

seen in terms of successive moments of transformation and its insertion into discursive practices. These are culturally and historically specific, but also changeable and to some extent idiosyncratic. Such practices are always already locked in power-knowledge relations, and the production of desire is inextricably intertwined in them.

From the point of view of a politics of change, a theory which combines these sets of relations between power, knowledge and desire within the same theoretical framework would combine two often unfortunately separate struggles: the changing of subjects and the changing of circumstances. As Deleuze and Guattari (1977a) has argued, the struggles for 'bread, peace, freedom' and that against the 'microscopic fascism installed at the heart of the machinery of desire' (1977a, p. 2), whilst they require different strategies of resistance, are bound up with each other in the wider objective of radical transformation.

Notes

- 1 Walkerdine and Corran (1979) and Walden (Eynard) and Walkerdine (1981) have worked out in detail an approach to children's learning of mathematics in the school setting based on these notions. Here mathematics is viewed as a discursive practice, and children's learning is conceptualized in terms of their positioning within this practice. This work is referred to in chapter 6, where it is contrasted with usual approaches to relations between cognition, language and social development in psychology.
- 2 Our discussion of psychoanalytic theory must necessarily be slight, and Lacan's work is particularly complex. Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974) remains the most accessible introduction to psychoanalysis within the context of feminism. For a very readable introduction to Lacan's work and its political implications, see Sherry Turkle's *Psychoanalytic Politics* (1979). For more technical discussion of his theory, see Anika Lemaire's *Jacques Lacan* (1977), and in the context of feminism, Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose's *Feminine Sexuality* (1982).
- 3 We cannot discuss all attempts to link psychoanalysis with an account of social processes. But see Mitchell (1974) and Turkle (1979).
- 4 For a fuller account of Object Relations theory and Winnicott's work applied within a feminist analysis, see Chodorow (1978). For a critique, see Sayers (1982). Some of these problems also apply to the account of feminist therapy presented by Eichenbaum and Orbach (1982). Notwithstanding the considerable importance of this venture, we suggest that it is constrained by an over-simple environmentalism, which in this case focuses on apparent inadequacies in mothering of daughters. Though the mother-daughter relationship is undoubtedly important, a focus on 'unmet needs' may not be the most useful axis through which to approach the issues.

Gender difference and the production of subjectivity

Wendy Hollway

Introduction

In this chapter I attempt to analyse the construction of subjectivity in a specific area: heterosexual relations. My framework depends on three conceptual positions which we have developed: the non-rational, non-unitary character of subjectivity; its social and historical production through signification; power relations and the re-production of systemic difference.

I have introduced the term re-production (with a hyphen) since the term reproduction is less than ideal owing to the limitations in its theorization. The dangers are ones for which Althusser has been criticized for failing to avoid. First, the concept stresses maintenance rather than change, and second Althusser's notion of economic determination 'in the last instance' avoids recognition of the effectivity of sites such as heterosexual relations - the one I use in this chapter - to re-produce gender difference. My use of the hyphen is intended to signify that every practice is a production (what we have called its 'positivity'). Hence recurrent day-to-day practices and the meanings through which they acquire their effectivity may contribute to the maintenance of gender difference (reproduction without the hyphen) or to its modification (the production of modified meanings of gender leading to changed practices). I am interested in theorizing the practices and meanings which re-produce gendered subjectivity (what psychologists would call gender identity). My approach to subjectivity is through the meanings and incorporated values which attach to a person's practices and provide the powers through which he or she can position him or herself in relation to others.

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Given the pervasive character of gender difference it is more than likely that all practices signify differently depending on the gender of their subject and object. However, I consider that heterosexual relations are the primary site where gender difference is re-produced. This claim will be substantiated in the detail of the analysis which follows.

The chapter is organized into five parts. In the first I illustrate what I mean by gender difference as it impinges on subjectivity. I show how femininity and masculinity cannot be taken as fixed features located exclusively in women and men. In a descriptive manner, this begins to demonstrate how subjectivity is a non-unitary and non-rational product of — in this case and among other things — gender difference. The next three parts are all oriented to an analysis of the relation between gender difference and gendered subjectivity, a relation of mutual reproduction. In the second part I explore gender differentiation in discourses by taking the example of women's and men's different positions in discourses concerning sexuality. In the third part I focus on individual women's and men's subjectivity that is the product of their history of positioning in discourses, and the way this constructs their investments in taking up gender-differentiated positions in heterosexual relations (thereby re-producing the discourses). In the fourth part I consider the multiple meanings, deriving from discourses which produce the practices of heterosexual sex. I demonstrate their connection, expressed or suppressed, with 'desire for the Other' and how this relates to the take-up of gender-differentiated positions with an investment in exercising power. In the fifth part, I consider the recurrent splitting between women and men of gender-specified characteristics.)

