk about the Drag Revue shows.

The newspaper clipping that is presented in Figure 5 (below) was discovered in a box of newspaper clippings, photographs, and other paraphernalia that was lent to me by Olivia, an artist who performed regularly in the Drag Revue shows. The newspaper clipping is inserted here because it illustrates how charity was used to legitimize the Drag Revue shows and, consequently, homosexual visibility.



Figure 5: It's not a drag when it's for a good cause

In the newspaper clipping in Figure 5 (above), "It's not a drag" is an ironic statement in a blurb that accompanies a photograph of three men who are quite obviously dressed in drag.

Purposefully juxtapositioning a statement that says “It’s not a drag” alongside a visual that makes the opposite statement makes the irony appear to be intended.

One reading of the statement, “It’s not a drag when it’s for a good cause”, invites a connection to the suggestion in the narrative “About Drag Revue” (Figure 4, on page 201) that it took a lot of hard work to put on the Drag Revue shows. However, another reading of this statement suggests that the irony diminishes homosexual visibility. This is because the negation (“It’s *not* a drag”) at the level of denotation (where the word drag is taken to refer to a style of performance) provides the means, at the level of connotation, to reappropriate the term and to confer a new meaning on it. At this level, drag refers to an inconvenience or a bother, which “a good cause” “is not”. While this strategy works to legitimize drag as a charitable endeavour, it achieves this by diminishing the traditional association between drag and homosexual visibility. In the context of a history of the state sponsored prohibition of homosexuality, negation is problematic. This is particularly so as it occurred in the 1990s which was an era characterized by a challenge to apartheid era ideology.

However problematic the (in)visibility of homosexuality in the newspaper article titled “It’s not a drag when it’s for a good cause” is, it still provides a useful contrast to the media representations of homosexuality and drag during the apartheid years. In the previous chapter (Chapter Six) I discussed the issue of spectacles of homosexuality that were constructed by media reports of police raids on private house parties. In the discussion I argued that these constructions of homosexuality marked a shift in the sites of the production of the spectacles, the site where the spectacles were viewed, and the site of the audience, and that these shifts were particularly problematic because it meant that

homosexual men became the object rather than the subject of the spectacles. In spectacles of homosexuality that were constructed by media reports of police raids on private house parties, homosexual men were unable to control how the spectacles were constructed and the way in which homosexuality was represented.

While the drag spectacle in the newspaper clipping in Figure 5 (on Page 207) evidences the same shift in the site of the production of the spectacle, the site where the spectacle appears, and the site of the audience as the media spectacles in the apartheid era, it is evident that the men in the photograph (in Figure 5) participated in the construction of the spectacle. The men went to the trouble of dressing in their costumes and applying make-up, and then arranged themselves in a pose for the camera. However, what is interesting is that, in the apartheid years, newspaper articles made the homosexual visible through naming; here, ironically, the homosexual is not named but remains implicit. Thus, the political implications of public visibility are potentially both positive and negative. In the next section further consideration is given to the implications of the shift in the site of the production of the spectacle.

DRAG REVUE AND THE PRODUCTION OF A SPECTACLE

Moving the site of the spectacle from the private to the public realm meant that the production of the spectacle started to change in form. In Chapter Six, I present Edward's description of the spectacles of the 'Belle of St Trinian's' and the 'masculine homosexual

man'. One characteristic of these spectacles is that they were constructed out of bits and pieces that were readily available, a school gym and an old military uniform, for example.

More work went into the costumes for the Drag Revue. Arguably, this is because when spectacles are staged in a commercial theatre they have to compete with other entertainment for an audience and for financial viability. A sketch for a costume and a photograph of the final outcome of the costume appear in Figure 6 (below) and Photograph 1 (on page 211). This evidences the greater effort invested in the production of the spectacles for the Drag Revue shows compared to the spectacles of cross-dressing and dressing-up at the Palm Springs party.



back view / black mesh
dress

if you really want to
be very funky [sic]
wear this with a motor
bike helmet in black
it will create a Star
Trek feel.

Very adventures [sic].

Figure 6: Create a Star Trek feel



In addition to the greater effort that was put into costume design and manufacture for the Drag Revue shows, another difference in the production of these spectacles is that while the spectacles of the 'belle of St Trinian's' and the 'masculine homosexual man' were unrehearsed, the spectacles constructed for the Drag Revue were rehearsed.

Photographs 1: Very adventures

The extract below (Extract 9) is taken from an interview discussion with Connie who performed in the Drag Revue shows.

Extract 9: You master the on and off switch of that specific character

- Connie for two weeks we do this every night I've got to go in (.) I switch on and now I'm I'm Bette Middler or I'm going to do Shirley Bassey (.) I must take on that person (.) like an actual performer would do (.) you know you've got to actually go into that character (.)
- Jacqui how do you do that?
- Connie well (.) first of all (.) obviously with all the rehearsals that you go through so you're now come to rehearse to (.) to (.) to pick up the finer lines that you want to do that and that's how you should do it (.) so there (.) so (.) with all the rehearsals you now pick up (.) and for the Revue we would rehearse like three (.) three (.) three and a half sometimes four months (.) so there is a lot of rehearsal that goes in (.) so (.) you (.) master (.) the on and off switch of that specific character very easily

In this extract, Connie expresses the idea that a "specific character" can be "mastered." The mastering of characters is an aim that is familiar enough in the context of the theatre.

However, the degree to which the spectacles in the Drag Revue were engineered can be contrasted with the more casual constructions of the 'belle of St Trinian's' and the 'masculine homosexual man' in the era of the Palm Springs party.

In the past there had been little distinction between the site of the production of the spectacle and the site where the spectacle appeared. This is because both occurred in private, and the construction of the spectacle was contingent on the inter-subjectivity that occurred through engagement with an intimate audience who were also the participants. By contrast, in shifting the scene into the public realm, the Drag Revue created a distinction between the site of the production of the spectacle and the site where the spectacle appeared. This is because while the drag spectacles were rehearsed in private, they appeared on stage, in the public arena. 'Drag performance' is a term that emerges in participants accounts of the Drag Revue era when spectacles of homosexuality shifted from the private to the public realm and onto the stage.

Shifting the scene where spectacles of homosexuality occurred from the private realm into the public realm had a number of implications for the participants. In the first instance, the negotiation of visibility underwriting participation in the public realm was problematic because many people were not willing to participate publicly. At the same time, however, with the spectacles of homosexuality shifting toward public space, to continue to be included in the social scene that cohered around such spectacles meant being able to negotiate the visibility of public space.

Many of the people that I spoke to described their involvement in the Drag Revue as beginning off-stage. The efforts of stage hands and lighting controllers, for example, were not remunerated, but this involvement offered a degree of participation and access to a social scene that was beginning to be built up around the production of the Drag Revue shows. For some participants working off-stage was the first step to participating on-stage. Extract 10 (below) is taken from an interview with Joel who participated both off and on-stage in the Drag Revue shows.

Extract 10: Originally I wouldn't have done that

Joel look originally I wouldn't have done that (.) I didn't (.) done something like that at all (.) eh (.) I started in the Revue (.) with lighting (.) with music (.) that's what I did (.) eh (.) and it came actually as a fluke one night (.) the guy (.) that had to do a show (.) his nose started bleeding and they had to rush him to hospital (.) and there was nobody else to (.) to stand in (.) and it was sort of fifteen minutes before the show (.) so they shoved me into a mini dress (.) with a tights (.) tight leotard and what what (.) and put a wig on (.) and we did Old Spice and I did a good old lady

A second implication of shifting the site of the production of the spectacle from the private into the public realm is that it separated the participants off from one another and into two distinct groups. For the first time people participated in the spectacles either as a member of the audience or as a drag performer. This had not been the case previously.

Describing the spectacles of homosexuality at private house parties in the apartheid era, Edward argued (in Extract 3 on Page 180) that "there was no such thing as an audience, everybody participated". Arguably, spectacles of homosexuality at the private house parties were still performances in the sense that one was viewed. However, as one was also simultaneously a spectator there was little or no distinction to be made between insider and

outsider. When the spectacles moved into the public arena, it was suddenly possible to make this distinction.

The bifurcation between insider and outsider had implications for the construction of the spectacle. I have already argued that the Drag Revue, in bringing the spectacle into the public realm, and onto the stage in particular, meant that more work went into its production. The protracted production of the spectacle, which the engineering of sets, costumes and rehearsals necessitated, meant that there was more opportunity for the participants to engage with one another in the construction of the spectacle. However, as many of the participants were now relegated to the role of audience, this foreclosed on their opportunity to engage actively in the construction of the spectacles. This is because the audience only intersects with the trajectory of the spectacle at the point when it appears on stage. However, at this point (the point at which the spectacles become public) the spectacles of homosexuality that the audience is presented with have already been “mastered”.

Even when the audience was present its role was vastly different to what it had been at the private house parties. At the parties the intimacies of performer-audience relations meant that participation involved a much greater degree of inter-subjectivity because the participants were simultaneously both performer and audience. However, in the more formal context of the theatre people were not only separated in terms of the different activities that their modes of participation required, but also by the spatial dimensions of the theatre and the designation of separate spaces for viewing and performing. Thus, the

formal structure of the theatre both spatially and in terms of the modes of participation that it suggests, started to impact on the construction of the spectacles of homosexuality.

For the performers, the partitioning of the modes of participation meant that instead of negotiating the spectacles through the inter-subjectivity of an intimate group as had happened at the Palm Springs party, they had to “master” a “specific character” (Extract 9 on Page 211) that could be presented to the audience on opening night. The mastery associated with this mode of production became a means to distinguish the artists from the audience. Thus, the concept, ‘drag artist’, like the concept of a ‘drag performance’ emerges in the participants’ narratives with the shift of the appearance of the spectacles from private (the home) to public (the stage) spaces.

The shift of the appearance of the spectacles from private to public spaces also initiated a shift from amateur to professional spectacles. Carlson (2004, p.3) describes performance as the “the public demonstration of particular *skills*” (emphasis added). In contrast to the growing professionalism of the performers, the audience was relegated to the role of mere spectators. As spectators the audience could only witness the spectacles of homosexuality that appeared on stage before them, they could not actively participate in the construction of the spectacles in the way that they had at the Palm Springs party. Participation, as a spectator only, invited a degree of passivity that was different to the earlier form the spectacles of homosexuality had taken, and there were political implications for this.

According to Kohn (2008), a central argument in Rousseau’s ‘Letter to M. d’Alembert on the theatre’ (1748/1960 cited in Kohn, 2008), which is an early critique of theatre spectacles, is

that theatre spectacles are not capable of being politically progressive because they are isolating. According to Rousseau, although people view the theatre as a place where they come together with others, when one considers the nature of this co-presence, collectivity, or commonality, it is really only an illusion because people seldom interact at the theatre.

I have commented on the way in which the theatre created separate modes for participation in the spectacles of homosexuality in the Drag Revue shows. According to Kohn's (2008) reading of Rousseau, this characteristic of the theatre undermines opportunities for active participation and depoliticizes the theatre spectacles. Rousseau's point is that although the theatre brings people together, co-presence is not sufficient. It is important to consider the nature of the interactions that the space invites.

In Chapter Six I argued that in spectacles of cross-dressing at the Palm Springs party, parody was variously employed to signify homosexual desire, trouble heteronormativity, and flaunt resistance to the state censure of homosexuality. Importantly though, this was achieved through active participation and intersubjectivity. "*Besteek my asseblief*", the subversive performance of an invitation for homosexual sex in the official language of a state that condemned it, for example, hinged on the other guests engaging with the invitation and decoding it for its meaning. I also argued that the reciprocity of the invitation exchange was guaranteed because it was addressed to an audience who would appreciate its play on meaning.

The same guarantee for reciprocity does not exist in a commercial theatre where entrance is gained through the purchase of a ticket. However, this is the political potential of public

space. It offers a degree of diversity that is absent in the private sphere. Consequently, public space opens up the possibility for encounter in ways that private spaces cannot. The Palm Springs party, for example, while providing participants with a sense of affirmation in a climate of state sanctioned prohibition, was limited to a small inner-circle of knowing allies. Therefore, the possibility to engage more broadly was curtailed. The limitations of engaging with a small private group that lacks diversity is apparent when one considers the constraints within which Edward worked to articulate an alternate spectacle of homosexual desire. Arguably, Edward's endeavours might have been made easier if he had had the opportunity to engage with a more diverse community that offered alternate articulations of homosexuality.

According to Kohn (2008), Rousseau acknowledged that the theatre has political potential because of the exposure to diversity that such public space invites, but that this was undermined by the orientation toward profit. Kohn argues that, in Rousseau's opinion, commercial theatres are more likely to acquiesce to the tastes of the masses in order to maintain their commercial viability than to open up and/or challenge the views and opinions of the paying public.

Rousseau's (cited in Kohn, 2008) critique of the political potential of theatre spectacles is relevant to this study. Pandering to the tastes of a public that has, historically, been hostile to the idea of homosexuality is taken up later on in this chapter in a discussion of the role of representations of ethnicity, race and class in the Drag Revue performances. The focus of the remainder of this section is on Kohn's observations of Rousseau's critique of theatre spectacles in terms of segregating modes of participation.

According to Kohn (2008), Rousseau argued that one implication of looking at others from the position of spectator is that other people become objects rather than co-constructors of a shared world. Thus, the theatre, in Rousseau's view, exacerbates a subject-object dualism. One implication of this split is that the other (the object) is imbued with artificiality. It is taken to be a fabrication because performance is about mastering conventions ("mastering a specific character"), and this can be contrasted with the assumed naturalness, trueness or genuineness of the viewing subject.

The theatricality that sets the performers apart from the audience also sets the reality of the performers' actual life apart from the role/character that is portrayed on stage. Thus, the 'other' object can also be contrasted with the performing subject. I observed that in shifting the site where the spectacle appeared from private (home) to public (stage) spaces and with the concomitant shift from amateur to professional spectacle a distinction began to emerge between what was perceived to be the real and the performed self. This issue is elaborated upon shortly.

The theatricalization of the spectacles in the Drag Revue lent them a degree of artificiality, and while Butler (1990/1999) has argued that artifice and exaggeration in drag performances are mechanisms for the queering of essentialized notions of gender, in the context of the theatre the notion that 'appearance is an illusion' is a given. An important question that the assumption of artificiality gives rise to is, whether or not it complicates the politics of theatricalization in the Drag Revue shows.

The extract below (Extract 11) is taken from an interview with Connie. I have inserted the extract here because it illustrates how locating the spectacle in the theatre, invokes, in the discussion, the notion that gender “is purely performance”.

Extract 11: This is purely performance

- Connie my opinion is personally (.) performing (.) I love to (.) why women? I think (5) it's it's you know you're using that (.) besides (5) gays being very u:m (6) don't mis::understand the word (.) ah (.) exhibitionist (.) they like to exhibit (.) perform (.) be creative (.) so ja (.) mixing that with this opportunity of these divas that you could listen to endlessly way back then (.) we just used to listen to it and we had to interpret it (.) so yes (.) and also wanting to be (.) the woman (.) or (.) not wanting to be the woman (.) but identifying (.) inside (.) that (.) that you're different to to to the guy working as a mechanic there on the car (.) you're different
- Jacqui what is it that you identify with?
- Connie to to me personally (.) as I say (.) my opinion (.) or or my personal experience is (4) with this (.) is purely (.) performance (.) I do not want to be a woman (.) I don't have the desire to go for a sex change and come walking down the street dressed like that (.) don't misunderstand me (.) I want to stay in myself (.) I'm quite happy with myself

This is not the first time that the idea that femininity “is purely performance” emerged in the analysis. In Chapter Six I engaged with the notion of the artificiality of femininity that coheres in the work of farce in the spectacle of the ‘belle of St Trinian’s’. In that discussion I critiqued a spectacle that opened up femininity for interrogation while leaving masculinity untouched. Some of that critique applies here too. This is because the tendency to associate femininity with artificiality provides an explanation for the relative ease with which a male actor can appropriate a feminine position in theatre performances. However, in the process of giving an account of ‘performing women’ (in Extract 11, above) Connie’s reflection on femininity as performance prompts a reflection on the performativity of masculinity too. This is interesting in the light of the fact that masculinity is not commonly associated artificiality or performance.

In the second and third lines of the Extract 11 (on page 219) Connie argues that “gays being ... exhibitionist”, they “like to exhibit, perform, be creative”. Arguably, exhibitionism and creativity are important character traits for someone wanting to have a successful career on the stage, but they are also customarily feminine traits. Literature on the subcultural origins of drag on the nineteenth century stage makes an appropriate link between performance and femininity. According to Ware (1909, cited in Senelick, 1993, p.84) the term drag entered into theatrical parlance in England in the mid-1860s when it was defined as a “theatrical petticoat or skirt used by [male] actors when *playing* female parts” (emphasis added). Thus, the association of femininity with performance and the theatre, which Connie draws upon in the narrative above, is not exceptional.

What is important, however, is that the theatrics of gender which Connie’s “performing women” invokes, illustrates the notion of gender as performance that Butler (1990/1999) critiques. In Chapter Three I discuss Butler’s argument for a distinction between gender performativity and the notion of gender as a performance. According to Butler, gender performance presupposes a subject, an actor who inaugurates the performance, whereas gender performativity does not.

What is interesting about the notion of ‘gender as a performance’ that Connie’s narrative (in Extract 11 on Page 219) invokes is that it is complicated in his attempt to explain why he likes performing women. Connie’s description of “gays *being*” invokes an essentialized notion of the self. His statement suggests that “exhibitionism”, creativity and a love of performance are all *essential* characteristics of gay men. In other words, gay men are necessarily, or naturally, so inclined. Further, that these characteristics belong as much to

“divas” as they do to “gays”, suggests that gay men and divas are essentially very much alike. Thus, essential, or natural characteristics are being invoked to explain why gay men are suited to performing divas – because, they *are* divas. The photograph (below) is of Connie performing to a song titled “I’m a woman’, which is sung by Bette Midler.



Photograph 1: ‘I’m a woman’, a song sung by Bette Midler

It is ironic that just as Connie gets to the point about the essential gay/diva, that he suddenly changes tack and argues against the very notion of an essential feminine self. Connie’s response to my question about what it was that he identified with in performing women is devoted to denouncing the essential diva “inside” him and arguing instead that in his experience, “this was all purely performance”.

Attempting to understand the contradiction in Connie's "wanting to be, the woman, or, not wanting to be the woman" in this narrative, I drew on Butler's (1990/1999) observations of the work of inversion in drag spectacles. According to Butler drag implies a double inversion. The first inversion suggests that beneath the outside performance of femininity is the body of a man. A second inversion simultaneously suggests that beneath the outside body of the man is the (inner, psychic) essence of a woman. According to Butler, these inversions mock both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity – the two dimensions which Connie draws upon in his explanation for "performing women".

I argue that it is the potential problematic that these inversions invoke that accounts for Connie's swift tack. In particular, I argue that Connie is responding to the threat to masculine hegemony that the confusion invoked by these inversions invites. After all, if there is nothing on the outside to signify what he is like on the inside, then how could we tell the difference between the man and the female persona? If femininity is nothing but its masquerade then Connie might *really* be the woman/diva he performs. Consequently, Connie repairs the situation his reasoning about the performative aspect of (a feminine) identity leads him to by juxtapositioning it, later in the conversation, with a naturalistic approach to his (masculine) gender identity.

Having argued that this (femininity) is "purely performance", Connie is careful to point out that he has no "desire to go for a sex change". The veiled reference to his penis is significant because the penis is the primary signifier of difference. Thus, I read Connie's statement about a sex change to mean that he still wants to be able to tell the difference.

In previous chapters I drew on Garber's (1997) argument that it is the implications for one's own identity that fuels the desire for legibility. According to Garber, it is customary to assume that where there are differences between people that those differences should be visible and interpretable. Garber argues that the impetus for wanting to tell the difference stems from an anxiety that, without difference, one could not identify or lay claim to a discernible self. Linking this argument to Derrida's (1982) observation that conceptual dichotomies are always hieratical, it is arguable that the desire for legibility involves laying a claim to a particular subject position.

It is significant that Connie's insistence about having a penis occurs at a point in the conversation directly after he reflects on the performative aspect of gender identity. In Chapter Three I present Butler's (1990/1999) argument that there is no 'ground' for identity. Rather, that identity is a 'doing' that is articulated in and through discourses that cite already established formulations of knowledge, ways of being, and it is this (re)citation which produces the subject. Butler's theorizing of identity formation coheres in Connie's narrative on performing women. The implication of this thinking is that the subject cannot be thought of as having any true essence or ontological foundation. It means that Connie's "being" is simply a fabrication, a signifying effect. The problem is that while Connie is prepared to accept this about his femininity ("performing women"), it is a potentially problematic framework through which to view his masculine identity.

