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**“To train our imagination to ‘go visiting’“-**

***Editorial***

While working with the articles in the current issue of the *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, my thoughts turned to Hannah Arendt’s idea on the political and knowing subject as a *visitor*. My train of thoughts took this direction because all four articles in this issue in one way or another relate to the site of knowledge production, problematizing method/ological points of departure and theoretical positionings.

When Arendt compares the process of critical thinking with the idea of the visitor, she focus on the stories that constitute the official frame we inhabit, stories originating from different persons and their wide range of different perspectives. To be able take into consideration the standpoints of others, their acts and judgements, Arendt writes that we need to train our imagination to ‘go visiting’. As visitors, we are then ready to abandon our private and subjective conditions and will have the possibility to transform our individual perceptions to thinking from the standpoint of other persons in a common world (Arendt 1978: 50, Benhabib 1996: 187).<sup>1</sup>

Similar to Arendt’s notion of ‘go visiting’, the authors to the articles in this issue of *GJSS* pursue inquiries of methods, methodologies or conceptual spaces. In various ways, all four present interdisciplinary knowledge production as a process where the lines between observer/observed, centre/periphery, society/policy and quantitative/qualitative are crossed, blurred or intermingled. Herewith, they also distance from the notion of the researcher as the subject of knowledge, and place an emphasis on the presence of discursive power, the need for theoretical synergies and the significance of multiple sites of knowledge.

In the opening article of this issue, Lee Wing Hin investigates the relationships between heterosexuality – heteronormativity – and the “heterosexual” institutions of marriage and

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<sup>1</sup> In the uncompleted three-volume book *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt describes her notion of *judgement* as the ability to think from the standpoint of other beings. In her notion of judgement, Arendt was inspired by the aristotelian practical reason and Kant’s notion of reflective judgement understood as enlarged thought.

reproduction, in her study of Hong Kong-Canadian discourses surrounding institutions of marriage. Here, Wing Hin proposes a methodological opening where the “heterosexual” arrangements are to be seen as simultaneously crucial parts of colonial, capitalist, patriarchal and racist regimes at different historical moments. Through a case study on the role of tradition in discourses of heterosexuality in four Hong Kong sex and puberty education materials, she argues that a comprehensive understanding of the functions of “heterosexuality” in the materials require attention to Hong Kong’s colonial history and post-colonial present. Her methodological opening offers potential both to deconstructing the relationship between heterosexuality and heteronormativity, and to uncover implications of normalizing heterosexuality.

The combination of various perspectives is also the theme for the subsequent article, where Jonathan Stilwell argues for the need of a synergetic approach in research, that enables the explication of societal impacts on given policy devices, combining economic, ecologic and social aspects. With a purpose of unpacking the role of NGOs in international environmental politics, Stilwell responds to the request proposed in the first issue of the *GJSS* in 2006. In this publication, Denis Chartier identified the need to understand the role that NGO groups play in international environmental policy processes through examinations of the nature of their actions and the scales that they work at (Chartier 2006: 58). In the current issue of the *GJSS*, Stilwell focus on the spatial focus of actions taken by NGO groups and the relevance of these focused actions within a broader interdependent and inter-temporal policy discourse in the article *Beyond Rainbows and Butterflies: Environmental Politics and the Scale and Scope of NGO Activities*.

The interrelatedness between ontological, epistemological and personal perspectives and their impact on research design is the topic for the piece *Self-reflection on emergent research design*. With a background in mainly quantitative approaches, Martin describes his journey from a positivist move towards a phenomenological perspective as an effect of his experiences as a researcher. The different contexts of the study involve the educational outcomes and learning processes in the three different locations; New Zealand, Czech Republic and Australia.

With respect to the intertwining of the social, material and virtual environments in the process of knowledge production, Jennie Olofsson presents a manifest for the fl@neur in her piece *Negotiating figurations for feminist methodologies*. With genealogies dating back to the Parisian flaneur as it has been presented by a range of authors from Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin

and Zygmunt Bauman, but also the role of the female flaneur, the flaneuse, and Donna Haraway's cyborg, Olofsson investigates the links between ontology and epistemology. Here, Olofsson introduces the fl@neur as a feminist figuration, usable both a theoretical tool and methodological approach with the capacity to challenge notions of men and women, observer and observed as well as body and spatiality.

In the review section of this issue, Isaac Marrero introduces in his presentation of the volume *Michel de Certeau. Analysing Culture*, by Ben Highmore topics and issues raised in the works of Michel de Certeau, with a specific focus on the methodological engagement of moving closer to the world in order to change it for the better.

In her review of Anne Phillips *Multiculturalism without culture*, Khadija Abbasi shows how Phillips develops a cultural politics that further combines the aims and purposes of gender equality and multiculturalism. This review presents an interesting analysis on gender equality and multiculturalism concentrated on the collision between cultural traditions and women's rights.

Melissa Fernandez reviews the documentary film *Chocolate City* (2007), by Ellie Walton and Sam Wild, telling the story of the low-income public housing estate in Washington D.C and the systematic marginalization of black citizens and Latino immigrant population. In this film, art emerges as a powerful sphere of activism. As the new organizing medium for residents to powerfully engage in space, the film shows how the field of artistic production gives the residents a more highly developed social consciousness and new methods in claiming their own rights.

A knowledge seeking that transgresses the disciplinary agenda may offer possibilities for critical thinking, deploying other forms of method/ologies and other ways of theorizing taking into account the intertwinement of a wide range of areas, from social structures, to social, political and ideological discourses and theoretical genealogies to personal narratives. As further developed in this issue of the GJSS, this raises certain questions of relevance for the scholar, and especially the question of how to handle the combination of individual narratives, theoretical and method/ological frameworks, social and cultural aspects, policy discourses and ideological regimes.

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## Centering the Center: Finding the 'Hetero' in Heteronormativity

### Abstract

*This paper begins with this question: what do we mean when we say “heterosexual” and how have we positioned “heterosexuality” in queer studies? The first part of the paper focuses on the normative heterosexual institutions of marriage and reproduction. Using a selection of historical works by Henry Abelove, Adele Perry, Ruth Perry, and Laura Ann Stoler, I proceed to challenge the perceived self-evident and ahistorical relationships between normative heterosexuality – heteronormativity – and the “heterosexual” institutions of marriage and reproduction. I propose a methodological opening to see “heterosexual” arrangements as often simultaneously crucial parts of colonial, capitalist, patriarchal, and racist regimes at different historical moments. This opening allows us to deconstruct the relationship between heterosexuality and heteronormativity, as well as uncover the non-sexual goals and implications of normalizing heterosexuality. In the last part of my analysis, I look at the role of “tradition” in framing discourses of heterosexuality in four Hong Kong sex and puberty education materials. I argue that comprehensive understanding of the definition and disciplining functions of “heterosexuality” in the materials requires engagement with Hong Kong’s colonial history and post-colonial present. This engagement includes, but is not limited to, the accounting for the relationship between “heterosexuality” and the erasure of same-sex desires in Hong Kong’s contemporary narratives of the Chinese “traditional” past.*

Keywords: heterosexuality; queer theory; history of sexuality; Hong Kong; sex education; postcolonialism

### **1. Introduction**

When I first encountered queer studies, I was struck by the field’s critical centering of queer persons, desires, and relations, as well as its immense potential to provide alternative analytical frameworks to question sexualities and norms. My investments in queer theoretical approaches in my own work are frequently sustained by Michael Warner’s promise in his collection Fear of a Queer Planet (1994). Warner argues that “if queers, incessantly told to alter their ‘behavior,’

can be understood as protesting not just the normal behavior of the social but the *idea* of normal behavior, they will bring skepticism to the methodologies founded on that idea.” (1994: xxvii).

As I investigate Hong Kong-Canadian discourses surrounding Canadian marriage law in my own work, I turn to studies of heterosexualities and normative sexualities in historical and contemporary Hong Kong and Canadian contexts. In turn, these discussions expose the multiple ways in which European and North American legacies of colonialism and imperialism continue to influence the construction of cross-sex sexual norms and practices in the post-colonial cultures of Hong Kong and Canada. While exploring North American, European, and Asian sources on cross-sex sexualities, I have discovered that there is no singular understanding of heterosexuality. In fact, queer studies scholars and historians of sexuality have used “heterosexuality” in different ways, varying from a descriptive shorthand for cross-sex relations (as in references to the “heterosexual couple”) to a “catch-all” for all hegemonic institutions with cross-sex participation (as in the use of “heterosexual family” to mean the nuclear family). In particular, historical works on time periods that predate the invention of the term “heterosexuality” point to our need to consider seriously when references to “heterosexuality” are useful and what its meanings are in specific historical and cultural contexts.<sup>1</sup> In *The Trouble with Normal* (1999), Michael Warner accurately, albeit fleetingly, describes the existing understandings of “heterosexuality” as “a contradictory amalgamation of histories and contexts” (1999: 129).<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I propose a *pause* in our study of sexualities; if queer studies promises alternate methodologies to demythologize the “*idea* of normal behavior” and we deem heterosexuality normal, we must critically engage with heterosexuality’s positioning within recent queer works.

This paper begins with this question: what do we mean when we say “heterosexual” and how have we positioned “heterosexuality” in queer studies? The next part of the paper focuses

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<sup>1</sup> According to historian Jonathan Ned Katz, the term “heterosexuality” was first introduced by an American doctor named Dr. James Kiernan in the late 1880s. But the term “hetero-sexual” was popularized by sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1893) in which Krafft-Ebing explained “hetero-sexual” desires as the most innate, unchanging, and universal urge to reproduce (1995:21).

<sup>2</sup> Although Warner’s observation on the current understandings and uses of “heterosexuality” is accurate and profound, his work *The Trouble with Normal* centers on the various manifestations “sexual shame” and he refers to “heterosexual” only as a descriptive term for male-female relations, desires, and couplings. It is worth noting that feminist theorist Gayle Rubin - who Warner eloquently references in *Trouble* - similarly argues for scholarly recognition of the sexual complexities within heterosexuality in her article “Thinking Sex” (1984:282). While she sets the foundation for further discussions on multiple heterosexualities, her emphasis in *Thinking Sex* lies in sexual regulations within patriarchal institutions and feminist communities at the time.

on the normative heterosexual institutions of marriage and reproduction. Using a selection of historical works by Henry Abelove, Adele Perry, Ruth Perry, and Laura Ann Stoler, I proceed to challenge the perceived self-evident and ahistorical relationships between normative heterosexuality – heteronormativity – and the “heterosexual” institutions of marriage and reproduction. I propose a methodological opening to see “heterosexual” arrangements as often simultaneously crucial parts of colonial, capitalist, patriarchal, and racist regimes at different historical moments. This opening allows us to deconstruct the relationship between heterosexuality and heteronormativity, as well as uncover the non-sexual goals and implications of normalizing heterosexuality. In the last part of my analysis, I look at the role of “tradition” in framing discourses of heterosexuality in four Hong Kong sex and puberty education materials. I argue that comprehensive understanding of the definition and disciplining functions of “heterosexuality” in the materials *requires* engagement with Hong Kong’s colonial history and post-colonial present. This engagement includes, but is not limited to, the accounting for the relationship between “heterosexuality” and the erasure of same-sex desires in Hong Kong’s contemporary narratives of the Chinese “traditional” past.

## **2. Positioning Heterosexuality in Contemporary Queer Studies**

In queer studies, scholars often discuss heterosexuality when exploring legal understandings of same-sex relations, cross-sex sexualities,<sup>3</sup> and sexual categories. Two visible instances are scholarships addressing recent debates on same-sex marriage and laws on homosexuality and sodomy in North America.

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<sup>3</sup> Unless I use quotation marks to refer to “heterosexual” as a specific sexual category, I use the terms heterosexual and cross-sex interchangeably to describe male-female desires and relations.

## ***2.1. Discursive Constructions of Normative Heterosexualities***

### “Marriage”

In recent decades, debates surrounding same-sex marriage and same-sex civil union laws have dominated many North American and European legal and political discussions. Scholars such as Lisa Duggan, David Eng, Janet Jakobsen, and Michael Warner have noted that many mainstream gay and lesbian rights lobby groups in North America have appropriated liberal *heterosexual* arguments regarding marriage and family to secure the legalization of same-sex marriage (Duggan 2003, Eng 2005, Jakobsen 2005, Warner 1999). In the “Introduction” to *What’s Queer about Queer Studies Now?* (2005), David Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz contend that although queer activism in the past “sustained a radical critique of family and marriage,” many queer activists at present have abandoned “a more global critique of capitalist exploitation and domination, state violence and expansion, and religious fundamentalisms and hate” (2005: 11). Instead, queer activists demand “access to the nuclear family and its associated rights, recognition, and privileges from the state” (2005: 11).

Queer theorist Janet Jakobsen furthers this argument and claims that this assimilationist demand for queer participation in marriage and procreation reproduces an individualist logic that constructs a “queer liberal” notion of choice, where one’s permission to wed a partner of “one’s own ‘choosing’” becomes the “*only* expression of sexual freedom” (2005: 286). As a result, heterosexuals’ right to marriage and the nuclear family, to many queer activists, becomes the epitome of heterosexual sexual freedom and for queers to acquire this right marks the end of sexual inequality. In these discussions, scholars use “heterosexual marriage” to signify a particular form of cross-sex relations. They do not mean all forms of cross-sex marital relations, but only cross-sex relations that are monogamous, two-person, and have the potential for the nuclear family formation.

### “Sodomy”

Apart from the discussions on marriage, North American legal debates surrounding homosexuality and sodomy and queer commentaries on these debates also ground popular and legal conceptualizations of homosexuality in specific understandings of heterosexuality. Queer theorists Cindy Patton in “Tremble, Hetero Swine!” (1994) and Janet Halley in “The Construction of Heterosexuality” (1994) argue that the popular equating of sodomy *exclusively* with male homosexuality is fundamental to maintaining seemingly-stable perceptions of heterosexuality. Their works on the discourses of AIDS and anti-discrimination legal cases in the 1980s and 1990s show that the (heterosexual) U.S. Right movement and the (heterosexual) U.S. judiciary claimed an “epistemological authority” (Halley 1994: 88) to identify homosexuals and further to distinguish themselves from what they regarded as immoral, anal-penetrating, and AIDS-carrying gay men. Consequently, such heterosexuals could ignore the complexity of heterosexual sex acts and their own same-sex desires, and thus collectively deny any possibility of immorality and disease among themselves. Both scholars contend that the rigid and exclusive association of homosexuals with sodomites define “heterosexuals” as “nonhomosexuals,” and thus this association exposes the centrality of homosexual sex and desires in societal understandings of heterosexuality.

In “Gay Rights versus Queer Theory” (2005), Teemu Ruskola responds to Halley and argues that present legal understandings of “homosexuality” not only help define “heterosexuality”; their equating of normative cross-sex sexuality with intimacy is fundamental to the construction of normative *homosexuality*. He investigates the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), which was framed around the question of “the validity of a Texas statute making it a crime for two persons of the same sex to engage in certain intimate sexual conduct” (2005: 236). While the court ruled against the Texas law, Ruskola claims that narratives of homosexuality in the case expose the deeply-entrenched argument that the (heterosexual) court is able to know the “truth” of homosexuality.

In this instance, the “truth” is that homosexuals interact only on “intimate terms” and “exist *only* in relationships”; at the same time, this intimacy “is just like heterosexual intimacy, except between persons of the same sex” and thus undeserving of discrimination and prosecution

(2003: 239, 241). As a result, Ruskola states that heterosexual acceptance of homosexuality and homosexuals is not unconditional, but limited only to a specific “intimate” and relationship-bound form of homosexuality which heterosexuals deem “respectable” (2003: 239). The implicit bargain in understanding homosexuality to be just like “respectable” heterosexuality reifies, rather than challenges, existing institutions of normative heterosexuality bounded by privileged concepts of relationships, intimacy, and family. As is the case in queer studies discussions of same-sex marriage, Patton, Halley, and Ruskola use “heterosexual” and “heterosexuality” to mean a particular “class of heterosexuals” (Halley 1994: 98) who only practice normative (read: non-anal) cross-sex sexual acts and only within intimate, two-person, committed, monogamous, and cross-sex relationships.

## ***2.2. Heterosexuality and Homonormativity as Institutions***

Many queer scholarly works on the debates surrounding same-sex marriage and sodomy demonstrate the positioning of “heterosexuality” in queer studies to mean institutionalized forms of normative sexuality. My understanding of “normative” is borrowed from Mary Louise Adams’ *The Trouble with Normal* (1997). She states that “individuals are encouraged, through a variety of discursive and institutional practices, to meet normative standards, and they come to desire the rewards that meeting those standards makes possible” (1997: 13). This complex system of encouragement, Adams argues, is the process of “normalization” (1997: 13). “As a form of social regulation,” she writes, “normalization defines and limits the choices that are available to us,” where “the point is not that we simply try to meet social norms it’s that we *want* to” (1997: 13). Similarly, heterosexuality becomes a specific form of normative sexuality through processes of legal and social normalization, as evident in the marriage and sodomy debates. As a result, society as a whole not only tries but *wants* to practice the “ideal” form of heterosexuality as monogamous, marital, reproductive or potentially reproductive, gender-

conforming (masculine male and feminine female), and two-person through memberships in institutions such as marriage, the nuclear family, and parenthood.<sup>4</sup>

Historian Jonathan Ned Katz effectively explains this interpretation of “heterosexuality” in *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (1995). He states that “Heterosexuality is not identical to the reproductive intercourse of the sexes; heterosexuality is not the same as sex distinctions and gender differences; heterosexuality does not equal the eroticism of women and men. Heterosexuality, I argue, signifies one particular historical arrangement of the sexes and their pleasures” (1995:14). Similarly, Adams describes “heterosexuality” not as “a simple matter of sexual attraction between women and men, nor of the particular forms of sexual behaviour women and men might engage in with each other” (1997: 166). Rather, she states that “[h]eterosexuality is a discursively constituted social category that organizes relations not only between women and men, but also between those who fit definitions of heterosexuality and those who do not” (1997: 166).

References to “heterosexuality” as normative sexuality or what Warner coins as “heteronormativity” (1994: xxi) are at the heart of current discussions of “homonormativity” in queer studies. Lisa Duggan explains “homonormativity” as a liberal platform on which gays and lesbians “rhetorically” remap and recode “freedom and liberation in narrow terms of privacy, domesticity, and the unfettered ability to consume in the ‘free’ market” (cited in Eng et. al 2005: 11). The mainstream queer adoption of normative heterosexual institutions such as marriage and family are instances where boundaries of “homonormative” desires and relations are charted along those of normative heterosexuality. In particular, theorists such as Duggan and Roderick Ferguson contend that mainstream queer activist negotiation for sexual and marital rights using individualist understandings of privacy and an immutable “gayness” have further marginalized non-normative queers.

In “Race-ing Homonormativity” (2005), Ferguson states that many queers claim their sexual orientation and relations as private matters that should be constitutionally protected and

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<sup>4</sup> Adams writes – and I agree - that there exist other heterosexual norms that seem to compete with “ideal” heterosexuality; one example is the glorification of young men who have multiple dating partners at the same time. However, she argues convincingly that such competing norms eventually give way to a dominant singular understanding of mature heterosexuality as monogamous, marital, gender-conforming and reproductive, and these competing norms of cross-sex relations are merely “heterosexual practice” for young persons’ inevitable destiny of marriage (1997:100-2).

their right to marry not be hindered. He argues that this argument takes on an “ethnic type” where persons claim queerness, like race, as a “private particularity” and not a “general threat” (2005:55, 60).

Duggan makes a similar point in “Making It Perfectly Queer” (1992). She claims that many queer activists evoke arguments based on the civil rights movement to align “the lesbian and gay population with racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups and women in a quest for full economic, political, and cultural participation in U.S. life” (1992: 13). Duggan believes that just as like many ethnic community-based movements claim to speak for a perceived “fixed minority constituency,” queer liberals have falsely constructed a monolithic queer community that “suppress[es] internal differences and political conflict” (1992: 16, 17). As a result, the movement establishes the gay identity as “a unitary, unproblematic given” and further perpetuates queer assimilationist and uncritical pursuits of equality (1992: 17). As a result, homonormativity’s dependence on the dual liberal (hetero)normative regimes of privacy and visibility favors white male capitalists and renders “the immigrant, the poor, [and] the person of colour” “bad” homosexuals, unfit Western citizens, and as the “cultural antitheses of a stable health social order” (Ferguson 2005: 65).<sup>5</sup>

### ***2.3. The Subjectless Heterosexual***

These readings suggest that “heterosexuals” and “heterosexuality” are often used as tropes rather than to describe specific realities of cross-sex relations and desires. While particular forms of cross-sex desires, relations, and behaviors indeed inhabit, perpetuate, and actively encourage sexual models such as marriage, reproduction, and the nuclear family, many references to

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<sup>5</sup> In response to the heteronormative and homonormative realities in the West, many scholars have looked to queer diasporic frameworks and narratives to combat racialized and sexist models of sexualities as well as provide alternate frameworks for studying queerness. An effective example is Gayatri Gopinath’s “Bollywood Spectacles” (2005) and *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (2005). Other works in queer and critical race studies have used queer diasporic narratives to displace Western-centric and homonormative understandings of “coming out.” See Martin Manalansan IV (2003) Marlon Ross (2005), C.S. Chan (1997), and William Spurlin (2001). The authors’ extensive references to various articulations and forms of same-sex desires, relations, and gender representations expose the Eurocentric and patriarchal privileging of gay, white, able-bodied, male, middle class culture as the sole legitimate gay vantage point.

heterosexuals and heterosexuality in queer studies do not analyze critically the multiple *and* different ways in which cross-sex desires and institutions have come to be normative. In other words, “heterosexuals” and “heterosexuality” in many queer works represent the models the queer frameworks must resist and challenge, leaving little room to raise the possibility that different “heterosexuals” may have drastically different investments in their normative arrangements and that these categories may “normalize” in multiple ways.