One way of seeing the different elements of this account is as follows. Gender-differentiated meanings (and thus the positions differentially available in discourse) account for the content of gender difference. The concept of splitting provides an account of how these positions are constantly taken up. Power difference (imaginary as well as real, intimately linked in the psyche with the early desire for the Other) is both the cause and effect of the system of gender difference and provides the motor for its continuous re-production. (See chapter 6 for a detailed analysis of these developmentalis in infancy.) The concepts of splitting and desire draw on psychoanalysis (albeit on different theorizations within the non-unitary and non-rational nature of subjectivity, but also with our emphasis on relations (see Introduction to section 3, pp. 205 and 224). Desire and desire for the Other draw on a Lacanian analysis which theorizes their relation to significance (see Introduction to section 3, pp. 211–18).

The analysis in this chapter is not just a reworking of important theoretical developments. Rather it uses these to illuminate people's

accounts. The material comes from dialogues and discussions conducted in the course of my PhD research (Hollway, 1982). Participants talked about relationships, sexuality and gender. I talked to them singly and in groups, and without using a structured format of questions. They were not chosen to represent a range of social differences. Rather, it was my intention to make detailed readings of their accounts, recognizing their specific social location and its effectivity in the re-production of gender difference in discourse and subjectivity through power and signification.

Living the recent history of gender difference

First I would like to illustrate the theme of gender difference, and the inseparability of subjectivity from the social domain by summarizing the contradictions of my own gender. What does it mean to be a woman in my class and culture? I have grown up in the 1950s and 1960s in a western industrial society, in a middle-class home where education and the career possibilities it conferred were — in certain important respects — available to me as they were to boys. Educational and job opportunity, unisex and permissiveness, were ideas which were, at least in principle, gender-blind. I went through university with as much money in my pocket as the men students (though I couldn't get such well-paid holiday jobs). The pill meant that I could have sexual relationships without becoming a mother.

Being as good as men

Early modern feminism (Greer, 1971; Firestone, 1972) was telling women like me that we were equal to men because we were the same as them. Certainly this fitted in with my pre-feminist assumptions that men represented all that was interesting, admirable, powerful and desirable. I was attracted to men, partly because I aspired to being like them.

I was keen to develop so-called masculine skills. For example, I learned to service my car, how to build houses and wire up electrical circuits. I disdained helping hands over gates and in general determined to walk, swim, run, drive — as far and as fast as my men companions.

Why was this a problem? Surely equality was desirable? To compete with men like this necessitated a negative definition of myself as woman, and it reproduced the signifier 'woman' unchanged. Women were a group I put myself outside of. When I made generalizations about women (almost always derogatory), I did not include myself in the group I was talking about?

Difference as otherness

As my own recollections demonstrate, the difference between women and men was not just a neutral difference. It is based on the principle of

'otherness' (de Beauvoir, 1972). In many practices, to be like men I had to be not like women.³ This is the crucial feature of gender differences. It also means that equality, in that earlier meaning of the term, produces contradictions, rather than simply offering additional and complementary possibilities. It is also more likely to produce reaction!

One of the participants in my research who changed sex to become a woman when she was in her twenties described how she felt at a very early age about being a boy:

Sheila: Yes it mostly wasn't a question of what I wanted to be, it was more a question of what one didn't want to be, what one didn't want to do. Because one was constantly faced with the things one was being told to do, one was taught to do, and that one was rejecting.