Connie's utterances about a sex change constitute a veiled reference to his penis that invokes not only an understanding of primary (natural) difference but also the idea, which is well entrenched in patriarchal culture, that the penis is the phallus. In other words, having a

penis (not wanting to go for a sex change) is not simply about being able to tell the difference but about Connie (re)establishing the 'ground' upon which he is able to assume a position in society that masculinity affords him. Therefore, when Connie claims that "I do not want to be a woman. I don't have the desire to go for a sex change and come walking down the street dressed like that. Don't misunderstand me. I want to stay in myself, I'm quite happy with myself" I argue that he is reasserting the social power that his masculine identity affords him rather than reflecting unproblematically (or innocently) on having, or not having, a penis. In this instance, Connie's insistence on a 'ground' can be read as a strategy to reinstate masculine hegemony performatively. In other words, in claiming to have a penis, Connie is claiming (to have) the phallus. It is interesting that he makes this claim at precisely the point in the narrative when he realizes that he is simultaneously potentially excluded from it because he is different to the mechanic. I shall come back to this shortly.

Connie's claim to have a penis works to (re)instate the phallus performatively. Understanding power not as something that can be assumed but which must be performatively (re)appropriated and (re)instated is a useful framework for understanding the impetus behind Connie's "performing women".

I have already argued that Connie draws on the role of the performative in his account for the impetus behind performing women. I have also argued that although Connie's statement about "gays *being*" invokes the notion of an essential self, which he argues his performance is an expression of, Butler's (1990/1999) critiques as an illusion. According to Butler, what is taken to be the essential self is really only constituted performatively

through everyday practices. This is something that Connie does indeed make reference to in his reflection of the everyday “performance” of femininity, which includes exhibitionism and “creativity”. Thus, performance and performativity are transversed in Connie’s narrative about “performing women”, and this happens with interesting effect.

A poignant moment occurs in Connie’s narrative when he argues that performing women signals that “you’re different to the guy working as a mechanic there on the car”. The role of motor mechanic is another performative; it is the ‘doing’ of a masculine identity. What makes this statement significant is that Connie is a motor mechanic by trade. It is interesting therefore that he chooses the signifier “mechanic” as representing a hegemonic masculinity from which he is excluded. Arguably, what is happening at this point in the narrative is that Connie’s conscious reflection of his “performing women” (the diva) is carried over to a reflection of his performing masculinity (the motor mechanic). Perhaps, seeing himself as different to the mechanic implies that his ‘real’ life is essentially a masquerade. He performs the tasks of a mechanic, but *is* not a mechanic. Conscious of this, the mechanic is a private performance, with the anxiety that this schism creates possibly being alleviated by the public performance of drag.

However, the implication of viewing masculinity as “pure performance” is that the phallus loses its ground. This is because masculinity as a performative suggests that phallic power is not necessarily or intrinsically connected to the penis. Thus, what occurs in Connie’s narrative is that in stumbling upon the performative aspect of his gendered identity Connie also stumbles upon the concomitant loss of an intrinsic ground to secure phallic power. Butler (1993, p.79) describes this as the realization that “what operates under the sign of

the symbolic may be nothing other than precisely that set of imaginary effects which have become naturalized and reified as the law of signification”.

In response, Connie attempts to recoup the loss through the performative reinstatement of phallic power, which he does, ironically, by insisting on a ground for identity. That is, on the very thing that is lost in a reflection of the performative aspect of gender identity. What is particularly salient in this strategy is that it illustrates Butler’s (1992b) point that phallic power is installed performatively. The difference between Butler and Connie is that while Butler is excited by the subversive potential of installing symbolic power performatively (she explores this in an essay on the lesbian phallus) Connie is concerned to reinstate masculine hegemony. Arguably, this is because not having the phallus signifies the same lack through which femininity has, traditionally, been signified.

In Photograph 2 (on Page 221) Connie performs in drag to a song titled ‘I’m a woman’. The song has been performed previously by Bette Midler who is a gay icon, and song “diva”, in Euro-American culture. The lyrics in the last lines of the song read:

I got a twenty dollar gold piece, says there’s nothing that I can’t do, I can make a dress out of feeding sacks, *I can make a man out of you, ‘cause I’m a woman* (emphasis added).

To understand how a woman can make a man, I draw on Tyler (1991, p.41) who argues that drag “en-genders differences that supports man’s illusion of wholeness through a fantasy of woman’s lack”. Tyler uses the term “phallic woman” to refer to men who use drag defensively, “to hold femininity and the lack that it signifies at a distance” (p. 40). According to Tyler, masquerading as the phallic woman allows the drag artist “to have (the illusion of

having) the phallus” (p.42). Thus, Connie’s “performing women” can be viewed as the recuperation of male power through the representation of women’s lack. And, therefore, while Butler (1990/1999) argues for the political utility of drag spectacles, Kohn’s (2008) account of Rousseau’s critique of the subject-object dualism that the theatre invites illustrates the potential limitations of a politics of visibility. The recuperation of power through representations of lack is a theme that is evident in ‘other’ performances too.

(RE)PRODUCING CLASS, ETHNICITY AND RACE IN THE DRAG REVUE

Drag is customarily understood as a performance in which gender is parodied and, in particular, where men dress in women’s clothing. This is the form that drag took in the Drag Revue shows. However, in addition to parodying gender, some performances also involved the parody of class, ethnicity and race.

Olivia provided me with copies of the Drag Revue show programmes for the years 1995-1999; 2001 and 2005. The show line-up, listed in each show programme, drew predominantly on Euro-American music. However, a number of performances that drew on South African folk music were also included. The show programme of the very first Drag Revue show appears in Figure 7 (on page 228).

Programme

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. PUT A LITTLE MORE MASCARA ON | ★ OLIVIA |
| 2. BIG SPENDER | ★ OLIVIA |
| 3. LIGHT UP THE LIGHTS | ★ BEULAH |
| 4. MY LITTLE WOODEN SHOE | ★ DAVE & SHAUN |
| 5. KEN JY TANT MOSSIE | ★ WAYNE |
| 6. BARCELONA | ★ DANE & ANDY |
| 7. KOM DANS KLARADYN | ★ EDDY |
| 8. CINDERELLA | ★ THE CAST |



I N T E R V A L

30 MINUTES



- | | |
|---|--|
| 9. WHITE ROSE OF ATHENS | ★ DANE |
| 10. GO WEST - VILLAGE PEOPLE | ★ THE BOYS |
| 11. I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU | ★ BEULAH |
| 12. PATA PATA | ★ ANDY |
| 13. I'VE NEVER BEEN TO ME | ★ WAYNE |
| 14. I KNOW HIM SO WELL | ★ NIVEN |
| 15. BALLET | ★ SHANE |
| 16. I DON'T CARE IF THE SUN DON'T SHINE | ★ OLIVIA |
| 17. ACID QUEEN | ★ BEULAH |
| 18. <u>FINALE</u> | ★ ENTIRE CAST |
| 19. THE LIVING YEARS | ★ DON & CO. WITH
MADGE & FRONT-OF-HOUSE |

Figure 7: Drag Revue programme, 1995

I have inserted the programme here because, in addition to the stock performances of songs sung by “divas” such as Marilyn Monroe (‘I want to be loved by you’) and the disco classic, ‘Go West’, sung by the pop group the Village People – a hit in gay clubs and bars in Europe and America – are well known Afrikaans folk songs : ‘Ken jy tant Mossie’ (Do you

know aunt Mossie), '*Kom dans Klaradyn*' (Come and dance Klaradyn) and Miriam Makeba's famous song, '*Pata Pata*' (Touch Touch). Makeba was a famous South African singer and anti-apartheid activist who lived in exile for many years.

The mix of Euro-American and South African folk music in the show line-up in the 1995 Drag Revue programme in (on page 228) is characteristic of all the Drag Revue shows. In 2006, the song '*Loftus Lied*' (Loftus Song), which was originally performed by Herbie and Spence, a young white male duo, was performed in the Drag Revue show. Olivia, a drag queen with a penchant for parodying Patricia Lewis who is a well-known South African folk singer, performed to this song.

Patricia Lewis sings in Afrikaans and English, but has a mainly Afrikaans following. *Loftus* is a reference to *Loftus Versfeldt* (Loftus Field), which is a rugby stadium located in Pretoria, the country's capital city. In Photograph 3 (below) Olivia is wearing a long blonde wig in the style of Patricia Lewis. Olivia is holding a rugby ball, and is surrounded by (physiological)



women who are dressed in rugby gear. In South Africa, Patricia Lewis and rugby are signifiers of Afrikaner identity.

Photograph 2: *Loftus Lied*

In ordinary circumstances – outside of the context of the Drag Revue show – a picture of this nature (a blonde ‘Patricia Lewis’ posing with a rugby ball) could be seen as titillating the heterosexual male fantasy. However, this use is subverted in the context of the Drag Revue where the hegemonic masculinity of rugby is undermined by having women appear in rugby shirts, although this may only be partially achieved. In South Africa, women have generally only been allowed to support, but not infiltrate rugby. In the light of this, the position of the women in the *Loftus Lied* photograph in relation to Olivia, a man who occupies the centre space, is symbolic of the position women occupy in rugby in South Africa.

An important observation about the parody in the Drag Revue performances is that the Drag Revue shows marked a shift away from simple practices of dressing-up and cross-dressing. The Drag Revue extended the grounds of problematization beyond a simple undermining of the male/female binary to commenting on power relations within which gender is infused. This observation is extended in a discussion about the Briels, a family that was an icon of Afrikaner Nationalist morality, which appears later on in this chapter.

In the third Drag Revue show staged in 1997 *Silwer Maan*’ (Silver Moon) appears in the show line-up, and the song ‘*Sonbrillitjies*’ (Sunglasses) appears in the show line-up in 1998. In 1999, ‘*Daai Twee Tannies*’ (Those two aunts), ‘*Seesand en sonskyn*’ (Sea-sand and sunshine) and ‘*Molo Sisi*’ (Hello Sister) were performed in the Drag Revue show. Unfortunately, most of the names of the folk singers who originally performed these songs could not be traced. It is possible that the performance titles listed in the Drag Revue show programmes are adaptations of the original song titles.

While it was not possible to trace all of the original folk performers whose music was incorporated in performances in the Drag Revue shows, the language of the titles of the performances provide clues to the race and ethnic characteristics of the music. The songs with Afrikaans titles signify Afrikaans ethnicity and 'white' race, while '*Pata Pata*' and '*Molo Sisi*' (Hello Sister) identify Xhosa ethnicity and 'black' race.

All of the performances in the Drag Revue shows, including those I have referred to as Euro-American, involved representations, not only of gender, but of economic class, race, and ethnicity. However, in my analysis of representations of class, race and ethnicity in the Drag Revue performances I chose to focus on performances that drew on South African folk music. This decision was informed by my observation that the performances that drew on South African folk music appeared to present more overt or purposeful parody of class, ethnicity, and race than the performances based on Euro-American music. For the purposes of discussing representations of class, ethnicity and race in performances in the Drag Revue shows, I shall focus on two performances: 'The Briels' and 'Pata Pata'⁴.

⁴ In Chapter Five I wrote that information about the Drag Revue performances was gathered retrospectively from verbal accounts that were recorded in interviews; from the text and visual information in the Drag Revue show programmes; from participants personal photographs; newspaper reports; and from the video footage of some of the early Drag Revue shows. This information was more complete for some performances than it was for others. Consequently, I have chosen to base my analysis on performances for which adequate data was obtained.

A spectacle of the Afrikaner: Parodying ethnicity and class

The Briel family were popular Afrikaans folk singers in the 1950s and 1960s. Briel was a family name. Frans Briel (b.1919) married Susanna (Sannie) Venter (b. 1923) in 1942. They had met each other that same year while looking for work in Bloemfontein. Frans and Sannie Briel had both been orphaned at a young age, and had grown up in children's homes. In Bloemfontein, Frans found state employment on the railways where he worked as a train driver and Sannie worked at a number of theatres as an usher. The couple had two children, Anita (b.1949) and Fransie (b.1954).

The Briel family moved to Pretoria soon after Anita was born. In Pretoria, Frans and Sannie Briel both found work at Yskor, an apartheid era iron and steel corporation that was owned by the state. At home, Frans Briel composed songs and wrote music that Sannie would sing along to. One of Sannie's brothers made a short recording and sent it to Arthur Harris at the Trutone record company. In 1955 the Briel's released their first record titled '*My Vader*' (My Father) on the front cover and '*My Moeder*' (My Mother) on the reverse side. In 1956, at the age of six, Anita Briel began singing with her parents.

The Briel family sang in Afrikaans and the themes were typically about love, family and marriage. This is evident in song titles such as: '*pappie se liefde*' (father's love); '*my hart klop net vir jou*' (my heart beats only for you); and '*geluk met jou troudag*' (congratulations on your wedding). The Briel family recorded 482 songs during their music career.

In the introduction chapter I discuss the apartheid state's policing of sexuality. In this discussion I argued that normative (hetero)sexuality was central to the patriarchal ideology of Afrikaner nationalism. In the context of this political era, proclamations of normative heterosexuality in the lyrics of the songs sung by the Briels can be seen as representing this ideology. A photograph of Frans, Sannie and Anita Briel appears on the cover of one of their records. A copy of the record sleeve is inserted in Figure 8 (below).



“Die Briels” (The Briels) is the title of the record album. The subtitle of the record is *“So het hulle gesing”* (This is how they sang). Unfortunately, it was not possible to trace the release date of this record. However, as Anita is still quite young in this photograph it is likely that the record was released in the late 1950s.

Figure 8: *Die Briels*

The Briels nuclear family unit served as an iconic representation of the heteronormative ideal they sang about. It was this ideal that was put forward by the state in this era (the same era as the Palm Springs party). However, in the context of rapid socio-political change in the 1990s, this ideal became the material for parodic play in the Drag Revue shows. In Extract 12 (below), participants describe the “morbid” and “deadpan” style of the Briel family which was parodied in performances of ‘The Briels’ in the Drag Revue shows.

Extract 12: The deadpan faces

- Vera and another number that's very popular and a lot of the audience don't understand are The Briel's but because of the way it's done (.) have you seen any of the Briels?
- Olivia that was on the last one (.) the Afrikaans number with the three
- Vera the father and the mother and the daughter (.) and that goes down very very well (.) even though a lot of them don't understand Afrikaans (.) but it's the whole performance that they enjoy and that gets more and more out of hand as the show (.) progresses
- Olivia ja
- Vera in the end the wigs even fly off
- Jacqui what is so appealing about that performance?
- Vera I'm not sure (.) I think just about the stupidity of it (.) of it all (.) because it's (.) stupid (.) would you say stupid?
- Olivia ja::: (.) and that whole thing with that Afrikaans music being so morbid (.)
- Vera and the deadpan faces
- Olivia and the total deadpan and (.) that brings that (5) comedy out in that total deadpan face
- Jacqui you're joking about something kind of real?
- Olivia oh yes (.) and maybe that makes them feel comfortable with it (.) I don't know

In the Drag Revue, 'The Briels' were performed by three men. One of the men dressed in men's clothing to represent the father, Frans Briel. The other two men dressed in women's



clothing to represent the mother and daughter, Sannie and Anita Briel. During the performance they stand together in their family unit: father, mother and daughter. The man in the role of 'father' pretends to play guitar while all three lip sync to the lyrics of a song sung by the Briel family. Their faces are purposefully expressionless. A photograph of the 'The Briels', which appeared as an insert in a Drag Revue show programme, is presented in Photograph 4 (left).

Photograph 3: The deadpan faces

Further into the performance the 'daughter' lifts her skirt, showing her underwear (and penis) to the audience. They continue to sing along; the 'parents' are seemingly unaware of the daughter's behaviour. The 'daughter' repeats the flash a number of times and the audience laugh. After a while 'mother' is alerted to what is happening; she pulls her 'daughter's' skirt down and gives her a stern look. 'The Briels' continue to sing along to the song. As the performance proceeds the 'daughter' continues to show her underwear/penis and the 'mother' gets increasingly upset about it. The performance ends, as the participants describe, with the 'mother' and 'daughter' tearing each other's wigs off.

Initially, 'The Briels' performance is an iconic representation of the Briel family. In Chapter Two I write that iconic signs are signs which bear some resemblance to the concept to which they refer. In 'The Briels' performance, the dress and performance style of the Briel family is replicated and presented along with their music, so that 'The Briels' look and sound like the original Briel family. However, at the level of denotation, the performance is, simultaneously, an iconic representation of heteronormativity around which the patriarchal ideology of Afrikaner nationalism coheres. But, as the performance progresses, it becomes apparent that the iconic representation of the Briel family, and the ideal which they represent, has been reworked.

The dress, performance style, and the music of the original Briel family that is incorporated into a performance of 'The Briels' in the Drag Revue show is only intended to form the 'ground' (original) upon which the parody trades. The crass ("stupid") sexualisation of 'The Briels' in the Drag Revue performance creates a critical distance between it and its original.

At one level, the sexualisation of the Briel family in 'The Briels' performance does some of the same work as Connie's narrative on performing women. It works to reveal the body beneath the clothes and the assumed ground for identity. However, it also does much more than this.

In their discussion of 'The Briels' performance, the participants identify the performance as "the Afrikaans number" (Extract 12 on Page 234). Arguably, this is because the 'The Briels' performance draws on signifiers of Afrikaner ethnicity. This includes dress and performance style, but works more specifically through the music of the Briels and the language in which their songs are performed. Collectively, these signifiers create a spectacle of the Afrikaner, which differentiates the Afrikaner in an otherwise unmarked racial category of 'whiteness'. Consequently, the performance is not only a revised iconic representation of the Briels and the heteronormative ideal they represent, but of Afrikaner ethnicity and 'whiteness' too⁵.

'The Briels' performance is a performance of ethnicity (which implicates national and racial identity) that works to show up the performative aspect of those identities by parodying their mundane everydayness (the "morbid", "deadpan faces"). By bringing this into view 'The Briels' performance displaces this right to ambiguity and, in doing so, opens it up for

⁵ It is important to say something about the way in which I approach the notions of ethnicity and race. I agree that ethnicity and race are interrelated; both terms refer to a set of socially constructed boundaries in political, economic, cultural, social, moral, and spatial terms (see Nagel, 2000). In South Africa, however, race is generally taken to refer to visible markers such as hair or skin colour; these sorts of distinctions were written into the laws on racial segregation. Ethnicity, on the other hand, is generally understood to refer to differences in language, region, and culture. For the purposes of this discussion I will use these dimensions to distinguish between ethnicity and race.

interrogation. Thus, 'The Briels' parody evidences an extension and opening up of possibilities (for interrogating whiteness and heteronormativity). However, the opening up contained within it the possibility of other, potentially more subtle, exclusions.

In previous chapters I argued that in order for a spectacle to be subversive it has to engage critically with the relations of power that it invokes otherwise there is a risk that those relations of power will be reproduced rather than undermined by it. In relation to this concern, I argue that while 'The Briels' performance distanced itself from the conventional morality underpinning Afrikaner nationalism, the manner in which this was done was problematic. The argument is presented in the remainder of this section.

I have stated that 'The Briels' performance was a crass caricature of bad social taste that worked to create a critical distance between it and the original Briels (as well the nationalist, racist, and (hetero)sexist ideologies they represented). I also stated that the drab apparel and "deadpan" faces of the performers brought into view the mundane (performative) aspect of Afrikaner ethnicity around which these ideologies cohered. More than this, however, I argue that in the context of potentially far reaching socio-political transition in the 1990s, the drab apparel and the "deadpan" faces also symbolized what was rapidly becoming an outdated ideology.

Of course, it could be argued that this parody of the original Briels, and the ideology they represented, was itself rather *passé*. After all, when 'The Briels' performance took to the stage in 1996, the first democratic elections had already taken place. Arguably, within the context of the rapid socio-political changes taking place in South Africa at this time, a

critique of the old ideologies was a bit of old hat. It is even possible to suggest that the impetus for distancing at this time stemmed from the fact that the performers, who were all white men, were as implicated in the old ideologies as the Briel family were. And, therefore, that the critique of old ideologies which coheres in the spectacle of the Afrikaner in 'The Briel family' performance appears, at this time, for the purposes of distancing the performers themselves from the old ideology.

The problem is the manner in which the performers constructed this distancing. On the one hand, the caricature of bad taste in the spectacle of the Afrikaner presented a challenge to the morality of the ideology it represented. However, in its caricature of bad taste it also, indirectly, enforced a distancing from the lower-middle-class groups who, Ross (1988) argues, have historically borne the stigma of bad or failed taste.

The distancing from the lower-middle-class is a dimension that differentiates 'The Briel family' performance from the original Briel family music. The title of one of the albums recorded by the Briel family is titled '*Die myners lied*' (The miners' song), '*Ter Gedagtenis van 435 myners*' (In memory of 435 miners). The record album is a collection of songs, such as '*Die graf in die myn*' (The grave in the mine), about the Coalbrook mining disaster which occurred in 1969.

In South Africa, the mining industry, while not state-owned, nevertheless also offered protected employment to poorly educated whites during apartheid. In the light of Frans and Sannie Briel's own experiences of being orphaned and living in impoverished circumstances, and the fact that their music was written for an Afrikaans audience (who would be familiar

with such hardship), it is not surprising that Frans Briel composed music about the Coalbrook disaster.