One example is Gayatri Gopinath’s proposal for a “queer diasporic framework” that challenges “a geneological, implicitly heteronormative reproductive logic” of nation and nationalism in *Impossible Desires* (2005: 10). She further suggests that by exploiting the “analogous relation between nation and diaspora on the one hand, and between heterosexuality and queerness on the other” one can successfully expose and denaturalize the hetero/sexist notion of nationalism and female domesticity (2005: 11). The result is the restoration of “the impure, inauthentic, nonreproductive potential of diaspora” (2005: 11). What is left unquestioned in this perceived seamless pairing of reproduction and domesticity with heterosexuality is whether heterosexuality is *necessarily* reproductive and inextricably tied to feminine domesticity. In addition, even if reproduction and feminine domesticity have historically been heterosexual institutions, the roles of heterosexuals in these institutions, these institutions’ relationships to each other, and their processes of normalization have been far from stable and self-evident.

In the “Introduction” to *What’s Queer about Queer Studies Now?* (2005), Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz draw attention to queer epistemology’s “‘subjectless’ critique of queer studies” that “disallows any positioning of a proper subject *of* or object *for* the field by insisting that queer has no fixed political referent” (2005: 3). To borrow this vocabulary, I believe that many works in queer studies point to “heterosexuals” and “heterosexual” regimes of marriage, reproduction, domesticity, and family as “subjectless critiques.” That is, they refer to the regimes’ normalizing power without interrogating how cross-sex desires may have functioned in them in heterogeneous ways and that these regimes’ relations to each other may be far from natural and coherent. This undertheorization of “heterosexuality,” I argue, creates the false impression that the normative power of regimes such as reproduction and marriage lies primarily

in heterosexuality and these arrangements contribute collectively and equally to the disciplining discourses of heterosexuality.

In the next section, I will reference historical investigations of what we have come to know as the heteronormative institutions of marriage and reproduction. I will complicate the seemingly self-evident dominant position of heterosexuality and heterosexual power in these arrangements and expose the arrangements' concurrent, and sometimes more powerful, functions as racialized, classed, and sexist regimes.

### **3. Historicizing Heteronormativity**

#### ***3.1. Multiple "Lines of Penetration"***

To untangle effectively the tightly weaved web of "heteronormative" institutions, I will employ Michel Foucault's notion of "lines of penetration" (Foucault 1979: 42). In *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction Volume 1* (1979), Foucault traces the nineteenth-century production of "childhood" as "an indiscreet anatomy and possibly mysterious physiology" by, what he calls, "an entire medico-sexual regime" formed by doctors and psychologists (1979: 43, 42). Foucault argues that rather than understanding the "vice" of children's sexuality as a temporary "evil to be eliminated," doctors pathologized children, and educators and parents were "alerted and left with the suspicion that all children were guilty" (1979: 42). The result, according to Foucault, was the production of an essentialized understanding of children and their sexuality as problematic and dangerous. Hence the nineteenth-century saw the medical-sexual regime build a surveillance and disciplining system all around children that "multiplied its relays and its effects, while its targets expanded, subdivided and branched out, penetrating further into reality at the same pace" (1979: 42). Foucault argues that the nineteenth-century medical-sexual regime witnessed the

beginning of “indefinite *lines of penetration*”<sup>6</sup> (1979: 42) all around children that have continued into the present.

I find Foucault’s notion of “lines of penetration” (1979: 42) especially useful in understanding institutions such as marriage and reproduction as social arrangements that penetrate particular societies at specific historical moments with multiple lines of normalizing power. At certain times the institutions may regulate cross-sex sexualities vigilantly, while at other times they may function most effectively as a racializing force. In other words, Foucault’s notion of “indefinite lines of penetration” can offer us a *methodological opening* in viewing normative heterosexual institutions as possessing diverse, and often concurrent, regulatory capacities. This opening allows us to denaturalize the connections between heterosexuality and heteronormativity and draw attention to the non-sexual goals and implications of normalizing heterosexuality. Indeed, historical works referenced in the following sections reveal that sexual arrangements of marriage and reproduction at different times have functioned as powerful markers of racial superiority, class unity, and patriarchy, as well as heteronormativity.

### **3.2. Marriage**

Historians Laura Ann Stoler and Adele Perry both argue that cross-sex, monogamous “marriage” has long served as the yardstick of civilization and white superiority, yet the institution’s heteronormative power was enacted in multiple ways.

In *Carnal Knowledge* (2002), Stoler investigates European colonial projects in Deli, Sumatra’s plantation belt in South East Asia from the late nineteenth-century to the beginning of the twentieth-century. Through exploring changes in marital regulations among white European populations in Deli, she aims to complicate “the politically constructed dichotomy of colonizer and colonized” that she claims has not been investigated in anthropological research. Rather than viewing whites as a unified community of oppressors and beneficiaries of colonial privileges, Stoler argues that only middle class white men enjoyed economic, political, and social

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<sup>6</sup> According to Foucault, children formed one of the many populations doctors and psychologists at the time deemed deviant and perverse. Other groups include “mad men and women,” criminals, and persons “who did not like the

dominance in Deli in the beginning of the 1860s. The white middle-class population, according to Stoler, enjoyed colonial authority over economic production and social arrangements that disenfranchised *both* poor impoverished white workers and the non-white populations (2002: 25). Stoler states that major European businesses only employed single applicants to work in Deli and the workers were not allowed to marry while employed (2002: 29). At the same time, “concubinary arrangements with Javanese women were considered preferable because they imposed a less onerous financial burden on low-salaried staff and helped newcomers to learn local language and customs quickly,” while European marriages “threatened to take up too much time and too much of employees’ salaries” (2002: 29).

However, Stoler claims that the problems of brawly single white workers fighting over native women, combined with white riots over their impoverishment and poor working conditions towards the end of the nineteenth-century caused a shift in European businesses’ marital restrictions (2002: 30). Stoler writes that, in the beginning of the twentieth-century “the recruitment of single male workers from Java and a bachelor staff from Europe was replaced by a policy that encouraged married couples and promoted conditions that would allow ‘family formation’ for both” (2002: 31).

According to Stoler, the permission for *all* white men to marry white women successfully blurred class differences and unified middle-class and working-class European men under the racial identity of whiteness. With the formation of a cohesive white colonial community, European businesses effectively shifted the explanation of further violence and conflicts within the colony “from the poor quality of low-level staff to the clandestine infiltration of communist and nationalist elements among Javanese and Chinese recruits” (2002: 31). At the same time, Stoler claims that the new marital regulations further consolidated white superiority, as white wives in Deli became vigilant guardians of their now racially segregated compounds and perceived superior white moral purity (2002: 34). Consequently, the changes in the marital laws in the 1920s secured both the economic interests and the racial superiority of white middle-class colonizers by labeling non-white workers and native Javanese men and women unfit workers, sexual inferiors, and racially denigrated in general.

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opposite sex” (Foucault, 1979, 38).

In *On the Edge of Empire* (2001) and “White Women, Race, and Immigration to British Columbia” (2004), Adele Perry’s study of Canada’s “importation” of white European women in the middle of the nineteenth-century marks racial purity, rather than the blurring of class differences, as the primary impetus for promoting white monogamous marriages. According to Perry, a huge population of British white male workers emigrated to British Columbia, Canada for mining opportunities in the middle of the nineteenth-century. However, the white authorities in British Columbia were aghast about the likelihood that men in these large white male homosocial communities would turn to same-sex sex or mixed-race, cross-sex white-Aboriginal relationships (2001: 42). Perry claims that anxieties surrounding mixed race relations were especially rampant as many whites considered mixed race relations “a symbol of imperialism gone awry,” as Aboriginal women were perceived as “squaws” and Aboriginal people in general “were constructed as inherently inferior, physically, and moral weak” (2001:74). Thus white authorities viewed mixed-race relations and, more importantly, mixed race children “a threat to the colony’s political stability” (2001:74).

As a result, Perry states that Assisted Female Immigration from Britain to British Columbia began in 1859 and white British women were imported for the main purpose of marrying white workers in Canada. Perry argues that “marriage was constructed as the ultimate bulwark maintaining appropriate racial segregation,” where white workers would no longer need to relinquish their racial superiority by sexually interacting with Aboriginal women (2001: 68). At the same time, white women who eventually became the wives of white workers would further concretize racial privilege by enslaving Aboriginal male and female workers in their homes (2001: 183).

While both Stoler and Perry describe marriage as a colonial regime of white and what we might perceive as heteronormative control, the political goals and implications of the institution “marriage” differed. In Stoler’s *Deli* in the beginning of the twentieth-century, the proliferation of marriage rights for all whites in Sumatra functioned to mask class differences and class-based violence and discontent. White business owners used marriage as a form of white middle-class privilege *primarily* to pacify class and economic, and not race-based, anxieties. The identity of whiteness was a convenient, yet very powerful, tool for economic consolidation through manufactured racial unity. However, Perry’s study of British Columbia a few decades earlier

points to white authorities' use of marriage as means to eradicate interracial sociality and sexuality and solidify white colonial racial superiority.

In both instances, the disciplining power of marriage extended well beyond the sexes and genders of the partners involved. Normative heterosexuality came to mean race and/or class-specific sexualities, as well as particular forms of cross-sex relations. In other words, while the institution of marriage may be the normative framework for heterosexuality across various historical moments, how it became heteronormative and the ways in which heteronormativity was justified and policed vastly differed. Stoler's and Perry's historical investigations effectively demonstrate that to attribute the normalizing power of marriage simply to the supremacy of cross-sex relations, or even white cross-sex relations, is insufficient to understand normative heterosexuality comprehensively, since white heterosexuality has been celebrated historically for multiple reasons as a flexible means of social control.

Hence, it is imperative to recognize that the "lines of penetration" of marriage multiply and mutate depending on specific contexts. While marriage guarded monogamous cross-sex sexualities as shown in both Perry's and Stoler's works, we must also recognize the institution's ability to exert equally, if not more powerful, effects to produce and strengthen race- and class-based oppression.

### ***3.3. Reproduction***

While reproduction, like marriage, has become a marker of normative heterosexuality, its role as a regulatory and normative heterosexual institution is by no means natural and ahistorical. In "Colonizing the Breast" (1991), historian Ruth Perry effectively argues that the concept of reproduction in the eighteenth-century was an extremely pervasive tool that justified British colonialism, blurred class differences among British women, and secured patriarchy within cross-sex relations. Perry writes that at the same time as Britain expanded its colonial empire abroad in the eighteenth-century, the domestic medical profession began to define knowledge concerning reproduction and motherhood as properties belonging to the domain of (male) doctors and no longer to midwives or women themselves (1991: 234). She argues that this was

no coincidence. Since British colonization signaled “new political and economic imperatives of an expanding English empire” and the need for an existing local social system to adapt to these new imperatives, motherhood was redefined as “a colonial form - the domestic, familial counterpart to land enclosure at home and imperialism abroad” (1991: 206).

According to Perry, the “new belief in the rational manipulation of natural forces for greater productivity” in imperialist conquests contributed to the notion that the purpose of procreation among white British women as the production of colonizing citizens (1991: 207). At the same time, since the British government was unable to provide public services to care for the rapidly rising population, Perry writes that the institution of “motherhood” as a patriotic, private, feminine, and, most importantly, voluntary duty of women emerged (1991: 208). In addition, Perry writes that the rising movements for sex equality in Britain also prompted the state’s naturalization of women’s sexual passivity and domestic responsibility through redefining femininity to mean reproductive motherhood (1991: 212). By the middle to the end of the eighteenth-century, Perry concludes, popular British journals, women’s literature, as well as the medical profession lauded British participation in reproduction and British women’s roles as mothers and as the producers of nationalist British citizens.

The valorization of motherhood and the naturalization of maternal instincts for *all* women, Perry writes, erased “class differences among women,” as the possibilities and meanings of the female body and “the degree of freedom in interpreting a woman’s duties” were universally reduced (1991: 234). As a result, women’s duties in Britain became increasingly defined by gender, rather than class (1991: 234). As is evident in Perry’s study, the discourse of reproduction as nationalist and natural charted the boundaries of ideal heterosexual relations. Yet the discursive power of reproduction also rested firmly in colonial, economic, patriarchal, and class-based logic. Thus at this historical moment, the promotion of procreative cross-sex sexualities as normative heterosexuality must be understood in a wider context as a means to colonial, economic, and patriarchal ends, all the while rearranging class divisions among British women.

In “Some Speculations on the History of Sexual Intercourse During the Long Eighteenth-century in England” (1989), historian Henry Abelove posits additional reasons for the drastic increase in birth rates in Britain in the eighteenth-century. He draws attention to two concurrent

trends in Britain at the time: the popularity of sexual intercourse and a rise in production. Ablove notes that cross-sex sexual intercourse – “penis in vagina, vagina around penis, with seminal emission uninterrupted”- became very popular in Britain in the late eighteenth-century (1989: 127). He suspects that the popularity of potentially reproductive sex acts was accompanied by the diminishing importance of non-procreative sexual practices such as voyeurism, anal sex, and mutual masturbation, which were reconstructed as foreplay (1989: 129). At the same time, he states that there was a rise in all indices of production (1989: 128). While he does not argue that an increase in material production caused a rise in reproductive sexual practices, he hypothesizes that “the rise in production (the privileging of product) and the rise in the popularity of the sexual act which uniquely makes for reproduction (the privilege of intercourse so-called) may be aspects of the same phenomenon” (1989: 128). Here, Ablove places understandings of cross-sex sexual relations and sex acts within the discourse of capitalism. Just as reproduction was a normative heterosexual institution in Britain in the eighteenth-century, Ablove posits that it may have been equally, if not more so, a normative capitalist institution, where capitalist productive principles affected the definitions and popularity of cross-sex sex acts.

Works by R. Perry and Ablove demonstrate that reproduction in eighteenth-century Britain not only normalized procreative cross-sex relations, colonization, and patriarchy; it also normalized capitalist principles of maximizing productivity. Again, to borrow Foucaultian vocabulary, reproduction’s “lines of penetration” in the two historical studies are vast and multiple. On the one hand, the discourse of reproductive relations penetrated and regulated cross-sex arrangements and definitions of sexual practices in Britain in the eighteenth-century. On the other hand, reproductive cross-sex sexuality’s normalizing power was bolstered by and, in turn, further entrenched imperial, patriarchal, and capitalist structures.

Apart from demonstrating multiple sites of normative power in the institutions of marriage and reproduction at various moments and locations, these historical texts also reveal that heteronormative institutions have not always functioned alongside each other. Stoler’s study reveals that the reforms in marital regulations among white Europeans in Deli in the early eighteenth-century were aimed primarily at preventing class-based riots among white settlers and

placed reproduction of white children at the periphery.<sup>7</sup> Reproduction, however, plays a larger role in A. Perry's study of the import of white British females and their marriage to white male miners in British Columbia during the late nineteenth-century. Yet A. Perry's work demonstrates that white authorities did not institutionalize marriage as a normative form of cross-sex relation to facilitate white reproduction as its primary objective. Rather, white cross-sex marriages were encouraged to curb mixed-race reproduction between Aboriginal women and white men.

Similarly, Abelove's and R. Perry's works on British sexual culture in the eighteenth-century show that normative understandings of cross-sex sex and marriage have not always entailed reproduction, and vice versa. They argue that reproduction as a mandatory, ideal, and natural form of cross-sex relations only became a prevailing phenomenon with the growing strength of British colonial conquests and domestic capitalist industrial production. At the same time, Abelove demonstrates that a spike in fertility among the British population - the result of increasing instances of cross-sex genital intercourse - did not secure the simultaneous normalization of cross-sex marriage, as births increased both inside and outside of marriage.

As I appeal to historical studies of marriage and reproduction, I do not doubt that participants in these arrangements engaged in cross-sex relations. I am also persuaded by historical and queer theoretical arguments that institutions such as marriage and reproduction champion monogamy, reproduction, mono-racial relations, and cross-sex marriages as the dominant and normative forms of sexual arrangements. However, I question the assumptions that heterosexuality's relationships to these institutions are always natural, unproblematic, ahistorical, and, most of all, primary. Works by Abelove, A. Perry, R. Perry, and Stoler have shown that marriage and reproduction were "heterosexual" institutions, and yet they were also simultaneously crucial parts of colonial, capitalist, patriarchal, and racist regimes, as well as different combinations of the above to different degrees at specific historical moments.

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<sup>7</sup> Although Stoler discusses white anxiety over mixed race children in other parts of her book she emphasizes that white European middle-class reformed marital regulations mainly due to increasing frequency of class-based riots

#### 4. Race-ing Heterosexuality – Puberty and Sex Education Literature

In this third and last section of my paper, I use the methodological openings proposed in the earlier sections to look at specific discourses of normative sexuality. In particular, I concentrate on four books published by the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (FPAHK)<sup>8</sup> between 2003 to 2007: *Youth Diary on Puberty* (2003), *Youth Diary on Puberty II* (2007), *All About Sex – Youth Q & A* (2005), and *All About Sex – Youth Q & A (II)* (2006).<sup>9</sup> These are educational materials that aim to provide accurate and comprehensive information on puberty and sexuality to Hong Kong teenagers. They extensively cover topics ranging from the growth of body hair, menstruation, acne, and mood swings to issues surrounding masturbation, homosexuality, contraception, marriage, and reproduction. Targeting youth who are entering adolescence, these Chinese-language books are popular among teachers, sex educators, and teenagers and they have been reprinted due to high demand.<sup>10</sup>

Here, I focus on the authors' narratives of cross-sex sexualities and relationships in the context of dating, marriage, monogamy, and reproduction. I argue that the study of heterosexualities and normative cross-sex sexualities *must* simultaneously interrogate race, class, culture, and historical categories, since normative heterosexual institutions are at once normative, racialized, classed, and gendered regimes with concurrent and sometimes competing "lines of penetration."

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among poor white workers and mixed race sociality.

<sup>8</sup> On its website, FPAHK explains that it was formerly called the Eugenics League founded in 1936, and was reorganized and renamed under its present name in 1950 to provide birth control services in Hong Kong. The Association became one of the eight founding members of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in 1952. The other members were India, Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, and West Germany. At present, the FPAHK is funded by both the Hong Kong Department of Health and the IPPF. Among its many services, the FPAHK operates 32 birth control clinics, a Sex Education Mobile Library, artificial insemination services, a pregnancy termination operation, a youth advisory service, and a pre-marital medical check-up service.

<sup>9</sup> Other than the titles of the books that bear original English translations, I am responsible for all Chinese-English translations in this paper.

<sup>10</sup> *Youth Diary on Puberty* (2003), *All About Sex – Youth Q & A* (2005), and *All About Sex – Youth Q & A (II)* (2006) have also been awarded respectively the "Critics Recommendation" Prize at the 2004, 2006 and 2007 Hong Kong Book Fair.

#### **4.1. “Tradition”**

Since the limited space here does not allow for an in-depth examination of cross-sex narratives and the genre of sex and adolescent advice literature in Hong Kong as a whole, I will concentrate on a frequently deployed key term in the books – “tradition.”<sup>11</sup> In their advice, the authors often use the term “tradition” to signal a conservative position and a repressive past. The term is often followed by encouragement for a timely and necessary transition into the present. An example would be the authors’ argument in *All About Sex – Youth Q & A* that “teenagers may be anxious, embarrassed, or ashamed of talking about sexuality because of ‘traditional influences’” (2005: 11). Another example is when the authors of *All About Sex – Youth Q & A (II)* look to “tradition” to explain the “double standard” that exists in cross-sex dating cultures that champion and police female virginity vigorously, while paying little attention to male virginity (2006: 23). In the latter book, the authors also attribute homophobia to “tradition” as parents may not accept their children’s same-sex sexuality due to “traditional beliefs” (2006: 71). In these instances, “tradition” comes to mean a sex-negative and homophobic culture that must be rejected. This rejection of “tradition” is often framed in the language of progress, where teenagers must enter into “contemporary Hong Kong society” through their rejection of “traditional” views on sexuality. Thus, youth sexuality and sexuality in general are positioned at the centre of contemporary Hong Kong perceptions of communities as “traditional” and “modern,” “backward” and “progressive.”

Similar arguments are made in *Youth Diary on Puberty* (2003) and *Youth Diary on Puberty II* (2007), two works that trace the diary entries of two fictional characters, Lam and Lui, as early adolescents in the first book and older teenagers in the second. Although direct references to “tradition” are less visible than in the *All About Sex* series, the authors of *Youth Diary I* and *II* clearly indicate the need to combat “backward” notions of sexuality. While Lam’s and Lui’s daily experiences show that the society has “double standards” for the sexes and that homosexuality is the butt of jokes at school, the authors suggest that the characters’ healthy heterosexual adolescence in “a contemporary advanced Hong Kong society” depends on their

respect for sexual equality and acceptance of *others* who may be homosexual (2003:59, 85; 2007: 59-61, 68).