Whereas for boys and men the alternative gender-differentiated positions are clear-cut and appear mutually exclusive (for girls and women it is easier to move among them. At a theoretical level it is quite easy to see why: 'man' and 'person' have been synonymous in western, patriarchal thought, as is evidenced by the use of the terms 'man', 'mankind' and 'he/him' as universals. As women we can strive to be 'people' and 'women'. Logically there is no contradiction. However, because 'person' actually consists of all the attributes which are meant to be characteristic of men, there is an underlying contradiction. I think I managed this contradiction by being (or trying to be) as good as men in the public world, and even competitive in my relationships with men. At the same time, by virtue of maintaining a heterosexual relationship, I preserved my feminine identity. Ever since I had grown up I had been in a couple relationship with a man, and however well I succeeded at doing things, they were always there – men who knew more than me, men whom I could learn from – to guarantee my femininity. Those qualities of men which 'guaranteed my femininity' demonstrate well that the differences which confer gender were not neutral in value. My position in relation to men demonstrates the non-unitary nature of my gendered subjectivity. I aspired to similarity in some spheres because of the value attached. At the same time I preserved my difference.

Gender difference in three discourses concerning sexuality

Foucault's use of the term discourse is historical and this is crucial to the analytical power of the concept. For my purposes the emphasis must be shifted in order to understand how at a specific moment several co-existing and potentially contradictory discourses concerning sexuality make available different positions and different powers for men and women. Thus the references to the histories of these discourses will be only in passing (but see Foucault, 1979a; Bland and Hollway, unpubl.; Heath,

1982). Given my objective of theorizing subjectivity as it is reproduced in discourses, it is personal genealogies which are a necessary part of the analysis. (See Introduction to section 3, p. 204 and for our discussion of the limitations of positions which see subjectivities merely as the sum total of positions occupied in discourses by a person.)

In order to make a reading of the accounts I gathered concerning sexuality, I delineated three discourses: the male sexual drive discourse; the household discourse; and the permissive discourse. I arrived at these three through a combination of my own knowledge and what was suggested by the data (an approach which Glaser and Strauss, 1967, call grounded theory). Clearly my own assumptions and those of research participants share a largely common historical production; they will also be recognizable to most readers. Some assumptions are more widespread than others (indeed, some would say that the discourse of male sexual drive was universal and that this supports a claim that it is based on the biological 'fact' of male sexuality). It would be relatively easy to identify more discourses, with different boundaries. For my purposes however, what is more important is the use I make of these three in my analysis of the effects of gender difference in positioning subjects.

The male sexual drive discourse

This needs little introduction because it is so familiar – so hegemonic, or dominant – in the production of meanings concerning sexuality. A man friend of mine captured it succinctly: 'I want to fuck. I need to fuck. I've always needed and wanted to fuck. From my teenage years, I've always longed after fucking. Its key tenet is that men's sexuality is directly produced by a biological drive, the function of which is to ensure reproduction of the species. The discourse is everywhere in common-sense assumptions and is reproduced and legitimized by experts, including psychologists.' For example Anthony Storr asserts that

Male sexuality because of the primitive necessity of pursuit and penetration, does contain an important element of aggressiveness; an element which is both recognised and responded to by the female who yields and submits.

(quoted in *The Observer*, 24 May 1981; my italics)

A more recent example of the discourse being made respectable by experts through recourse to scientific explanations is Glenn Wilson's (1979) use of sociobiology to attack feminist accounts of sex differences which are based on social theories of women's oppression. The effect and intention of his argument is to represent women's position as biologically determined and therefore unchangeable. Elsewhere I have tried to show how psychology is particularly vulnerable to such biologism because of its own history and theoretical starting points (Hollway, forthcoming).

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The have/hold discourse

This has as its focus not sexuality directly, but the Christian ideal associated with monogamy, partnership and family life. The split between wife and mistress, virgin and whore, Mary and Eve, indicates how this and the male sexual drive discourse coexist in constructing men's sexual practices. In some aspects the discourses are consistent; for example both share assumptions about sexuality being linked to reproductiveity and also that sex is heterosexual. Yet the two recommend different and contradictory standards of conduct for men.

~~This contradiction is resolved for men by existing upon women.~~ Either women are divided into two types (as above), or more recently a woman is expected to be both things. In effect we end up with a double standard (the widespread recognition and criticism of which has not wholly changed the practices): men's sexuality is understood through the male sexual drive discourse; they are expected to be sexually incontinent and out of control - 'it's only natural'.

The following letter from a man in *Spare Rib* (a British feminist magazine) demonstrates how these discourses can coexist in the beliefs of one person.