However, as Vera observes in the opening lines of Extract 12 (on page 234), a lot of the English speaking audience at the Drag Revue shows did not understand the Briels music. Consequently, the Briel family became a signifier for lower-middle class whites, not so much because the audience knew who the Briel family really were or were familiar with their music, but because of the way in which they were represented in the Drag Revue shows. In a photograph of 'The Briels' that appeared as an insert in the Drag Revue show programme (Photograph 3 on page 234), the actors are dressed in drab (lacking decorative trim), conservative (loose-fitting full-length dresses) and out-of-date (hat, handbag, hair ribbons) apparel that signifies the white lower-middle-class.

Distanciation from lower-middle-class whites is not unique to the spectacle of the Afrikaner in 'The Briels' performance in the Drag Revue show. In the previous chapter (Chapter Six) I argued that there was an element of class bias and exclusion in the spectacles of homosexuality at the Palm Springs party. Ross (1988) argues that the pleasure produced by parodic spectacles is often enjoyed at the expense of others. "This is because it relies on the labor [*sic*] of the producer of taste, which is predicated on exclusion as well as the appeal to an 'in-group' of fellow patrons" (p. 135). Perhaps this is why, even though 'The Briels' performance was a parody of a culture familiar to both the performers and the patrons of the Drag Revue show ("you're joking about something kind of real?", "Oh Yes"), the class distinction "makes them feel comfortable with it" (last lines of Extract 12 on page 234).

What is problematic about the exclusionary work of 'The Briels' performance in the Drag Revue is that it occurred at a moment in South African history when socio-political change hinged quite obviously on processes of integration rather than exclusion. Furthermore, precisely because homosexual men had experienced, first hand, the exclusionary work of apartheid ideology it was important for them to cultivate a new climate of inclusion ("to heal the hurt of intolerance and hatred") at this time.

Exclusions that cohered around differences in socio-economic class were particularly problematic at this time. This is because the terms for socio-political transformation that had been negotiated ahead of the first democratic elections in 1994, while securing advanced human rights – which included rights for sexual minorities, also guaranteed the protection of private property. The problem with the protection of private property was that it secured old class divisions. And, in South Africa, class divisions are also race divisions.

Arguably, in the light of recent events, it was not politically expedient for the homosexual men in the Drag Revue to undermine the issue of economic inequality, which has been at the root of a history of racial (and gender) inequality in South Africa. In the introduction chapter, I discuss the issue of a growing social conservatism in South Africa, which a number of intellectuals have argued threatens the rights of sexual minorities (McKinley, 2010; Schuhmann, 2010; Suttner, 2010). According to McKinley, the growing social conservatism in South Africa is a consequence of the fact that most South Africans are still disenfranchised through economic inequality, resulting in a growing critique of the sorts of rights the Constitution protects and those that have continued to be neglected.

A spectacle of black femininity: Parodying race

'*Pata Pata*' (touch touch) is a song that was originally performed by Miriam Makeba. It is important to say something about the life and times of Makeba, or Mama Africa as she was also known, because it provides a critical backdrop against which the spectacle of black femininity in a parodic performance of '*Pata Pata*' in the Drag Revue can be read.

Makeba was a famous South African singer and anti-apartheid activist who lived in exile for many years because, after testifying against apartheid before the United Nations in 1963, her citizenship and her right to return to the country were revoked. In 1990 President Mandela asked Makeba to return to South Africa, which she did, making a home in the formally exclusively white and upper-middle-class neighbourhood of Houghton in Johannesburg. After returning to South Africa, Makeba continued to travel and performed abroad. In 2008 Makeba became ill while performing in Italy. She suffered a heart attack after singing her hit song '*Pata Pata*' and was rushed to hospital. Makeba died on the 10th November 2008.

Visual images of the '*Pata Pata*' performance in the Drag Revue show in 1995, taken from an audio-visual recording of the show, are presented in Photograph 5 (on page 242). In the '*Pata Pata*' performance in the Drag Revue show, a spectacle of black femininity appears centre-stage in a solo spot. In this spectacle the corporeality of the black female body is a strategic site of signification. Exaggerated breasts and buttocks, created with copious amounts of cushioning, construct a spectacle that is an iconic (re)presentation of colonial depictions of black femininity.



Photograph 4: *Pata Pata* performance, 1995

The spectacle is a caricature of black femininity modelled on colonial depictions of the Hottentot Venus, Sarah Bartman. Bartman, a Khoisan woman, was taken from her home in the Eastern Cape to Europe in 1810 by Hendrik Cezar, a white South African man. In Europe Bartman was exhibited as a freak: an abnormal, savage monstrosity on account of her unusually large (by European standards) buttocks and genitalia. Gilman (1985) argues that, through the gaze of the colonizer, Bartman's buttocks and genitalia signified a similarly excessive sexual appetite. Her enlarged clitoris, for example, was thought to have been caused by lesbian sex. By focusing on Bartman's body, a construction of a hyperbolic black female sexuality was produced within a visual framework. Race differences were defined in terms of sexual differences which were believed to be written, quite literally, on the body.

Using the body to make difference visible is a theme that resonates in drag performance. However, I argue that the usefulness of that troubling potential is undermined in the '*Pata Pata*' performance because the performance engages in a modality of visibility that has its roots in a colonial discourse of difference. In the course of the 19th century, the hyperbolic sexualisation of black femininity became a stereotype in colonial discourse (Gilman, 1985).

Stereotypes are a form of representation that 'fixes' an other. In colonial representations of black female sexuality, difference and otherness was reduced to specific corporeal (immovable) characteristics. With the help of cushioning, this same fixing of difference is appropriated in the '*Pata Pata*' performance in the Drag Revue.

To understand the role of fixidity, Bhabha (1994) argues that colonial stereotypes are a defensive strategy of disavowal which function to reassure a subject who is threatened with the possibility of lack and with the possibility of instability of his own identity. According to Bhabha, the certainty of the stereotype is something that the subject returns to when his own identity is threatened. Bhabha's articulation of the function of the stereotype is consistent with Tyler's (1991) argument that stereotypical representations of femininity (as lack) in drag function to hold lack at a distance and to create the illusion, for the male performer, of having the phallus.

The (re)appropriation of power through representations of lack that characterizes the spectacle of black femininity in the '*Pata Pata*' performance is similar to the spectacles of difference constructed through blackface minstrelsy. In America in the 19th century blackface was a very popular form of entertainment in which white entertainers painted their faces black and caricatured slaves through song, dance, and comic routines (Carlson, 2004). What is interesting about the phenomenon of blackface is that it emerged shortly after the civil war, at a time when many whites worked in jobs that required hard labour, and for which they were paid minimal wage (Roediger, 1991). In other words, in circumstances very much like slave labour. In this context, blackface minstrelsy provided working-class whites with a

means to distinguish themselves from a group who lived in similar circumstances as themselves.

According to Roediger (1991, p.117), “[t]he simple physical disguise...of blackening up served to emphasize that those on stage were really white and that whiteness really mattered”. Roediger argues that the vulgar caricatures of blacks provided a relational model in contrast to which whites could establish a positive and superior sense of identity. The ‘*Pata Pata*’ performance in the Drag Revue does much the same work because the spectacle of black femininity that is articulated in this performance creates a subject position that emerges through its dissimilarity to white masculinity and the white femininity performed in the other songs. In relation to the natural, ‘primitive’ self that black femininity signifies in colonial discourse, there is the civil ‘normalized’ self that whiteness signifies.

Differentiating between the self and an other provides a crucial distance. It means that the other can be interrogated with all the safety of being out of range. Indeed, Roediger (1991) argues that Blackface provided whites with a mask behind which fears and longings could find expression, by projecting them onto the (black) other.

While racism underwrites the representations of black femininity in the ‘*Pata Pata*’ performance in the Drag Revue, I was interested in what appeared to be a whitewash parody of the blackface genre. In the ‘*Pata Pata*’ performance the performer is dressed in white stockings, white shoes, white gloves, a white dress, and a white feather boa is arranged in the style of an afro hairdo. The performer is thus, quite literally, dressed in whiteness. However, this whiteness is only intended to veil the blackness beneath, which is

made visible through the fashioning of large breasts and buttocks and the singing of a song that is quite clearly associated with a black woman.

I argue that this 'dressing-up' in whiteness is intended to be a parody of the upwardly mobile black. It is significant that it is portrayed in 1995, in the midst rapid and far-reaching socio-political transition in South Africa; at a time when many whites were threatened by the implications of racial equality for their own position in society. In the '*Pata Pata*' performance in the Drag Revue these anxieties cohere around the spectacle of the 'white black'.

It is also significant that the spectacle of the 'white black' is articulated in a performance of '*Pata Pata*'. '*Pata Pata*' is a song that has both English and Xhosa lyrics. As such, the song juxtaposes colonial and black African culture, cultures that imbue relations of power that can be traced back to a colonial past. Consequently, the crossing over from one to the other, that Makeba's performance of the song achieves when she switches from the Xhosa lyrics into English, can be read, in the context of the socio-political changes taking place at this time, as the crossing over, or potential switching, of relations of power.

It is arguable that because Makeba achieved her success in the west, became wealthy, and, when she returned to South Africa in the 1990s, settled in a 'white' upper-middle-class suburb, she herself is representative of the notion of the 'white black'. Ironically, what is significant about this is that Makeba's success came from singing traditional African songs and by singing about the struggle during apartheid. In a sense then, it was through her music and the success that it brought her that Makeba was able to re-appropriate some of

the power that had eluded her early in her life in a township in South Africa. Thus, Makeba's own success can be read as the (re)appropriation of power that was achieved through performance. In the context of Makeba's success and the appropriation of power that it signifies, the representations of black femininity in the performance of '*Pata Pata*' in the Drag Revue is particularly violent because it mocks this (re)appropriation of power by reinstating the presumed truth of the black female body and the lack it is purported to signify.

So far, the discussion of the '*Pata Pata*' performance in the Drag Revue show has focused on the way in which anxieties about power (and the loss of power and the implications of this) were addressed. In this discussion I have drawn on Bhabha (1994) and Tyler (1991) to argue that the spectacle of black femininity and the spectacle of the 'white black' worked to (re)inscribe power within white masculine terms, by representing an other in terms of lack. The significance of this is understood in the context of socio-political change and the challenge to white masculine hegemony.

Importantly, however, while the spectacle of black femininity and the spectacle of the white black in the Drag Revue worked to articulate an other (blackness, femininity) in terms of lack, that lack, while homogenizing the other, simultaneously homogenized white men. This is because white men, homosexual as well as heterosexual, were articulated in terms of their dissimilarity to the lack that the spectacles of black femininity signified. Arguably, this was a rather fortuitous consequence at a time when white homosexual men were endeavouring to assimilate with normative (heterosexual) society and to find self-worth (as evidenced in the narrative "About Drag Revue" on page 201). Therefore, the

homogenization of white masculinity that the spectacles of black femininity achieved can be seen as another strategy for negotiating visibility in a period of transition and uncertainty.

The homogenization of white masculinity in a drag performance that works as a strategy for negotiating the visibility of homosexuality in public space in the post-apartheid era provides an interesting opportunity to reflect on the interaction between space, identity, and power. The appearance of the spectacles of black femininity in the '*Pata Pata*' performance occurred in a public space that is imbued with relations of power. In the context of a history of apartheid ideology, race, gender and sexuality are particularly salient dimensions for the analysis of power in the post-apartheid era. However, in the '*Pata Pata*' performance (homo)sexuality is elided by the super-ordinate (visible, written on the body) signifiers of gender and race, facilitating the assimilation or normalization of homosexual men on the premise of their sameness (to white heterosexual men) in comparison with the racial/gendered other.

That the assimilation of homosexuality is premised on exclusion (the signification of difference) is problematic in the first instance because, like the charity objective, it diminishes its own presence (the '*Pata Pata*' performance is a spectacle of black femininity and not homosexuality). It is also problematic because of its race politics. It is ironic that the assimilation of homosexuality should be negotiated through a politics of (racial) exclusion, given that under apartheid homosexuality was also subjected to exclusionary politics. It is doubly ironic that homosexuality should be negotiated through a politics of exclusion in the context of a period of socio-political transition in which the rights of homosexuals were secured on the back of a larger battle for racial equality.

Lastly, the homogenization of whiteness, which made the assimilation of homosexuality possible, had implications for class politics. I have already discussed how differences in socio-economic class were used to articulate a spectacle of the Afrikaner in a parody of the Briels, from which the participants and their audience could distanciate themselves. Ironically, however, the (socio-economic) difference upon which this distanciation was premised was more relevant to the participants than it had appeared to be at first. An extract from the interview with Connie appears below (Extract 13). The extract is taken from a point in the discussion where Connie describes how his socio-economic circumstances impacted on his ability to participate in the Drag Revue shows.

Extract 13: He can go and have his milk bath

Connie for two weeks the show runs (.) I used to work until four (.) half past four I come out and I'd rush to the theatre and quickly stop at the bottlestore and buy a box of wine ... just to calm the nerves (.) and then the make up starts and it's a whole process I mean some of them they used to take up to three three and a half four hours just to do make up (2) and Olivia he'll tell you that (.) but then it's not just (.) it's not just make up it's sit and *kuier* [visit] and have a glass of wine *steek net die sigaret op* [just light up the cigarette] ok now I must do the pencil you know (.) so it's it's a whole *kuier ding* [visit thing] we tried to do that because we were working people (.) ah (.) I couldn't take off work (.) but Olivia would take two weeks leave from work just to go and do that (.) ah (.) Beulah had the salon (.) and he sees that he schedules all his hair appointments up until twelve o'clock thereafter he can go and have his milk bath (.) and I mean (.) anyway (.) so (.) um (.) yes (.) so we've come from work and then we rush over to the theatre and and start with the make up and obviously ours is not so stretched out but there's the end product ((points to picture))

In this extract, Connie argues that, as a result of his financial circumstances, he had less time available to rehearse, apply make-up, and to socialize backstage during the Drag Revue shows. Although the two other men that Connie refers to in this extract (Beulah and Olivia) were also employed, there are significant distinctions in their type of employment. Beulah, for example, was self-employed, while Olivia had professional qualifications and was employed in the formal sector. Therefore, both Olivia and Beulah were in a position to take

time off during the run of the Drag Revue shows. However, Connie, who worked as a diesel mechanic, could not, and this impacted negatively on his ability to participate to the same degree as Olivia and Beulah. Thus, differential access to resources created a socio-economic distinction among the participants in the Drag Revue shows. However, while differences in socio-economic class was quite clearly an issue for Connie, as well as some of the other participants in the Drag Revue shows, this difference was obscured through the homogenization of whiteness that the spectacles of black femininity achieved.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I focus on performances in the Drag Revue show in order to elucidate the politics of homosexual visibility in the 1990s – a period of rapid socio-political transition in South Africa. In my analysis of the performances in the Drag Revue shows I am critical of the strategies that were used to legitimize and promote homosexual visibility, and to facilitate the assimilation of (white) homosexuals into (white) (hetero)normative society.

I argue that by presenting the Drag Revue as a charitable enterprise its political dimension, which was the visibility of homosexuality and the democratization of public space, was diminished. The negotiation of homosexual visibility in the public realm through a strategy of legitimation was also problematic because it evidenced a politics of visibility that was tailored to appease public (heteronormative) sentiments at a time when it could have been challenging them. I argue that the political utility of visibility that the shift from private to

public space made possible was undermined by the decision to negotiate this visibility through strategies of legitimation.

In this chapter I also argue that it was problematic for public assimilation to be negotiated through spectacles of a classed, raced, ethnic other when apartheid ideologies pertaining to class, ethnicity and race were being disassembled. The critiques presented in this chapter speak to the limitations of parody as a politically progressive strategy for resistance.

CHAPTER 8: GAY AND LESBIAN BEAUTY PAGEANTS

The title of this chapter, 'gay and lesbian beauty pageants', is the name that is given to the third part of the analysis. In the previous two chapters I wrote that in the process of analysing the data collected for this study an important distinction emerged between private and public spectacles. Chapter Six, titled 'cross-dressing and dressing-up' dealt with spectacles of homosexuality during the apartheid era. In that chapter, private spectacles of homosexuality which were characteristic of private parties such as the Palm Springs party, which were popular in an era in which homosexuality was prohibited, were discussed. The chapter also included a discussion of the public spectacles of homosexuality that were constructed by media exposés of police raids of those parties. Chapter Seven, which is titled 'drag performance', dealt with the emerging visibility of homosexuality in a period of rapid socio-political transition in South Africa in the 1990s.

In relation to the state-sanctioned invisibility of homosexuality in the public realm in the apartheid era discussed in Chapter Six, and the first tentative steps toward negotiating visibility in the public realm during socio-political transition in the 1990s, which is the topic in Chapter Seven, this chapter deals with the politics of homosexual visibility in the 21st century post-apartheid period.

HOMOSEXUAL VISIBILITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY POST-APARTHEID PERIOD

In Chapter Seven I argue that, in the 1990s, the Drag Revue was instrumental in shifting spectacles of homosexuality from the private to the public realm. However, over the course of the decade, “fellows in frocks” became less of a novelty and after seven annual shows the Drag Revue ended in 2001, although there was a special performance in 2005 at the behest of a charity that desperately needed to raise funds.

In 2005, a gay nightclub called Club Heaven opened in the city in which this research is located and where the Drag Revue had been staged previously. The club is owned by a woman who identifies as a lesbian. Since its inception, Club Heaven has hosted two annual gay and lesbian beauty pageants. Earlier in the year (usually in April) Club Heaven hosts the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant, and later in the year the Miss & Mr Gay Sunshine Coast beauty pageant. The second event is supposedly the more prestigious event; the first pageant is viewed as a run-up to this event.

Details of the data that were collected from the two annual Club Heaven beauty pageants in 2008 and 2009 are outlined in Chapter Five. This data provided an interesting context in which to explore new trends in spectacles of homosexuality. The show programme for the 2008 Miss & Mr Gay Sunshine Coast beauty pageant appears in Figure 9 (on page 253). The show programme is inserted here because it provides a useful point of reference which can be used to compare spectacles of homosexuality in 2008 and 2009 with the form they had taken previously.

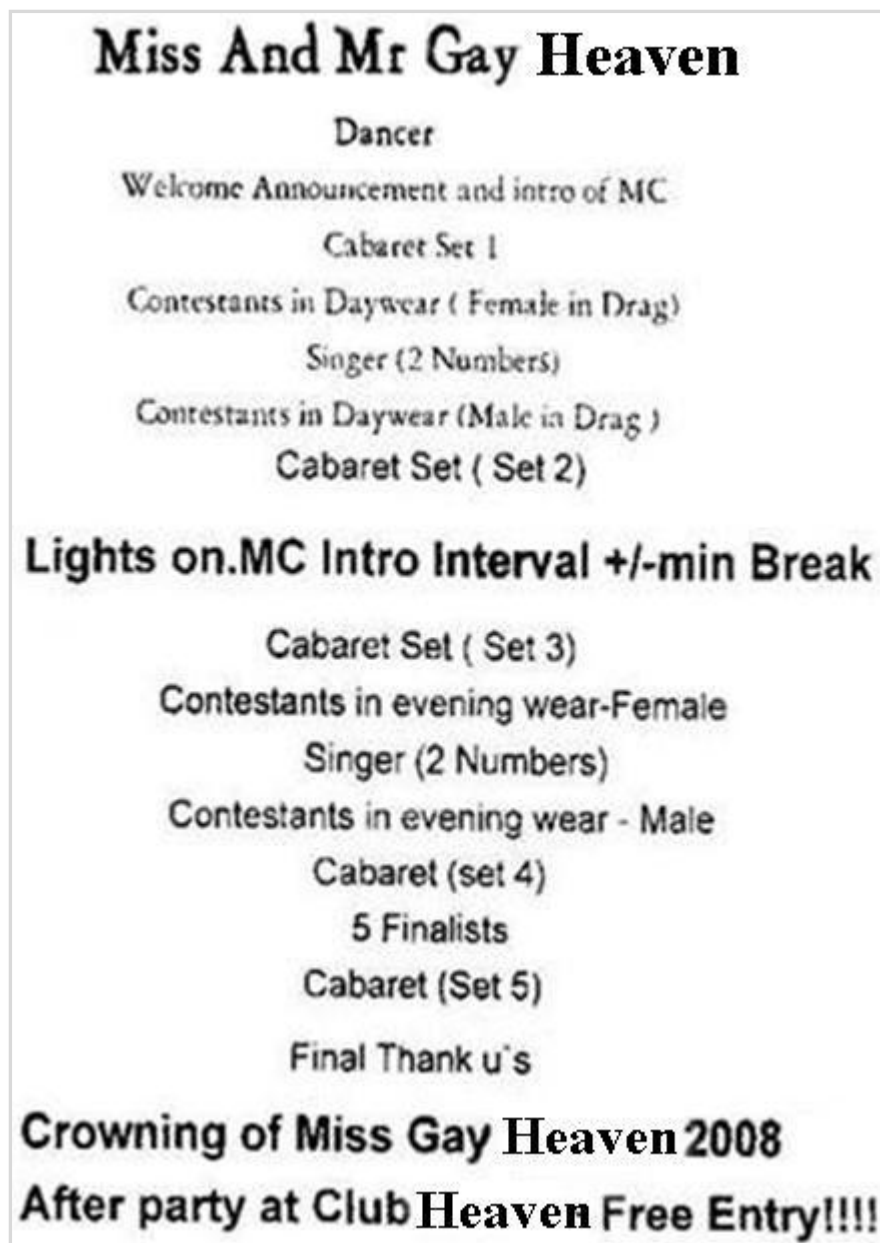


Figure 9: Miss & Mr Gay Heaven programme, 2008

The most notable difference is that while the Drag Revue had focused exclusively on drag performance, the Club Heaven shows focused on beauty pageant competitions. And, while drag, or “cabaret” as it was now termed, was an aspect of the Club Heaven shows, it was only intended to provide some of the entertainment in amongst the more serious business of selecting a pageant winner. It was not the main source of entertainment as it had been in the Drag Revue.