Although the authors explicitly state in all four books that homosexuality is a legitimate sexual desire and must not be suppressed due to the “traditional mindset,” the heterosexuality of its main characters and readers are assumed and unquestioned. In fact, the authors in all the books point to cross-sex attraction as a crucial and fundamental marker of one’s entrance into puberty (2003: 74; 2005: 14; 2006: 8; 2007: 87). Also, the four books centre on themes such as cross-sex relations, cross-sex desires, and cross-sex sexual behaviors and illustrate a linear trajectory of casual cross-sex dating, monogamous courtship, marriage, and reproduction, all the while emphasizing that sexual activities are most rewarding and healthy within committed long-term, serious, monogamous, and cross-sex relationships. Boundaries of normative and ideal heterosexuality are most apparent in *Youth Diary on Puberty I* and *II* where the (male) characters who pursue multiple partners are deemed immature and untrustworthy and eventually suffer from the “failures” of short-term relationships.

All in all, young readers learn that: they are heterosexually oriented unless in exceptional circumstances and they enter into puberty when they desire cross-sex sex and into maturity when they promise long-term monogamy to their cross-sex partners. While these discourses of normative heterosexualities police all forms of sexual relations and desires, the textual and conceptual entangling of “sexuality” and “tradition” reveal the complex ways in which heterosexualities come to enact discursive power. To comprehend fully this particular discourse of heterosexuality, we must study “tradition” in the specific context of Hong Kong.

#### ***4.2. “Tradition” and the Colonial Past***

In the four books, the authors never fully articulate their definition of “tradition,” assuming its meaning to be self-evident to their readers. Since a large majority of the population in Hong Kong is of Chinese-descent, the literature is directed specifically at Chinese youth, and “tradition” in the Cantonese dialect refers to Chinese culture, it is almost certain that the authors

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<sup>11</sup> The term for “tradition” in Traditional Chinese characters is 傳統.

understand “tradition” to mean Chinese tradition. If the authors indeed equate Chinese culture with conservative and backward notions of sexuality and envision a different Hong Kong society that is progressive and sexually-open, this “healthy” heterosexual society, with a few exceptional homosexuals, would become “un-Chinese” or “progressively Chinese.” This hypothesis raises questions regarding the places of “race” and culture in the construction of normative heterosexuality in the advice literature, as well as in a contemporary and cosmopolitan Chinese society in places such as Hong Kong.

More importantly, if “tradition” indeed points to “Chinese tradition,” it glosses over the history of Hong Kong as a British colony from 1842 to 1997. During British colonial rule, Hong Kong institutions including the health education syllabus, community activist organizations, and legal structures were standardized based on British models. Although Hong Kong’s colonial status ended more than a decade ago, the current Hong Kong systems and syllabus for sex and youth education and laws regarding sexual crimes and behaviors still largely resemble those of Britain. Thus contemporary understandings of “Chinese tradition” in the context of this collection of literature and in Hong Kong in general *must* take into account colonial influences and the import of British categories of sexuality, morality, and youth. More significantly, we must also investigate the meanings of Chinese culture as “traditional” and the ways in which this frames current discourses of heterosexuality beyond the British paradigms.

#### ***4.3. “Tradition” and the Heterosexual Past***

We must also consider the possibilities that the current understanding of “conservative Chinese tradition” is the product and/or part of an ongoing process of resistance to categories of sexuality enforced by more than a-century of colonization. The authors’ concept of Chinese “tradition” as “conservative” and therefore heterosexual and anti-homosexual requires further dissection. In fact, the claim by formerly colonized and/or presently racially marginalized people that their culture’s past and traditions are heterosexual and anti-homosexual is not unique. Postcolonial scholars Kendall Thomas (1997), William Spurlin (2005), and Gayatri Gopinath (2005) have argued that the homophobic reinvention of the cultural past as strictly heterosexual in post-

colonial South Africa, post-colonial India, and post-slavery America respectively are the results of colonial trauma and ongoing discrimination.

Thomas argues that “blackness” in America in the recent past is articulated in monolithically hyper-masculine, heterosexist, and anti-queer jargons as a defensive response to “white supremacy from the body of black America” and “white racism’s phobic conception of black sexuality” both in the slavery past and the racist present (1997: 131). To Thomas, this “jargon of authenticity” falsely represents black histories and subjectivities as violent and homophobic, and, at the same time, excludes and enacts oppression against black queers (1997: 124, 123).

Similar to Thomas’ claim, Spurlin contends that imperialist emasculation of blackness and the colonial conflation of homosexuality with denigrated femininity have enacted “psychic violence” on South Africans. These processes have led to postcolonial search for “pure” blackness where this false “authentic” pre-colonial identity becomes inevitably heterosexual and homophobic (2005: 198). Gopinath’s example of the National Federation of Indian Association’s refusal of South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association’s (SALGA) participation in the annual Indian Day Parade in New York City during the 1990s also highlights heterosexism and homophobia within post-colonial diasporic Indian nationalism. (2005: 16). Works by Thomas, Spurlin, and Gopinath are convincing evidence that British colonial influence may have had significant impact on Hong Kong’s current conception of Chinese “tradition” as necessarily anti-homosexual and Hong Kong’s past as necessarily heterosexual.

However, as within all post-colonial societies, the colonial influences on Hong Kong communities’ cultural and sexual self-perceptions are only one manifestation of the city’s continuing tense and unstable relations with Britain and the West in general. The sex education authors’ call for a departure from heterosexist and homophobic Chinese “tradition” and their promotion of a “progressive” and “modern” Hong Kong society must also be understood in the context of Westernization of many Hong Kong’s sex education discourses, among other facets of the society.

Accompanying the authors’ justifications for the “progressive” acceptance of homosexuality and the fictional characters’ homosexual friends, the authors’ explanations of homosexuality as a “sexual orientation” are borrowed from Western English definitions and

narratives. In *All About Sex – Youth Q & A (II)*, the authors use the English terms “sexual desire and attraction,” “sexual behaviors,” and “sexual identity” to explain the “three tiers of sexual orientation” to their young readers (2006: 64). In addition, in the four books, the authors frequently rely on the explanations of homosexuals’ desires for long-term monogamy, marriage, sexual gratification, and children as proof that homosexuals are “the same” as the presumed heterosexual fictional characters and young readers (2006: 64-72; 2007: 80). This narrative of homosexuality as a private and apolitical “sexual orientation” grounded in the universality of desires for marriage, reproduction, and monogamy is influenced by and/or very closely resembles the earlier articulated discourse of homonormativity pervasive in the West (see Section 2). The authors’ message is clear: understanding Western models and definitions of homosexuality is crucial for youth to live in a homosexual-friendly contemporary Hong Kong society that repudiates “traditional prejudice.”

Yet despite this homosexual-friendly message, the assumed heterosexual status of all the main characters of the books and of all the targeted readers expose the authors’ narrowly defined model of heterosexuality as the most healthy, common, and legitimate. In doing so, they replicate, ironically, the heterosexism of the very “traditional” culture that they wish to denounce. More importantly, the authors’ uses of Western discourses and vocabulary to explain (normative) heterosexuality and homosexuality, coupled with their seemingly contradictory evocations of Chinese “tradition” demonstrate that relationships between the West and Hong Kong’s post-colonial culture are multiple, complex, and often very messy. That is, in order for the young Hong Kong readers to become sexually healthy (hetero)sexual adolescents, they must at once embrace Western liberal ideas of homosexuality and confront “traditional” Chinese heterosexism – which I argue is a homophobic reaction to historical British role - all the while living in a post-colonial Hong Kong society which is described to them as extremely heterosexual.

Thus to comprehend fully the construction of normative heterosexuality within the selected sex education materials, the roles of Chinese “tradition” and “modern” Western homosexual narratives *must* be mapped onto broader historical and contemporary transnational interactions between Hong Kong and the West in general. In short, historically- and culturally-

informed investigations *must* play a crucial, if not fundamental, part in understanding discursive constructions of heterosexuality.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper is prompted by the question: what do we mean when we say “heterosexual” and how have we positioned “heterosexuality” in queer studies? The first part of the study illustrates the uses of “heterosexuality” in queer studies scholarship to mean a particular arrangement of cross-sex relations – two-person, monogamous, committed, marital, long-term, and procreative or potentially procreative relations. In the second part, I appeal to historical works by Henry Abelove, Adele Perry, Ruth Perry, and Laura Ann Stoler to challenge perceived self-evident, ahistorical, and universal relationships between normative heterosexuality and the institutions of marriage and reproduction. I argue that while institutions such as marriage and reproduction have been and remain normative forms of heterosexualities, our understanding of them as “heteronormative” may have glossed over the historically contingent and highly turbulent connections between heterosexuality and these institutions’ processes of normalization. At the same time, the selected historical examinations draw attention to the undertheorization of heterosexuality in many queer works, where the discursive power of (hetero)sexuality is often privileged over racial, class, gender, and colonial relations and normative cross-sex institutions’ relationships to one another are assumed unproblematic. I argue that there is no monolithic heterosexuality, just as there is no monolithic normative heterosexuality. I propose a *methodological opening* where the normalizing power of “heterosexual” institutions are seen as sexual as well as racial, gendered, classed, and historically contingent. I attempt to apply this methodological alternative to look at the discourses of heterosexuality in four Hong Kong sex and puberty education materials in the third part of the study. To make such notions of heterosexuality intelligible, I argue that we must seriously consider the specific colonial, Chinese, contemporary, and historical contexts of Hong Kong. As queer studies emphasizes the dissection of the normative “center” as well as the queer “periphery,” my project questions how we come to define the “center” and the “norm.” Although my case study on Hong Kong sex

education literature is brief, I hope it has helped further sexuality studies' conversations about heterosexualities and sexual normativity. Most importantly, my goal is to expand such conversations beyond familiar Western, English-speaking subjects and environments.

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## **Beyond Rainbows and Butterflies: Environmental Politics and the Scale and Scope of NGO Activities.**

### Abstract

*The article examines the role played by NGOs in international environmental policy processes. Special attention is given to the relationship between the effectiveness of NGO interventions and the scale and scope of their actions. Scale is defined in the article with reference to the spatial focus of actions taken by NGO groups, and scope is seen as defining the relevance of these focused actions within a broader interdependent and inter-temporal policy discourse. Taking this interdependent, inter-temporal and inter-spatial view of the policy process provides a basis for exploring the interdisciplinary importance of attempts to enhance the effectiveness of NGO actions relative to the scale and scope of their activities.*

*It is argued that the presence of NGOs in environmental politics has to some extent been determined by the existence of policy vacuums that prompt responses to the perceived need for a more inclusive approach to these forms of politics. However, a number of theoretical examples are used to illustrate that enhanced inclusiveness is not a sufficient condition for ensuring more fair policy processes. The example of NGO participation in Senegalese marine fishery policy discourse is used to substantiate this point.*

*On the basis of theoretical and practical observations, it is argued that attempts to realize greater inclusiveness can detract from the effectiveness of policy processes through adding additional voices to already noisy policy arenas. This is compounded by the temporal, special, and conceptual interdependence characterizing many of these spaces in the first place. As an alternative, I argue that the efficacy of policy processes can be enhanced through a more synergistic approach that identifies common objectives across diverse and often conflicting rationalities. The concept of sustainable development is seen as one that is capable of providing the macro rational orientation required for the realization of a more synergistic attrition of ideas. And NGO groups are seen as the entities most capable of the flexibility that is required for advocating that cause.*

Keywords: Environmental Politics, NGOs, Sustainable Development, Senegal, Fisheries.

### **Introduction**

Political responses to the pressures that human activities place upon the earth's ecological systems have been diverse. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) can be described as an important component of the emerging spread of responses to environmental issues. However the

nature of the forces that these groups exert upon policy processes is not well understood.

In a 2006 article published in the Graduate Journal of Social Science, Denis Chartier stated that being able to understand the role that NGO groups play in international environmental policy processes requires that the nature of their actions and the scales that they work at be examined. Chartier suggests that the question of scale has an important temporal dimension since the urgency of environmental problems requires swift action, while their complexity requires a longer-term view. (Cartier, 2006, 58 )

It is the purpose of this article to unpack the role of NGOs in international environmental politics with reference to the *scale*, defined with reference to the spatial focus of actions taken by NGO groups, and *scope*, which defines the relevance of these focused actions within a broader interdependent and inter-temporal policy discourse. The interdependent, inter-temporal and inter-spatial view of the policy process in turn provides a basis for exploring the interdisciplinary importance of attempts to refine NGO actions relative to the scale and scope of their activities.

The article argues that the presence of NGOs in environmental politics has to some extent been determined by the existence of policy vacuums, and urges a response to the perceived need for a more inclusive approach to these forms of politics. A number of theoretical examples are used to illustrate that enhanced inclusiveness of perspectives is not necessarily a sufficient condition for ensuring more desirable policy outcomes. The example of NGO participation in Senegalese marine fishery policy discourse is used to substantiate theoretical claims with more practical observations. On the basis of the theoretical and practical observations that are made, it is recommended that in certain cases more desirable environmental policy outcomes require that NGOs come to grips with conceptual spaces that will enable them to make sense of already noisy policy arenas.

## **NGO Identity**

States have been criticized for failing to act appropriately and timeously in response to a range of issues, including environmental issues. It has been noted that this perceived failure to act appropriately and timeously to various issues has created policy vacuums that can be, and have been, filled by NGO activities. Thus it has been argued that:

The search for effective and substantial environmental reform has to be pursued in a domain below and beyond the nation-state level. The predominant answer is to value the style of NGO politics that has emerged from this fragmented and diffused political situation. (Doyle and Mc Eachern, 2001, 85)

On their web page: *The NGO Café*, The Global Development Research Centre suggests that NGOs can be distinguished by their orientation and their level of operation. (The NGO Café) For Authors like James Connely and Graham Smith further distinctions between NGO groups are necessary. According to the authors, important distinctions must also be made in terms of who and what different groups represent, and by whom they are recognised as being legitimate.

Just as NGOs vary in their orientation and level of operation, the forms of action employed by these groups are also divergent. The forms of action employed include informal contact and influence over politically influential individuals and clusters, formal lobbying, letters and petitions, scientific research and reports, consumer boycotts, court action, demonstrations and marches, media stunts, non-violent civil disobedience, and violent direct action.

From this list, in 2006 Nwabuo Uzodike and I identified four broad categories for the roles played by NGOs in the national and international policy settings. The categories were: placing critical attention on issues that may otherwise have been sidelined; providing scientific evidence for critical engagement for claims and guidelines in policy processes; rallying popular support from civil societies in an attempt to evoke political impetus for formal action; and finally, in some cases, NGOs play roles as mediators and arbitrators for the negotiation of new policies within and between governments, commercial and industrial entities. (Stilwell and Uzodike, 2006, 35)

If we aim to evaluate the impacts that NGO activities have for policy settings, the activities of these groups can be further reduced to questions surrounding the nature of the influence that their activities have. It is here that issues of scale and scope become important because it can be argued that the effectiveness with which orientation is given to the scale and scope of NGO actions - within what may be highly interdependent policy environs, plays a determining role for the credibility of the influence exerted.

We can break the different kinds of influence that NGOs may wield in policy processes

into the following categories: power to be heard, power to enter the policy process, power to implement policy changes, and importantly, the power to realise productive changes.

Having the power to be heard can involve the application of all of a particular group's functions, ranging from drawing critical attention, providing scientific evidence, and rallying popular support, to mediating and arbitrating. However for this power type the extent of the group's effectiveness is limited to simply highlighting an issue, thus drawing critical attention. The power to enter a policy process on the other hand is likely to have a more direct impact upon policy outcomes, though it is not guaranteed to do so. Again the realisation of this type of power can involve all four NGO functions, though once within the policy process influence will be focussed on potential to provide scientific evidence and perform mediation and arbitration. The power to implement policy changes implies the successful application of any number of the four main NGO functions, though the extent to which the policy change is productive is not guaranteed. This observation highlights the fourth, and possibly most important, type of power: the power to realise productive policy changes. It is this type of power that requires more than the simple performance of the four main NGO functions, but requires an intuitive understanding of the likely impacts of those actions relative to the subtleties of given settings.

### **Arenas for Exclusion**

There are a number of areas where policy vacuums may emerge in policy processes as the result of systemic marginalisation of potentially relevant perspectives, and as I have suggested, these areas are frequently capitalised upon by NGO groups. Although at academic levels the multidisciplinary nature of these areas may sometimes mandate separate treatment, NGOs can find themselves simultaneously operating in a number of different realms of policy discourse. It is therefore important to identify some of the policy areas and/or dynamics that create an impetus for NGO involvement. The first that will be discussed here concerns democratic systems of governance.

Electoral democracy has been perceived to be insufficiently inclusive of all the relevant views that may be held by sometimes-marginalized polities. For this reason *deliberative democracy* can be seen as a means to achieving greater inclusiveness and participation of

marginalised minority groups, which in turn leads to greater enlightenment among participants. (Farrelly, 2003, 4) Deliberative democracy depends upon the creation of discussion groups which aim to strengthen the voice of the agents who may otherwise be unheard. As such this process of inclusion attempts to make democracy more democratic, but despite this effort in practice deliberative democratic processes tend to be dominated by the more articulate, more confident, more concerned, more domineering, more respected, and above all, more present participants. The *ideal speech* that is required for participants to remain rational and objective seldom keeps its integrity. (Mouffe, 2000, 6) As a result the outcomes of these deliberative processes tend also to reflect the imperatives of these more dominant groups. One example of this is the division that has occurred between the interests of current and future generations in sustainable development discourse. This is the case because the interests of future generations are easy to overlook at political and policy levels since these groups are effectively absent.

In cost benefit analyses, which are often used to determine the merits or de merits of a particular policy proposal, a similar dynamic exists. Cost-benefit analysis attempts to provide a clear decision criterion to a policy proposal based on the addition and subtraction of the cost and benefit points as a means to evaluating which are the most and least beneficial courses of action. (Kopp, Krupnick and Toman, 1997, 1) In this instance, again, only more obvious and more easily accountable factors are considered while other considerations, which may be too hard to understand or account for are more or less ignored, despite the possibility of their single or aggregate importance being great. (Kopp, Krupnick and Toman, 1997, 7) Such is the case with many natural resource and environmental policy dilemmas. Although the micro accounting benefits of producing a product may be clear, the long term macro environmental or social costs associated with the production of that good may not be.

Garret Hardin's observations in his work, *Tragedy of The Commons*, also illustrate how certain modalities take precedence over others in economic life. In this instance, which normally deals with common pool resources, a free rider effect occurs. The free rider effect is underpinned by a logic which suggests that it is relatively easy and personally beneficial to consume an extra unit of a shared resource at the shared cost of other users. Although the benefit of consuming an extra unit of the good is direct and may be large, the cost to all users (one's self included) is a partitioned cost and thus less grave than the personal benefit of the free riding activity. (Hardin, 1968, 162)

As a result governance decisions made in interdependent policy environments may frequently be insufficiently inclusive of relevant interests. Groups, such as NGOs, who view governance or policy processes as insufficiently inclusive may attempt to counterweight this lack of objectivity.

However matters of scale and scope raise some important potential problems for NGOs operating in these opened policy spaces. First, NGO groups may compete to occupy a similar policy space. In some cases this may be desirable, though in others competing to fill common political spaces may mean competition for financial and technical resources. Having to compete for these resources can have the affect of making neither of the groups as effective as they might otherwise be. Second, actions with a relatively narrow normative focus - perhaps aiming to make a policy process inclusive of a certain set of under or un-represented interests, may be rendered ineffective by the nature of the dynamics within the broader policy process. If effective policy responses are desired, it may not be sufficient to simply lend a voice to the voiceless in instances where the 'new voices' are likely to be eroded by other more dominant ones engaged in the policy process.

Further, the realization of narrow policy goals can be counterproductive. Depending upon the nature of the larger context NGO actions can succumb to the paradox that sometimes characterises the difference between micro and macro rationality. Just as Hardin's subjects are compelled to farm more cattle or fish more fish, NGOs may represent micro interests that can lead to counterproductive outcomes at macro levels: "Micro rationality often leads to macro irrationality, as evidenced by the paradox of thrift, the tragedy of the commons, the prisoner's dilemma, the tyranny of small decisions, and the arms race." (Daly, 1997, 113)

William Odum suggests that society is managed as a conglomerate of public decisions. Individuals and small groups form the lower 'nests' of decision making while higher levels are occupied by elected governments and smaller bodies within governments. The higher levels are theoretically supposed to be comprised of experts who collectively make rules that are applied to the decisions and decision-making processes that occur at the lower echelons of the conglomerate. (Odum, 1982, 728)

In some cases small groups or individuals arrive at decisions without the 'supervision' of the expert elected authorities. (Odum, 1982, 728) When we consider the advent of systemic marginalisation, or highly complex interests sets in policy processes, it may be difficult for even

the expert authorities to provide policy orientation that ensures an objectively desirable outcome.

Where the dominant interests within policy processes represent the realisation of a number of actors who base their actions on the attainment of their micro rational interests, and a cleavage exists between micro rational and macro rational interests, a tyranny of small decisions results. The central theme is the notion that whether or not decision processes are highly inclusive or are led by expert authorities, the aggregate of small decisions, may not lead to a desirable outcome for the total.