As a mature male, I am in total support of the new 'women against violence against women' campaign, with the proviso that the supporters should realise that the majority of men are decent, of reasonably high principles and respect women as equal partners, and only a small proportion are grossly anti-social. But man being the animal he is, do you think that the answer to rape is well-ordered government-run brothels to cater for the large section of single, sexually-frustrated men in our society? (*Spare Rib*, 104, March 1981)

The picture is more complicated for women. Underneath the insistence on our asexuality within this discourse is the belief that our sexuality is rabid and dangerous and must be controlled. This is far more explicit in Mediterranean cultures where women are traditionally seen as being in one of two categories: 'fallen' or 'not yet fallen' (Du Boulay, 1974). The implication is that women's sexuality is inevitable and dangerous. (It is not defined as a lack, as in post-Victorian northern Europe). The only way to preserve the family honour is thus the total subservience of women to male control. Here men project onto women a rabid and ever-present sexuality, which leads to irrational jealousy (Moi, 1982). Later I shall approach the question in terms of men's 'desire for the Other' and the reasons for their projections, rather than falling into the assumption that this has something to do with women's sexuality.

According to the have/hold discourse, women's sexuality is seen as a lack, the possibility avoided by the stress on their relationship with

husband and children. For example, Eustace Chessger, a liberal sexual reformer in the 1950s, argued that the sex act for women was only a prelude to satisfaction of the 'maternal instinct' and 'finding joy in family life' (quoted in Campbell, 1980).

Gender-differentiated positions

Before going on to comment on the permissive discourse, I will indicate the main implication of the coexistence of these two discourses for gender difference. It is not that women's sexuality is not constructed in the male sexual drive discourse. Rather, woman is seen as its object. The position for a woman in this set of meanings is as the object that the recipient men's natural sexual urges!

Will: Well certainly in adolescence I felt that there was a very impersonal sexuality. But it wasn't anything particularly that women did. It was my need - as it were - that did it to me. That meant that any woman would be doing it to me - in a sense - even if she hadn't noticed my existence. And that's what I mean by feeling quite enslaved to an abstract impersonal sexuality.

However, in the practices of courtship and sexual activity, women are not just the hapless victims of this male sexual drive. Angela McRobbie in her work on adolescent working-class girls concludes that 'their goal is to attract and keep a man' (McRobbie, 1978). Commonly accepted practices of femininity take it for granted that there is status and power attached to being attractive to men. In order to attract them, women can take up the object position in the male sexual drive discourse. Women are often seen as 'trapping' men by their powers of sexual attraction. But sex can also derive its meaning from the have/hold discourse. For example:

Dot: The one time I did fuck with Charles, it felt really good, like there was an awful lot that was important going on. But I didn't have an orgasm... maybe the tension was too great or something. I don't know, I was very turned on. It was the idea of fucking with him rather than with someone else. The image I get makes me physically shudder with excitement. That reinforces my hunch that it's what's invested in the idea. I was in love with him. It's not fucking itself, it's something to do with the rights it gave me to see myself as having a relationship with him. I didn't have any of course.

Despite positioning herself in the permissive discourse (see below) by saying 'of course' she didn't have any rights to a relationship. Dot's reading of this one-off sexual encounter, and even her physical sexual response, were constructed through the set of meanings associated with the have/hold discourse. In another epoch, 'keeping a man' would have

meant marriage. Here it is expressed as wanting a relationship. It entails positioning the woman as subject of the have/hold discourse. Although nothing was said on that matter between Dot and Charles, those meanings were an inalienable feature of her feelings. We don't know whether Charles positioned Dot through the have/hold discourse. When this is the case, in complementary fashion, the man is positioned as object of this discourse. This constructs the meanings, and affects the practices, of some men. For example Jim avoided casual sexual encounters because of what it might mean about commitment. Not specified, but a basic assumption in the following extract, is that a relationship was what the woman would want. The complementary position (that he does not) is also quite clear:

Jim: Feeling that sex was kind of dangerous. If you had sex, it meant that you were committed in some way and I didn't want that. Also that if you just had sex without a relationship, it was a pretty shitty thing to do to have one part of it without the other.