The two annual beauty pageants sponsored by Club Heaven are modelled on the traditional form that beauty pageants take. At the start of the competition each contestant is given a number to wear so that they can be identified by the judges. The competition comprised of a number activities. In 2008 the contestants first competed in the daywear section and then in an eveningwear section, in which they modelled their clothing and accessories. In these sections of the competition the contestants were judged on their apparel, make-up, hairstyles, and the manner in which they crossed the stage, made turns and half turns, and posed in front of the judges.

In the Club Heaven beauty pageants the term drag did not refer to drag performance, as it had in the Drag Revue. Instead, drag was used to refer to contestants who participated in categories in which they cross-dressed. In the daywear and eveningwear sections of the 2008 Miss & Mr Heaven pageant “Female[s] in Drag” was a category in which lesbian contestants dressed in traditionally masculine apparel (Photograph 5, below) and, in the category “Male[s] in Drag”, men dressed in traditionally feminine apparel (Photograph 6, on page 255).



Photograph 5: Contestants in eveningwear, females in drag



Photograph 6: Contestants in eveningwear, males in drag

In 2008, in the 'male' category, five semi-finalists were selected on the basis of the judges' assessments of their efforts in the daywear and eveningwear sections of the competition. The audience was encouraged to influence the judges' selection of the semi-finalists by applauding loudly and calling out the name of their favourite contestant. After the judges announced who the semi-finalists were, each semi-finalist was asked to respond to a question that was posed by a judge.

The judges' questions dealt with issues that were deemed to be relevant to the gay community. For example, the question that a judge posed to Contestant no. 8 (Photograph 7, above) was, "Many people in this city have a negative perception of homosexuals. If you won this competition what would you do to change that?" The judges assessed the participants' responses to their questions and on the basis of their scores in this section of the competition, three winners were selected (a 'Queen' and two 'Princesses'). The new 'Queen' was crowned by the outgoing Queen (the previous pageant winner).

In 2008, there were far fewer contestants in the 'female' category than there were in the male category. Consequently, only one contestant was selected as the winner of the female category on the basis of the judges' assessments of her performance in the daywear and eveningwear sections of the competition. The female contestants did not participate in 'question time', and there was no equivalent crowning of a 'King' or first and second 'Prince'. Despite the lesser participation of women in the pageants sponsored by Club Heaven, their participation did constitute a notable difference between the Club Heaven pageants and the Drag Revue shows, which had sported an all-male cast of "fellows in frocks".

Another point of departure from the Drag Revue is that the participants in the Club Heaven beauty pageants were not exclusively white. Of the five male semi-finalists in the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant in 2008, only two contestants (Contestant no.5 and Contestant no.10) identified as 'white'. Contestants' no. 3, no. 7 and no. 8 identified as 'coloured' and as 'Indian'. In 2008 all of the 'female' contestants were 'white' and none of the participants of colour identified as 'black'.

The racial profile of the participants changed in the time during which data were collected for this study. In 2009 there were many more participants of colour, including, for the first time, 'black' homosexual men and women. In the Miss & Mr Heaven pageant in 2009 black contestants won both the Miss Butch Heaven title (a new name given to the 'female' contestant category) and the Miss Heaven title (the category traditionally reserved for 'male' contestants).

The greater diversity of the contestants in the Club Heaven beauty pageants, in comparison with those who had participated in the Drag Revue, was due, in part, to the new mode of participation in the spectacles of homosexuality that the Club Heaven beauty pageants made possible. I have noted that one of the primary differences between the Club Heaven beauty pageants and the Drag Revue is that while the Drag Revue focused exclusively on drag performance, the Club Heaven shows focused primarily on beauty pageants. And, while drag performance was a feature of the Club Heaven beauty pageants, it was secondary to the nomination of a beauty pageant winner (a pageant 'Queen'). One of the consequences of this change in focus was that it created a new category for participation. The new 'contestant' category made it easier to participate in the shows than it had been in the past; this is explained in the paragraphs that follow.

In the light of the fact that the Club Heaven shows cohered around the beauty pageants rather than the drag performances, it was interesting to observe that, in the months preceding each pageant, the pageant contestants were not involved in the production of the shows. Only the people participating in the drag performances (which was now referred to as 'cabaret'), attended the show rehearsals. The many hours that were put into rehearsing the drag performances, and the fact that the performers were largely responsible for obtaining their own costumes, meant that the drag participants' involvement in the production of the shows was extensive. By contrast, the beauty pageant contestants only attended the final dress rehearsal a night or two before the pageant was set to take place.

The pageant contestants attended the final dress rehearsal on the night before the pageant in order to learn the format of the show and their place in the programme of events. It was

also an opportunity for the owner of Club Heaven, who was also the producer of the pageant, to explain to the contestants how they should walk across the stage and introduce themselves to the audience and the judges. The judges and the emcee also attended the final dress rehearsal, and they were introduced to the contestants at this time.

In the previous chapter (Chapter Seven) I noted that the protracted production of the spectacle, which costumes and rehearsals necessitated, provided a greater opportunity for the participants to engage with one another in the construction of the spectacles. However, that as a result of the division of labour in terms of the differential modes for participation, the opportunities to participate in the production of the spectacles were not the same for all of the participants. In the Club Heaven beauty pageants, the pageant contestants did not participate in the production until the night of the pageant, when they took centre stage.

Although the participation of the pageant contestants can be seen to be marginal when taking into account the process of the production of the Club Heaven beauty pageants, there were benefits to this in terms of facilitating their participation. In the first instance, because the pageant contestants were not expected to attend rehearsals and were only expected to make an appearance at the final dress rehearsal before the night of the pageant, participation as a contestant did not bias individuals who would not have been able to attend regular show rehearsals.

In the previous chapter (Chapter Seven) an extract from an interview with Connie appears in which he recounts the time constraints to participating in the Drag Revue shows for individuals such as himself who could not take as much time off work as the other

participants to rehearse his performances, or to do his make-up, or socialize backstage (Extract 13, on page 248). According to Connie, differences in terms of time availability impacted negatively on his ability to participate in the Drag Revue shows. Thus, differential access to resources created a socio-economic distinction among the participants in the Drag Revue shows.

Socio-economic differences, and their impact on time availability, were relevant to the participants in the Club Heaven shows. A number of the pageant contestants came from out of town and it would have been difficult for them to attend rehearsals regularly. Even those who lived in town often did not have their own motor vehicles and lived too far away from the club to walk to the rehearsals. Taxi fare for regular attendance at rehearsals would have been a barrier as many of the contestants were unemployed.

Furthermore, participating as a contestant as opposed to a drag performer meant that less was required in terms of costume. While some participants had the means to purchase elaborate ball gowns and expensive wigs or suits, many contestants entered the pageant wearing what they could borrow from their family and friends. Interestingly, in 2009 it was the participants who did not have the resources for wigs and ball gowns, and who had to rely on what they could borrow, who were instrumental in changing the ball gown and wig tradition. These contestants introduced a more contemporary style to the 'male' eveningwear section of the Miss & Mr Sunshine Coast beauty pageant competition and, in the process, walked away with the winning titles.

A photograph of the winner, the Queen of the 2009 Miss & Mr Sunshine Coast beauty



pageant and a runner up, the Second Princess, appear in Photograph 7 (left) and can be contrasted with the semi-finalists of the Miss & Mr Heaven pageant in Photograph 7 (on page 255) who are dressed in the traditional pageant costume of ball gowns and wigs.

Photograph 7: Miss Heaven and the Second Princess, 2009

While the nature of the shows and the profiles of the participants changed, the notion that the shows provided homosexuals with a platform for visibility remained constant. The extract below (Extract 14) is taken from a focus group discussion with members of the audience after the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant in 2008. In this extract, participants respond to a question about what they perceived the main purpose of the Club Heaven beauty pageants to be.

Extract 14: Its just getting it out there

- Hank I would think the value (.) I mean (.) to answer your question (.) is for me (.) is just that (.) getting it out there and being aware (.) as you know there are so few platforms in this town to have (.) anything gay (.) that anybody can go to (.)
- Collette and it's also exposure for the artists themselves (.) you know (.) I think there were people (.) and I may be wrong (.) who (.) that really was their first time of of doing anything like that and if you're starting on a scale like this I think and you (.) you're getting positive feedback and (.) and I think it's quite an embracing environment (.) I don't think the audience is (.) hyp- hyper critical even are (.) are pretty accepting so I think it's quite a gentle environment (.) ...

Nina I feel (.) to put (.) to to (.) to let our straight people also get in contact (.) with
 Yves =an aware awareness
 Nina =and accep- and you know that's going to create even more acceptance
 Yves mm
 Hank I think it's just getting it out there (.) making it (.) you know (.) be proud
 Yves yes

In this extract, Hank, who identifies as a gay man, argues that the “value” of the Club Heaven beauty pageants is the “platform” that it provides for gay visibility. The other participants in the focus group discussion, while agreeing with Hank, make two additional observations. Nina, who identifies as a straight woman, argues that the Club Heaven pageants facilitate “contact” between homosexuals and heterosexuals, which she presumes will lead to greater “acceptance” (of homosexuality). Nina’s opinion is echoed in many other interviews with both homosexual and heterosexual participants. It is the same assumption that underwrote the impetus for the Drag Revue. Collette’s opinion, however, diverges somewhat in that she makes an observation about the nature of the space within which the Club Heaven beauty pageants take place and the value of this for the participants themselves.

Collette, who identifies as a straight woman, describes the context in which the pageants occur as an “embracing environment”. In her elaboration of this environment Collette describes an audience that provides “positive feedback”, is not “hypercritical” and who are “pretty accepting” and even, “gentle”. Collette’s description of the audience at the Club Heaven beauty pageants is at odds with a public that is at other times construed as being the very opposite of this. For example, in the previous chapter I cite authors (McKinley, 2010; Schuhmann, 2010; Suttner, 2010) who argue that there is currently a growing social conservatism in South Africa that is intolerant of homosexuality.

Contradictions in descriptions of the public realm – or spaces within the public realm – that are both accepting and unaccepting of homosexuality can be understood when space is approached from a constructionist perspective. In other words, when the reality of space is understood as being contingent on the way in which it is spoken about and the sorts of activities that particular constructions of space make possible as well as those that are foreclosed upon. This is the topic of the next section.

Sexuality and the construction of space

Sexuality plays an important role in defining the social character of public space. Drawing on the notion that public space is sexualized space, Valentine (1993) argues that sexuality cannot therefore be understood as something that is limited only to the private sphere – behind closed doors, but should be viewed as an ordinary dimension of public space.

Extract 15 (on page 263) is taken from a conversation with a beauty pageant contestant named Violet, and two young women. The young women had volunteered as stage ushers on the evening of the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant in 2008. The conversation took place early in the evening at the theatre venue, while the contestants and drag (cabaret) performers were arriving and making preparations for the show. In this part of the conversation Violet and the two young women talk about drag appearances in public space. This extract provides material for a discussion of the role of sexuality and sexual identity in the construction of space and the implications of this for the activities in these spaces.

The extract (Extract 15) begins with Violet and the ushers constructing a distinction between straight and gay public space. Their distinction relates specifically to nightclub entertainment, what Bell (1991, p.324) calls “pleasure geographies”, and the distinction between the straight and gay pleasure geographies (spaces) in the city in which this research took place.

Extract 15: This is a walk in the park

- Violet they're ((referring to heterosexuals who attend the beauty pageant shows and then follow the crowd to Club Heaven afterward)) not going to a straight club ((shakes head)) so whatever they run into there ((at Club Heaven)) they've got to accept (.) whether:: it be drag queens (2) gays (2) whatever
- Jacqui you said it was brave to go out like that ((in drag)) elsewhere?
- Violet we::ll (2) here it is still a bit ((smiling)) you know (.) ((shakes head)) we're not in Jo'burg girl ((laughs)) ... you know you have to have big knees if you want to go out dressed in drag to a straight club
- Usher 2 =because they will discriminate against you
- Usher 1 =ja
- Violet ((nods)) ja absolutely (2) I mean (2) always ((hits his hand on the table)) the straight people here (.) I mean (.) >a lot of people< won't tolerate that ((shakes his head))... (5) let's just say that I would even be scared to do that you know (.) unless its an in:vitation >kind of party< like this ((indicates the room))
- Ushers ja
- Violet like this (.) kind of thing (.) then I wouldn't have a problem with it ah I think it all boils down to a factor of fear at the end of the day (1) I mean you don't want this group of people walking up to you you know and shoving you in a coffin ((laughs and sits up in his chair))
- Ushers ((laugh))
- Violet ja so (.) ah its scary but it depends on you (.) you know (.) how you feel (.) if you want to dress like that then go ahead and dress like that (.) ((shakes head)) (2) it's your prerogative (.) so::: (.) its still scary though ((smiles))
- Jacqui but as you said some places are safer than others (.) like is this fairly safe?
- Violet ^yes^ (.) ja (.) ah: (.) this is a walk in the park ((laughs))
- Jacqui well (.) what's the difference? Doing it here as opposed to doing it at a place like (.) Hit?
- Usher 1 O:::H
- Usher 2 NO
- Usher 1 that is a place for straight- um (1) I mean a lot of (.) well ((looks at her friend))
- Usher 2 mainly straight people go there and if you're like gay and you walk in there especially like that ((in drag)) I promise you I think people will throw a drink on you or something like that or the bouncers won't even let you in
- Usher 1 ja (.) because they won't let you in if you're dressed-up like (.) otherwise

In the course of the conversation the 'gay' and 'straight' identities of the nightclub spaces are constructed in terms of the sexual identities of the people who frequent the clubs. In the opening lines of the extract Violet is talking about Club Heaven, which he describes as "not...straight"; a place where one is likely to "run into ... drag queens [and] gays". By contrast, in the last lines of the extract, one of the young women (Usher 1) describes Hit, another nightclub in town, as "a place for straight, um, I mean a lot of, well, mainly straight people go there". In these instances we see how sexualities and space are constitutive of each other. Gay spaces (nightclubs) are spaces that gay people occupy and straight spaces are spaces that straight people occupy.

However, homosexuality is not written on the body to the degree that gender and race are. This means that homosexuality has to be made visible. The process of sexualizing space, of differentiating between gay and straight public space, occurs in the narrative (Extract 15) the participants talk of the behaviour that makes it visible, and, in particular, how the open expression of homosexuality informs the social character of space, which is otherwise unmarked and therefore presumed to be heterosexual. Violet and the ushers make numerous references to the visibility of homosexuality that cross-dressing achieves when they make mention of "drag queens", people who are "dressed in drag", or who "dress like that".

The narrative also provides an account of Violet and the two young women's reflections of the implications for the visibility of homosexuality in different (straight/gay) public spaces. Violet describes gay visibility, in the form of cross-dressing, in the context of the Club Heaven beauty pageants – within the parameters of 'gay space', as "a walk in the park". This

can be contrasted with Violet's comments elsewhere in the narrative where gay visibility in 'straight spaces' is described as "scary".

According to Violet there is "a factor of fear" in making homosexuality visible outside of the safety of gay space because "a lot of people won't tolerate that". Further along in the narrative "intolerance" of homosexuality is described as presenting a particularly violent threat. In Violet's words, "you don't want this group of people walking up to you, you know, and shoving you in a coffin". Thus, fear and the threat of violence are important dimensions that are drawn upon in this narrative to construct the difference between straight and gay space. Consequently, what this extract shows is that sexuality, and the visibility of homosexuality in particular, is not only a process through which space is given a particular character, but also a process of power relations.

Comments made by Violet and the two young women in the narrative presented in Extract 15 (on page 263) illustrate how space is contingent on its construction in language and the implications of this for the way in which people act out their sexual identities in those spaces. In particular, while homosexuals may cohabit 'straight spaces' that cohabitation is premised on appropriate gender behaviour relative to the expectations of the heterosexual majority. This requires matching the physiological body with clothes containing the appropriate gender codes (i.e. a masculine body dressed in men's clothing). In this way, gender and sexuality intersect. A homosexual person 'passing' as straight by dressing (and behaving) in a manner that reinforces the sexual binary can, therefore, be seen as attempting to manage the threat of violence in heteronormative space. Correspondingly, when homosexuals dress and/or behave in a way that undoes this binary they emphasize

the instability of gender. And, because behaviour that does not conform to the expectations of the majority will not be tolerated, it is unlikely to occur. Thus, the narrative bears testimony to the way in which heterosexual hegemony gains expression and is reproduced through discrimination and the threat of violence which inhibits the expression of homosexuality in public space.

Heteronormativity, as it is articulated in this narrative, is a question of the degree to which homosexuality can be visible. Violet and the two young women acknowledge that straight clubs don't prohibit homosexual patrons per se, only those who actually *look* or *act* homosexual. This evidences the unequal implications of being visibly homo or hetero sexual.

What I find particularly interesting, however, is the way in which managing safety is individualized. In Violet's words, "it's scary but it depends on you ... if you want to dress like that then go ahead and dress like that it's your prerogative". These words suggest deeply embodied practices of self-surveillance, which explains why visible expressions of homosexuality can be mapped. In the light of this it is arguable that homosexual enclaves within public space are a pivotal aspect of homosexual visibility because they offer a reprieve from the spatial dominance of heterosexuality and the threat of violence. Club Heaven is viewed by many of its patrons as just such a space.

Club Heaven is owned and managed by a woman who openly, and very proudly, identifies as lesbian and provides patrons with a sense of having a degree of protection in this space, making it qualitatively different from other public spaces. As Violet argues, when straight

people enter Club Heaven “whatever they run into there they’ve got to accept”. This can be contrasted with the “intolerance” that is associated with heterosexual space.

The Club Heaven beauty pageants are, however, not held on the Club Heaven premises but in a small dinner theatre in town, a few blocks away from the club. Nevertheless, Violet displays the same confidence about the theatre space as he does Club Heaven. Violet describes participating in the Club Heaven beauty pageant at the theatre as “a walk in the park”. Again, this raises the question of how gay space is made.

I have already argued that the open expression of homosexuality informs the social character of particular spaces. The construction of Club Heaven as a gay space in the participants’ talk is a case in point. However, in the case of the dinner theatre in which the beauty pageants take place, the construction of gay space is more transient. The theatre is not a designated gay space but, rather, becomes a gay space for one evening twice a year when the beauty pageants are hosted at the venue. Arguably then it is the social relations and interactions that occur in this space at this time that makes the theatre into a gay space.

Extract 16 (on page 268) is taken from an interview with beauty pageant contestants. The interview took place backstage on the night of the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant in 2008, while the contestants were busy applying their make-up and getting into their costumes. The extract is inserted here because it evidences the importance of cross-dressing in making homosexuality visible, and the importance of visibility and recognition for the participants.

Extract 16: Shout it out

- Jacqui Who are you tonight?
- Jasmine u::m well they will say that I am a:: Jasmine is like an Indian lady (.) or an Indian princess (.) and I'm actually wearing a sari for my daywear
- Jacqui What's important about being Jasmine? To you?
- Jasmine a::h (2) mmm ((shakes head)) ahh it's just ((shaking head)) it's just hiding away from the real world (5)
- Clare °what is the real world?° (2) the real world?
- Jasmine °that is a question I also ask myself sometimes° (3) the real world is the cruellest world (.) outside this place
- Jacqui we::ll how's this different?
- Clare here we are allowed to express=
- Jasmine =yea (.) yes
- Clare =feelings (.) >hidden feelings< (.) that you're not allowed in general to express in social (.) society (.) for that matter
- Jacqui but why not?
- Clare u::m ((shakes head)) because of society's (3) u::m ((shakes head))
- Jasmine perception of us (.) be:::cause (2) some people think that (.) to (.) be gay is::: ((shakes head)) a big no no in society
- Giselle we still live in a very closed minded community
- Jasmine definitely (.) it's a big no
- Jacqui ah who are you?
- Giselle I'm Giselle
- Jacqui like the supermodel?
- Giselle no (.) like the slutty temptress
- Jacqui and does that mean that you're secretive about this?
- Giselle no (.) everyone knows (.) they just don't accept it (.) it's a big issue (.) a very big issue (2)
- Clare but this is great fun (.)
- Jasmine oh yes
- Clare putting on the plastic titties and putting *die koekie in die blikkie* ((the biscuit in the tin)) (.) ah:: man (.) it's great fun (.) great fun ((spays on deodorant)) and I use ex cla mation ((shows the name of the deodorant and draws an exclamation mark in the air)) shout it out.