Applying this view to the participation of NGO groups in environmental forums raises some key questions about the nature of the influence that NGO groups may seek in different policy environments. If these groups seek to influence the opinions of experts in the upper nest, then their actions must be measured against those of the other actors attempting to influence the upper nest/s. A lot also depends upon the competence of the upper nest. In some cases the upper nests may attempt to please all groups, and this can lead to poor results for all. In others, they may be biased, in which case groups wishing to effect changes may be best off taking action for reform in the decision processes.

Groups seeking a particular change must anticipate the responses of the other actors comprising their interpretive community to their actions. For example NGO preservationist groups who seek to preserve ecological systems may aim to close access to a useful environmental resource. In a broader system, achieving this goal can be counterproductive at a larger scale if as a result of being denied access to the important resource, user groups place additional pressure on other (perhaps equally) vulnerable resources. In another example, placing rigid restrictions may simply cause users to transgress those restrictions, which in turn places an additional burden on management systems that must now have the capacity to deal with new kinds of problems. In such examples actions aimed at solving one problem simply create others, and in some cases the new problems might be more serious than the old.

Identifying a transcendental ethic that is capable of giving trajectory to such policy dilemmas is therefore a desirable goal. The extent to which the concept of sustainable development is capable of providing this policy orientation is therefore an important point for discussion.

## Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has long been viewed as a concept that is capable of providing orientation for issues where a relationship between economic, social and ecological forces is at stake. Sustainable development discourse is, however, fraught with disagreement.

Theorists contend in varying degrees that “*man-made*” capital is substitutable for *natural capital*. These conflicting views have given rise to two broad schools of thought within the sustainable development discourse. Proponents of so-called *weak sustainability* claim that natural and conventional capital are substitutes, thus if one divests in one form of capital while investing in the other, sustainability can be achieved. Proponents of *strong sustainability*, on the other hand, argue that the two broad capital types are complements and that each must be maintained intact for sustainable interaction between the two to be realised. (Magill, 1997, 245) Still others such as Francis Laloë argue that perceptions and definitions of capital also evolve over time (Laloe, 2007, p 90) thus supporting the view that the truth regarding the *weak versus strong* substitutability debate probably lies somewhere in the middle ground between the two opposed views. Arguments, such as those offered by Herman Daly, who views natural and conventional capital as being “fundamentally complements and only marginally substitutes” (Daly, 1996, 76) may also occupy this space.

On the question of political implementation of the concept, Olivier Godard has suggested that a political process toward sustainable development can neither be derived directly from an inter-temporal economic optimisation informed by market prices, nor from scientific understandings of biophysical processes upon which the reproduction of the natural environment depends. Godard argues this on the basis that imperfect understandings of the complexity of each of these two fields, and the relationships between them, dictate an element of uncertainty regarding policy processes toward sustainable development. (Godard, 1996, 17) For his reason, the author gives importance to the *precautionary principle* as a means to tempering decision processes that may lead to ecologically unsustainable economic activities. (Godard, 1994, 17)

One implication of Godard's view is that predictions based upon articulations of the relationships between environmental and economic factors as we understand them are unlikely to be credible. We suggest that one response to this problem is to measure the relationships between

economic activities and ecological impacts post hoc as a means to understanding their consequences. This article highlights, however, that the consequences of economic activities are not only important from an economic point of view, but from broader societal ones too. Thus the search for a transcendental ethic for providing orientation for the scale and scope (particularly) of NGO policy actions will rest upon an argument for a system of measurement that can be used to explain the societal impacts of given economic policy choices which combine economic, ecological, and social aspects.

International trade systems have provided an important example of how the interconnectedness of global economic, social, political, and ecological systems can mean that actions based on one ethic pertaining to a particular policy domain can result in problems for another.

### **The Case of Fisheries Management in Senegal**

Today, it is widely thought that Senegal's fish stocks are under severe threat of depletion due to heavy fishing pressure on the country's fishery resources. (Kaczynski and Fluharty, 2002, 82) This fishing pressure results from the activities of three main fishing sectors, these are the local artisanal sector, the local industrial sector, and the foreign industrial sector.

The governance of the Senegalese fisheries sector directed by the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982 gave legal jurisdiction to coastal states over the marine resources found within a 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) adjacent to those states. Controversially Article 62 of the UNCLOS mandates that a nation cannot sell access to already fully exploited resources, though they should make resources that are not fully exploited available to foreign entities. (Brown, 2005, 1) Joseph Catanzano has argued that concurrent usage of a common fishery resource by numerous user groups that emerges as a result of implementing Article 62 can lead to inefficiencies in fishery use. (Catanzano, 2003, 5) The view suggests that Article 62 fails to recognize that some groups may be more efficient than others in the production of fishery products. The legal mandate prescribed by this article therefore prevents fishery management authorities from allocating access to fish stocks in accordance with the comparative advantages that some users may have over others in

the production of certain fishery products. The ramifications of this issue, it is argued, lead in turn to sub-optimal exploitation of the fishery that discords with the approach that would be recommended by the HO theory of comparative advantage that was discussed earlier in this article.

Post the UNCLOS, one of the first major institutional attempts to address the global fisheries problem was the development of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* (CCRF) in 1995.

Noting that fisheries industries had become a market driven, dynamically developing sector, that is driven by growing international demand for fish and fishery products, and that fishery resources could not sustain such growth indefinitely, the United Nations Committee on Fisheries (COGI) and the FAO put together a strategy for the development responsible fisheries management. (UNFAO, 2005)

This code sets out principles and international standards of behavior for responsible practices with a view to ensuring the effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources, with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity. The Code recognizes the nutritional, economic, social, environmental and cultural importance of fisheries and the interests of all those concerned with the fisheries sector. (UNFAO, 2005)

Although certain parts of the CCRF are based upon relevant rules of international law, it remains voluntary, and thus only provides guidelines for responsible fishery management. (UNFAO, 2005) For example article 5 of the code simply states that: "States, relevant intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and financial institutions should work for the adoption of measures to address the needs of developing countries." (UNFAO, 2005) By making recommendations without identifying the complex causes that have led to the need for these recommendations, the code does not address many of the systemic causes of weak fishery management regimes, but rather presents a prognosis of the symptoms. As such, the CCRF remains a necessary but insufficient step toward the sustainable development of fisheries.

Although I shall not give an exhaustive review of all of the policy responses to the over-fishing problem here, responses such as the UNCLOS and the CCRF can be argued as being indicative of the failure of policy responses to achieve sufficient resonance with the complexity

of interdependent fisheries systems where ecological, social, economic and political factors are at play and at stake. This poses a problem for the credibility of what Odum (1982) would describe as the 'upper nests' of fisheries policy discourse. The extent to which actors such as NGO groups can offer a means to reviving the credibility of the policy orientation in fisheries actions therefore becomes an important question.

### **Governance in the Senegalese Fishery and the Role of NGOs**

In the Senegalese context, the forces that influence the government perception of what is a good fisheries policy are diverse and often conflicting. As a result of this, fisheries policies in the region can be described as diffused.

On the one hand the motivation for signing fishing access agreements with foreign partners such as the EU is clear from a financial point of view, since these agreements entail substantial lump sum payments to the Senegalese government for fisheries access.

On the other hand the local artisanal fishing sector provides comparatively little direct financial compensation to the government since it is relatively informal, though the sector performs crucial functions in terms of employment and food security, as well as other cultural functions. The significance of the sector to the local population gives the interests of artisanal fishers strong electoral power. (Samba, 2006) The third sector, the national industrial sector, is less important than the foreign industrial sector in terms of financial compensation, and less important than the artisanal sector in terms of employment and food security, but still important in terms of the development of more industrialised local fisheries activities.

For the Senegalese fisheries management authorities, the different import of each of these sectors has resulted in a policy *mélange* that attempts to satisfy all groups. Access agreements have been signed and resigned with the EU in order to satisfy the desire to earn lump sum finances, and possible other economic benefits related to EU development aid. At the same time policy makers have attempted to satisfy the employment and food security interests of the local population through providing subsidies to artisanal fishers, (Dione, Sy, and Ndiaye, 2005, p 33.) as well as granting fishing licenses to national industrial fishing companies. This 'the more the merrier' policy approach has supported overcapacity in the country's fishery which has led to a

decline in many of the country's important fish stocks. After the previous agreement expired in 2006, the EU did not renew their access agreement with Senegal. Although the reasons for this are not yet crystal clear, a common suspicion is that Senegal's overexploited fish stocks are no longer interesting to the EU in the light of more favorable access arrangements available among the country's neighbors.

As a result of this decline, and the competition between user groups that is seen to emerge as a result, a number of NGO actions have been taken as a means to filling associated policy vacuums.

The main response to the Senegalese fishery problem attempts to de-marginalise certain interests in order to achieve policy outcomes through the application of all of the four core functions that have been highlighted.

One of the largest projects aimed at addressing the fisheries dilemma is the *Programme de Conservation de la Zone Côtière d'Afrique de l'Ouest* (PRCM), (Programme for the Conservation of the West African Coastal Zone) which has been created in a partnership between a grouping of West African states called the Sub Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), the World Wildlife Fund, the International Union for the Conservation of nature (IUCN), Wetlands International, and the *Fondation Internationale du Banc d'Arguin* (FIBA) (International Foundation for the Banc d'Arguin national park of Mauritania). (Fisheries Agreements, 2006)

Among other actions, the project aims to improve the negotiation abilities of member states of the CSRP through improving transparency for the management of marine resource in the West African region by boosting participation and collaboration between member states and concerned actors. (Fisheries Agreements, 2006)

The actions taken under this project include attempts to address the poor ability among representatives of CSRP countries to negotiate fishing deals; the lack of coherence and coordination among CSRP states when negotiating fishing deals with foreign partners; the lack of transparency, and participation of all actors who are concerned by the negotiation process; insufficient knowledge about the marine resources for which access rights are sold; insufficient follow up monitoring on the implementation of fishing agreements; and the economic and political dependence of CSRP countries upon fishing agreements. (Fisheries Agreements, 2006)

In this instance the actions taken by these NGOs include all four forms of actions where critical attention will be generated through the publication of materials. Scientific evidence will

be provided through research processes in the field, popular support will be rallied through lobbies in Europe and also as a function of the critical attention drawn to the problem. Finally mediation and arbitration will be performed as a product of activities aiming to bring participants together in deliberative processes. The aims of these actions can be categorised as attempts to realize their power to be heard, their power to enter the policy process, their power to implement policy changes, and indeed their power to realise productive changes. Problematically the extent to which the fourth of these goals is realised will be dictated by the nature of the broader policy process which in turn is dependent upon an array of external variables.

For example, Carolyn Deere has suggested however that the EU weakens the bargaining position of West African states by negotiating fishing deals separately with each state. This creates a fear that if states do not comply sufficiently with EU demands, the fishing deal will be lost to neighboring states, along with the financial compensation that accompanies it. (Deere, 1999, 43) This factor combined with the large, often conflicting, and very complex forces faced by fisheries management authorities in the region makes it difficult to coordinate attempts to ensure the sustainable development of fisheries in West Africa.

The situation illustrates how at a regional level, as at an individual national one, the fisheries politics is diffused by conflicting interests. At an intercontinental level the trends are not much different. There have been various institutional attempts to address these issues, but most have failed to address any more than the symptoms of conflicts.

The extent to which NGO actions aiming at entering into regional fisheries policy processes for the purpose of achieving the sustainable usage of the regions resources is likely to be a product of the extent to which these groups are capable of uniting the vision of currently competing user groups. Although the project mandates a more participative approach to regional fisheries policy, it seems unlikely that more inclusive processes will provide a realistic alternative in the absence of a shift from actions taken on the basis of micro rational interests of participants.

The problematic results of Senegalese policy approaches that aim to accommodate all parties and their interests provide practical evidence that achieving sustainable fisheries will require actions to be based upon an overarching ethic rather than through achieving greater inclusiveness for a wide spread of conflicting ones.

Although we have seen how there is a natural impetus to simply make policy process

more inclusive in all kinds of ways, a real solution to a complex policy problem such as this is likely to require a paradigm shift from micro rational actions to actions based on a transcendental scope, where policy actions are taken as a means to satisfying a more universal synergistic ethic. In this case progress will not engender simply including a wider spread of already competing micro rational actors and interests, but will require forms of politics that fill the macro rational spaces that have been left open by even NGO groups.

These examples also illustrate how conducting these operations without due regard for the nuances between aiming for policy action, and aiming for the sustainable realisation of particular interest can pose problems for NGO effectiveness in policy arenas.

## **Conclusion**

At conceptual levels, a synergistic approach to policy dilemmas involving competing actors, that are all aiming to fulfill their own micro rational interests, does exist. In certain cases NGO groups fall prey to this same dynamic in their attempts to make policy processes more inclusive of unheard voices, while overlooking the potential for an approach that simultaneously hears all voices. This is unfortunate since it is unlikely that other groups, more heavily engaged with micro rational interests, will fill this space – at least not without being prompted.

If NGO groups are to prompt such action, it will likely come as the result of an articulation between policy discourse and the scale and scope of their actions within that discourse, relative to an ability to process large and complex interactions between social, economic, ecological, and political forces. Thus, it is doubtful whether an argument for multidisciplinary cooperation has ever been made as strongly, or relative to as important an issue as sustainable development.

Since NGOs have traditionally proven to be most adaptable to changes in the policy environments, it is perhaps likely that the next challenge - of evoking a shift of perspective toward the wood, for the benefit of the trees, will be characterised by refinements in the scale and scope of NGO activities, and greater attention to interdependence in highly porous political spaces.

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## Self-reflection on emergent research design

### Abstract

*This paper provides a self related narrative to the development of the philosophical and methodological framework for my PhD study. The thesis involved evaluating case studies of the educational outcomes and experiential learning process of courses at Outward Bound institutions in New Zealand, Czech Republic and Australia. It presents a story, reconstructed through reflection of the development of an emergent research design based on my experience of the research process, methodologies and methods. My dilemma in using a traditional pre-planned design was that whilst my research background and review of literature into outcomes of experiential education programs initially favoured a quantitative approach. My world view and the nature of the different research contexts related to the educational process suggested using a phenomenological paradigm. The emergent unplanned journey reflected my experiences as a researcher becoming increasingly involved in the different contexts of the study. The resulting use of different methods reflected the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and how some research methods may be more appropriate for different contexts and cultures. The epistemological implication from this paper for other interdisciplinary studies is the benefit of a multi method approach related to the emergent nature of the research, which aims to enhance the study's reliability (dependability) and validity (credibility and transferability). This experiential process also allows the development of a broader perspective of research methodologies involving adaptations to different learning environments.*

Key words: self-reflection; emergent design; experiential learning; case study

### **1. Introduction**

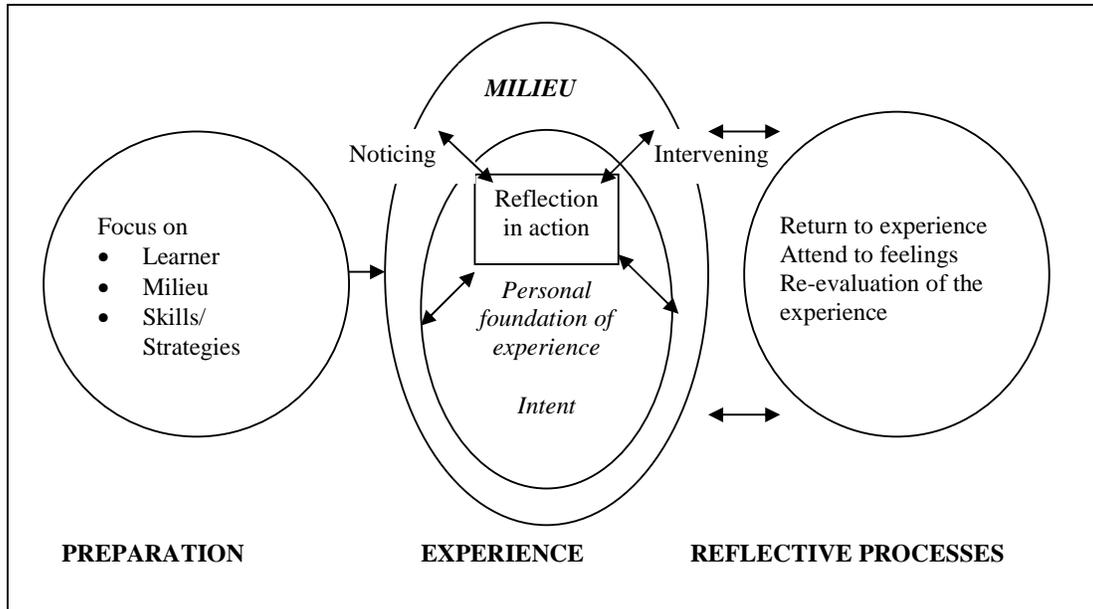
The structure of this paper initially provides some background to the case study approach used to develop a greater understanding of the experiential educational processes at Outward Bound and why specific outcomes were achieved. The evaluation of experiential education programmes had been limited mainly to studies focusing on participant's perceptions of change in aspects of self-concept involving quantitative statistical analysis (Hattie, Marsh,

Neill & Richards 1997). However the use of more qualitative methods had been advocated to investigate why the outcomes of the courses are achieved (Bocarro & Richards 1998). My particular interest was in the Czech method of ‘dramaturgy’ (a theatre term), which involves student-centred design of the courses.

The paper then presents the ontological, epistemological, and my own perspectives and involvement that impacted the research. The main focus of the paper is the change and development of the emergent research design involving my prolonged involvement and use of context and culture specific multiple methods, which aimed at enhancing the study’s credibility.

Development and change are central to the process of experiential learning and these were certainly themes for me during my PhD involving Outward Bound (Martin 2001a). These themes were not just in terms of the many powerful participant learning experiences that I read through my research, but from the significant learning that occurred, as I became comfortable as a researcher with the epistemological consequences of my interdisciplinary and multi method approach. The process was very similar to the model of experiential learning (Figure 1) presented by Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993), which provided a conceptual framework for the research design. It focuses on the three stages of reflection associated with experiential learning activities, prior, during and following the activity with assumptions that the learner brings a personal foundation to the experience and that the learning milieu is the social, psychological and physical environment in which the learner is situated. The key factor being the ‘reflection on action’, which involves the learner re-evaluating the experience (Boud et al 1993; Andresen, Boud & Cohen 1995).

The aim of this paper is to present a narrative of self (Ellis & Bochner 2000; Sparkes 2000), which draws upon my PhD experiences and reflections, as a novice researcher gaining a broader perspective of different research methodologies. It also aims to provide greater understanding of the benefits and emergent nature of using a multiple method research process in interdisciplinary research involving different contexts.



**Figure 1 Model for promoting learning from experience (Boud, Cohen, & Walker 1993: 7)**

## 2. A Special Place

My association with Outward Bound (OB) began whilst lecturing sport and outdoor recreation management at Massey University in New Zealand, as I undertook some preliminary funded research into participant outcomes of Outward Bound New Zealand (OBNZ) courses, at a time of major change for the organization due to falling enrolments and financial losses (Martin & Legg 2002). I had an outdoor activity interest, but limited skills based ‘expertise’ in this adventure field and regarded myself as a novice researcher, which meant I entered the OB environment nervously. My involvement at the beginning of this study appeared to be purely on a professional level, however, little did I realize the type of personal impact this study would bring, as I subsequently participated in a 9-day course. The participants were made aware of my involvement as an observer at OBNZ, but this did not appear to affect my acceptance in the group or the instructors involved in the study (although

not all of the instructors agreed to be involved). On a personal level, the series of mainly outdoor activities was not particularly physically challenging, however, the ‘mountains spoke for themselves’ (James 1980), and the interaction within the group provided a personal learning platform due to the range of experiences and backgrounds. This immersion provided a professional appreciation of the organisational culture and helped me personally gain a greater understanding of the importance of my friends and family. I wrote at the time ‘Outward Bound is certainly an experience of a lifetime and Anakiwa is certainly a very special place’

My initial role was as a university lecturer, an external and independent evaluator and observer. My increasing interest in the OB experiential process led to the development of the PhD topic, a topic that was deviant from my initial aim prior to undertaking the project. My case study aimed to determine what outcomes OB achieved and to develop a greater understanding of why the outcomes were achieved. Much of the literature on experiential education programs that I had reviewed focused on outcomes using primarily quantitative methods. However, there was a lack of empirical research linking outcomes and educational processes to experiential learning. The objectivity of a positivist approach and collecting outcome data that could be compared to previous research provided me with a starting point to commence fieldwork and was certainly favoured as a ‘safe’ option by me. My real interest, resulting from my participation, was about ‘how’ and ‘why’ the outcomes occurred. Part One of my study evaluated the outcomes of the 22-day and 9-day courses at OBNZ over a 6 month period and investigated the key elements of the educational process (Martin 1998). To complete this research it became clear to me that this could not be done using purely an objective research model (Bocarro & Richards 1998), due to the social construction of the many variables of outdoor education (people, processes, and outcomes) (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991).

### **3. Dramaturgy**

The focus of the PhD could have remained on OBNZ but during the same month as I was participating two instructors from Outward Bound Czech Republic (OBCZ) were also participating in a course. Their training experiences soon led to a ‘creative day’ initiative on

the New Zealand courses involving activities such as painting, story telling and role-playing. The Czech courses appeared to be significantly different from other physical outdoor activity based OB courses. The instructors placed emphasis on ‘dramaturgy’, an holistic method of course design, characterized by the intertwining of a wide variety of social, physical, creative, and reflective ‘games in nature’ using ‘the dramaturgy wave’ (Martin, Franc, & Zounková 2004).