The permissive discourse

The sexual practices of the participants in my study (aged on average around 30 in 1980) cannot be understood without recourse to a third discourse: the 'permissive' discourse. In this, the principle of monogamy is explicitly challenged, as is illustrated by this comment from the Student Christian Movement in 1966 speaking, predictably, from within the have/hold discourse: 'The teaching of the Christian church that sexual intercourse should be confined to marriage is frequently attacked as a theory and ignored in practice' (Sex and Morality, p. 4). In assuming that sexuality is entirely natural and therefore should not be repressed, the permissive discourse is the displaying of the male sexual drive discourse. Similarly it takes the individual as the locus of sexuality, rather than looking at it in terms of a relationship. In one important respect it differs from the male sexual drive discourse: it applies the same assumptions to women as to men. In other words it was - in principle at least - gender-blind. In 1968, a reviewer of Vance Packard's book *The Sexual Wilderness* summed up the characteristics of the permissive society in the following terms: 'On the whole the young of both sexes believe that they have a right to express their sexuality in any way they choose so long as nobody is hurt' (my italics). Women could now be subjects of a discourse in a way which meant active initiation of a sexual relationship based on the idea that our natural sexual drives were equal to (or the same as) men's. However, gender difference in sexuality was not suddenly transformed. That this was not the case demonstrates the importance of recognizing the historically specific nature of discourses, their relation to what has gone

before and how practices - such as the one-night stands of the permissive era - are not the pure products of a single discourse.

The differences between men's and women's positions in the traditional discourses were never banished in permissive practices. Beatrix Campbell sums up what is commonly recognized now by women in the Women's Movement (many of whom were believers in the equality of sex in permissive practices at the time):

[the permissive era] permitted sex for women too. What it did not do was defend women against the differential effects of permissiveness on men and women. . . . It was about affirmation of young men's sexuality and promiscuity; it was indiscriminate. [so long as she was a woman] The very affirmation of sexuality was a celebration of masculine sexuality. (Campbell, 1980, pp. 1-2)

In the following extract Jo describes why permissive sex was alienating for her:

Jo: I've fantasized it [the quickie] yes, but it's never functioned like that - even when that person was a complete stranger. Afterwards I just looked at that stranger and felt completely alienated from what I'd just done with him. I mean, really uncomfortable in the extreme. Why did I do it? I think in that situation I'd almost never come, because I'd just be too guarded. You know, there was too much, which I'm just not going to let go - with a complete stranger. . . .
Colin: Isn't that just the point? - Why the attraction? It's the fact that it's a stranger. It's nothing to do with the rest of your life. There's no damage that can be caused, you know, and all that kind of thing.

Piera: Yes, you don't have to have a relationship with that person.
Jo: But I don't think I can have sex without having a relationship. So if I haven't got one, it feels alienated, because to me, sex is expressing whatever the relationship is, and is going to be, and what can be built and how I feel with that person, and if it doesn't I really do feel awful. I do feel that if all I want is a quickie - that is some sexual tension released - then I'm much happier masturbating.
Colin: I don't think that's the nature of a quickie, though.

The meanings of sex for Jo are inconsistent with the permissive discourse and therefore the practice which it promoted felt wrong. In contrast Colin's statements emanate from the assumptions of the permissive discourse. His account of the attraction of the quickie casts light on what Jim said above. In contrast to the have/hold discourse, the permissive discourse did not imply any commitment or responsibility. Had Jim been able to position himself by means of the permissive discourse rather than the have/hold discourse, sex would not have seemed so dangerous.

Handwritten notes at the top of the page: 'The permissive discourse' and 'The sexual wilderness'.

However, as I shall argue in the fourth part of this chapter, the meanings of sex are more contradictory than that.

The practices that a discourse re-produces are not neutral. The liberating effects of the permissive discourse were particularly contradictory for women. Certainly the discourse enhances men's powers (men's 'rights') to a heterosexual practice without emotional bonds. Later I shall return to the question of why men had more invested in this than women.

Summary and restatement of the approach

My treatment of these three discourses makes several points which are theoretically significant for the use of a discourse analysis to understand the relation of gender difference, subjectivity and change.

(1) Discourses make available positions for subjects to take up. These positions are in relation to other people. Like the subject and object of a sentence (and indeed expressed through such a grammar), women and men are placed in relation to each other through the meanings which a particular discourse makes available: 'the female who yields and submits' to the man (Storr, quoted on p. 231).

(2) Because traditional discourses concerning sexuality are gender-differentiated, taking up subject or object positions is not equally available to men and women. ('Try out Storr's formulation in reverse: 'the man who yields and submits to the woman's aggressive pursuit'.) The same applies to practices understandable in terms of gender-differentiated discourses. For example it's virtually impossible for women to put themselves in the position of subjects in the male sexual drive discourse when it comes to practices such as bottom-punching or wolf-whistling.