In the narrative in Extract 16 (above) the contestants agree that cross-dressing is “great fun” because it creates an opportunity for them to express “hidden feelings” that are “not allowed in general”, and which cannot be “express[ed] in social society”. Interestingly, spaces where you can express hidden feelings are normally associated with healing or

therapeutic spaces. Arguably, the need for healing spaces is understood in the context of a “cruel” heterosexual (“real”) world.

In the Club Heaven beauty pageants, spaces for healing are achieved by what Visser (2008, p.1344) has elsewhere referred to as the “homonormalisation” of space through spectacles of cross-dressing. In this regard, the spectacles of cross-dressing in the Club Heaven beauty pageants perform the same function as they did in the era of the Palm Springs party. They provide a space for recognition and affirmation of homosexuality. However, while spectacles of homosexuality were a strategy for resisting the state sanctioned prohibition of homosexuality in the apartheid era, in the 21st century post-apartheid context, visibility is a strategy for resisting informal, socio-cultural prohibitions. Bristow (1989, p.74) argues that “it is possible to be gay [only] in specific places and spaces”. For the duration of the Club Heaven beauty pageants, contestants could indulge fantasies of the self that are “not otherwise permitted”.

A return to a concern with articulating homosexuality and for the mutual recognition of this among the contestants is an important dimension upon which the Club Heaven beauty pageants can be contrasted with the spectacles in the Drag Revue, where there was a focus on representations of an other. While the performers in the Drag Revue were concerned to assimilate with the audience through representations of an other, the contestants in the Club Heaven beauty pageants created spectacles that were designed to lure the gaze of an audience with whom they were already quite familiar.

My own observations of the audience on the night of the Club Heaven pageants was that the audience consisted almost exclusively of people whom I had already met at Club Heaven and who I knew identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. They were friends and acquaintances of the contestants. Furthermore, the non-homosexual members of the audience were often identified as relatives of the contestants, or they were friends or work colleagues. In my view, this familiarity accounts for the “embracing environment” that Collette describes in Extract 14 (on page 260).

Importantly, the intimacy that this familiarity invited could be contained because, unlike the Drag Revue shows that ran for weeks on end, the Club Heaven beauty pageants were one night only events and this limited the size of the audience considerably. Furthermore, the pageants were advertised primarily by word of mouth and through advertisements on display at Club Heaven, which is also where the pageant tickets were purchased. Therefore, when Clare proclaims to “shout it out”, she does so with a particular audience in mind. And, as was the case in the era of the Palm Springs party, Clare can be assured that this is an audience ‘in the know’, and likely to be appreciative.

I argue that the affirmative recognition that the contestants received from each other, and from the audience, was an important aspect impacting on the spectacles that were constructed at the Club Heaven beauty pageants. In particular, that it resulted in a shift back to constructions of homosexuality reminiscent of the Palm Springs party in previous decades. Importantly though, this shift coincided with the shift back to more private sites in which the spectacles appeared.

Midway through the narrative in Extract 15 (on page 263) Violet describes the Club Heaven beauty pageant as “an invitation kind of party”. This description hints at the privacy (and relative safety) of a small group, which, arguably, was characteristic of the earlier sites of the spectacles of homosexuality such as at the Palm Springs party. Although, while it appears to be self-evident that a house party should take the form of “an invitation kind of a party” (because the home is traditionally understood to be a private space), it is less evident how a show that is staged in a commercial theatre where entry can be purchased can be construed as “an invitation kind of party”. However, I have already argued that the audience at the Club Heaven beauty pageants was a more intimate audience than the Drag Revue audience because the pageants only ran for one night and the size of the audience was consequently much smaller. The Club Heaven pageant audiences often consisted of friends and relatives of the contestants and this lent a degree of performer-audience intimacy that was different to the Drag Revue audience. Furthermore, it is possible that, by purchasing a ticket, heterosexual people agreed to an invitation to a particular kind of party. As such, they agreed to enter homosexual space and to suspend the usual violence of heterosexual space.

More importantly though, and drawing on the idea that space is constructed through social practice, it is arguable that the interactions that this space allowed – the visibility of homosexuality through cross-dressing, and the recognition and affirmation – were instrumental in creating a private space within the traditionally public realm. In the first half of the narrative in Extract 16 (on page 268) Jasmine describes participating in the pageant as “hiding away from the real world”. When Jasmine talks about the world “outside this place” s/he is not simply referring to a place that is defined in geographic or material terms but by

the social relations that structure it. When Jasmine says that “the real world is the cruellest world” this point is underscored.

Thus just as the formal (state-sanctioned) prohibition of homosexuality during the apartheid era closed down public space and possibilities for the visibility of non-conforming (non-heterosexual) gender performance, in the 21st century post-apartheid context, informal (socio-cultural) prohibitions have done much the same work. In this context, the beauty pageants and the negotiation of gay space (albeit transient) can be seen to present an important challenge to the heteronormative ideology that defines space. However, an important dimension in the creation of gay space, in this instance, is exclusivity – the necessity for gay space to be confined to a small and relatively familiar group of people. The disadvantage of this retreat is that it is motivated by violent heterosexual space and thus fails to transgress or undermine it. However, there is also an important advantage to the shift back into more intimate spaces.

In the past, the intimacy of private spaces such as the Palm Springs party invited a greater degree of inter-subjectivity compared with the Drag Revue. Furthermore, an important dimension of this more private engagement was the negotiation of articulations of homosexuality. In the Drag Revue, when the spectacles shifted into the public realm, this was overshadowed by strategies (representations of an ‘other’) that were designed to facilitate (hetero)normative assimilation. By contrast, the Club Heaven beauty pageants marked a shift away from spectacles of an ‘other’ which characterised the performances in the Drag Revue, and back to articulations of the participants’ sexual identities, as had been the case in the era of the Palm Springs party.

Importantly though, the space within which the Club Heaven beauty pageants were staged was more permeable than it had been in the past. In previous chapters I discussed the implications of racial segregation during the apartheid era. In the 21st century, while still bearing the scars of the apartheid policies of racial segregation, social interaction across 'race' groups, particularly in urban areas, is at least no longer prohibited. Consequently, while the spectacles are becoming more intimate again, there is a degree of diversity in the spatial context of the Club Heaven beauty pageants that had been absent in the era of the Palm Springs party. In the remainder of this chapter the presence of white and black lesbian women is discussed. The discussion focuses on the challenge of articulating difference in gay space and the concomitant politics of visibility.

TRIPPING OVER THE PHALLUS: FEMALE MASCULINITY AND MALE HEGEMONY

Extract 17 (below) is taken from a group discussion with members of the audience after the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant in 2008. The extract is inserted here because it presents a part of the discussion that focuses on the audience members' observations of the lesbian contestants' performances on stage. The lesbian contestants that the audience members are referring to in this extract appear in Photograph 5 'Contestants in eveningwear, females in drag' (on page 254).

Extract 17: They were too uncomfortable in themselves

Nina	the girls that participated (.) what is that?
Jacqui	they're contestants (.) who are cross-dressing as much as the male contestants are
Walt	ja (.) they want to be (.) olook like a mano

- Nina but boy they didn't look happy ... not one of them there (.) had the personality to carry it off and (.) you know (.) I looked at those faces and I thought to myself you actually look sa::d ... (3) I expected also more (2) confidence there
- Collette they (.) they were too (.) sh- (.) shy is the wrong word (.) they were too uncomfortable in themselves and (.) and that disturbed me (.) I felt so sorry for them (.) I really (.) I just wanted to rescue them (.) that was (.) was (.) was the emotion they ma- (.) was what I was feeling (.)
- Nina I'm glad you say that that's exactly how I feel you know as I say they were too (.) uncomfortable (.) perhaps that is the right word (.) ... they didn't look as if (.) hang we're going to go for it (.) and where was the competitive spirit?
- Yves ja
- Nina no spirit whatsoever=
- Collette =no but trying really hard
- Nina they were trying (.) they were trying I'll give them ten out of ten for that but=
- Collette I think it's a hard thing (.) I think it's a- (.) because I have an idea of what drag is for (5) for (2) for men dressing up (.) ... it's an exaggerated thing (.) to see women (.) they (.) I'm not (.) I'm not at all familiar with it so for me it was the first time I've ever seen it and I just (.) I just didn't think they were pulling it off ... the most creative was a hairstyle (.) whereas there was nothing exaggerated from make up to (.) anything (.) it wasn't drag (5)
- Nina mmm
- Collette okay (.) it was to me it was too close to:: (.) to me it was almost like a coming out party (.) coming out of the closet party for the girls (2) okay (.) whereas the men (.) were (.) were drag (.) so (.) so it was you know that's interesting for me

In this extract Nina and Collette describe what I termed in my analysis a failed performance.

I used this term after Austin's (1962) elaboration of unhappy performatives, which is discussed in Chapter Three. According to Austin, unhappy performatives are utterances that fail to generate effects. In other words, they fail to enact what they intend to enact. According to Austin, this is because unhappy performatives are unconvincing. While performatives succeed by adhering to convention, unhappy performatives actually look like a performance – a parody, or insincere copy. In the context of the discussion about the lesbian contestants, failed performance refers to the discussants' evaluation of the lesbian contestants' performance of masculinity. In the first half of the extract Nina and Collette describe the lesbian contestants' performance of masculinity as lacking confidence, arguing

that they looked “sad”, or “shy”, and, “uncomfortable”. According to Nina and Collette it just “wasn't drag”.

Perhaps it is incongruent to label the lesbian contestants’ performance of masculinity a failed performance on account that it looked contrived or unnatural when the audience made a similar evaluation of the male contestants’ performance of femininity. In the second half of the extract Collette comments that, “for men”, drag is “an exaggerated thing”. However, my intention in using the term failed performance is to highlight the audiences’ differential evaluation of the gender performances. In contrast to the discussants’ evaluation of the lesbian women’s performance of masculinity, the men were seen to construct appropriately “exaggerated” performances that, recognizably, “were drag”.

Key to the audiences distinction of what was and wasn't drag was the degree to which the contestants “exaggerated” their respective gender performances. Arguably, this is because drag is customarily viewed as an insincere performance to begin with, as a parody or insincere copy of the ‘real’, and more sombre, everyday, gender performativity. However, it highlights a fundamental difference in the aims of the lesbian women compared with the homosexual men. While the male contestants were content to parody femininity in order to signify homosexual desire, the female contestants were not.

In Chapter Two I discuss Halberstam (1998) and Maltz’s (1998) distinctions between impersonation, drag performance, and drag butch. Halberstam’s (1998) distinction between impersonation and drag performance provides a useful framework for thinking through differences in the modes of participation that the Club Heaven beauty pageants made

possible. In the previous chapter I argued that, in the Drag Revue, what one participant described as the mastering of a “specific character” (Extract 9 on page 211) was an important dimension that distinguished the drag artists from the other participants – the audience. In the context of the Club Heaven beauty pageants, the mastering of a specific character continued to be an important dimension for distinguishing between modes of participation, albeit in quite a different way.

Below are two extracts from an interview with Olivia (a drag queen and beauty pageant contestant). In the first extract (Extract 18) Olivia argues that, in his experience, drag performance is an extension of theatre performance because it also requires artistic “interpretation” and the ability to “act”. In the second extract (Extract 19) Olivia argues that Celeste, a beauty pageant contestant who won the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant in 2009, deserved to win on account that “he was a complete woman”.

Extract 18: It's an extension of theatre

Olivia I hear a song (4) I don't need to know who sings it (.) I like it or I don't (5) I'd say (.) in these cases (5) I can do something with it (5) or I can't (10) ... I hear (.) I hear something and it will go to interpretation (.) and well (.) you've got to be able to act (10) an::d (.) that's what I (.) what I've always seen it as (.) gone from (.) its an extension of theatre (.) straight theatre

Extract 19: He was a complete woman

Olivia I thought that the (.) that Celeste deserved to win I really do (.) to me he was (4) a complete woman and and and that is what a pageant is about ... and what I (3) what caught me was (.) knowing Celeste (.) he looks like nothing as a man and as a woman he is very sort of (2)

Jacqui polished?

Olivia a polished woman ja (.) um:: (.) before he moved here he was in Joburg for quite a long time and (4) he entered a lot of pageants there (5) and they were put through all sorts of paces (10) for (3) a pageant

In these extracts (Extract 18 and Extract 19) Olivia argues that talent, or the ability to ‘master a specific character’, is an important dimension to participating in beauty pageant competitions and drag performances. Arguably though, while talent is an important dimension in both instances, it differs to the degree to which it is visible. In drag performance the “act” is made visible as such, while, in beauty pageant competitions, contestants are expected to give a “complete” performance. In other words, a performance that is convincing and does not look like an act.

These are generalizations of course, and there were examples to the contrary. However, throughout the discussions and interviews that were recorded for this study, drag was differentiated from other modes of participation on account of the sorts of excesses that the performances made apparent (visible). The portrayal of sexual immodesty, signified through a show of undergarments, in a performance mimicking the moral propriety of Afrikaner ideology, symbolized in the “deadpan faces” of the performers, in a parody of the Briels in a Drag Revue show, is a case in point.

However, despite differences in the degree of excess employed in the performances of cabaret/drag artists and beauty pageant contestants, a common feature of both was that rehearsal was seen to be the key to success. In other words, by doing “something with it” or by being “put through all sorts of paces”. Thus, in both instances, success meant consciously and intentionally *performing* gender.

While performing gender invokes the notion that gender entails *doing* rather than *being*, it is not gender performativity in the way that Butler (1990/1999) intends the term to be used.

This is because the gender performances that the drag queens and beauty pageant contestants rehearsed were consciously mediated performances of gender. The performances were inaugurated by the pageant contestants and drag performers for the purposes of the show and they were discarded after the curtains closed. Gender performativity, by contrast, cannot be discarded. It is the *being* that the contestants and drag performers revert to when the show is over. Of course, Butler would argue that *being* entails *doing* in order for the 'being' to materialize. The point for distinction is that doing, in the performative sense, is not generally visible as such.

I turn now to the distinction that Halberstam (1998) and Maltz (1998) make between impersonation, drag performance, and the masculinity of butch lesbian women. The distinction is important because it provides a framework for making comparisons between the gender performances of the 'male' and 'female' beauty pageant contestants. According to Halberstam and Maltz, the masculinity of butches differ both to impersonators and drag artists. Halberstam argues that a butch lesbian woman is "a masculine woman who wears male attire as part of her *quotidian* gender expression" (p. 232). Thus, for a butch lesbian contestant male apparel constitutes the materialization of her *being*. Therefore, while impersonators and drag artists 'put on' gender (a putting on that drag artists endeavour to make visible and impersonators work to conceal), masculinity, for the butch lesbian, is, by contrast, a part of her everyday gender expression.

My own observations of the differences in gender performance of the 'male' and 'female' beauty pageant contestants was that prosthetics (breasts), hair removal (face, chest, leg, underarm), wigs, and women's apparel (sundresses, ball gowns, heels, hats, handbags)

constituted the obligatory paraphernalia that the male contestants adopted in their gender performances. The 'female' contestants, on the other hand, did not 'pack' (prosthetic penises), apply fake hair (beards, moustaches), or wear men's clothing. The 'female' contestants wore their own clothing appropriate for the 'daywear' (jeans and tee-shirts) and 'eveningwear' (pants, ties, blazers) categories of the competition. Furthermore, while the choice of a feminine pseudonym, for the 'male' contestants, was an important aspect in creating their female stage personas (see the opening lines of Extract 16 on page 268, and Giselle's introduction further on in the same extract), this was not a consideration for the 'female' contestants, at least not until the idea was introduced to them by the emcee.

Extract 20 (on page 279) is taken from an interview with Sally who is the owner of Club Heaven and the producer of the Club Heaven beauty pageants. In this extract Sally reflects on the 'male' and 'female' contestants' participation in the beauty pageant competitions. The extract has been inserted here because it highlights the differential approach that the butch lesbian contestants have to participating in the beauty pageant competitions compared with the male contestants.

Extract 20: I will use my own name because I'm comfortable with myself and being butch

- Sally I think that is how (.) drag started originally was that (.) men were dressing up as women (.) because that is what they want to be (.) or who they want to be (.) that they're showing (.) by standing up out there (4) ... on stage like that (.) dressing up and (4) and all these things (3) and it's more difficult for the butch because you don't really see Mr South Africa do you? (3) unless it's muscle building or something like that (2) and for the butches it's difficult (.) I mean you even saw (2) it was even difficult for them to use a male name (2) we (.) are much more comfortable with using our own names
- Jacqui so why didn't they just use their own names?
- Sally u::m (.) the emcee was suggesting they use other names ... I mean all the queens change their names (.) but it's not (.) a necessity (.) and if I have to enter into a competition like that I will use my own name (2) I'll say I'm Sally and I'll walk out as Sally (.) because (.) I'm comfortable with myself and being butch

In this extract Sally argues that, compared with the “queens” (the ‘male’ contestants), “butch” (masculine) lesbian women are “more comfortable” using their “own names”. Sally argues that if she competed in a beauty pageant competition she would opt to use her own name on stage rather than a male pseudonym because she is “comfortable” with herself and “being butch”. These utterances illustrate an important difference between the ‘male’ and ‘female’ contestants: while the male contestants made a clear distinction between their on-stage and off-stage personas, this was not the case for the ‘female’ contestants.

One of the difficulties in articulating female masculinity, which is a particularly difficult thing to do given that, in patriarchal societies, dominant discourses construct masculinity in exclusively male terms, is that its authenticity is contingent on a muted visibility. Halberstam (1998) argues that the presumed non-performativity of masculinity makes it difficult to parody. Sally alludes to this in the extract above when she argues that “it’s more difficult for the butch”. This is because masculinity is not made visible, or it is not made into an object for viewing in the way that femininity is. In Sally’s words, “you don’t really see Mr South Africa do you?”(my emphasis).

Perhaps also, the “man” or “mankind” signifiers have, traditionally, incorporated females (while simultaneously excluding them), while “woman” or “womankind” signifiers have always excluded males. And so, paradoxically, females may occupy masculinity without having to enter a spectacle. They can express masculinity whereas men can only wear femininity.

The relative difficulty of parodying masculinity notwithstanding, Halberstam's (1997) research on drag kings shows that masculinity is not impenetrable. According to Halberstam, drag king performances have made masculinity visible through parodic performances of Elvis and 'gangsta rap' and that the key to the success of these performances is the degree to which they employ theatricality (elaborate dance moves, bedazzled suits, oversized jewellery, wigs, prostheses).

However, in contrast to the theatricality in the drag king performances that Halberstam describes, the butch lesbian contestants (drag butches) in the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageants were endeavouring to express masculinity rather than simply wear (parody or appropriate) it. This was indicated in their preference to dress in their own clothes and use their own names on stage; in other words, by being deliberately non-theatrical. While the non-theatricality of masculinity in the butch contestants' stage performances was possibly more transgressive than the gay male drag, it was less spectacular and therefore a disappointment to audiences. It was also made more difficult by the fact that, in the context of the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant, these performances of masculinity were juxtaposed to a tradition of gay male drag that has, historically, been made visible through mechanisms of artifice and exaggeration. The imperative for a theatrical performance of gender was thus imposed on the butch lesbian participants' performances.

An excerpt of the introduction of a butch lesbian contestant during the Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant in 2008 is provided in Extract 21 (on page 282). Much of the extract consists of my own description of what occurred during the introduction of the contestant.

Therefore, I have included a series of photographs that were created from video footage of the show. The photographs are intended to supplement my description in the extract.

Extract 21: Contestant number four

Emcee contestant number four (2) the final contestant (4) in the butch category ((points the microphone toward the contestant so that she can introduce herself)) [Photograph 9A]
 Cont.#4 (15) ((looks confused and hesitates to give her name to the emcee [Photograph 9B]
 Emcee sorry (.) two minutes [Photograph 9C] ((the audience laughs))
 Cont.#4 ((shrugs her shoulders)) (25) ((mutters something to the emcee))
 Emcee ((points microphone back toward the contestant))
 Cont.#4 okay (.) my name's (5) John [Photograph 9D] ((the audience laughs and so do 'John' and the Emcee))
 Emcee that took a while didn't it!



Photograph 8: My name is John

In the previous extract (Extract 20 on page 279) Sally recalls that the emcee suggested to the butch lesbian contestants that they use male pseudonyms on stage. This evidences an assumption that the theatricality of femininity in gay male drag and female impersonation provides an appropriate script (of gender inversion) for structuring the butch lesbian contestants' performances in the beauty pageant. However, the inappropriateness of this assumption reflects in the hesitancy of Contestant No. 4 to use a male pseudonym and hence to appear to 'act' masculine. The difficulty for Contestant No. 4, a boyish looking

lesbian contestant, was how to portray *female* masculinity in a spectacle of *female* homosexuality without indulging the notion of gender inversion.

Within lesbianism, masculinity has, historically, played an important role. The masculine lesbian woman, Halberstam (1998) argues, has made lesbians visible and legible as such. No doubt, this is because butch lesbians incorporate masculine style into their gender expression. And, consequently, the butch, like the drag queen, is made visible within a matrix structured in terms of the male/female dichotomy.