Encouraged by the OBNZ director and my supervisors, I travelled to Prague to investigate an OBCZ course for international participants (Intertouch). With the invitation to ‘take a ride with us and discover gears you did not even know about’ it certainly pushed my comfort zone (Leberman, & Martin, 2002), as I reproduced a ‘masterpiece’ painting with my nose and took on various dance and drama role plays. The holistic course design using ‘dramaturgy’ (Martin, Leberman, & Neill 2002) integrated a variety of activities/games involving reflection and the learning environment provided a safe, positive and supportive atmosphere allowing participants to play (Martin & Leberman 2004).

My increasing interest in ‘dramaturgy’ and the range of methods and activities of OBCZ, led to Part Two of the study, which focused on investigating the outcomes and key elements of the educational process of the initial 12- day OBCZ course, Intertouch and the course held the following year, which I helped facilitate. I should mention that I met my wife, Lenka, on the Intertouch course. We were married less than a year later and now have two sons whose learning environment and ability to play influenced my thinking in relation to the PhD study. What was evident to me on the Czech courses was ‘adults’ learning from playing. Clearly this personal impact led to potential biases towards the Czech courses, however, the international nature of the study also presented difficulties for data collection and communication, as I initially did not speak Czech and the instructors were not used to or comfortable with me using pre/post quantitative questionnaires and hence more open ended questioning was developed, which resulted in rich description of participant outcomes and the key elements of the experiential process. Lenka assisted greatly in translating literature and participant responses, and also provided me importantly with a greater understanding of the Czech outdoor context.

Rather than an activity focus, the emphasis is on *turistika*, which has the basics of activity and sport but differs in that it is mainly about aesthetic and educational experiences, whilst moving (on foot, bike etc) and playing games in nature. My experiences in the Czech

Republic provided a more holistic educational approach and also personally afforded a more creative side, illustrated by me subsequently writing poems and experimenting with colours and art. However, professionally the development of a rich narrative, balancing and integrating description, analysis and interpretation, continued to present a significant challenge (and frustration for my supervisors) in writing up the findings, as it has also done in developing this paper. This reflection process pushed my comfort zones, but produced considerable learning and understanding, and provided me with the confidence to go on to produce the book ‘ Outdoor and Experiential Learning’ , written with two Czech colleagues, which describes the Czech methods and activities (Martin et al 2004).

#### **4. The Dramatist**

Three instructors from Outward Bound Australia (OBA) participated in the Intertouch course I helped facilitate. Their enthusiasm and interest in the course led to the objective of Part Three of the study, which was to try the Intertouch course in a traditional outdoor adventure context at OBA (which I also helped facilitate the following year) and evaluate the course outcomes and key elements of the educational process.

This unplanned journey involving three different OB contexts allowed me to ‘reflect on action’, re-evaluate the experience (Boud et al 1993), and become increasingly involved with the Czech methods. I used mixed methods for each of the three parts of the study, which overall involved: participant observation of five courses; over one hundred and fifty participants’ questionnaire responses, initially from Likert scale survey and then open-ended written responses using a longitudinal approach six months and up to two years after the courses; semi-structured interviews with seventeen instructors. The additional fieldwork involved a considerable amount of time and close cooperation with the staff of the organizations, and a requirement for me to adapt and change methods to the different contexts, courses and environments. I also recognize that my participation questions the thesis’ credibility because of potential researcher bias contributing either directly or indirectly to the implementation of the research and to the final conclusions. However, my subsequent involvement as a participant observer of a number of OB courses in a variety of contexts

importantly gave me an increasingly greater perspective of the phenomena and variables involved.

The findings from all three parts suggested that the main outcomes perceived by participants related to the course objectives of personal and interpersonal development; in particular improved self-confidence and better interpersonal relationships. The key elements of the experiential education process, developed from the qualitative data, in achieving the outcomes were: a holistic approach to course design, integrating a variety of activities involving reflection. These elements are illustrated by the following participant response from the OBA course.

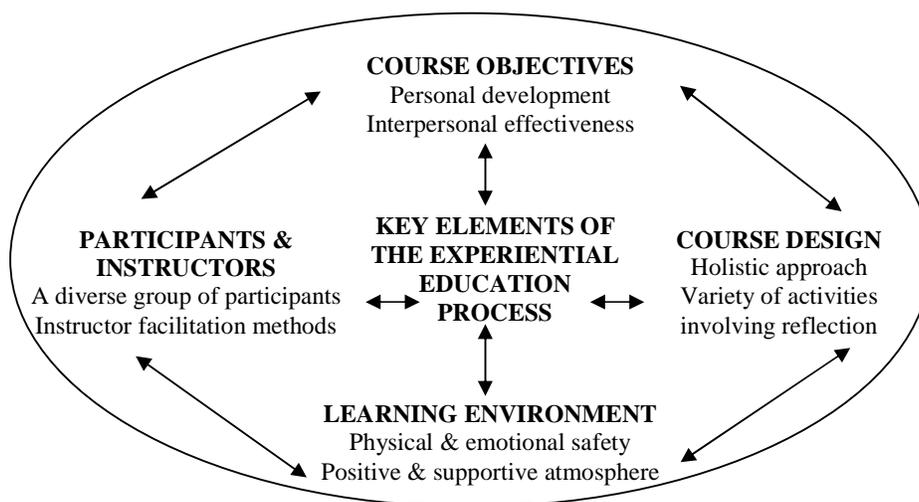
‘It was like a lifetime of experiences/lessons compressed into 2 weeks. It was like an experiment where I experienced tests of every capability I thought I had as a human being, and more. I used every sense, every skill, every limb, every milligram of energy in the shortest space of time possible. I used neurons I knew I had, and created connections between neurons that have never been used.’

Other key elements are the learning environment, which is safe and creates a positive and supportive atmosphere that allows participants to play; the range of instructor facilitation methods and a diverse group of participants.

‘The critical element is that this ‘experiment’ occurred in a ‘cocoon’ of safety/support/compassion/caring, allowing me to play full out. This cocoon allowed me to go on this emotional roller coaster of the highest highs and the lowest lows without wanting to get off. I wanted to stay on because I knew that during this journey of 2 weeks I was learning what would possibly take me 2 years or more in my ‘normal’ life. I know that this was more than an educational experience because when I try to explain the activities/learning to others, I often can’t find the words. It was a wake up call too because all of that was and is within me, I only need to tap into it.’

The empirical findings of this present study have reinforced the views of Hattie *et al.* (1997) that the study of outcomes is of limited value unless linked to the investigation of the educational process. The development of a conceptual model (Figure 2) offered a broader

theoretical understanding of the phenomena and was the final level of my analysis. This model supported Itin’s (1999) and Beard and Wilson’s (2002) theoretical view of experiential education, which links the interaction of facilitators, participants, the learning environment and a range of activities that involve all the senses. The development of the model followed many of the elements of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967), although this was not an original intent of my study.



**Figure 2 A holistic model of the key elements of the experiential educational process (Martin, 2001a: 276)**

### 5. Multiple Perspectives

My background to research had been limited to mainly quantitative approaches, due to an undergraduate mathematics and computer science degree, followed by seven years of teaching high school mathematics and, in particular, statistics. It was whilst teaching that my interest in enhancing the experiential educational process developed. Many of the students had negative prior experiences of mathematics, hence the success and challenge of my teaching depended on more than just achieving results, but providing and developing an environment and activities that gave a positive learning experience, whilst improving the student’s knowledge. Similarly, from coaching a number of sports, the player’s enjoyment

and development is not just about the skills of the sport, but involves a number of other factors, such as social and team involvement. Subsequently, working in the health and fitness industry, the social aspect and feeling of belonging were often more important factors in sustaining people's interest and involvement, than the activity itself. My philosophy and educational beliefs have been the same since I started lecturing, although the assimilation of course content is important, it is my role to develop a positive learning environment using a variety of facilitation and experiential methods that aim to enhance the learning process for the individual students.

In considering my approach to the PhD study, a mathematics and statistics background favoured using a positivist approach, but my involvement in the development of a variety of educational programs and my interest in what happened to people on these programs had given me more of a phenomenological perspective favouring naturalistic enquiry (Lincoln & Guba 1985). My recognition of a multiplicity of perspectives early on in this research process was particularly evidenced by the epistemological and methodological discourse amongst my initial two supervisors whose own backgrounds favoured a positivist approach and action research, respectively (Lewin 1946). A third supervisor became involved after the second phase of the study, having recently completed their own PhD using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Not surprisingly, each one impressed upon me to use methods they were most familiar with, and I acknowledge that each of the methodologies has, in part, clearly informed the study.

However, the reality of my PhD research process changing contexts resulted in an emergent design (Lincoln & Guba 1985), rather than pre-determined, which added credibility to my findings due to the within-case analysis, cross-case analysis, and methodological triangulation. This approach reflected research as experience (Garratt & Hodkinson 1999), my role as a participant observer, and the purposive sampling of the different courses and contexts used in the study. Purposive sampling was used as each case extended and maximized the information I had already obtained (Lincoln & Guba 1985). As the researcher I became a *bricoleur*, 'jack of all trades' (Denzin & Lincoln 1994: 2), which supported the emergent design and the use of mixed methods. My inevitable adjustment to the design and methods depended on the questions asked, which in turn depended on the context. At no stage during the various dilemmas that were faced in each context did I feel comfortable with any one method or methodology, and whilst my supervisors urged me to make decisions on

these early on, it was only at the latter stages of the process that I was able to argue confidently that collectively the different parts had strengthened and added credibility to my findings.

Initially in reviewing the literature I found there was a lack of accepted and appropriate methods used in evaluating outdoor education programs (Cason & Gillis 1994; Hattie et al 1997). Whilst a quantitative assessment of OBNZ outcomes did initially allow me some comparison with previous research, the nature of my research aims pointed towards how these outcomes were achieved, and the focus of the study switching to the Czech context led to a more qualitative development of my study.

Assumptions on how the research should be conducted and my world view as an educator also suggested using an interpretative paradigm or naturalistic inquiry, especially as I would be studying subjects in their natural setting, and trying to make sense of and interpret the phenomena in terms of the subjective nature of participant's different experiences (Cohen Manion, & Morrisson 2000; Denzin & Lincoln 2000). As a consequence in each of the parts of the study I attempted to increasingly build 'a holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants' (Creswell 1994: 1).

## **6. Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives**

The ontological premise (nature of reality), concerning the nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated (Cohen *et al.* 2000), underpinning the qualitative part of my study as opposed to the positivist approach, was in studying the many variables of outdoor education (people, processes, and outcomes), that were socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Easterby-Smith *et al* 1991). Dahlgren and Szczepanski's (1998) review of Scandinavian research and Barrett and Greenaway's (1995) review of outdoor research in the UK also supported the use of more humanistic and qualitative approaches. My research supported Allison and Pomeroy's (2000) view that focusing on a single question 'Does it work?' demonstrates a lack of understanding of the complexity of the experiential education field. They indicated that there was a need to 'shift the focus of the questions asked (epistemological shift)' in order 'to understand reality in a different way (ontological shift)' (96).

The epistemological assumptions (nature of knowledge) for using an interpretative paradigm in this study were its subjectivity and my concern with greater understanding of the experiential process (Allison & Pomeroy 2000), where knowledge was created in interaction between myself, the participants and instructors rather than independently, with emphasis on my interpretation of the experience. I attempted to ‘emphasize, describe, judge, compare, portray, evoke images, and create, for the reader or listener, the sense of having been there’ (Guba & Lincoln 1981: 149). Humberstone (1997a) also argued that research in outdoor education should involve the instructors and participants, but also the researcher. As I found, the researcher was an integral part of the research process and could not easily be removed from it (Humberstone 1997b).

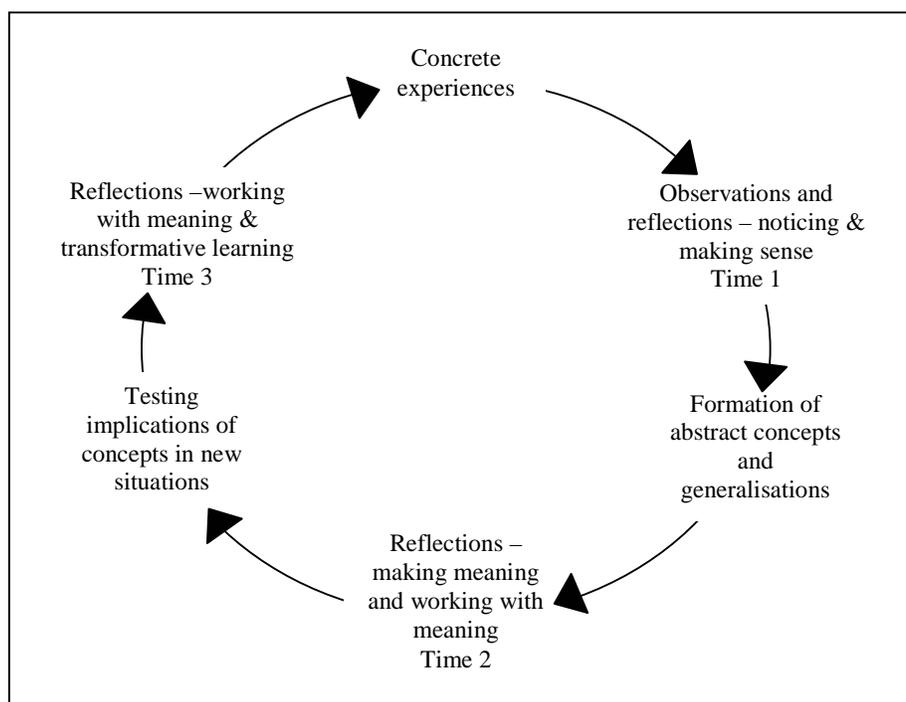
The emergent nature of my PhD was due to the different contexts of the research and allowed the exploration of both paradigms and use of a range of methods, which provided a ‘meaningful design’ (Kolb 1991) for the evaluation of these experiential programs. Whilst there has been much discussion about the incompatibility of the epistemological positions (Hammersley 1996), this study showed that both quantitative and qualitative can be complementary and used within a naturalistic paradigm (Guba & Lincoln 1994). ‘A false dichotomy existed between qualitative and quantitative approaches [despite it being more than thirty five years since Dawe (1970) wrote his seminal paper on ‘the two sociologies’] ... researchers should make the most efficient use of both paradigms in understanding social phenomena’ (Creswell 1994: 176).

The resulting design provided an eclectic ‘naturalistic’ investigation (Remenyi, Williams, Money, & Swartz, 1998), resulting in my evolving understanding of the dynamics present within this multi case setting (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis 1976; Hussey & Hussey 1997). The type of case study used was ‘ethnographic’, as it involved participant observation and was ‘evaluative’ of the programs using fieldwork (Stenhouse 1985; Sturman, 1997). Although my research did not consist of a number of cycles, a ‘technical’ action research approach (Bunning 1994) clearly informed my study as it aimed to enhance educational practice, with the Czech Intertouch program being tested in another context, i.e. Australia (Martin 2001b).

Action research (Lewin 1946) provides a very practical methodology for conducting research into the outdoor education field, as the learning process is cyclical involving, action,

reflection and then testing the result elsewhere (Cohen & Manion, 1994), which is reinforced as part of the experiential process (Kolb 1984).

Kolb’s (1984) model is commonly used as a basis for discussion of the experiential learning process, where reflection on experience is seen as the second stage in the cycle followed by conceptualization and then action. He characterizes learning as “a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p.38). Leberman and Martin (2004) proposed an extension to Kolb’s experiential learning model in terms of two extra times for reflection (see Figure 3). The extension affects the reflection part of Kolb’s model and incorporates the important element of time in promoting learning.



**Figure 3 Extended experiential learning cycle incorporating the notion of time with respect to reflection (Leberman & Martin 2004: 181)**

## **7. My Involvement**

My preference for learning style empathized with visual and kinaesthetic approaches and I had often used an experiential approach in my teaching, lecturing and coaching. Also, my involvement in many outdoor recreation activities had reinforced that knowledge was based on observation and action, as suggested by Dewey (1938). These experiences piqued my interest in participating and observing, as a way to understand what was happening at Outward Bound, than being detached from the process. I was also interested in focusing on the actual experiences of both participants and instructors. The method of participant observation required me, as the researcher, to be part of the group, observe the activities, or be part of the team of instructors. One of the strengths of the qualitative aspects of my case study was the rich descriptive material allowing an increasingly holistic interpretation (Bassey 1999; Merriam 1998) of 'the setting, environmental factors and the group dynamics which influence participants' experiences' (Kolb 1991: 41). The use of participant observation allowed me to experience, observe, and be part of the experiential process. This opportunity of being both a participant and an instructor, particularly on the Intertouch courses, gave me greater insight and understanding of the participant's experiences and instructor practices, than a more positivist approach.

During my involvement as a participant observer at the three OB schools I was conscious of potential issues of bias and subjectivity, and the need to conduct the research in an ethical manner. I felt that this role, in most situations was informal, and did not appear to cause a conflict of interest. Indeed much of the success of the study was due to the respect and friendship generated by my interaction amongst participants and staff alike. For example, pre- or post-course questionnaires were not used at the Intertouch courses, as the team of instructors were not used to, or comfortable with, administering a questionnaire survey on the course. However, the questionnaires were given at OBA, as their instructors were used to this type of quantitative tick box approach. This reinforced the importance of me, as the researcher, adapting to the context, and how some research methods may be more appropriate for different contexts and cultures, which are important characteristics of an emergent research design (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

## 8. Mixed Methods

My mixed method approach initially used a pre- and post-course quantitative survey, with Likert scales, but this limited the response of participants to specified questions. These methods focused on short-term changes and followed previous statistical procedures of analysis related to outcomes and issues of self-concept (Hattie *et al.* 1997). I added a number of open-ended questions post-course, which asked participants to comment on specific course outcomes (personal, interpersonal and professional development) and elements of the educational process (the atmosphere and instructors). These formed most of the questions in the six-month post-course questionnaire. I acknowledge that these questions may have led participant responses, but they provided me with a range of descriptive responses that enhanced my understanding of the process.

I subsequently added a longitudinal approach, which Gass (1993) had advocated, using a purely qualitative survey eliciting descriptive responses at OBCZ and OBA in the respective one and two-year post-Intertouch follow up for participants to reflect on the impacts of the course (if any) and the key factors in achieving these impacts. I realized that other factors could have impacted on their lives in the intervening time, and hence influenced their responses other than the effects of the OB course. The international nature of this study also compounded the drop out rate in participant responses, as it was difficult to follow up on why the questionnaires had not been returned (for example, change of address, not able to be contacted by E-mail, gone overseas or not interested in responding were possible reasons). Whilst the non-responses could suggest limitations in the findings' credibility and dependability, the participant's responses from questionnaires given six months, one year or two years after the Intertouch courses highlighted descriptively the many powerful learning experiences.

The use of semi-structured interviews in my PhD study provided insight into the methods used by instructors while they developed and facilitated the courses, but it was the participant responses to the questionnaires that formed the main part of the data for this study. Due to the international nature of the Czech team of instructors and difficulties in scheduling interviews, some instructors preferred to respond to the questions in written form, which were then translated while others I interviewed.

## 9. Credibility

My involvement and the evolving mixed method approach presented concerns for my supervisors in terms of the study's reliability and validity. When to stop data collection and the quality of the data collected were also issues frequently discussed with supervisors, due to its longitudinal nature and range of courses investigated. However, looking for similarities and differences across the various methods, contexts and courses provided more sophisticated descriptions and powerful explanations to the findings. It also attempted to address issues of my bias and the lack of rigor in case study research, and enhance the study's reliability (dependability) and validity (credibility and transferability) (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 2000). My prolonged involvement, persistent participant observation, and identifying my biases by clearly stating the research assumptions and my world view was also important to me enhancing the study's credibility and confirmability (Priest 1999).

The different parts of the study presented two stages of analysis, within case analysis that attempted 'to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases' (Yin 1994: 112), and cross-case analysis which reviewed processes and outcomes across the cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The findings were further strengthened using methodological triangulation (Mathison 1988), which allowed for comparisons between the main themes from the analysis of my field notes from participant observation, data from semi-structured interviews, and responses to structured questionnaires. However, I do acknowledge that my involvement did present limitations due to issues of subjectivity, problems of bias, the use of case study, and a mainly qualitative approach, which limited the generalisability of the findings until tested in other contexts. In this study there was no control group involved or supportive data from family or employers to substantiate participant responses. However, controls are often not used in qualitative research due to the many variables in social settings (Remenyi et al. 1998).

I computed effect sizes for the statistical data and content analysis quantified the descriptive qualitative data aiming for greater acceptability of the findings (Yin 1994). Burnard (1991) pointed out that although the 'researcher sets out to explore individuals' perceptions of experiential learning (the qualitative aspect)... every qualitative researcher necessarily engages in some form of categorization and quantification in order to present the

findings' (43). Initially I undertook the interpretation of participant responses into codes and categories manually, but the qualitative data analysis package HyperRESEARCH (Researchware 1998) provided me with a much more structured and rigorous analysis process and removed much of my own biases. It allowed me to identify the number of respondents for each code, who was making repeated comments about the same code, and also non-typical responses that I may have overlooked. However, I found the structured approach to content analysis difficult to follow strictly due to the variety of the data, which was in contrast to a qualitative 'analytic process of creating and assigning the categories themselves' (Dey 1993: 58).