(3) The positions are specified for the category 'man' or 'woman' in general. None the less particular men and women fill these positions. Their practices in relation to each other are rendered meaningful according to gender-differentiated discourses.

(4) Practices and meanings have histories, developed through the lives of the people concerned. These histories are not the product of a single discourse (though, depending on the hegemony of one discourse, meanings may be more or less homogeneous).

(5) Because discourses do not exist independently of their reproduction through the practices and meanings of particular women and men, we must account for changes in the dominance of certain discourses, and the development of new ones (for example those being articulated by feminists) by taking account of men's and women's subjectivity. Why do men 'choose' to position themselves as subjects of the

discourse of male sexual drive? Why do women continue to position themselves as its objects? What meanings might this have for women? How do the contradictions between the have/hold and male sexual drive discourses produce the practices of a particular heterosexual relationship? Do the practices signify differently for women and men, because they are being read through different discourses? Why and under what past and present circumstances are women more likely to read a sexual relationship through the have/hold discourse than men?

(6) By posing such questions, it is possible to avoid an analysis which sees discourses as mechanically repeating themselves – an analysis which cannot account for change. By showing how subjects' investments, as well as the available positions offered by discourses, are socially constituted and constitutive of subjectivity, it is possible to avoid this deterministic analysis of action and change.

How can we understand gender difference in a way which can account for changes? If we do not ask this question the change of paradigm from a biologicistic to a discourse theory of gender difference does not constitute much of an advance. If the concept of discourses is just a replacement for the notion of ideology, then we are left with one of two possibilities. Either the account sees discourses as mechanically repeating themselves, or – and this is the tendency of materialist theory of ideology – changes in ideology follow from changes in material conditions. According to such a use of discourse theory people are the victims of certain systems of ideas which are outside of them. Discourse determinism comes up against the old problem of agency typical of all sorts of social determinisms.

Althusser's generalities – because they are based on empirical historical data – do not register the stasis of discourses, but rather their changes. However, there is a gap in the theory which he uses to account for such changes. He stresses the mutually constitutive relation between power and knowledge: how each constitutes the other to produce the truths of a particular epoch (see Introduction to section 2, pp. 115–18). Rather than power being equated with oppression and seen as a negative thing, which can be got rid of come the revolution, power is seen as productive, inherently neither positive nor negative: productive of knowledges, meanings and values, and of certain practices as opposed to others. He still does not account for how people are constituted as a result of certain truths being current rather than others. The advantage of the idea that current at any one time are competing, potentially contradictory discourses (concerning for example sexuality) rather than a single patriarchal ideology, is that we can then pose the question, how is it that people take up positions in one discourse rather than another? If the process is not a mechanical positioning, why is it that men take up the

subject position in the discourse of male sexual drive? What's in it for them? Under what conditions do men cease to do this? What accounts for the differences between some men and others? These questions require that attention is paid to the histories of individuals in order to see the recursive positioning in certain positions in discourses. It also requires a question concerning the investment in that position.

I have had considerable difficulty finding a good term here. 'Motivation' connotes biologically determined drives or alternatively individual needs (*qua* Maslow (1968), see chapter 1, p. 31). 'Drive' gets its meaning from psychoanalytic theory and reduces to 'instinct'. The terms all express concepts which are subject to the weaknesses of dualism. They are also subject to the related problem of accounts of agency. For when the forces propelling people's actions have not been theorized as reducing to biology or society, they have been seen as a product of rational decision-making. Yet, following our critique of the rational subject, a term like 'choice' does not convey the complexity of causes for action. I have chosen 'investment' because it appears to avoid most of these problems. In addition it was the German word for 'investment', *Besetzung*, which Freud chose to refer to what in English has been translated as 'cathexis'. As the two uses share some important emphases, it is a potentially productive meeting of paradigms. By claiming that people have investments (in this case gender-specific) in taking up certain positions in discourses, and consequently in relation to each other, I mean that there will be some satisfaction or pay-off or reward (these terms involve the same problems) for that person. The satisfaction may well be in contrast with other resultant feelings. It is not necessarily conscious or rational. But there is a reason. In what follows, I theorize the reason for this investment in terms of power and the way it is historically inserted into individuals' subjectivity. (See chapter 6 for an account of the early emergence of subjectivity in these terms.)