There is an important distinction between the gender performances of butch lesbian women and drag queens. Specifically, that the butch lesbian's gender expression is not put on and taken off like a costume. Arguably, this is because the masculine style of a butch lesbian woman is not simply a strategy for making female homosexual desire visible, but central to her understanding of her gender identity. This difference has implications. In the first instance, the pervasive notion of gender inversion, which drag accentuates, is problematic for the recognition of female masculinity. This is evidenced in the audiences reading of the lesbian contestants' performance of masculinity.

In the opening lines of Extract 17 (on page 273) Walt argues that the lesbian contestants "want to be, look like a man", suggesting that the butch contestants appropriation of masculine dress codes signifies their desire to be men. Further, *wanting* suggests not actually *being*, or *having*, implying that the butch contestants were endeavouring to be something which they were not really.

In the second instance, and this is an implication of the first, the lesbian contestants are then in a situation where their masculinity has to be installed performatively without it being read as a performance (as an 'act'). Thus, like masculinity in men, masculinity in women is a 'reality' that has to be achieved performatively, but unlike masculinity in men, masculinity in women is necessarily viewed as an achievement which then works to undermine its 'reality'.

In reference to female masculinity I have inserted 'reality' in quotation marks because, after Butler (1990/1999), I approach female masculinity, like all gender expression, as a performative achievement that is radically contingent and culturally specific rather than real. Nonetheless, the labour that butch lesbian women invest in their masculine identities and the way in which this is *read* is important because it provides an opportunity to reflect on the politics of gender identity and the differential implications for gay men and lesbian women.

Extract 22 (below) is taken from an interview with Sally. The part of the discussion that appears in this extract is a continuation of the discussion that appears in Extract 20 (on page 279). This part of the conversation is inserted here because it evidences the implications of masculine identity for the visibility of lesbian women's sexuality.

Extract 22: To them it's like I want to be a male

Sally being butch (3) it's difficult because (.) like (.) you walk into a place and (.) because (.) ah (.) okay let's say (.) because (.) our whole society has always been male dominant (2) and for women to walk in there (2) looking like a male (.) and not that I want to look like a male (2) I don't want to look like a male (.) but (.) the way I dress (.) to them (.) it's like (.) I want to be a male (.) when I don't (.) I don't want to be a male ... but they see it as a threat (.) men always feel intimidated by a masculine woman (.) why I don't

know (.) that has always been (3) my experience (.) my personal experience (.) they don't feel comfortable (.)

In the opening lines of this extract Sally argues that *being* butch is difficult because men read her masculine style to indicate that she “want[s] to be a male”. While Sally repudiates the notion that being a “masculine woman” means that she “want[s] to be a male”, she acknowledges that female masculinity is problematic because it is read in this way and that men “see it as a threat”.

Arguably, it is the performative contingency of masculinity that female masculinity makes visible that makes it a threat. In Chapter Three I draw on Derrida’s critique of Austin’s concept of ‘unhappy’ performatives. According to Derrida (1972/1991), unhappy performatives are not accidental, as Austin suggested, but are instead an essential feature of all linguistic signs because all signs can be reappropriated, reiterated, and recited. Derrida calls this the “essential iterability of [a] sign” (1972/1991, p.93). By ‘iterability’ Derrida means that signs cannot be contained by convention and Sally’s appropriation of masculinity is a case in point.

With regard to Sally’s appropriation of masculinity, Butler (1999a, p.179) argues that where gender performatives are re-enacted, the re-enactments are unlikely to be fully identical to (what is presumed to be) their ‘original’ and this discontinuity threatens to “reveal the ...groundlessness of th[e] ‘ground’” of identity. I argue that it is this that leads Sally’s performance of masculinity to be seen as a threat.

Importantly though, it is at this juncture (where discontinuity threatens to reveal the groundlessness of the ground of identity) that Butler (1990/1999) locates the possibility for resistance. In the extract above, contrary to normative conceptions of gender in which maleness is assumed to be the ground from which masculinity emanates, Sally asserts that she is a masculine woman. Arguably, Sally's repudiation of the exclusionary work of the conflation of masculinity with maleness evidences an exercise of resistance.

Sally's masculinity does not derive from a single performance but through her everyday gender performativity, in which she invests considerable effort. Of course, Butler (1990/1999) argues that all gender is performative, meaning that all individuals are compelled to invest in their gender identity in order to lay claim to a viable subjectivity. However, much of this effort is invisible because it is normative, whereas female masculinity is not. Normative gender allows what we achieve performatively to masquerade as nature. Consequently, we're accustomed to thinking that gender reflects something of the nature of our *being* rather than a cultural *practice* that constitutes our being. In Sally's case, however, the contested nature of her gender performativity makes her *doing* of gender visible as such.

Further on in the conversation Sally reflects on the way in which her masculinity implicates her sexual identity. An excerpt from this part of the conversation is provided in Extract 23 (below).

Extract 23: People look down on you because of your sexuality

Sally being a butch (.) is a battle (4) be::cause (.) people are not so (.) I don't know (.) I don't know how they think (2) but to them we are different (.) and we are not different (.) we're nothing different to a heterosexual person the only difference is (2) that we go to

bed (.) the partners that we take to bed (.) that's the only difference between us and (.) heterosexual people (3) so ja ...people look down on you all the time (3) because of your sexuality

In this extract Sally argues that, to heterosexual people, homosexual people “are different” and heterosexual people “look down on you all the time because of your sexuality”. This evidences another dimension upon which female masculinity is different to male masculinity. Masculinity makes lesbian women’s sexuality visible, and this accomplishment is not readily extended to male masculinity. Here I refer back to Edward’s failed attempt to construct a spectacle of the masculine homosexual man at the Palm Springs party, which is discussed in Chapter Six.

One explanation for the way in which masculinity implicates lesbian women’s sexuality is that, in patriarchal societies, dominant discourses articulate desire as an attraction to the opposite sex. Consequently, gender performatives that trouble dichotomies such as the female/male dyad upon which the articulation of desire rests necessarily also troubles the sexual identity of the desiring subject.

In Sally’s case, the dissonant juxtapositioning of male dress and corporeal signifiers of femaleness (secondary sex attributes such as breasts and vocal pitch) achieve a degree of gender confusion. The co-presence of male and female signifiers suggests an identity structured in terms of both/and, and this is contrary to the customary either/or conceptions of gender identity. By contrast, when Edward dressed-up in masculinity he did not present the same discord and confusion because the signification of masculinity in his dress was consistent with the corporeal signifiers of maleness. However, because homosexuality is

customarily interpreted through the gender inversion framework, Edward's presentation of himself as a masculine man failed as a strategy for articulating homosexual desire. Sally's masculinity, by contrast, achieves precisely that (a culturally intelligible articulation of homosexual desire).

"I'M A BLACK LESBIAN WOMAN": MAKING DIFFERENCE VISIBLE

Arguments presented in the preceding section described differences underwriting many of the lesbian contestants' experiences. This included their aims in participating in the Club Heaven beauty pageants, which were related to their experiences of masculinity and the implications of their masculinity for their sexual identities. The observations in Sally's narrative illustrate that these differences were perceptible to a degree. Therefore, it was surprising to observe that, despite her awareness of these differences, Sally should argue against difference.

In Extract 23 (on page 286) Sally argues, "we're nothing different to a heterosexual person the only difference is that we go to bed, the partners that we take to bed, that's the only difference between us and heterosexual people". In this utterance Sally articulates homosexuality narrowly as sex with the same sex (same-sex acts). This is not altogether surprising as same-sex has, traditionally, defined homosexuality as such. However, the utterance occludes the gender trouble her masculinity occasions as well as the implications of masculinity for her identity as a lesbian woman.

Sally's argument for sameness is also understandable in light of the fact that the recognition of 'sameness' has been a political strategy that gay men and lesbian women have used to argue for equal rights (Sullivan, 1995). Thus, despite its obvious occlusions, Sally's argument for sameness can be understood, in the context of a society in which gay and lesbian rights have been guaranteed constitutionally but remain highly contested, as a strategy for legitimizing equality.

However, I argue that Sally's argument for sameness occludes not only some of her own experiences, but other significant differences among lesbian women. When Sally argues that "we are nothing different", the "we" to which she is referring, appears, at first reading, to be homosexual men and women. However, because this presumes a cohort for whom difference is experienced primarily, if not exclusively, in terms of sexual orientation, in a country in which race has historically been the primary signifier of difference, such a statement necessarily implies a "we" that is white.

In contrast to Sally's claims of sameness, difference was an important issue for discussion among the black lesbian women I spoke to. Arguably this is because, for these women, racial difference is a significant dimension structuring their lives. Extract 24 (on page 290) is taken from a discussion that took place at a meeting of black lesbian women. The lesbian women who attended the meeting were part of a larger provincial forum advocating for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTI) rights. The meeting was facilitated by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that supports the initiatives of emerging black lesbian advocacy groups. The meeting was held in the same city in which this research took place.

I was invited to the meeting in order to document it because I was known to some of the women who organised the event as a researcher who is interested in gay and lesbian politics. Although the meeting was recorded primarily for the purpose of the forum's own records, I retained ownership of the recording and obtained a release to use it for the purposes of this study. At the time when the meeting was recorded I was unsure how this data would be relevant to my study. In retrospect, however, it evidences reflection on the importance of the issue of difference, which is illustrated in the extract below.

Extract 24: There's differences between us, we are not the same

Facilitator lesbian gay bisexual trans blah blah blah (.) so there is that level of difference within us as a so-called community (.) the L the G the B the T and if you talk about intersexed the I (.) there's differences between us (.) we are not the same (.) we are not the same if you take those (.) categories (2) and you link them with race (.) whether we like it or not this country comes out of a history of apartheid and white people accessed things that black people didn't (.) so-called coloured people accessed a (.) little bit less than white people but a bit more than ((nods)) so we know its layered (.) right (1) so (.) so we have different (.) um (.) privilege (.) based on race (.) so that means something (.) and we can't pretend it doesn't mean something (2) we have differences also based on class (2) I don't know how many people in this room are employed (1) and how many are unemployed (.) but that means something (.) if you have an income or you don't have an income it has to mean something (2) linking that with the fact that I'm a lesbian woman (.) that means something (.) I'm an unemployed lesbian versus I'm an employed lesbian has to mean something (5) a:::nd so (1) you know (3) I think I think what I'm asking us to do is to recognize diversity (.) difference (.) the fact that we're different (.) even if we're all black lesbian women there are still differences (.) and if we start off organizing ourselves assuming (.) and pretending (.) that we are all the same because we are black or we are all lesbians (.) we are starting off on the wrong footing

In this extract (Extract 24, above) difference is conceptualized not only in terms of race differences but the socio-economic differences that such difference engenders. The facilitator is careful to point out that there are potential limitations to a gay and lesbian politics that does not acknowledge difference. Importantly, the acknowledgement of difference within this forum can be contrasted with denials of difference among white gay men and lesbian women.

The next extract (Extract 25, on page 292) is taken from a meeting between the owner and management of Club Heaven and members of the (predominantly black) lesbian and gay forum. The meeting was initiated by both parties with a view to discussing possibilities for the mutual support of each other's initiatives – political as well as social. In the course of the meeting it transpired that the forum did not have their own premises and were holding their meetings at a local bar. Members of the forum complained that while the owner of the establishment was sympathetic to their cause and the other patrons at the bar were accepting of their presence, it was not always a comfortable situation. The forum members said that being affectionate with their partners under the (hetero)normative gaze made them feel awkward.

Sympathising with their experience of difference in heterosexual space, the representatives from Club Heaven suggested that the forum use the Club Heaven premises to hold their meetings. It was presumed that this would not only provide the forum with a more appropriate (homonormative) space to conduct their meetings, but would also invite ('black') gay and lesbian politics into ('white') gay and lesbian social space.

Extract 25 (on page 291) is taken from a point in the discussion in which Lebo, a member of the LGBT forum, responds to the suggestion to hold forum meetings at Club Heaven. This extract is included because it evidences the importance of the issue of racial difference for black homosexuals in the context of an initiative that would involve bringing historically (racially) divided groups of gay men and lesbian women closer together.

Extract 25: Meeting between the gay and lesbian forum and Club Heaven

Lebo we can try to unite
Sally yes (.) we need to
Lebo ((nods)) but some of us we (3) we (.) we're afraid and (2) I I I (.) I can't isolate myself
 from that one that (.) I am afraid (.) to come in a whi:::te ((shows inverted commas))
 club
Connie white?
Lebo eh (.) yes (.) because=
Connie =duh (.) who's white?
Lebo some of the=
Connie =is there whites here?
Lebo [no (.) in the]
Jacqui [Connie listen]⁶
Lebo there are so many things that we cannot ignore
Connie I know I know I know

In this extract Lebo refers to Club Heaven as a white space. Arguably, this challenges the identity of the club as, primarily, a gay and lesbian leisure space. I argue that Lebo's remark works to make visible the historic exclusion of blacks from white social spaces and leisure spaces in particular. In doing this, Lebo complicates white homosexuals understanding of difference as difference in terms of sexual orientation only. For Lebo, a black lesbian woman, race is an important dimension of difference because it reflects the primary social relation structuring her experiences of white leisure spaces, even when they are homonormative.

⁶ I interrupted Connie because I interpreted his statements to be indicative of a privilege to ambiguity that being male and white affords him and because I saw this as thwarting Lebo's attempt to articulate the specificity of the experiences of black homosexuals. My interruption blurred the researcher/participant role. During data collection I was not, in general, in the habit of directing discussion in this way. At the time that this conversation was recorded I did not know that I would be using it for this research.

The extract also illustrates the difficulty of articulating an alternate homosexual identity. In this excerpt, Lebo's attempt to describe the different experiences of black homosexuals in a white gay leisure space is constantly interrupted by Connie who eagerly insists that there are no differences ("Who's white?" "Is there whites here?").

Strategies that challenged understandings of gay and lesbian sexuality so that they did not necessarily imply whiteness were not limited to discussions at the gay and lesbian forum meetings. In 2009, black lesbian women entered the Club Heaven beauty pageants for the first time. Extract 26 (below) is a transcript of the introduction of Zinhle, a black lesbian contestant in the 2009 Miss & Mr Gay Sunshine Coast beauty pageant competition.

Extract 26: I'm a black ... lesbian woman

- Emcee and now our second contestant for Ms Butch (.) here we go (5) give her a hand (.) for encouragement
- Audience ((clap and cheer, especially the table booked by the gay and lesbian forum))
- Zinhle ((walks on stage, she is escorted by Sally, in the middle of the stage Zinhle and Sally turn to face each other and bow, Zinhle then crosses the stage, first to the left corner where she stops to pose for the audience who are cheering her on, then she crosses in front of the stage and poses midway before walking to meet the emcee on the other side of the stage))
- Emcee alright (.) please introduce yourself
- Zinhle good evening guys (3)
- Audience ((women sitting at the gay and lesbian forum table scream and shout words of encouragement))
- Zinhle I'm a black (3)
- Audience ((some embarrassed laughs))
- Zinhle ((smiles)) lesbian woman
- Audience cheers and claps
- Zinhle and my name is Nozinhle (2) but you can call me Zinhle (.) ja

There are some important differences in Zinhle's introduction in the 2009 Miss & Mr Gay Sunshine Coast beauty pageant, which can be compared with 'John's' introduction in the

2009 Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant (an excerpt of which appears in Extract 21 on page 282). In the 2009 Miss & Mr Heaven beauty pageant the emcee suggested that the butch lesbian contestants use male pseudonyms, ostensibly so that they would represent the same sort of play with gender-crossing as the male contestants who used female pseudonyms. However, the lesbian contestants found this awkward, and the same suggestion was not made to the lesbian contestants completing in the Miss & Mr Gay Sunshine Coast beauty pageant that took place later that year, which was the competition that Zinhle entered into.



In the 2009 Miss & Mr Gay Sunshine Coast beauty pageant the lesbian contestants introduced themselves using their own names. All of the lesbian contestants in this competition introduced themselves, first by giving their name, and then saying something about where they were from. Contestant no. 2, however, stood out from the other lesbian contestants because she introduced herself firstly as “a black lesbian woman”. Zinhle, the name she is known by, came as an after-thought.

Photograph 9: You can call me Zinhle

Zinhle's decision to introduce herself as a black lesbian woman is significant when one considers the context in which these statements were made. Some audience members laughed when Zinhle introduced herself as "a black"; perhaps this was because her blackness was already very evident to them. My own observation of the audience was that it was predominantly white, with the exception of the members of the gay and lesbian forum who had reserved a table at the event. Within this context, Zinhle's decision to introduce herself as a black lesbian woman could be read as an endeavour to make the specificity of her lesbian identity apparent. After all, in a society where skin colour has, historically, been privileged as the definitive signifier of difference, it is, possibly, rather difficult to articulate less significant dimensions of difference.

Or perhaps it is precisely because skin colour is the definitive signifier of difference that blackness provides black lesbian women with a mechanism for making difference visible that white women do not have recourse to. In Chapter Three I draw on Martin (1994) who argues that racial markers are often used as an on-screen strategy to accentuate sexual difference in film. And, the results of this study show that it was indeed difficult for the white lesbian contestants in the Club Heaven beauty pageants to articulate their lesbian identities in a context where homosexuality has, historically, been made visible through spectacles of (white) homosexual men. It is arguable therefore, that, for the black lesbian contestants, the visibility of their sexual identities in a white gay leisure space was underscored by the hyper-visibility of racial difference.

I read Zinhle's statement, "I'm a black lesbian", in this context, as a strategy that makes apparent the politics of location in terms of sexual difference, but without discounting the

issue of racial exclusion. This is significant in the light of the fact that a limitation of the political utility of visibility is that, in making something visible, something else is usually excluded from view. Indeed, Martin's (1994) critique of the use of racial difference to make sexual difference visible (on screen) is that sexual difference then becomes visible at the expense of racial difference. Zinhle's statement about being a black lesbian woman shows that the visibility of sexual difference need not be at the expense of racial difference. However, I have also considered that the visibility of black lesbian women in the context of the Club Heaven beauty pageants possibly occludes the fact that there are spaces where being black and lesbian is especially difficult.

In the same meeting of black lesbian women from which Extract 24 (on page 290) is taken, many participants spoke about spaces in which being black and lesbian was problematic. In these discussions participants made numerous references to the cultural politics embedded in the institution of the family and the implications of this for lesbian sexuality. For example, one participant made reference to the confusion that lesbian sexuality is seen to create for the cultural practice of *lobola*.

Extract 27: Who will pay *lobola*?

Speaker Culture does affect us because we're expected (2) as women (.) okay (4) um:: okay if I get married to (2) ah (.) Nomfundo *ne* (.) Nomfundo is my ((female)) partner so (.) we were discussing who will pay *lobola* because I will pay and Nomfundo will also pay for me (.) so who's going to pay *lobola*? And the families want *lobola* (.) because they've got girls.

The speaker's mention of *lobola* is significant because this custom has been an important issue in debates on same-sex marriage and the passing of the Civil Union Bill. In the introduction chapter I wrote that traditional leaders argued against same-sex marriage on

the grounds that, in 'African culture' "only a man can pay *lobola* for a woman"(Nkosi, 2005). I argued that this statement evidences the threat that same-sex marriage is presumed to pose for masculine hegemony and that, for this reason, statements from traditional leaders on the issue of same-sex marriage have consistently been framed in such a way as to exclude homosexuality and homosexual partnerships from notions of African identity.

Arguably, it is precisely because the statements of the traditional leaders reflect the powerful way in which culture is invoked to exclude dimensions of identity such as homosexuality from race/ethnic identities, that Zinhle's statement, "I'm a black, lesbian woman", can be read as a strategy that simultaneously speaks to this exclusion. However, without discounting the power of such an affirmation, I am critical of the fact that Zinhle's speech act is contained within a white leisure space.

The seclusion of (white) gay space provides Zinhle with a platform to articulate a dimension of her identity that – like the white participants – is "not otherwise permitted". And, while Zinhle's spectacle of the black lesbian woman occurs – like the spectacles of white homosexuality – at a distance from 'traditional' cultural spaces, it is particularly problematic in Zinhle's case because her visibility in this space has the potential to perpetuate the idea that homosexuality is "un-African"; "a Western import" that corrupts black youth who come into contact with it in the cities.

LAST NOTES ON EXCLUSION

This chapter began with a discussion of the democratization of public space and the visibility of homosexuality in the 21st century. In this discussion I argue that the participants' talk about straight and gay leisure geographies shows that public space is a differentiated space, and this is contrary to the efforts of the Drag Revue, in the early 1990s, to integrate and assimilate homosexuality with (hetero)normative society.

Reflecting on participants' talk about intolerance toward homosexuality and a return to more private spectacles of homosexuality reminiscent of the Palm Springs party in the apartheid era I argue that this evidences a shift, in the 21st century, from prohibitions orchestrated by the state to those that cohere, more incipiently, in socio-cultural norms and practices.

While the shift toward more private spectacles of homosexuality in the 21st century reflects the continuing oppression and marginalization of non-hetero sexualities, I argue that it also facilitates some of the positive outcomes associated with the spectacles of a bygone era. In particular, that the private spectacles of homosexuality facilitate a degree of intersubjectivity – dialogue and exchange – which had been lost in the time of the Drag Revue.