## 10. Summary

The development of the emergent research design involved my prolonged participation and use of context and culture specific multiple methods. This approach enhanced the study's credibility and addressed potential limitations of subjectivity and bias, the generalisability of case study findings, and the quality and quantity of data collected from a mixed method approach. The study was descriptive, illustrative, and experimental, creating a story or narrative as it evolved from the different contexts. It illustrated educational innovative practices (OBCZ), and was experimental, implementing procedures into new contexts and evaluating the benefits (OBA). The initial focus of my study changed, reflecting the emergent design, but although this meant that more data were created (in Czech and Australia) and some data were rejected (from OBNZ), the aims remained unaffected. The shift in focus was particularly important for me as a participant observer, as it gave me a greater range of perspective than I would have had with just the single case study.

As a relatively novice researcher, the emergent design has allowed me to develop a broader perspective of research methodologies, and better still as a *bricoleur*, 'jack of all trades'. My more recent research continued to focus on the development of the experiential educational process using qualitative approaches (Martin & Leberman 2005a, 2005b; Leberman & Martin 2005, 2004) and also on the Czech outdoor methods of *turistika* (Turčová, Martin & Neuman 2005). I have also been fortunate in being invited to share the Czech methods, through presentation of the book, and a series of conferences and workshops

in different continents around the world. This has also led me to facilitating OB and other courses internationally using the dramaturgy methods, which came as quite a surprise to OBNZ staff who did not regard me initially as an 'outdoor' instructor. This facilitation has also allowed me to reinforce the transferability of the study's findings in relation to the key factors of the experiential education process.

Emergent design supports Garratt and Hodkinson's (1999) argument against choosing a list of preordained sets of universal paradigmatic rules or criteria, but presenting a powerful case for the hermeneutics of interpretation and understanding of research as experience. This more naturalistic, holistic, participative research also provided opportunities for activities that involve social aspects and feelings of belonging, personal interest and involvement, which may be a more appealing and appropriate approach for novice social researchers than traditional positivistic scientific research methods linked to validity and reliability. The evaluation of the findings from the different parts and methods used within my study created greater credibility and dependability, and enhanced the transferability of the findings.

This self-reflection serves to illustrate the process of experiential learning highlighted above by Boud *et al.* (1993). The experiential process led to my development as a researcher involving adaptations to different learning environments. This also led to the development of a broader perspective of research methodologies, and learning from the variety of experiences and reflective opportunities that also resulted from the emergent design of the research process. The epistemological implications for other novice researchers are the benefits of the emergent design, cross case analysis, and use of a multiple method process involving methodological triangulation in enhancing the credibility of interdisciplinary research involving different contexts.

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**Negotiating figurations for feminist methodologies  
- a manifest for the fl@neur**

Abstract

*Introducing the fl@neur as a feminist figuration, this article seeks to refigure and defy the notion of Baudelaire's flâneur as a male loiterer. Hence, the fl@neur comprises my points of departure as I hope to – not only promote seamlessness between body and spatiality – but also between social, virtual and material sites. The article is drawn up as an interview situation in which I serve both as the questioner and as the interviewee; a favourable approach in order to dismantle Baudelaire's dandy-like hero. The fl@neur is claimed to be an intriguing key figure in order to understand the intertwined social, virtual and material environments; the negotiation of this figure corresponds with my intention to emphasize transgressive bodies and performances as well as multiple sites. Hence, the fl@neur can be seen as a feminist figuration, occupying multi sited perspectives and taking into consideration social, virtual as well as material settings.*

Keywords: flâneur, refiguration, fl@neur, feminism, body, spatiality, densities, virtualization, multiple sites

**FLANIFESTO**

**For the perfect flâneur, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow. To be away from home, yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the center of the world, yet to remain hidden from the world – such are a few of the slightest pleasures of those independent, passionate, impartial natures which tongue can but clumsily define.**

--- *Baudelaire*

<http://www.flaneur.org/flanifesto.html> (2007-09-05)

### **Introductory remarks**

The following article adopts the form of an interview in which I position myself both as the interviewer and as the interviewee. I consider the structure of interviews to be most appealing when explicating alternative streams of thoughts as it enables frank questions and responses as well as detailed dialogues between the participating parties. Hence, discussing the fl@neur as a feminist figuration – being simultaneously the narrator, the writer and the respondent – I bid to pave way for an intriguing, and hopefully more explicit, encounter between enquiries and responses.

By employing Donna Haraway's presentation of the Cyborg, this article introduces the fl@neur<sup>1</sup> as a feminist figuration<sup>2</sup> and respectively it also seeks to convey this crucial figuration as materializing in the activities of – for instance – ethnographic- and feminist researchers. Saying this I call for the directed interview to begin:

**Interviewer:** As an interviewer being brought up in a motley field of post-modern disciplines, I find developments and negotiations of feminist methodologies interesting and challenging from a range of perspectives. One of the great benefits with feminist theories is that they enable a dismantling of traditional standards and by this means; they also show that things could have been otherwise (Star 1991:38). Therefore, it is fruitful to consider metaphors as temporarily fixed, thus always open to innovative ascriptions (Jordanova 1989:9). This gives rise to new possibilities but also to obstacles and to constant negotiations. Before turning towards the interviewee I'd like to shortly introduce the current subject and the point of departure; Donna Haraway's presentations of *the Cyborg* as well as *FemaleMan*© and *OncoMouse*<sup>TM</sup> (1991,1997,2004). These are all pivotal actors in post-modern theories as well as in Science & Technology Studies (STS). In her works, Haraway

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the French term *flâneur*; man-about-town – in itself – suggests a male person. The female counterpart *flâneuse*, which also makes it rather difficult to eschew the term *flâneur* as an inherently gendered male. Following political scientist Maud Eduards (2002); men – unlike women – are not regarded as splintered subjects in that they do not perceive them selves as gendered. The self-evident assumption of him being a man correspondingly endorses mankind as male (Eduards 2002:135). Nonetheless, acknowledging language as gendered but also as a necessity for interaction, I claim the *fl@neur* to be a promising feminist figuration in order to challenge hegemonic perspectives.

strikingly depicts the extent to what it means to negotiate different figures and mould them in order to suit feminist purposes. Using the term *materialized refiguration* or *female figuration* to depict these interrupting figures; she also challenges the notion of the *Grand Narrative*. If I understand the respondent correctly, that is also one of your intentions with bringing the term *flâneur* – or as it will turn out; *fl@neur* – into play. This figure, being introduced by, among others Charles Baudelaire and developed further by Walter Benjamin are – according to you – harbouring possibilities to challenge a traditional (and standardized) understanding of the gendered researcher as well as embodied actions and the inextricability between different spatial settings. Would you like to develop your thoughts more explicitly?

**Interviewee:** Over the last couple of years, the *flâneur* has been meandering in my mind in a most dodging and defying manner. After studying texts concerning the *flâneur*, I also find the figure to be subject for ongoing debates and negotiations, which is why I seek to partake in the discussion and bend the dynamic figure in yet another angle. Haraway's materialized refiguration – promising as a theoretical tool but also as an embodied practice in terms of hearing aids, pace makers and mp3 players; “we are cyborgs” (Haraway 1991:150) – is an important aspect in order to understand the *fl@neur* as it appears – not only as a theoretical instrument – but also as a methodological tool and as a situated (ethnographic) activity. Indeed, the *fl@neur* materializes in the constant oscillation between observer and observed, it calls to question the material setting it inhabits and seeks to problematize the own splintered position. Correspondingly; as I, leaning towards the work of theorist Slavoj Žižek (2001:18), suggest a *virtualization* of reality rather than understanding *Virtual Reality* and *Real Life* as separated entities, I have found it inspiring to – instead of discussing the *flâneur* – introduce the *fl@neur*. This feminist figuration comprises not only the intermingling between observer and observed but also between body and spatiality as well as between virtuality and reality. Just as the Parisian *flâneur* could be seen as breaking the city apart “into a shower of events” (Weinstein & Weinstein 1991:158), the streets of today – be they physical, material or virtual – are simultaneously dismantling the *fl@neur*, thus determining the embodied actions performed. This reciprocal collaboration is certainly crucial as I also hope to further emphasize the researcher as roaming and constantly oscillating between *multiple sites*

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<sup>2</sup> Note that this article adopts the term *figuration* – as opposed to *metaphor* – in order to depict “a transformative account of the self” (Braidotti 2003:54).

(Marcus 1998) and intertwined settings such as social, virtual and material spatiality. Hence, fieldworks cannot be understood as anything else than multi sited, always taking place and operating in the crucial relationship between the researcher, the informants and the spatial surroundings (Marcus 1998:84,86). Nonetheless, before delving too deep into this discussion, I'd like to pinpoint that I, by no means, suggest exhaustive explanations and full stops. Rather, I see this theoretical- as well as methodological figuration as dynamic and its framework as highly situated.

**Interviewer:** But how can the flâneur be seen as crucial in your work?

**Interviewee:** First of all, the appearance of the flâneur – and as it will turn out; the fl@neur – is indeed valuable when disclosing the intermingling between bodies and materiality as well as spatiality, be it cities, exhibition halls, online-games or virtual communities. Moreover, as I employ ethnographic methods, the flâneur as a feminist figuration calls to question my own position as a researcher. Ethnographic fieldwork and the writing of ethnographies have increasingly come to be understood as the results of a reciprocal interaction between researcher and interviewee (Arnstberg 1997:53) which is why I find the flâneur a most welcome adherent. This – indeed situated – figure proposes reciprocity between observer and observed (remember the very term flâneur as a man-about-town) and encourages an understanding of ethnographic research as inherently partial and incomplete (cf. Geertz 1973:29). However, in order to give a more detailed answer to your question, I will briefly introduce you to my thesis. The current point of departure is a short statement enveloping the difficulties in actually answering human relationship with machines (cf. Law 1994:11). And indeed, the subject has been beneficially depicted and developed by several theorists; however I sense the discussion as constantly breaking new waves, puzzling minds, adding knowledge and re-articulating existing thoughts. Delving deeper into this dilemma, I therefore suggest a scrutinizing of the closeness and reciprocity between human machine. Understanding the ambiguity between human machine, I've come to develop the area of my research; to depict this intertwined relationship by focusing on gendered embodied expressions and deterministic movements. Taking my point of departure from the body, I seek to understand how embodied knowledge is crucial in order to transgress and challenge traditional gender categories. To draw on the work of Katherine Hayles (1999), I suggest that

”when people begin using their bodies in significantly different ways, either because of technological innovations or other cultural shift changing experiences of embodiment [a variety of alternative manifests] bubble up into language, affecting the metaphoric networks at play within the culture” (Hayles 1999:206f, my comments within square brackets). Saying this, I promote Haraway’s Cyborg as an interesting female figuration and as an inspiring theoretical point of departure when introducing the fl@neur. As Haraway also states; “[f]igurations are performative images that can be inhabited” (Haraway 1997:11). Using the cyborg in order to construct “an ironical political myth faithful to feminism, socialism, and materialism” (Haraway 1991:149) Haraway strikingly elucidates the coupling between organism and machine. Nonetheless, by introducing the fl@neur as yet another feminist figuration, I seek to – to a larger extent – explicate the embodied intermingling with spatiality and artifacts, be they social, virtual or material. Correspondingly, I stress the reciprocity between body, machine and spatial sites to give rise to alternative ways of enacting gender.

**Interviewer:** So you’d claim that bodies could be extended through technological artifacts?

**Interviewee:** Yes. Bodies are not always performing according to their gender and this is – I stress – especially relevant when understanding the embodied interaction between human machine and spatial settings.

**Interviewer:** Noting the concept for this conversation – “Negotiating figurations for feminist methodologies” – I am curious to find out whether your venture can be seen as a contribution to the critique of the Baudelairean flâneur as male. Traditionally, the act of flânerie has exclusively been found within men’s bodies whereas women have been depicted as merely sites of sexuality (Wilson 1992:106) and as objects for the male gaze (cf. Wolff 1985:41; Wilson 1992:98; Mazlish 1994:52; Benjamin 1997:93). What are your thoughts about this?

**Interviewee:** Drawing on the work from Elizabeth Wilson (1992), I acknowledge the notion of the female flâneur or rather, the *flâneuse* (Wilson 1992:104f). What I find appealing with Wilson’s (1992) argument is the ways in which she presents a subversive picture to Baudelaire’s male dandy, thus advocating the woman-about-town. Correspondingly, she also responds to Janet Wolff’s (1985) early work and the latter’s emphasis on passivity and

victimization of women. While it is important to acknowledge the diminished space in which the flâneuses often were allotted a position in the public spaces – as prostituted, widows or murder victims (Wolff 1985:44; Buck-Morris 1986:119) – one must nevertheless remember that these women by no means constituted the only flâneuses. The French writer George Sand, for instance, successfully took place as an icon for the woman-about-town and hence, she challenged the *male gaze* of the flâneur. Similar to this, I seek my point of departure by calling the flâneur, only to bend the gendered gaze in slightly different ways than the traditional. In the article “The Oppositional Gaze. Black Female Spectators”, bell hooks (1992) also highlights the male gaze as crucial in order to understand visual narratives, such as photos, pictures and movies. Nonetheless, steering away from the gaze as exclusively male, hooks (1992) introduces what she refers to as *the oppositional gaze*. Leaning towards her work, I thus call for the fl@neur and the subversive gaze of this figure. Consequently, I believe that it is possible to replace the seemingly objective male gaze of the flâneur with a subjective embodied gaze (cf. Malmberg 1998:167). Donna Haraway’s (1991) notion of *situated knowledges* constitutes an interesting input in this statement as she claims all knowledge production to derive from somewhere. Partial and strongly limited in time as well as space, Haraway (1991) nevertheless suggests situated knowledges to offer a possible allegory for feminist versions of objectivity (Haraway 1991:188ff). Additive to this, Elizabeth Wilson (1992) argues that although the flâneur can be seen as the very embodiment of the privileged male idler, his characteristics undeniably lead him towards a marginal position as he, being rebel, also constantly is torn between different sites and perspectives (Wilson 1992:107). This – according to Wilson (1992) – ambivalent and fragmented character of the flâneur and the possibility to present an unidentified face in the crowd also gives rise to an anonymity that eventually annihilates him. The flâneur thus disappears in the crowd, denied a stable masculinity, forced to meander and by this means, he also fails to banish women from the streets. Consequently, the figure must be regarded as, not representing the triumph of masculine power, but rather embodying its attenuation (Wilson 1992:109), a statement I find highly interesting.

**Interviewer:** Connected to your scrutiny of the male flâneur; can you further develop the notion of the flâneur as a crucial figuration in your work?

**Interviewee:** First I'd like to pinpoint that using the flâneur as an analytical tool is not a novel venture. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Walter Benjamin employed this figure in order to reflect upon his own methodology for the Arcade projects he was involved in. The flâneur thus provided an understanding of how it was possible to observe and investigate the signifiers of the city (Frisby 1994:89). What I find attractive with the flâneur is the intense search for flows of people and the ambiguous relation to spatiality. Just as Baudelaire suggests in one of his quotes [see the top of page 1]; “[f]or the perfect flâneur, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow”. This statement can be seen as applicable for researchers conducting ethnographic fieldwork as well. Rob Shields (1994) suggests the term *participant observer* in order to grasp the aura of the flâneur (Shields 1994:75). Just like the ethnographer, the flâneur catches things in flight (Frisby 1994:92). Simultaneously being homeless and at home (cf. Jonsson 1995:34; Paasonen 2002:100), the flâneur as well as the ethnographer are constantly oscillating between closeness and distance, local and structural (Shields 1994:74); they merge into the masses only to diverge and occupy a distant position. Lena Malmberg (1998) strikingly depicts this by juxtaposing distance and intimacy, as she stresses the perfect flâneur to be a passionate observer (Malmberg 1998:156). The flâneur thus inhabits an intrinsic ambiguity, being able to at the same time be a part of the crowd (Benjamin 1997:121) and separated from it (Malmberg 1998:147). The wish to observe without blending into the masses is combined with an insight that the flâneur, by doing so, has placed the own being outside (Malmberg 1998:163). Hence, the movements of various acts seem to counteract each other, intimacy thwarts the objective observation only to be swallowed by the anonymous throng (cf. Benjamin 1997:28f; Malmberg 1998:154). This constant oscillation between closeness and distance is also what I claim as characteristic for ethnographic researchers. Consequently, I stress the notion of the flâneur as always being on the threshold (Smart 1994:162), a statement that is relevant from an ethnographic perspective as well. Following Rob Shields (1994); “[w]hile flânerie is an individual practice, it is part of a social process of inhabiting and appropriating urban space/.../” (Shields 1994:65). Put differently; the flâneur has no possibility to occupy an objective approach towards the city (cf. Malmberg 1998:167). Rather, the figure is – as also mentioned above – situated, thus undeniably a part of the crowd. As expressed [quoting from a paper];

The flâneur has no specific relationship with any individual, yet he establishes a temporary, yet deeply empathetic and intimate relationship with all that he sees--an intimacy bordering on the conjugal--writing a bit of himself into the margins of the text in which he is immersed, a text devised by selective disjunction (<http://www.thelemming.com/-lemming/dissertation-web/home/flaneur.html> 2007-09-05)

Saying this, the flâneur presents a subversive and revolutionary approach (Buck-Morris 1986:114ff; Shields 1994:71) closely connected to refiguration and re-negotiation of meaning. As Buck-Morris, also states; “[a]s a dream-image, loitering allows a subversive reading/.../with his ostentatious composure [the flâneur] protests against the production process” (Buck-Morris 1986:136). Hence, employing the flâneur can be seen as an attempt to dismantle commodification and consumption as well as black boxing of taken for granted categories.

**Interviewer:** Returning to the above concern of the flâneur as a figure conventionally seen as male, I’d like for you to further explicate how you seek to articulate the traditional notion of the flâneur.

**Interviewee:** As I suggested above, my endeavour with employing the fl@neur is to bend Baudelaire’s dandy-like figure in yet other ways, which also take into consideration, the merge between different spatial settings. Therefore I suggest the figuration to be spelled *fl@neur*. This remodelling corresponds with my intention to emphasize transgressive bodies and performances as well as multiple sites. Put differently; the reason for employing the flâneur as a figure and augment the term into what can be seen as *the fl@neur* is three-fold. Firstly, I find the discussion whether there is such a figure as the female flâneur as pivotal for further negotiations. Elizabeth Wilson’s (1992) call for *the flâneuse* presents a subversive and highly appealing flâneur, quite far away from Baudelaire’s loitering, dandy-like hero. Being portrayed as a well-dressed man, strolling in the streets of Paris in the nineteenth century – indeed a highly situated creature in time as well as in place – the flâneur nonetheless represents a much-negotiated figure. This is evident as Zygmunt Bauman (1994) suggests, “[the] modern/post-modern history [to] be, with but a little stretching, told as one of the feminization of the flâneur’s ways” (Bauman 1994:147). I also claim this feminization to

pave way for the post-modern fl@neur, the borderland being or, if you wish, *the culturally illegible body* (Stone 1992:112). This illegible body is created in the tensions between dualisms; in order to convey what counts as deviant and abnormal, the culturally illegible body is manifested and reproduced according to standardized norms. Nonetheless, I consider some aspects of the flâneuse to be rather flawed as they sometimes tend to amplify cementing structures and gender orders. Reading the article “Damernas paradis? En historia om varuhus och köpcentrum” [“The ladies paradise? A story about department stores and shopping malls”, my translation], Hillevi Ganetz (2005) advocates the female flâneur to be found in today’s shopper (Ganetz 2005:39f). By this means, she presents a capable attempt as she, just like Elizabeth Wilson (1992), challenges the assumed connection between women and the private sphere. Nonetheless, in doing so, it seems to me like the woman flâneuse is ascribed a public position that is gendered as traditional female, which is why I suggest that Ganetz (2005) runs the risk of paving way for stigmatizing and cementing rather than for empowerment. Consequently, as women invade the shopping malls, they are allotted a spatial room, deviant from the streets of the flâneur. Moreover, these women are enacted as merely consumers (cf. Lury 2000) and as such, they are denied the relaxed idling of the flâneur. This gives rise to the second reason for suggesting a refiguration of the flâneur. By employing the fl@neur, I wish to eschew the explicit focus on the gendered flâneur, let it be dandy male loiterer or the female prostitute and shopper. Rather, my endeavour with introducing the fl@neur is to promote a borderland being oscillating between traditional categories such as men and women, Virtual Reality and Real Life as well as carbon-based life and silicon-based life (cf. Hayles 1999:231). Put differently, I hope to use this female figuration in order to trouble other categories (cf. Haraway 2004:335). Paraphrasing Nina Lykke, I suggest the fl@neur to constitute an interesting adherent to the already existing figurations of in-betweenness; the goddesses, the cyborgs and the monsters (Paasonen 2002:227). All of these figures challenge hegemonic notions. Hence forth, the fl@neur can contribute, not only to bend gender identities differently but also to challenge stabilized orders (cf. Haraway 2004:329) and promote inextricability between embodiment, artefact and spatiality.

**Interviewer:** What do you hope to imply by using the symbol @? As you’ve mentioned; the term “flâneur” as such seems to inhabit transgressive elements and subversive readings. How come you advocate the need for yet another female figuration?

**Interviewee:** As hinted above, my intentions with introducing the fl@neur are to encourage multiple sites as well as seamlessness between the ethnographic researcher and the field. I also wish to expand room for the flâneur to encompass more than the streets of Paris during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By employing this symbol, I augment Baudelaire's flâneur as a methodological approach to also include the merging of place, body and materiality. Moreover, the @ can be understood as one of the "chief signifiers of the Net" (Haraway 1997:4). It calls for fluid identities (Paasonen 2002:91), e-mails and virtual communication, and for this reason I also hope to advocate what Žižek (2001) refers to as virtualization of reality. Saying this, I understand e-mail addresses as highly ambiguous in that they are at the same time global and local. It is today possible to reach the local and regional community from practically anywhere in the world (Haraway 1997:4) and this presents a complex picture of these, often contrasting terms. The third reason for me to employ the fl@neur is that the term enables me to interpret the fieldwork I'm conducting, in adequate ways. Attending a range of different – often liminal – contexts, I consider George E Marcus (1998), term *multiple sites* as most useful. Rather than focusing on one specific setting, I wish to meander amid the different milieus, parallel realities and thus to explicate them in light of each other. Just like the flâneur, I understand the fl@neur to occupy multi sited perspectives – virtual, social and material - traditionally being found in the street, on buses, in the arcades but in the current case also showing up in a range of virtual realities. In other words; I advocate the city as a splintered socio-technical field (cf. Rudinow Sætnan 1996:35) and the fl@neur as embodying these multiple settings. By this means, the fl@neur as a feminist figuration serves as both a theoretical- and a methodological tool. Elizabeth Wilson (1992) describes the constantly oscillating perspectives by quoting George Augustus Sala's enthusiasm; "[t]he things I have seen from the top of an omnibus!" (Wilson 1992:96). Hence, she strikingly depicts the passionate relationship between the streets and the involved observer. To encompass; by using the term fl@neur, I wish to pave way for the post-modern flâneur and hence, I strive to elucidate refiguration and multiple settings as well as the culturally illegible body (Stone 1992:112). Bodies are preferably understood as sites of power and identity (Haraway 1997:180; Lock 1998:208) and by combining this physical appearance with the notion of materiality and virtualization, I hope to bring yet another borderland being into the discussion. The fl@neur is further pinpointed as a feminist figuration in that it challenges the

male privilege to limit and label gendered expressions. Constantly oscillating between different settings – the own body and surrounding crowds – the fl@neur constitutes a figuration most unwilling to be encircled and categorized. Following political scientist Maud Eduards (2002); being in motion makes you harder to designate (Eduards 2002:149). Inextricably part of spatiality as well as of material and embodied collaborations, the fl@neur thus constitutes a capricious and subversive figuration that enters into a – most ambiguous – relationship with the surroundings. By this means, the figure also diverts from Haraway's cyborg in that I seek to outline the fl@neur as constantly merging with social, virtual and material surroundings as well as with embodied flows of humans. Although Haraway – in her book *Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium. FemaleMan©\_Meets\_OncoMouse™. Feminism and Technoscience* (1997) – does mention the crucial intermingling between time and space as mutually organizing each other in relation to what she refers to as the second millennium (Haraway 1997:41f), I seek to augment the discussion to hopefully comprise – not only the collaboration between human and organism, time and space – but also the intermingling between observer and observed as well as between embodiment and spatiality. Saying this, I claim the fl@neur to constitute a most interesting figuration.

**Interviewer:** Connected to Haraway's second millennium and the implication of time; the rise of what today is referred to as modernity is also said to, to a large extent equate with the sharpened distinction between public and private domains (Wolff 1985:43). You have already briefly touched upon how women were coupled to the private sphere (cf. Wolff 1994:115). Consequently, since modernity to a large extent, was equated with experiences in the public sphere (Wolff 1985:44), women were also being excluded from the experience of modernity. The claim that private and public domains have been – and still to a large extent are – gendered, is, as you also mentioned, something that *unables* women to flânerie. How do you relate to the distinction between public and private?

**Interviewee:** I think it is somewhat problematic to talk about the public/private as separated entities. Indeed, spatial settings are gendered differently but the divide public/private neglects these domains as inextricable and mutually feeding off from each other. Moreover, assuming the division between public and private as a-historical and universal tends to promote an anachronistic view (Wilson 1992:98). Important to remember is the notion of public/private

as subject for constant negotiations and that makes it difficult – and not particularly fruitful – to draw sharp borders. Hence, rather than reproducing the above dichotomy, I call for the fl@neur as the transgressor, the borderland being or as Donna Haraway (2004) puts it; *the inappropriate/d other* (Haraway 2004:70). As an inappropriate/d other, the flâneur occupies an ambiguous position and makes visible flaws in the web of dualisms. Similar to the cyborg, the fl@neur thus skilfully dodges and defies dichotomist expressions (cf. Haraway 1991:181). To further elucidate and disclose the ambiguity between domains such as public and private I suggest a closer look at what can be referred to as male transgressors. For as Janet Wolff (1994) also pinpoints in her later work; women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were by no means the only ones peeking out from the private closed sphere, thus following the crowds from afar. Indeed, artists like Chagall and Matisse several times depicted the throng from the window rather than from within the street (Wolff 1994:121). Consequently, men as well as women disobeyed the borders of what was considered as public and private domains and this opposes the assumption of gender and spatiality as black boxed categories. Gender differences are indeed not at all easy to fit into the rigid boxes of public and private (Wolff 1994:124) which is why I – following the later works of Janet Wolff – advocate “gender ambiguities, unstable borders and intermediate identities” (Wolff 1994:127)

**Interviewer:** To provoke your forthright manifest, I’d like for you to discuss the flâneur and the reputation of being merely an irresponsible idler in the early arcades of Paris. These acts of purposelessly strolling seem to enact the flâneur as rather careless.

**Interviewee:** It is true that in order to engage in flânerie, one must not have anything too definite in mind (Frisby 1994:81). At the same time, the flâneur is – quite the contrary to the person who silently waits or aimlessly strolls – immersed in the surrounding world (Frisby 1994:84). Furthermore, following Wolff (1994), I understand not only the female flâneur as “engaged in a kind of purposive mobility” (Wolff 1994:125) but also the male flâneur as “ready to grasp the aim” (Bauman 1994:139). Understanding the flâneur in terms of the actions pursued, thus in the act of flânerie (Tester 1994:7) also suggest the activity as two-folded, taking place amid passionate searching and idle-like meandering. Once again, the inherent ambiguity within the flâneur (Frisby 1994:82), the constant oscillation between subject and object – remember the sandwich men who, to a large extent were reduced to signs

and letters (Buck-Morris 1986:122) – seems most appealing to me. Experiences of total familiarity in the streets, alongside exposure, vulnerability and homelessness (Buck-Morris 1986:118) enables the flâneur to develop a specific relationship with any individual, which is why the figure presents a most unstable appearance. Consequently, the flâneur establishes a temporary, yet deeply empathetic and intimate bond with what is perceived and observed (<http://www.thelemming.com/lemming-/dissertationweb-/home/flaneur.html> 2007-09-05). As Bruce Mazlish (1994) expresses; the flâneur wishes both fusion and apartness (Mazlish 1994:48). Saying this, I once again claim the notion of the fl@neur to correspond with ethnographic fieldwork. The figure materializes in the ethnographic- and feminist researcher; it appears as salient in fieldworks and hence forth it enmeshes the permeable boundary between tool and myth, instrument and concept (cf. Ben-Tov 1995:139). Constantly oscillating between being an obvious participant and a foreign stranger in the field, I further acknowledge the different turns in my research as highly capricious. As mentioned above, this is also one reason for employing the fl@neur as a female figuration. In order to understand my position as a researcher, I seek to present a subverted picture of the flâneur with help from the fl@neur. Saying this, I do not by any means suggest this venture to be easily pursued. As Donna Haraway (1997) also states; “[n]egotiating metaphoric travel is an important and dangerous work” (Haraway 1997:139), which is why my endeavour should be understood as *an attempt to*, by introducing the term fl@neur, also explicate and convey my own splintered position as a researcher. Summing up the answer, I believe the flâneur to engulf more than the passive observer (cf. Tester 1994:18; Bauman 1994:147). There is indeed a sense of investigation in the approach that deserves to be illuminated and spelled out loud. Correspondingly; being anonymous in the crowd ([http://www.sociology.mmu.ac.uk/vms/vccc/s1/s1\\_2/-flanerie\\_4.php](http://www.sociology.mmu.ac.uk/vms/vccc/s1/s1_2/-flanerie_4.php) 2007-09-14) does not, according to me, imply irresponsibility. Rather, I claim the fl@neur to be actively participating in- and co-constructing different sites.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned earlier the inextricability between bodies and spatiality. Can you further develop your notion of this intertwined relationship?

**Interviewee:** Certainly. Taking my point of departure from spatiality, I claim the flâneur to be an embodiment of the streets (Wilson 1992:108). As stated above, the flâneur has strong

connections with the Parisian boulevards and the throngs of people during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, this turns out to be somewhat problematic when critically scrutinizing the city as a spatial setting. Hence, rather than understanding streets – of Paris in particular and of cities in general – as urban domains, I wish to steer away from dichotomies such as urban and rural, which is why I focus on what the Norwegian theorist Dag Østerberg (2000) refers to as *förtätningar*, or *densities*. Dismissing dichotomies such as rural and urban areas, the term densities is useful when scrutinizing so called densely organized socio materiel (Østerberg 2000:30). According to me, not only is the understanding of densities paving way for blurred boundaries between city and countryside; using the term also allows for alternative views of the embodied relationship between humans and spatiality. Put differently; by investigating densities I hope to emphasize the notion of the own physical appearance and the collaboration with other bodies (Østerberg 2000:67f) as well as with the spatial vernacular. The flow of bodies, movements and gestures indeed affects the own appearance when being situated in different densities and consequently, the limits towards the surrounding milieu as well as towards other bodies suddenly seem most vague and indistinct. Introducing the fl@neur, I seek to, not only promote seamlessness between body and spatiality but also between social, virtual and material sites. Being more than parallel – thus assumed as separate realities (Paasonen 2002:89) – I hope to depict these settings as constantly merging and oscillating. For being merely part in a flow of other bodies, I realize the difficulties with distinguishing myself from the field I am studying. Undeniably, I find myself floating between densities and throngs. I meander and by this means, I am no more and no less than a part of a constant beat. Just like the flâneur, I urge for densities (cf. Parkhurst Ferguson 1994:23); drawn to arenas for interaction, the crowd is my element (cf. Mazlish 1994:50) in that I find myself simultaneously considering the relation between the fluidity of the city and the physical negotiations of the space as well as other bodies (cf. Tester 1994:4f). However, as much as I find myself at home in the network, I adopt my own physical appearance to also critically examine the same. In this endeavour, the fl@neur becomes crucial.

**Interviewer:** If I understand you correctly, the fl@neur has much to offer ethnographic researchers in that the figure serves – not only as a theoretical tool – but also constitutes a methodological approach. Hence, the fl@neur is said to disclose the indecisive position of the ethnographer. Nonetheless, this ambiguous approach, the passionate observation, the study of

multiple sites and the close collaboration between bodies, materiality and artifacts are just some of the characteristics that – considering some of the texts mentioned above – unite the flâneur and the ethnographer. Leaning towards one of the former question above; what are the benefits from bringing yet another figuration, the fl@neur, into play?

**Interviewee:** First I'd like to refer to the discussion above, thus claiming the fl@neur to occupy multi sided perspectives and to take into consideration social, virtual as well as material settings. Secondly, employing the fl@neur, I seek to pinpoint the embodied practice as crucial in ethnographic research. Following Donna Haraway (1997) I understand the body – and particularly the female body – as a marked site (Haraway 1997:2). To recapitulate; the fl@neur allows for these bodily expressions to augment and thrive, sometimes in quite subversive manners. Even though the female body often is closely connected to earth and nature (Haraway 1997:164f) this traditional notion is, I claim, possible to thwart with the help from the fl@neur as a transgressive figuration. Consequently, by bringing female figurations such as FemaleMan©, OncoMouse™ and also, I suggest, the fl@neur into play, I promote re-articulations and explicated standardizations. Hence, the fl@neur encourages alternative ways of understanding embodied relationships with social, virtual and material settings. Just as Walter Benjamin (1997) depicts the flâneur as hard to separate from the gaslight (Benjamin 1997:50), I stress the importance of understanding embodied actions as intermingling with surrounding crowds, artefacts and spatial sceneries. Moreover, similar to Donna Haraway (1997) who claims the cyborg to be a child of the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and technoscience (cf. Haraway 1997:3) – thus being born in the belly of the beast – I suggest that even if the fl@neur takes its point of departure from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris, the city will never stipulate the homeland (cf. Buck-Morris 1986:129). Consequently, the fl@neur represents a splintered, non-innocent creature occupying merely a flawed position and this is also what makes the feminist figuration promising.

**Interviewer:** Noting that you're frequently referring to Donna Haraway I want to pinpoint the risk of treating the flâneur as an objective, alienated observer, merely depicting from afar. This is also subject for constant discussions within feminist research. Gathering these voices, Haraway (1991) presents the term *God's eye trick* to convey how (western) knowledge production to a large extent remains naturalized. Important to remember, however, is that

there is no such thing as a disembodied, omnipresent gaze, deriving from nowhere (Haraway 1991:189f). You have briefly touched upon this dilemma earlier, mentioning the flâneur as a situated figure. Would you like to further develop your thoughts?

**Interviewee:** Firstly I'd like to agree with your concern. The God-eye's trick is certainly an important dilemma to consider and moreover, to actively encounter. As I mentioned earlier; male artists like Chagall and Matisse can be seen to – alongside with disobeying the borders for what was considered as male and female domains – also represent the notion of the objective observer simply depicting from an above omnipresent perspective. Saying this, I also draw parallels to Haraway's (1991) God-eye's trick. Nonetheless, according to me the flâneur constitutes an identity, far from stable and uniform. Rather, the figure is subject to considerable ambiguity or put differently; the precise meaning of the flâneur still remains elusive (Tester 1994:1). But because of this, I'd also claim the term to be highly mouldable. Hence, it encourages elaborations and refigurations. The assumption that the flâneur should be regarded as disconnected from the multiple sites being depicted is only partly adequate. Indeed, this figure inherits ambiguous feelings towards the surrounding. At the same time as being closed off, the flâneur is undeniably a part of the density. Hence, the passionate spectator, the centre of the milieu conveyed, simultaneously remains hidden from the world (Gluck 2001:76). Consequently, the flâneur has the most shifting identities, oscillating between vaporization and centralization of the Self (Gluck 2001:77). Being the close cousin, I argue for the fl@neur to harbour an ambiguity similar to the flâneur. Further, I'd like to once again emphasize the similarities between the flâneur and the ethnographic researcher; both figures have the possibility to partly re-articulate meaning. Saying this, I ask you to note the expression “partly”; sometimes re-articulations are possible just as long as the standards remain uncontested (Tester 1994:12). Leaning towards the work of Susan Buck-Morris (1986), I thus claim “the flâneur as-writer [to] have social prominence, but not dominance” (Buck-Morris 1986:112). Consequently; the flâneur's gaze must be seen as flawed and undeniably situated. The ways in which this figure deploys different settings are nothing but flawed representations and saying this, I stress the flâneur as well as the fl@neur – who has inherited a range of traits from its cousin – to be quite far away from the omnipresent God-like gaze. Idling around, paving way through densities, the flâneur certainly has to take into consideration, the throngs of surrounding traffic and the crowds of people passing by, which

is why the seemingly mobile characteristic for the flâneur can easily be turned into immobility (cf. Parkhurst Ferguson 1994:32). Hence, the flâneur takes place and is allotted a position in constant collaboration with the social, virtual and material surroundings. This reciprocity indeed requires an awareness of the own being. The notion of the own embodiment is also strikingly conveyed by Mary Gluck (2001) as she displays the portrait “A Frenchman painted by himself” (Gluck 2001:74); a graphite sketch of a man – presumably a flâneur – portraying himself in front of a mirror. Nonetheless, as Zygmunt Bauman (1994) also pinpoints; the mirroring is twisted, the portrait is situated and the flâneur is – rather than reflecting – displaying crumpled pictures, mimics (Bauman 1994:139) of the settings as well as of the own being. Once again the fl@neur adopts the traits from the flâneur, the figure can indeed be seen as part and parcel of the multiple sites depicted, the body being mapped and marked by others. Also, similar to the flâneur, the fl@neur reads the flows of people passing (cf. Frisby 1994:99), writes about the shoals of embodied actions (cf. Wilson 1992:95) and by this means, this feminist figuration advocates humans, rather than representing ends and conclusions, to preferably be regarded as means (cf. Shields 1994:77).

**Interviewer:** As can be seen in texts considering the flâneur, this figure was, at least initially, strongly connected to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris (Tester 1994:1). However, being limited in time as well as in place, the flâneur also faced a rather quick death. What are your thoughts about the conveyed death of the flâneur?

**Interviewee:** Indeed, the flâneur was originally used in order to depict a man who loitered around in the streets of Paris, a picture that also can be seen in several of Charles Baudelaire’s texts. Hence, the figure is – although I like to understand the fl@neur as occupying densities rather than boulevards – situated in an urban context (Wilson 1992:94; Tester 1994:9) and more exactly, in a Parisian context (cf. Parkhurst Ferguson 1994:22). The strong connection between the streets of Paris during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the flâneur can also be seen in the text of Buck-Morris (1986) where she claims “[t]he “flow” of humanity [to have] lost its gentleness and tranquillity” (Buck-Morris 1986:102). Nonetheless, reading the article of Buck-Morris (1986), I suggest the fl@neur to allow for shoals of people and artifacts in the post-modern era. Following Allucqère Rosanne Stone claiming; “I live a good part of my life in cyberspace, surfing the Net, frequently feeling like a fast-forward flâneur” (quoted

in Paasonen 2002:116), I accordingly promote the flow of humanity to proceed, however in different patterns and within altered settings. Even though this figure preferably is understood as closely connected to the Parisian context, philosophers like Sartre have been adopting the flâneur into other contexts as well (Tester 1994:10). Consequently, I claim that it is possible to find traces of the flâneur, for instance in the laid back zapping between TV-channels or as Stone mentions above; in surfing the net. Drawing on the work of Zygmunt Bauman (1994); the post-modern flâneur can be seen to practice the art of flâneurism without being mobile (Bauman 1994:155), as in this case, not being forced to even leave the couch. Nonetheless, in order to promote renegotiations, it is of importance to take the traditional flâneur seriously. For, as Haraway stresses; “the collapse of metaphor and materiality is a question/.../ of modes of practice among humans and nonhumans that configure the world/.../” (cf. Haraway 1997:97). Hence, on the one hand, in the minute the flâneur is refigured and removed from the streets of Paris, it begins to disappear and lose clarity. By this means, I’d like to elucidate the flâneur as inhabiting a historical specificity, which cannot be foreseen. As Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson (1994) also writes; “[a]bstraction has its costs. Isolating the flâneur from the time, the place and the texts in and from which this urban personage emerged turns the figure into an analytical category/.../” (Parkhurst Ferguson 1994:22). I strongly agree with the above claim; every attempt to transform metaphors is somewhat flawed as it harbours elements of discrepancy and mismatching, of this we have to be aware. On the other hand, the notion of the flâneur as contextualized opens up for other interpretations, which is why I also find it possible to augment the term flâneur, thus presenting the fl@neur as a feminist figuration. As hinted above; as tool and myth mutually constitute each other (Ben-Tov 1995:139) the death of the flâneur might be relevant in a Parisian context but according to me, the figuration certainly has the capability to live a rich life outside the boulevards of Paris.

**Interviewer:** This interview is coming to an end but before we finish, let me just ask one more question. As much as we’ve been discussing your intentions with using the fl@neur as a figuration, can you see other benefits with using the fl@neur and how do you connect this to yourself as a researcher?

**Interviewee:** Studying the flâneur and also bringing the fl@neur into play is a most interesting journey. Leaning towards Haraway's feminist figuration – the Cyborg – I call for the fl@neur in order to thwart dualisms. As already mentioned I stress the fl@neur as a feminist figuration to challenge the notion of men and women, observer and observed as well as body and spatiality. The fl@neur presents a subversive reading of embodied collaborations and with its multiple appearances it challenges the notion Baudelaire's flâneur as a man-about-town, suggesting that things indeed could have been otherwise (cf. Star 1991:38). Moreover, comparing the flâneur with Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's (1987) term *rhizome*, the metaphor seems to best be understood in light of what it is not. Indeed, the rhizome can be understood and resembled to the network of branches in a tree, but interestingly enough, it comes into being from the very separation to the tree (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:7). Following Priscilla Parkhurst-Ferguson (1994) and Walter Benjamin (1997), I find the flâneur to be defined in similar ways; “to stroll is to vegetate, to flâner is to live” (Parkhurst Ferguson 1994:29), “[t]o wander is human, to *flâner* is Parisian” (Parkhurst Ferguson 1994:22) or “[the joy of watching] can stagnate in the gaper; then the *flâneur* has turned into a *baduad*” (Benjamin 1997:69, his italics) are all expressions that define the flâneur through what the figure does *not* do. Also, I'd like to once again stress the similarities between the fl@neur and the ethnographer. For rather than reflecting true conditions, I believe the fl@neur to divert readers from dullness (cf. Buck-Morris 1986:112), thus presenting a rather crumpled picture of the surrounding settings. Moreover, together with Østerberg's (2000) term densities, the fl@neur constitutes a re-negotiated scene for encounters between observer and the masses (cf. Malmberg 1998:165). Indeed, it is motivated to scrutinize my own reasons for trying to wake up the lost male flâneur from his dwellings and introduce the fl@neur. This feminist figuration – introduced as both a theoretical tool and a methodological approach, but also as materialized in the appearance of the ethnographic- or feminist researcher – allows for a chance to present a subversive picture of the flâneur and bend it slightly differently. Crucial for me is to understand how the fl@neur merges with the social, virtual and material surroundings and the embodied flows of humans. As mentioned above; at the same time as the flâneur transgresses the borders between individual and community, the figure is no more and no less than a part of a constant flow. I wish to conclude with my hopes for the fl@neur; to act as “a shifting projection of angst rather than a solid embodiment of male bourgeois power” (Wilson 1992:109). The

fl@neur is certainly an intriguing key in order to understand the intertwined social, virtual and material environments (cf. Tester 1994:18) and by this means, I urge for a continued meandering in these multiple sites.