The Club Heaven beauty pageants provided participants with a space in which homosexuality could not only be made visible without fear of the sorts of repercussions such visibility obtains in other (straight) public spaces, but where it could also be actively

and positively affirmed. The political utility of this coheres, firstly, in its challenge to the heteronormative ideology that otherwise colonises public space and which seeks to obliterate difference. But also, in the space that it provides for the participants to turn their gaze inwards and to return to the question of the homosexual self.

In Chapter Seven I wrote that in the 1990s, in the time of the Drag Revue, the endeavour to assimilate and integrate with heteronormative society resulted in spectacles that ceased to interrogate notions of the homosexual self – as they had in the era of the Palm Springs party – but focused, instead, on spectacles of an other. This not only homogenized the other, but worked, very strategically, to homogenise white masculinity too – thereby facilitating the assimilation of white homosexual men with heteronormative (white) society. Arguably, focusing on spectacles that homogenized the homosexual self rather than interrogating and accommodating difference meant that an important opportunity was lost at a crucial time in South African history to articulate homosexuality in terms of its diversity.

However, with a return to more private spectacles of homosexuality in the Club Heaven beauty pageants, space was made, once more, for interrogating the question of the self. And, an important difference between the context in which the spectacles of homosexuality in the Club Heaven beauty pageants occurred and the earlier spectacles of homosexuality in the era of the Palm Springs party, was the political change that had begun in the 1990s and the gradual dismantling of colonial and apartheid era policy meant that the space in which the Club Heaven beauty pageants occurred was more permeable than it had been in the past, and this had important implications for thinking about the homosexual self and gay space.

In the era of the Palm Springs party, homosexuality and gay space had been made visible exclusively through spectacles of the white male homosexual. In the 21st century, race and gender continued to be key dimensions of homosexual identity. However, because public space has become more diverse in the 21st century, race and gender diversity has started to be accommodated and incorporated into spectacles of homosexuality and the articulation of gay space. In the second half of this chapter I interrogated constructions of sameness and difference in lesbian women's narratives and reflect on the differential implications of race and gender for a politics of visibility in public space.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance in events that took place over a period of sixty years, from the 1950s and the inception of apartheid policy, through the socio-political changes in the 1990s to the 21st century post-apartheid context. This was done in order to analyse the politics of homosexual visibility in spectacles of dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance. The study drew on Butler's notion of performative resistance and took the form of a Foucauldian genealogy. The usefulness of a genealogical analysis in this study was its ability to explicate the role of contextual and historical specificities for the way in which these spectacles were read, misread, or not read.

In the introduction I wrote that Judith Butler's work has been especially popular among scholars who have sought to queer conventional discourse on gender and sexuality. Part of what makes Butler's work appealing is her engagement and reworking of sophisticated theoretical ideas initially put forward by a range of scholars whose own work has contributed significantly to debates on subjectivity and power. Foremost amongst these are Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.

Butler's popularity is also partly as a result of her subject matter, the centrality of 'the queer' subject in Butler's ground-breaking text 'Gender trouble' is an affirmative resignification of what has otherwise been used as a homophobic repudiation, and because of the examples she draws upon to illustrate theoretical formulations. Key amongst these

has been her decision to use the spectacle of the drag queen to ground a discussion of performative resistance (Butler, 1990/1999).

Despite the exciting potential in Butler's theorizing of subjectivity and resistance, critics have not overlooked its limitations. One of the key areas of debate with regard to the limitations of Butler's theoretical formulations of the process of subject formation and the possibilities for resistance has been the tendency to focus on what Lloyd (1999, p.210) has termed "the historicity of a particular subject's construction as a gendered being." For Lloyd, the problem with research that focuses on the disruptive behaviour of individual subjects is that it occludes the role of contextual specificities. These include: materiality, history, and the politics of institutional and everyday practices which have implications for the politics of homosexual visibility. Arguments about the importance of taking contextual factors into account informed my own approach in this inquiry and the choice of genealogy as method.

In this chapter I draw together and discuss the key findings of the study. The discussion is presented in three parts. The first part is titled 'The limitations of homosexual visibility in public and private space'. This part of the discussion focuses on the shift from the state prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid to disciplinary power in the post-apartheid context and the implications of this shift for intersubjectivity and the politics of homosexual visibility. The second part of the discussion is titled 'Tactical invisibility'. This part of the discussion addresses the potential for harm that is associated with homosexual visibility and considers the circumstances in which invisibility may be desirable. The last part of the discussion is titled 'Difference and its implications for solidarity on the basis of oppression'.

In this discussion I consider the implications of structural inequality and the issue of difference for allegiance in gay and lesbian politics.

THE LIMITATIONS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VISIBILITY

In Chapter Six I argue that the state sanctioned prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid presented a challenge to the visibility of homosexuality because behaviour that was prohibited by the State could not be seen to occur. Homosexuals could not establish public meeting places that were explicitly gay spaces and behaviour that was explicitly homosexual could not occur in view of the public without risking a term in jail and the personal costs associated with that. During apartheid, homosexual visibility was a target for state intervention. However, despite the risks, homosexuality did still occur in the public realm. Drawing on participants' accounts of the antics at the Station Bar, a privately owned bar located in the train station building in the city centre, I argue that the state prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid, far from preventing it from happening, made it instead into a rather intriguing game of (not) knowing.

Homosexual behaviour at the Station Bar was clandestine, with the implication that the public could then choose to turn a blind eye. During apartheid, a guise of officialdom was achieved through social relations marked by the privileging of white hetero-masculinity through its right to visibility and the corresponding occlusion of homosexuality. Ironically though, homosexuality in public was possible precisely because of the State's prohibition. By drawing a distinction between official and unofficial behaviour, the public could choose,

under the guise of officialdom, not to know about it. However, turning a blind eye was contingent on the homosexual activities at the Station Bar remaining somewhat invisible. I argued that this evidenced a peculiar dynamic characterized by both agency and restraint.

Homosexual behaviour in public during apartheid was not always covert. Participants spoke about the 'favourite victims' at the Station Bar. Unskilled white labourers benefiting from protected state employment (and, therefore, invariably strong supporters of the Nationalist government under whose rule homosexuality had been criminalized) would sometimes come into the bar for 'a drink'. According to participants' accounts, it was not uncommon for the homosexual men at the Station Bar to engage intimately with these men, and that these liaisons occurred in the station building.

In Chapter Six I argued that homosexual sex with straight men challenged the state prohibition because with public sex there is a risk of being caught out and, consequently, of the unofficial (private, secret) becoming official (public, known). However, while I concluded that public sex was a subversive strategy that homosexual men used to challenge a state ideology that sought to erase them, the obvious limitation of its subversiveness is that, although there was a risk of being discovered, these scenes occurred out of sight of the hustle and bustle of the crowds on the station platform and in the bar. The subversiveness of homosexual sex in the station buildings was contained because these acts remained private acts.

The state prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid meant that explicit homosexual behaviour in public was not viable on account of the risks associated with it. Consequently,

explicit homosexual behaviour was limited to the private realm. In the apartheid era, private house parties such as the Palm Springs party, which took place away from the public eye, provided gay men with an opportunity to experiment with articulations of homosexuality. At the Palm Springs party, the intimacy of private space invited a degree of engagement and exchange (intersubjectivity) through which these articulations could be negotiated. However, while the privacy and exclusivity of the Palm Springs party meant that the men could experiment with articulations of homosexuality and engage with one another in this endeavour it also meant that there was little opportunity for new ideas to filter in.

In Chapter Six I argue that, in the context of the Palm Springs party, it had become practice to articulate homosexual desire within heterosexual terms as an attraction to the opposite sex. This complicated Edward's efforts to rearticulate homosexuality as a desire for the same sex. Edward's spectacle of the 'masculine homosexual man' was an anomaly in an era in which there was a lack of diversity in the way in which homosexuality was articulated. I argue that this lack of diversity was a direct consequence of the privacy and exclusivity of the Palm Springs party. Consequently, while the prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid made the privacy and exclusivity of the Palm Springs party necessary, these same conditions limited the possibilities for articulating homosexuality. Thus, a major drawback of the prohibition of homosexuality during apartheid was that it limited explicit expressions of homosexuality to the private realm where privacy and exclusivity meant that the possibilities for engaging broader articulations of homosexuality were restricted.

In the light of the closeted nature of homosexuality during apartheid and the implications of this in terms of limiting opportunities for exposure and engagement with broader

articulations of homosexuality, I expected an analysis of the performances in the Drag Revue shows in the 1990s, a period of rapid and far-reaching socio-political change in South Africa, to be the mark a new start. This was not the case.

The democratization of public space in the 1990s brought with it the impetus for previously marginalized and excluded social groups to claim space within the public realm. However, a history of exclusion, marginalization, and pathologization problematized the emerging visibility of homosexuality in the public (heteronormative) realm at this time. Two strategies for negotiating homosexual visibility in the public realm in the 1990s, which are discussed in Chapter Seven, is the use of charity to legitimize the visibility of homosexuality and the assimilation with (hetero)normative society through representations of an other.

With regard to the first strategy, the legitimization of homosexuality was achieved by framing the Drag Revue as a charitable enterprise. It is argued that this strategy was problematic because by presenting the Drag Revue as a charitable enterprise its political dimension, which was the visibility of homosexuality and the democratization of public space, was diminished. In the light of the fact that homosexuality had, historically, operated under the threat of erasure in the public realm it was particularly problematic, in a period of socio-political transition, to engage a strategy for negotiating public space that discounted the visibility of homosexuality, which is what happened when charity rather than homosexual visibility was presented as the super-ordinate objective in public statements about the Drag Revue.

The negotiation of homosexual visibility in the public realm through a strategy of legitimization was also problematic because it evidenced a politics of visibility that was tailored to appease public (heteronormative) sentiments at a time when it could have been challenging them. Consequently, I argue that the political utility of visibility (that the shift from private to public space made possible) was undermined by the decision to negotiate this visibility through strategies of legitimization. The implications of a politics of visibility that is tailored to assimilate with a (hetero)normative public rather than challenge the prevailing politics of that space are most apparent in my discussion of a second strategy: public assimilation through representations of an other.

In Chapter Seven it is argued that the spectacle of the Afrikaner in a parody of *Die Briele* and the spectacle of the 'white black' in a parodic performance of Miriam Makeba's song '*Pata Pata*' evidence a trend, in the 1990s, to negotiate assimilation through representations of an other. I argue that it is particularly problematic that assimilation should be negotiated through spectacles of a (classed, raced, ethnic) 'other' precisely at a time when apartheid ideologies pertaining to class, ethnicity and race were being disassembled. It is even more ironic that on the eve of the democratization of public space homosexual men should employ strategies of representation that worked to marginalize and exclude groups of people when, under apartheid, they had had first-hand experience of this themselves.

Arguably, the reproduction of ideologies pertaining to race, ethnicity, gender and class in performances in the Drag Revue shows evidences how spectacles intended to resist normative conceptions can be co-opted and used to undermine that endeavour. Homosexual visibility, in the context of the Drag Revue, was not politically progressive.

Instead, homosexual participation in the public realm was irredeemably normalizing. In the light of this finding I am interested to explore opportunities in the trend for contemporary spectacles of homosexuality to move into more private spaces in the public realm. This is explored in the discussion that follows.

TACTICAL INVISIBILITY

In Chapter Six I argue that, during apartheid, the prohibition of homosexuality made it possible for homosexual behaviour to occur in public. This is because, by drawing a distinction between official and unofficial behaviour, the public could choose, under the guise of officialdom, not to know about it, which they did. During apartheid it was an open secret that the Station Bar was a place where homosexual men went to meet other men for sex. And it was easy to turn a blind eye and to claim not to know anything about “it” when all the men did was come in for a drink.

In Chapter Six I argue that because of the considerable risks associated with overt homosexuality in the public realm, many homosexual men were not willing to go so far. In the apartheid era, the visibility of explicit homosexual behaviour was most often limited to private spaces and to private house parties in particular. The spectacles of homosexuality at private house parties were spectacles in which gay men sought to make their identities as gay men visible and recognizable as such. Thus, like public sex acts in the station building, spectacles of homosexuality at the house parties were a strategy for homosexual men to counter the threat of erasure during apartheid. However, these spectacles carried far less

risk because the exclusivity of the house parties meant that there was an assurance that the spectators (who were participants themselves) were 'in the know' and, consequently, could be relied upon to be cooperative and appreciative. Thus, participation in the spectacles, practices of recognition and affirmation of homosexual identity, and cooperation and appreciation characterized social relations within the space of the house parties, marking it out as private space; a refuge from the threat associated with being marked in public space.

However, there was still some risk attached to the house parties. This risk, like sex in the station buildings, was directly related to the threat associated with the private becoming public. In Chapter Six I presented extracts in which participants talk about police raids of the private house parties during the apartheid era and the ensuing spectacles of homosexuality constructed by media exposés of the raids in which homosexual men were represented as a threat to normative society. I argue that the participants accounts of the police raids and the media exposés evidences not only the threat and the potential for violence that characterized public space at that time, but the contingency of space itself. Just as sex in the station buildings had the potential to make public space private, so could the violence of the spectacles of the police raids and the ensuing media exposés make private spaces public.

In Chapter Seven, in the context of socio-political in South Africa homosexual visibility in the public realm was more viable than it had been in the past. This is evidenced by the shift, in the 1990s, of the spectacles of homosexuality from the private realm of house parties and into the public realm and onto the stage. In the preceding discussion I consider the critique in my analysis of performances in the Drag Revue shows and the politics of homosexual visibility in the public realm in the 1990s. In the light of the limitations articulated in my

critique I was interested in the trend, in contemporary spectacles of homosexuality, to move into more private spaces within the urban public realm.

In Chapter Eight I write that although the Club Heaven shows took a different form to the Drag Revue shows, and participants in the Club Heaven beauty pageants were more diverse in terms of race and gender, visibility remained a key objective. However, while many of the people interviewed for this study also described the Club Heaven shows as a platform for homosexual visibility (e.g. Extract 14 on Page 260), I found it difficult to extend the notion of a platform for visibility to the spectacles of homosexuality in the Club Heaven beauty pageants.

In Chapter Eight I argue that the difficulty in extending the notion of the Club Heaven shows as a public platform for the visibility of homosexuality is that the Club Heaven shows were staged before a much smaller audience than was the case in the era of the Drag Revue. This was because the Club Heaven beauty pageants ran for one night only while the Drag Revue shows ran for weeks on end. And, in addition to there being a much smaller audience, there was also a degree of familiarity and intimacy at the Club Heaven beauty pageants that was not characteristic of the Drag Revue.

The familiarity and intimacy characterising social relations at the Club Heaven beauty pageants played an important role in creating a sense of safety for the contestants. Importantly, these characteristics (familiarity, intimacy, and safety) have, historically, characterised private rather than public visibility. Thus, although the Club Heaven beauty pageants were located in the same public venues as the Drag Revue shows, in the context of

the Club Heaven beauty pageants, these public locations were made private through social relations characterized by familiarity, intimacy and a sense of safety. Thus, in the 21st century, safety remains an important dimension for the visibility of homosexuality.

Privacy is an important factor for homosexual visibility because homosexuality is still a highly contested identity in South Africa. However, under apartheid rule relations of power were clearly demarcated in state legislation prohibiting homosexuality and the various state apparatuses that were put in place to police the prohibition. While, in the 21st century, when these policies and apparatuses are being dismantled, the prohibition of homosexuality is shifting and becoming the purview of socio-cultural norms and expectations rather than state sanctioned legal code.

The shift from state sanctioned prohibitions of homosexuality to socio-cultural prohibitions of homosexuality evidence a shift in technologies of power, and a shift toward disciplinary power in particular. Foucault's (1977) notion of disciplinary power provides a useful framework for understanding how old relations of power – structured through notions of 'race', 'gender' and 'sexual orientation' – could be reasserted in a period of democratic change. In Chapter Eight I discuss participants talk about the cultural politics of marriage (Extract 27 on Page 296) and the implications of this for lesbian sexuality. In this discussion I argue that the coercive reinstatement of heteronormativity in hegemonic and exclusionary notions of marriage and African culture evidences the work of disciplinary power in which desired forms of behaviour are cultivated through coercive discourse.

Critically, Foucault argued that the special force of disciplinary power is the invisibility it manages to obtain. The implication of a force that is not immediately visible is that it is particularly difficult to counter. In discourse on 'African culture' and 'marriage' power is, as Crossley (2005, p. 220) describes, "the effect of a relational network of localized social practices which shape the conduct of everybody but belong to nobody."

While disciplinary power is contingent on making those who are subject to it visible, homosexuality is often not discernible or externally visible in the way that race and gender usually are. Thus, in the context of pervasive discrimination and stigmatization, the non-obviousness of homosexuality provides a strong motivation for closeting it. In Chapter Eight, self-regulation resonates in participants' talk about homosexual visibility in the public realm in the 21st century post-apartheid context. In Extract 15 (on page 263) Violet equates the decision to be visibly homosexual in public space with the management of risk ("it's your prerogative, it's still scary though").

Reflecting on the issue of self-regulation and homosexual visibility, Sedgwick (1990) has argued that the closet is a defining structure of homosexual oppression. Certainly, the prevalence of homophobic violence in South Africa that emerges at the same time as the escalating visibility of homosexuality in debates about same-sex unions and the right of homosexuals to adopt and raise children, provides an explanation for the observation in this study of the retreat of spectacles of homosexuality in the 21st century post-apartheid context into more private spaces – into gay enclaves within the urban public realm.

While I am also cognizant that this retreat has implications for the potential of homosexual visibility to transgress or undermine heteronormativity, I have identified some advantages to the retreat. One advantage of the retreat into more private spaces within the public realm for the participants in this study was that it provided a strategy for them to gain control over the threat associated with being marked as homosexual in public. The other advantage of the retreat pertains to the negotiation of difference and the issue of the 'subject' in gay and lesbian politics in South Africa.

DIFFERENCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SOLIDARITY ON THE BASIS OF OPPRESSION

In the apartheid era, the state's policies of racial segregation meant that the social scenes in which the spectacles of homosexuality occurred were racially exclusive. Consequently, important aspects of the work of the spectacles of homosexuality such as recognition and affirmation were only extended to white homosexual men. Furthermore, when the police raided private house parties and the media made these raids into public spectacles, these spectacles of homosexuality worked to perpetuate notions of homosexuality in exclusively white and male terms. Decades later, both of these events have had implications for gay and lesbian politics.

In the 1990s socio-political changes provided room for gay men and lesbian women to take control of the production of homosexual visibility in the public realm. This provided an opportunity for self-articulation and representation that had not been possible in the apartheid era. In the apartheid era, articulating homosexuality in the public realm was

limited to medical and/or judicial discourses in which the homosexual subject was articulated as 'deviant', which not only foreclosed on the possibility for self-representation but simultaneously legitimized the state's prohibition of homosexuality. However, while self-representation in the public sphere in the 1990s presented new opportunities for self-articulation and representation, moving the spectacles into the public realm meant that a new set of restraints would have to be negotiated.

Shifting the spectacles into the public space of the commercial theatre also introduced an imperative to present polished (professional, rehearsed) spectacles that had less to do with grappling with homosexual identity than creating spectacles that would entertain audiences and secure box office incomes against which production costs could be off-set. This meant taking into account the normative values of public audiences who gained entry through the purchase of a ticket rather than by private invitation.

Consequently, when the drag spectacles became public entertainment their political potential was determined, not in terms of gaining recognition and affirmation as they had in the past, but by the degree to which the spectacles facilitated public (heteronormative) assimilation. In addition to this, profitability became a new important dimension for determining the viability of the spectacles. These changes shed light on the emergence of representations of class, ethnicity and race in the performances in the Drag Revue. Borrowing on a tradition of parodic (re)appropriations of identity performance, white homosexual men created spectacles of classed, raced, ethnic, and gendered others that invited the sort of derisive laughter from their white middle-class audience that was

required to minimise their own difference and secure a box office turnover that made public visibility viable.

The imperative for normative assimilation was the effect that disciplinary power had on the drag spectacles as they shifted into the public realm. That normative assimilation was pursued through parodic representations of classed, raced, ethnic and gendered others indicates that, contrary to some claims, parody is not necessarily subversive and is easily incorporated into the machinery of disciplinary power.

This observation is pertinent in the light of the fact that a long history of racial segregation in South Africa meant that it was virtually impossible for black and white homosexuals to socialize with one another. In Chapter Six, the participants recount only knowing one black person ever to attend the private house parties held in a 'white' city suburb in the apartheid era. In the same chapter I argue that this lack of diversity had implications for the negotiation of homosexual identity because it limited the scope of identity to which the men were exposed. However it also meant that other dimensions of the spectacles such as recognition and affirmation were similarly limited. Consequently, the solidarity fostered among white homosexual men was not extended to black homosexuals, and only occasionally to white lesbian women. I argue that the implications of this became apparent in the era of the Drag Revue; when women were excluded from participating in the shows and the performers drew, unproblematically, on strategies of representation that reified old ideologies of race, gender and class.

Social relations marked by exclusion and marginalization, which were reflected in performances in the Drag Revue, were representative of just the sort of social relations still governing public space at that time. Therefore, I argued that the privileging of the white male in the Drag Revue was not particularly queer. Those who were queer at this time were the homosexual men and lesbian women who were still invisible. The subjects whose histories had never been recorded in police reports and media exposés in the way that the histories of white homosexual men had been, and who were consequently barely present in the public imagination. I argue, therefore, that the public spectacles of homosexuality in the context of the Drag Revue were traditionally public not so much because of the site of the appearance of the spectacles or the audience that was admitted, but because they failed to address the issue of erasure.

Failure to address the issue of erasure in the context of the Drag Revue show can be contrasted with the politics of visibility in the era of the Palm Springs party when the objective of the spectacle was to make the excluded and marginalized subject visible and to affirm that visibility. Here, the usefulness of a genealogical analysis becomes apparent because, by analysing the work of spectacles of homosexuality as they are repeated over historically significant periods of time, makes it possible to track the changing politics of visibility and, in this instance, to shed light on the implications of shifting the site of the spectacles of homosexuality from the private to the public realm. In this regard, the results of this study indicate that when the spectacles of homosexuality shifted into the public realm performative resistance was restrained by the normative conceptions of self and other that had become sedimented in the public realm under colonialism and apartheid. An

analysis of the implications of the politics of visibility for spectacles of homosexuality was extended by taking contemporary shifts into account.

The practices of marginalization and exclusion incorporated into the spectacles of homosexuality in the Drag Revue shows meant that they were unlikely to appeal to a broader, more diverse audience. The annual Drag Revue shows came to an end in 2001 (with the exception of a special performance in 2005). The director and many of the cast now live abroad. While it is beyond the scope of this study to ascertain the truth about the demise of the Drag Revue, it is possible that the limitations just mentioned played a role. It would have been difficult to sustain interest in the Drag Revue shows without ever questioning the politics of the performances and the audiences those performances sought to address.

In the 21st century post-apartheid context, the character of public space is more diverse than it was during apartheid and at the start of the transitions taking place in the 1990s. However, a history of race-based privilege and oppression is still discernible in the structure of South African society today. The country's wealth is in the hands of a white minority and most of the population is poor and black. However, shifts have occurred in the small middle-class sector of the population where, since 2009, black South Africans have constituted the majority.

Changes in labour legislation and social redress have provided black homosexual men and lesbian women better access to job opportunities. Employment opportunities and disposable incomes have provided the means to access commercial enclaves within the

public realm. This is particularly true with regard to Club Heaven. Located in a small city with a decidedly working-class and conservative Christian character, the club's viability is precarious enough not to warrant any undue restrictions on entry into the club. This accounts for a degree of diversity in this space that is different to the Drag Revue and the Palm Springs party.

In the 1990s, the historic absence of black homosexual men and lesbian women in white leisure spaces meant that white homosexual men could draw, unproblematically, on crude representations of blackness and femininity with impunity. However, in the 21st century post-apartheid context such representations are countered by the growing visibility of black homosexuals and lesbian women who are taking charge of the opportunities for self-representation directly rather than their presence being limited to the representations of white men. Nevertheless, this endeavour can be complicated.

In Chapter Eight I analyse the implications of a tradition of representing homosexuality in crossing-dressing spectacles for lesbian women's articulations of masculine femininity. For lesbian women, representing the self entails negotiating one's difference from traditional understandings of homosexuality as male and white. I argue that while the issue of difference is central to lesbian women's self-articulation, white and black lesbian women respond to this issue differently.

In Chapter Eight I draw on participants narratives to show that white women, while constantly referring to differences structuring their everyday experiences, paradoxically disavow that difference when talking about homosexuality as a category while, for black

lesbian women, difference is at the forefront of such discussions. I argue that the black lesbian women's experiences of racial oppression accounts for their concern to be explicit about difference. This can also be understood in the light of the fact that race continues to be a primary marker of difference in South Africa.

The relation of heteronormativity, patriarchy, masculinity, race, ethnicity and class, to materiality, history and knowledge in a discussion of the politics of public and private spectacles of homosexuality moves different subjects to the fore of these conversations. It also illustrates the complexity of thinking about homosexual identity in South Africa and the politics of homosexual visibility. In this study, looking at practices of dressing-up, cross-dressing and drag performance in order to examine the politics of homosexual (in)visibility entailed paying attention to what could and could not be seen in the performances and to consider the conditions underpinning this (in)visibility. My observations in this regard are presented in the preceding chapters. They elucidate the complexities of the relations in which homosexuality becomes visible and is read, misread, or remains unread. Complexity makes resolution difficult. Consequently, in the conclusion I have opted to present an argument for the value of these observations that does not require their resolution.

CONCLUSION

In her work on the unmarked, Phelan (1993) argues that we search for an image of ourselves in our encounters with representations. In the context of pervasive heteronormativity and its dominance in the public arena, there are few opportunities for

gay men and lesbian women to encounter representations that reflect their experiences as desiring subjects. In the light of this, it not surprising that within homosexual subculture there emerges a history of practices in which homosexual men and women endeavour to articulate their identities as desiring subjects. Consequently, far from discouraging the endeavour, the prohibition of homosexuality is the motivating force.

However, while dressing-up, cross-dressing, and drag performances enable gay men and lesbian women to construct representations of homosexual desire, these practices do not offer resolve. Consistent with the work of Derrida, Butler and Foucault, the findings of this study illustrate that visibility in a performance is contingent on absences, and that in crossing some boundaries we also take refuge in others. However, Phelan (1993) argues that if disappearance is an aspect of finding who we are then finding can never be done, and so we are motivated to continue to look. Consequently, while I am critical of the politics of homosexual visibility, I am compelled to agree with Phelan on the usefulness of looking. Every endeavour to know evidences the failure of what we already know and a desire to know differently. Though it is wise to consider the nature of the force that compels us and which shapes our endeavour.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Photo-Elicited Personal Interview Guide

Introduction

A brief overview of the research is provided along with a description of the various sources and methods of data collection.

Interview process is described.

Ethical considerations are discussed (e.g. voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality - ask about pseudonym).

Consent forms are signed.

Opening question

How did you come to perform in drag/how did you get started with this?

Procedure

Stage photographs of each of the participants performances are laid out in front of the participant. It is explained to the participant that the purpose of the photographs is to remind him/her about the performances, explain that the questions pertain specifically to these performances.

Ask the participant to choose one photograph (e.g. of her/his favourite performance) to begin the interview process. Ask all interview questions about this photograph before moving onto the next photograph.

Questions about performance

What is this performance about?

Why did you choose to do it, does it have any special significance for you?

Your performance was for an audience, what did you want the audience to see in your performance? What did you want to communicate to the audience through this performance?

How was your performance going to achieve this?

Do you feel that your performance achieved what it was supposed to?

Did you play around with other ideas, for example, about how it might be done differently or improved upon?

At this point, if there are photographs of other performances that have not yet been spoken about then point to one of those photographs and start back at question 1.

Additional question

How is this persona different to the one we have just spoken about?

Closing questions

What do you most enjoy about performing in drag?

Do you have anything that you'd like to add, something that you think is important to say and which did not come up in the interview?

Is there anything that you would like clarity on with regards to your participation in this research?

END OF INTERVIEW

Appendix II: Group Interview Guide – Apartheid era

Introduction

Interview process is described.

Ethical considerations are discussed (e.g. voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality - ask about pseudonym).

Consent forms are signed.

Opening statement

My research is about cross-dressing and drag performance in the homosexual community. I'm looking at recent events in the drag scene in this town. But the way things are now perhaps has a lot to do with what came before, and that is what I would like to learn more about from you. I would like you to tell me about the gay scene when you first came into it and how you think it has changed. The discussion won't be very structured. I have a few questions but the format for responding to my questions is completely open because I want you to use your own words and descriptions of the events at that time.

Opening question

Can you tell me about a particular event that occurred at the time when you first entered the gay scene, any event that stands out in your mind, one of the parties, for example.

Follow up questions

Was this event important, why?

Where did it take place? Why this place?

How did you come to know about it?

Were there risks involved? What kind of risks? Were the risks the same for everyone?

Why did you go there?

Who was there? Who wasn't? Why not?

What did they do?

Closing questions

Do you have anything that you'd like to add, something that you think is important to say and which did not come up in the interview?

Is there anything that you would like clarity on with regards to your participation in this research?

END OF INTERVIEW

Appendix III: Photo-Elicited Group Interview Guide - Audience Members

Introduction

A brief overview of the research is provided along with a description of the various sources and methods of data collection.

Interview process is described.

Ethical considerations are discussed (e.g. voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality - ask about pseudonym).

Consent forms are signed.

Procedure

Stage photographs of each of the drag performances are laid out on a table around which the discussants chairs are arranged.

Each participant is handed a question which is typed on a piece of paper. Participants are asked to pose each of their questions, in turn, to the group for discussion.

Opening questions

What prompted your decision to come to see the show? (If you were a Judge then explain why you agreed to be a judge).

Interview questions

What prior expectations did you have about the show? And was the show different to what you expected to see? - If so, how was it different?

Which aspects of the show did you find particularly entertaining? Explain.

Which aspects of the show did you not particularly enjoy? What do you think could have been done to make it better?

Which cabaret (drag) performance do you think was more successful than the rest? Explain why you think it was better.

Which cabaret (drag) performance do you think was not very successful? Explain why not.

Aside from raising money for [REDACTED], what is the value of this form of entertainment?

Closing questions

Do you see yourself supporting another of these events? Explain why/why not.

Is there anything that hasn't been mentioned that you think is worth mentioning as it pertains to the show?

END OF INTERVIEW

Appendix IV: Covering Letter - Audio-Visual Recordings of Show Rehearsals

Date

Dear Participant,

Thanks for letting me tell you about my research. This letter contains some of the important details covered in our meeting. My contact number is also provided in the event you require additional information, or have questions about the study which did not come to mind in our meeting.

My research is on the topic of drag and it is being done for a Doctoral degree in Psychology at Rhodes University. My research involves collecting and analysing data from a variety of sources and I would like to use the show rehearsals as an opportunity to collect data. I think that the impromptu discussions about gender performances that take place at rehearsals will provide interesting material for my research and I would greatly appreciate it if you allowed me to make use of this opportunity.

I will collect data by video-recording rehearsals. Parts of these video-recordings, for example, where a comment or discussion is of particular importance to my research, will be transcribed (turned into text), and used for the purposes of analysis. Some of these texts may be reproduced verbatim (word for word) in my thesis or in other publications such as an academic journal article or conference material. In all of these instances your identity will be masked. I will do this by changing or omitting any identifying information, for example, by using a pseudonym in the place of your real name. In addition, if any mention is made of third parties (e.g. friends, partners, and children) I will mask their identity in the same way your identity is masked, by using a pseudonym.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you are free to change your mind about participating in it at any time, even if I have not finished collecting data. If you choose to withdraw from the study you can request that your data be withheld (not included). Moreover, your participation in the show is in no way contingent on your participation in this research. If you do not want to participate in this research I will simply omit, in the transcription process, any of your comments that occur in the recorded data.

If you decide to allow me to collect data during rehearsals I will ask you to sign a consent form. The consent form contains much the same information that appears in this letter. I will also ask you to sign a Permission and Release Form where you will indicate that you have allowed me to collect this data. Even when you have signed these forms you still have the right to withdraw from the study.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Marx

E-mail address: [REDACTED]

Phone number: [REDACTED]

Appendix V: Consent Form - Audio-Visual Recordings of Show Rehearsals

AGREEMENT BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I _____ agree to participate in research which is being conducted by Jacqueline Marx on the topic of drag.

I understand that:

This research is being conducted as part of the requirements for a PhD degree at Rhodes University. The video-recordings will be used for the purposes of this research.

Data will be collected by video-recording show rehearsals. Parts of these video-recordings will be transcribed (turned into text), and used for the purposes of analysis. Some of these texts may be reproduced verbatim (word for word) in a thesis or in other publications such as an academic journal article or conference material. In all of these instances my identity will be masked so that I cannot be identified. This will be done by changing or omitting identifying information. For example, by using a pseudonym in the place of my real name.

Participation is entirely voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If I choose to withdraw from the study I can request that the data I have provided up until that point be withheld (not included in the study).

I can talk to Jacqueline about any concerns I have about my participation in this study at any time.

Signed on _____ (date)

By

Participant: _____ signature: _____

Researcher: Jacqueline Marx

signature: _____

Appendix VI: Permission and Release Form - Audio-Visual Recordings of Show Rehearsals

USE OF VIDEO RECORDINGS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES – PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM –	
NAME	
CONTACT DETAILS	
RESEARCHER	
LEVEL OF RESEARCH	
BRIEF TITLE OF THE PROJECT	
SUPERVISOR	
DECLARATION I consent to the video-recording of the beauty pageant shows. I have been informed that this is being done for research purposes. The nature of the research has been explained to me both verbally and in writing. I have been informed that parts of these recordings may be reproduced, either in the form of written text (transcribed) or visual images (still photographs) and appear, in this form, in a thesis or other type of publication such as a book or journal article. In these instances, all identities will be masked so that no-one can be individually identified. In the case of reproductions in the form of text, this will be done by changing or omitting identifying information. For example, by using pseudonym in the place of the individuals real names. In the case of visual reproductions, this will be done by manipulating the image so that participants' faces are indiscernible. I give permission for this material to be retained by the researcher. However, a digital copy is to be made available to me for my own purposes.	
Date: _____ Signed: _____ Witnessed by researcher: _____	

Appendix VII: Permission and Release Form - Beauty Pageant Shows

USE OF VIDEO RECORDINGS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES – PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM –	
NAME	
CONTACT DETAILS	
RESEARCHER	
LEVEL OF RESEARCH	
BRIEF TITLE OF THE PROJECT	
SUPERVISOR	
DECLARATION I consent to the video-recording of the beauty pageant shows. I have been informed that this is being done for research purposes. The nature of the research has been explained to me both verbally and in writing. I have been informed that parts of these recordings may be reproduced, either in the form of written text (transcribed) or visual images (still photographs) and appear, in this form, in a thesis or other type of publication such as a book or journal article. In these instances, all identities will be masked so that no-one can be individually identified. In the case of reproductions in the form of text, this will be done by changing or omitting identifying information. For example, by using pseudonym in the place of the individuals real names. In the case of visual reproductions, this will be done by manipulating the image so that participants' faces are indiscernible. I give permission for this material to be retained by the researcher. However, a digital copy is to be made available to me for my own purposes.	
Date: _____ Signed: _____ Witnessed by researcher: _____	

Appendix VIII: Covering Letter – Group Interview – Homosexuality during Apartheid

Date

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research. This letter contains some of the important details pertaining to your participation in the study. Please keep it for your own record. A contact number is provided at the bottom of the page in the event you require additional information, or have questions about the study which did not come to mind in our meeting today.

My research is on the topic of drag and it is being done for a Doctoral degree in Psychology at Rhodes University. While much of the information I have gathered has come from the performers themselves, I am also interested to learn about your experiences. Your participation is invited for this purpose and will take the form of a group discussion. The discussion should take about an hour to complete.

The information that you provide will be used for the purposes of analysis which will be written up in the form of a thesis. Some of your information may appear verbatim (word for word) in my thesis. I may also use information you provide in a publication such as a journal article or as conference material. In all of these instances your identity will be masked. I will do this by changing or omitting any identifying information, for example, by using a pseudonym in the place of your real name. In addition, if any mention is made of third parties (e.g. friends, partners, and children) I will mask their identity in the same way your identity is masked, by using a pseudonym.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you are free to change your mind about participating in it at any time.

You will be asked to sign a Consent Form and a Permission and Release Form. These forms contain much the same information that appears in this letter. These forms will be retained by me for my records. Even when you have signed these forms you still have the right to withdraw from the study.

I will answer any questions you may have about the study, or your participation in it, now or at the end of the interview.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Marx

E-mail address: [REDACTED]

Phone number: [REDACTED]

Appendix IX: Covering Letter – Group Interviews - Audience

Date

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research. This letter contains some of the important details pertaining to your participation in the study. Please keep it for your own record. A contact number is provided at the bottom of the page in the event you require additional information, or have questions about the study which did not come to mind in our meeting today.

My research is on the topic of drag and it is being done for a Doctoral degree in Psychology at Rhodes University. While much of the information I have gathered has come from the performers themselves, I am also interested to hear the views of the public, and the audience in particular, about drag entertainment. Your participation is invited for this purpose and will take the form of a group discussion with a few other members of the audience. The discussion should take about an hour to complete.

The information that you provide will be used for the purposes of analysis which will be written up in the form of a thesis. Some of your information may appear verbatim (word for word) in my thesis. I may also use information you provide in a publication such as a journal article or as conference material. In all of these instances your identity will be masked. I will do this by changing or omitting any identifying information, for example, by using a pseudonym in the place of your real name. In addition, if any mention is made of third parties (e.g. friends, partners, and children) I will mask their identity in the same way your identity is masked, by using a pseudonym.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you are free to change your mind about participating in it at any time.

You will be asked to sign a Consent Form and a Permission and Release Form. These forms contain much the same information that appears in this letter. These forms will be retained by me for my records. Even when you have signed these forms you still have the right to withdraw from the study.

I will answer any questions you may have about the study, or your participation in it, now or at the end of the interview.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Marx

E-mail address: [REDACTED]

Phone number: [REDACTED]

Appendix X: Consent Form – Group Interviews

AGREEMENT BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I _____ agree to participate in research which is being conducted by Jacqueline Marx on the topic of drag performance.

I understand that:

This research is being conducted by Jacqueline Marx as part of the requirements for a PhD degree at Rhodes University. The information which I am providing will be used for the purposes of this research.

Information about my views on the performances will be collected in a focus group discussion. It has been explained to me that this discussion will be tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

My true identity will be kept confidential by using a pseudonym in place of my real name. My real name will be replaced with the pseudonym in the transcription process and the audio tape will be destroyed when the transcript is complete. This means that my real name will not appear on the data records.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time. If I choose to withdraw from the study I can request that the information provided up until that point be withheld (not included in the study).

As a participant I can request, at any time, for information that I have provided to be withheld. I will do this by alerting Jacqueline about which information to withhold (not to include in the study).

I can talk to Jacqueline about any concerns I have about my participation in this study at any time.

Signed on _____ (date)

By

Participant: _____

Researcher: _____

Appendix XI: Permission to record workshop proceedings

USE OF VIDEO RECORDINGS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES – PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM –	
NAME	
CONTACT DETAILS	
RESEARCHER	
LEVEL OF RESEARCH	
BRIEF TITLE OF THE PROJECT	
SUPERVISOR	
DECLARATION I consent to the video-recording of the workshop. I have been informed that this is being done for research purposes. I have been informed that parts of this recordings may be reproduced, either in the form of written text (transcribed) or visual images (still photographs) and appear, in this form, in a thesis or other type of publication such as a book or journal article. In these instances, all identities will be masked so that no-one can be individually identified. In the case of reproductions in the form of text, this will be done by changing or omitting identifying information. For example, by using pseudonyms in the place of the individuals real names. In the case of visual reproductions, this will be done by manipulating the image so that participants' faces are indiscernible. I give permission for this material to be retained by the researcher. However, a digital copy is to be made available to me for my own purposes.	
Date: _____ Signed: _____ Witnessed by researcher: _____	

Appendix XII: Permission and Release Form – Personal Interviews

PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM

I choose to participate in the following research activities			
(Indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box)	YES	NO	SIGNATURE (in the box below)
Personal interview	☐	☐	
Provide photographic data	☐	☐	

This information can be published, for example, in a thesis or in conference proceedings provided my identity is protected.			
(Indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box)	YES	NO	SIGNATURE
Interview data This data can be used provided a pseudonym is used in the place of my real name. All other identifying information such as where I live or work must either be omitted or changed.	☐	☐	
Photographs This data can be reproduced in a thesis or other publication provided my identity is protected. Where necessary this will be done by reproducing the photograph in such a way that my face appears smudged and cannot be recognised.	☐	☐	

DATE: ____/____/20____

I am aware of the fact that I can change my preferences (indicated above) at any time during the research process.	Signature:
--	------------

Appendix XIII: Transcription Conventions

These transcription conventions are an adaptation of the conventions outlined by Silverman (2000).

[]	Left bracket indicates the point at which a current speaker's talk is overlapped by another speaker's talk. Right bracket indicates the point at which the overlap ends.
=	An equal sign at the end of a line of speech and one at the beginning of a line of speech indicates that there is no gap or pause in conversation between the two speakers.
(.)	Indicates a silence of less than one second.
(1)	The number in brackets indicates elapsed time in silence in seconds.
—	Underlining indicates stress in pitch or tone.
><	Indicates whisper.
:	Indicates prolongation of the immediately prior sound, number of colons is indicative of the length of the prolongation.
CAP	Caps lock indicates especially loud sounds in relation to other talk.
.hh	Indicates out breath, number of h's are indicative of the length.
(word)	Possible hearings.
()	Transcribers inability to hear the word that was said.
((<i>italics</i>))	Indicates participants displayed emotion or actions.
(<i>italics</i>)	Indicates English translation.