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Highmore, Ben (2006) *Michel de Certeau. Analysing Culture*. London and New York: Continuum. ISBN: 0-8264-6073-9 (paperback). xii + 188 pp. RRP: £18.99.

The book title could be misleading: this is not a biography, or an intellectual biography, or even an introduction to Michel de Certeau's work. It is, however, something far more interesting: a book that takes his work as a point of departure for discussing key methodological questions for the study of culture. In this sense, the book is not a roadmap to de Certeau's work, rather it maps a road from it. Even though he conceives of it as a contribution for re-imagining Cultural Studies, I'll argue that Ben Highmore's latest book is in fact an important contribution to contemporary epistemological debates in the social sciences, particularly around the possibilities of a post-positivist empiricism.

Each of the chapters introduces a *field* in which de Certeau's texts come into fruitful dialogue with other authors and disciplines. In a rare achievement, the book manages to simultaneously stay close to de Certeau's writings without being constrained by them. Besides the introduction and conclusion, the themes tackled are the necessary rhetorical condition of history as text (ch. 2); the psychoanalytic aspects of de Certeau's work, particularly as a practice of listening (ch. 3); writing history from subjugated standpoints and allowing the 'zones of silence' to emerge (ch. 4); the relevance of narrative for writing better accounts of culture (ch. 5); and the way de Certeau's approach is aimed at social ends, including his policy-related work (ch. 6). Each of these chapters is somewhat autonomous, but they inform each other creating a coherent whole. Highmore's writing is fluid, unadorned, precise. The book's stated progression 'from the past to the present, from epistemological problematics to a politics of hope, from abstractions to practices' (p. 19) is indeed very well managed. However, I won't reproduce it here. Instead, I'll cut through the text taking the questions issued in the introduction as a guide.

Highmore suggests that studying Michel de Certeau is studying 'inventive (and hopeful) methodologies in the face of epistemological doubt... an ethical demand to go beyond critique, to offer substantive accounts of the world that are more inclusive, more attentive, more responsive to an alterity at the heart of culture' (p. xi). This strong

methodological orientation is one of the book's main contributions and one that in many ways distinguishes it from other monographies dedicated to de Certeau published in English (Ahearne, 1995; Buchanan, 2000; Ward, 2000). De Certeau's engagement with getting closer to the world in order to change it for the better could be linked to Bruno Latour, Isabelle Stengers or Donna Haraway. In fact, his "science of singularity" is akin to much of STS' program: a science committed to specific, located objects that are allowed to exist in all their complexity, heterogeneity and alterity. As Highmore states, this requires two operations: the first is redefining the relationship with theory, which ceases to be a framework to be applied; the second is mobilising all means necessary for producing better accounts of such a wild object. These are the two themes that guide my reading through the book.

The 'logic of the *application*' of ready made concepts or theories is one form of pacification of the 'sheer alterity of objects' de Certeau contests. Against this method of contention, an *alteration* is necessary: 'to let the object bite back, to de-pacify the object, what is required is a disrupted and disrupting form of attention; a derailing of observation' (p. 7). Highmore defines De Certeau's 'letting go' of theory as parallel to Freud's refusal to offer a general interpretation of dreams, and his study of the *logics* of dreaming instead. It is not about developing an overarching framework, but a vocabulary that can deal with the *operations* taking place. But there's a second, even more important aspect of De Certeau's methodology rooted in psychoanalytic practice: the active listening. 'The sound of the other needs to *alter* the disposition of the hearer: remain the same and you will miss what is being said' (p. 69).

Under Highmore's conduction, De Certeau's work invites us to see the object outside the frame already made for it, which in turn leads to a permanent experimentation of better ways of telling and describing. Here the literary condition of knowledge is not opposed to its objectivity, but is its condition of possibility. De Certeau 'epistemological awakening' recasts the 'poetic condition of historiography as the very condition of its claim to objectivity... The 'being literary' of history is not the most damning indictment that can be levelled at it, rather it is its most challenging potential for knowing the past' (p. 29). Or as Latour has said: 'we don't have to abandon the traditional goal of reaching objectivity simply because we consider with great care the heavy textual machinery. Our texts, like those of our fellow scientists, run the parallel course of being artificial *and* accurate: all the more accurate *because* they are artificial' (2005: 124). In fact, Latour acknowledges the convergence of their projects in a

footnote at the end of *Laboratory Life*: ‘De Certeau once said (pers. com.), “There can only be a science of science-fiction.” Our discussion is a first tentative step towards making clear the link between science and literature’ (Latour/Woolgar, 1986: 261).

To illustrate this search for ‘better ways of making contact with the actual, the real’ (p. 118), Highmore brings in the work of, among others, Margerite Duras, Marin Duberman and Samuel Delany. They too experiment with strategies for writing histories ‘in the name of those left out of the dominant accounts’, histories of/from various ‘zones of silence’, which make the absences speak –without effacing their silenced condition. We’re as far from a naïf positivist naturalism as from idle postmodern textualism. It is this point that draws methodology and ethics (or politics) very close. The work from subjugated standpoints, the work with the silenced, the proliferation of heterogeneity, the embracement of alterity cannot but define the analyst’s responsibility as that of literally *responding* to the other. In this sense, de Certeau’s uncompromised cultural policy work becomes particularly relevant aimed as it was at ‘fashioning spaces more hospitable to the voices of others’, ‘where otherness and heterogeneity could proliferate’, ‘uncontrolled and deregulated’, ‘allowing alterations to occur so that a home culture can be *remade* in response to the other’ (p. 160). Here the methodological engagement with *singularity* becomes a politics of *multiplicity*.

The ‘science of singularity’ *Michel de Certeau* pursues clearly escapes the boundaries of Cultural Studies. In this sense, I think that even if the question Highmore poses in the introduction and retakes in the conclusion might be of certain interest (‘what would cultural studies look like if it decided to engage with the work of Michel de Certeau?’), it is nonetheless the kind of disciplinary concern that de Certeau’s work (and Highmore’s engagement with it) invites not to take too much concern about. In other words, Highmore’s own account of de Certeau’s work ‘bites back’ at him and breaks away from the Cultural Studies frame prepared for it.

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Phillips, A. (2007) *Multiculturalism without culture*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 180p.

Evidence proves that because of a great deal of fear of radical Islam, public opinion on multiculturalism has changed over the last several years. In *Multiculturalism without Culture*, Anne Phillips attempts to indicate how critics misrepresent culture as the justification of everything minority group members or non-Western groups carry out. She defends a multiculturalism that dispenses with notions of culture and places individuals at its centre. Given that, in recent years, multiculturalism has been blamed and criticized for encouraging the oppression of women, critics have, in turn, taken this as an opportunity to deploy gender equality as a justification for the retreat from multiculturalism. Anne Phillips's argument draws on a feminist insistence to consider women as agents using a broad range of literature. She argues that both critics and proponents of multiculturalism exaggerate the unity and distinctness of culture that considers men and women as members prescribed and dictated by culture. Believing that multiculturalism can still have a key role in achieving social equality, she develops a new way of answering dilemmas of justice and gender equality in multicultural societies.

Two simultaneous preoccupations cut across the entire book. Firstly, it considers the notion that feminism was becoming prone to paralysis by cultural differences with concerns about cultural imperialism, thus producing a relativism that made it difficult to represent any belief or practice that is at odds with gender equality. Second, it takes into account the perception that outside of feminist debates, principles of gender equality were being utilized as part of a demonization of minority cultural groups. In this work, Anne Phillips has hoped to engage with and transcend these dilemmas with a normative commitment to the principle of equality, demonstrating that this can in fact work to support both multiculturalism and women's equality.

Anne Phillips's former work had explored the relationship between equality and difference, as well as the practicality of group representation as a way of decreasing imbalances

of power between women and men and minority and majority ethnic groups. In *Multiculturalism without Culture* she draws from these former insights in ways that would mediate the persistent opposition between either feminism or multiculturalism, making it possible to pursue these important components of an equality agenda together.

She begins with a reading of feminism as a politics of gender equality that, at times, requires policies that treat women differently from men while multiculturalism, she asserts, is as policy developed to lessen the unequal handling of cultural groups and the “culture-racism” to which members of minority cultural groups are exposed. She first addresses the potential conflict between these two socio-political fields in terms of their shared challenges to equality claims arguing that, given multiculturalism’s and feminism’s similarities in dealing with inequality, it would be inappropriate to consider one more essential than the other. That is, both address inequality (multiculturalism in relation to cultural minorities and feminism in relation to women) and both projects draw on a shared obligation to equality. Therefore, the two must be balanced in circumstances where they appear to collide.

Against the backdrop of increasing national concerns about the economic and social integration of cultural minorities, rising world tensions over terrorism, the failure of the peace process in the Middle East, and the invasion of Iraq, these conditions rapidly metamorphosed into a retreat. Multiculturalism became a supposedly misguided approach to cultural diversity that encouraged men to beat their wives, parents to abuse their children, and communities to erupt in racial violence. Critics have suggested that the “managers of ethnic diversity” deliberately avoided public debate, preferring to negotiate the practicalities of multiculturalism “behind closed doors” (Barry 2005:95). More recently, there has been much talk of the death of multiculturalism, the bigotries of multiculturalism, or multiculturalism turning into “a dangerous form of benign neglect and exclusion” (*ibid.*).

This retreat from multiculturalism provides the political context of Phillips’s book, which should be considered as arguing for a different kind of multiculturalism. She does not stress neither the one-sided integration that preceded talk of multiculturalism, nor the more generous cosmopolitanism that has followed it, claiming that neither satisfactorily addresses the power inequalities that provides the normative case for multiculturalism and insists that the strident assertions of national identity that have characterized the post-September 11 world, make the

case more urgent than ever. Her object, however, is a multiculturalism without culture: a multiculturalism that dispenses with the reified notions of culture that feed those stereotypes to which so many feminists have objected, yet retains enough robustness to target inequalities between cultural groups; a multiculturalism in which the language of cultural difference no longer gives hostages to fortune or sustenance to racists, but also no longer paralyzes normative judgment. She maintains that those writing on multiculturalism, both supporters as well as critics, have exaggerated not only the unity and solidity of culture but the intractability of value conflict as well, often misrecognising contextual political dilemmas as if these reflected deep value disagreement. Though there are important areas of cultural disagreement, most do not involve a deep diversity with respect to ethical principles and norms, and many run parallel to the disputes that take place within cultural groups.

In developing this argument, she queries what she sees as one of the biggest problems with culture: the tendency to represent individuals from minority or non-Western groups as driven by their culture and obliged by cultural dictates to behave in particular ways. Widely employed in a discourse that denies human agency, culture is used to define individuals and is treated as the explanation for virtually everything they say or do. This sometimes features as part of the case for multicultural policies or concessions, but it more commonly appears in punitive policies designed to stamp out what have been deemed as unacceptable practices. She argues that a more careful understanding of culture provided a better basis for multicultural policy than the overly homogenized version that currently figures in the arguments of supporters and critics alike. A defensible multiculturalism will place human agency much more at its centre- it will dispense with strong notions of culture.

Further, Phillips focuses on areas of contestations where either a sensitivity to cultural traditions has been employed to deny women their rights, or where principles of gender equality have been used as a reason to ban cultural practices, drawing on a growing feminist literature that sees the deconstruction of culture as the way forward in addressing tensions between gender equality and cultural diversity. Her own approach is closest to those who have noted the selective way culture is employed to explain behavior in non-Western societies or among individuals from racialised minority, and the implied contrast with rational, autonomous Western individuals, whose actions are presumed to reflect moral judgments, and who can be held individually

responsible for those actions and beliefs. This binary approach to cultural differences is neither helpful nor convincing. The basic contention throughout is that multiculturalism can be made compatible with the pursuit of gender equality and women's rights, so long as it dispenses with an essentialist understanding of culture.

Structurally, the author sets out the chapter 1 to the main themes by reference to the notions of culture employed in the political theory and feminist literatures, and identifies the main normative issues. Chapter 2 provides a detailed exploration of the concept of culture, drawing on debates in the anthropological literature, and confronts the most obvious alternative-cosmopolitanism. Chapter 3 focuses on cultural defense, based mainly on cases from the English and U.S. courts. Chapter 4 addresses notions of culture as restrictions that shape in the case both for and against multiculturalism. A central part of the argument in both chapters 3 and 4 is that culture needs to be treated in a more nuanced way than has become available for class and gender: that is, as something that influences, shapes, and constrains behavior, but does not determine it. Chapter 5 looks at questions of exit, suggesting that the right to leave an oppressive family or group does not provide enough protection for "at-risk members" partly because it does not attach enough significance to cultural belonging. Chapter 6 pulls together the various threads of Phillips's argument regarding the relationship between the individual and the group, and spells out its implications in terms of some specific policy questions.

In general, the evidence included indicates that national arguments about the politics of diversity represent an exaggerated opinion about cultural differences. In her book, Anne Phillips successfully managed to show her disagreement by incorporating a realistic and useful picture of the politics of diversity. Arguing against a conception of culture as one that is bound and static, she instead develops a politics that combines the goal of gender equalities with multicultural ones. She also believes that minority cultural values are contextually diverse and that the fact that minority group members are agents rather than culturally-programmed robots, affords them a visibility which has not yet been granted. *Multiculturalism without Culture* is a timely and significant incursion into the contemporary debates on cultural differences and social policy, integrating a great deal of legal, philosophical, and political theory material in order to develop a new framework from which to approach social justice in multicultural societies.

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## **Introduction**

Ellie Walton is from Washington DC and has a background in radio journalism. She has recently completed an MA in Screen Documentary at the University of London and is currently working on a documentary project based on several UK prisons.

Sam Wild is from London and has a background in print journalism (The Times and The Independent). He has recently completed an MA in Screen Documentary at the University of London and a film for the WWF (Switzerland). He is currently finishing a film about wolves in Ticino.

## **Review**

The city of Washington D.C. is often imagined through its visually emblematic White House. '*Chocolate City*' effectively reveals how the partiality of that vision is produced through the systemic marginalization of its majority black citizens, as well as its Latino immigrant populations. The documentary tells the story of one of the city's regeneration schemes through the plural voices of those most impacted by the financial fancy of real estate: the displaced citizens of a low-income public housing estate and a neighborhood called Arthur Capper. Without making any explicit reference to the way gender, race and class intersect in the creation of social activism and resistance, this representation displays women as the central and assertive denouncers of injustice. Like a growing number of critical urban work fashioned through the Chicago school's community-

focused interest, it documents the intersections of inner-city poverty and mobility; but, by situating this larger dilemma within the particularities of one case study, the field of artistic production (such as play-writing and slam poetry) uniquely emerges as a powerful sphere of activism in its organizing and transformational capacity. And, by regularly juxtaposing the landscapes of bureaucracy and poverty, the impact of the currents of ‘development’ on the daily life and struggles of some low-income city residents becomes palpable.

One of the greatest and most relevant ironies of ‘*Chocolate City*’ has to do with the undemocratic manifestations of power in the center of what is proclaimed as the bedrock of democracy - the American political machine. Right behind the historical monuments, “in your bureaucratic backyard”, forced displacement is part and parcel of the Federal Housing and Urban Development Agency’s (HUD) Hope VI program. This initiative, which demolishes public housing projects seen as ‘in distress’ and rebuilds ‘mixed income’ properties in its place, has been seen as a partner of growing gentrification processes. As legacies of previous urban renewal programs, they push out poor sectors of inner cities now widely associated and perceived as causes of poverty, joblessness, crime, and other social pathologies. This is further combined with a voracious housing market that seeks to create spaces for new development, both commercial and housing alike. The desire is to attract middle and upper class segments to working class or poor urban neighborhoods. Although the multifarious impact of these processes on the urban poor has been widely debated in academic circles, ‘*Chocolate City*’ engages only with those questions that address the changes, feelings, and reactions of relocation from the perspective of long-time residents affected by such mechanisms. In taking this more personalized approach, the complex issues of the lived day to day reality that result from underlying economic forces take center stage.

In revealing “the hopelessness of Hope VI”, the black residents of Arthur Capper understand that, ultimately, it is an economic logic that guides their destiny, effectively subsuming an interest in ‘the bottom line’ under the rubric of a diverse and ‘mixed-income’ community. Feeling that their neighborhood has, in effect, been taken for money, this vision is reinforced by some of *Chocolate City*’s shots. They include:

displays of corporate promotion on demolishing cranes and other construction equipment, advertisements of '1.8. million dollar lofts' and short verbal interjections by real estate agents and developers who reveal their interest in catering to a particular and new kind of clientele/audience. The latter are believed to hold the power to resurrect, with new life, a perceived dead city space. This not only belies the history and present life that inculcates those areas, but it also erases the diversity and multiplicity of its inhabitants. It is further complicated by the fact that the city of Washington D.C. is not, legally speaking, a city of its own and thus not subject to the same kinds of protocol and mechanisms required of cities by HUD. Again, through visual perspectives of the white cityscape, the viewer captures the implications of this reality- where the stronghold of the U.S. Congress is not only explained, but implied through its infrastructural grandiosity vis-à-vis the smaller, more worn out edifications of the urban poor. This counter-positioning renders poor, dark bodies invisible.

An important aspect addressed by the documentary had to do with the connections between the African American and immigrant plights of the city. Rather than giving a straightforward account of unity and solidarity, it offers a more nuanced exploration of how both legal and illegal immigration is sometimes seen by African American communities as a competing group, described through similar expressions as those used to slur their own image. Thus, the film impels its participants and viewers to make connections between 'the nation of immigrants' and poor urban Blacks' problems in order to take pertinent action simultaneously. However, in trying to make an important call for action through consciousness-raising, I believe *Chocolate City* leaves out a significant strand of thinking which does not believe in one unitary black political agenda. Mary Patillo's *Black on the Block*, for example, gives a more nuanced understanding of racial differentiation, suggesting that class categories inform the realm of lifestyle in an interracial fashion that transcends economic trends. Her account of urban history, power and politics sees 'blackness as a collective endeavor' but suffused with racial *and* class tensions (Patillo, 2007: 17).

In looking at cities' histories, Witold Rybczynski has said, "If getting somewhere is as important as being somewhere, then mobility affects our very sense of place." A

common theme of the film is the inherent loss of uprootedness. It presents the residents' pain when looking at or talking about demolition and physical displacement. Their stories are meant to demonstrate the precarious nature of their situation and the weakness of public housing residents in comparison to the economic power of determinations of the private housing market. By sidetracking these individuals' lives, the pervasive fear they feel in loss of community is not widely debated. The detrimental health consequences resulting from a sudden lack of social networks cannot be bought nor sold. Of all the damage brought on by these processes, it is the demise of communal ties which figures as the most painful and injurious of all.

It is in this context that a woman activist- playwright's work is presented as a strong political alternative, bringing not only her community work into focus, but also her own personal views and transformation, through contact with the neighborhood. Her efforts with both adults and children through artistic representations and pedagogical activities offer a way by which to create desired social networks despite enforced physical dispersal. Art is presented as a new organizing medium for residents to powerfully engage in space, rather than through the typical housing-administrative mediation. Her improvisations and staged acts confront the multiple voices, opinions and conflicts that can occur between the displaced residents themselves. It gives voice to those who have been shrunken and overwhelmed by the power of bureaucracy and its set-format meetings. And, it incorporates the transformational role of children as child activists that can use new methods in claiming their own rights through a more highly developed social consciousness. And, finally, it gives all of those involved the tools with which to stretch their cause and engage with transnational efforts such as the poor people's economic human rights campaign.

Beyond the message the explicitly given of the potential inherent to artistic production in seemingly protracted battles, a second, underlying theme was silently claiming the power of its own medium; that is, the documentary video production and multimedia engagement. Radio transmission frequently entered the film through voice-overs, individual or group activism, or simply through music. *Chocolate City*, from beginning to end, gives what is felt as an accessible account of networking within and

across communities through various technologies that enable the opening up of spaces of unification and resistance. Thus, against the official descriptions of regeneration or the reports of displacement which render it permanent, what this documentary ultimately does is present a vision of political continuity beyond physical destruction. In face of the urban street spoken word that pronounces, “less and less people of color and more Starbucks”, the film shows how particular forms of organization can actually bring together more and more people of color (and Hispanic immigrants) despite the Starbucks.

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