Boys' and girls' entry into masculinity and femininity

In this part I will try to give an account – albeit schematic – of boys' and girls' developing relation to sexuality through the available discourses. Any analysis which focuses on subjective positioning in discourses requires an account of the investment that a person has in taking up one position rather than another in a different discourse. Of course some discourses are more hegemonic and thus carry all the weight of social approval. But successful positioning in these discourses is not automatic, else there would be no variations. But to assume the mechanical reproduction of discourse requires asking how it got to be like that in the first

place. And that question is in danger of throwing theory back into answers according to the terms of biological, Oedipal, or social and economic determinisms. (Chapter 6 tries to address the question of the emergence of subjectivity in young children without falling into these determinisms.)

The point that I have been at pains to stress is that discourses coexist and have mutual effects and that meanings are multiple. This produces choice, though it may not be simple or conscious. Consequently we have to account for what investments a boy or girl has in taking up a particular position in discourses by relating in certain ways with the other. What accounts for the different investments produced historically in people of the same gender? Clearly other major dimensions of social difference such as class, race and age intersect with gender to favour or disfavour certain positions. However, as well as recognizing cultural regularities it is also necessary – without resorting to essentialism – to account for the uniqueness of individuals. Lacanian theory does so by stressing the somewhat anarchic character of desire: desire as a motive force or process is common to all significations (although it is contentious whether it is universal). Although the significations which it occupies may be quite idiosyncratic, I try to show that they are not arbitrary. Significations are a product of a person's history, and what is expressed or suppressed in signification is made possible by the availability and hegemony of discourses. Positions available in gender-differentiated discourses (with relative power by enabling the suppression of significations) which would be undermining of power.

Growing up properly for a boy

For Jim girls were essential to 'growing up properly'

Jim: I remember very young – before twelve – feeling a pressure to have a girlfriend and not having a clue. I remember hanging around a local cinema thinking that might be how something happened. But it was like an abstract pressure – I just felt that I should in order to show I was growing up properly. It didn't have any connection with the rest of my life, it was just something that I felt I should take on.

What did having a girlfriend mean that it signified 'growing up properly'? It positioned Jim as a 'proper man', in other words it afforded him a gender-appropriate position:

Jim: I did feel the onus always to actually be pushy, to see how far it was possible to go with somebody, to see how far they were actually into me.

Wendy: What did you want?

Jim: Well just an obvious sign of . . . as a way of showing I was into them – well in a way showing I was a proper man.

The sexual (or protosexual) practices he engaged in enabled him to be positioned as subject in the male sexual drive discourse ('being pushy'). He was not the victim of a natural drive (though the girl concerned probably read it that way). His interest was to do with gender not sex. His successful masculine positioning depended on a girl being 'into him' and the proof of this would be that she let him get sexual with her.

'Being attractive' for a girl

The same principle is illustrated in Clare's account of her adolescent feelings about boys. The available positions are different however. Where Jim had to be pushy, Clare had to be attractive. There is a chain of assumptions running through the account: being attractive . . . (means) . . . being attractive to boys . . . (means) . . . engaging in sex (or protosex) with boys . . . (means) . . . having a boyfriend.

Clare: I can see from the photographs that I went from being a child who was quite pretty to an early adolescent who – I felt myself to be fat and ugly, and desperately lacking in confidence. I suspect I lacked confidence because I had had ways of dealing with people, which were to do with being an attractive child. They didn't work any more, because I wasn't one. When I was fourteen or fifteen I went on a diet – and I went down from being quite big to seven stone. It was an absolutely wonderful thing. It had a lot for me, to do with sexuality. I remember I thought I would be more confident, I thought I would be more attractive to boys.

Wendy: Were you more confident?

Clare: In a way, yes. I was quite good at school, though but certainly – when I lost weight, it seemed like the resolution of a set of contradictions. Having lost weight, I was no longer destined to be the 'ugly, clever type'. It would be alright because I was actually quite attractive as well. The more I dig deep, the more I think of the hurt – there's a hell of a lot of hurt around not being attractive enough and particularly about not having boyfriends. I remember, kind of, going out with anybody who asked me. I was so pleased to be asked, that I would have gone with anybody.

Wendy: When you did go out with them, what did you think of them?

Clare: Not a lot. I thought it was all a bit of a joke. Most of them were fools.

Adolescent girls' sexual practices gain them the reputation of being either slags or drags [Cowie and Lees, 1981] – a contradiction which is a logical product of women's contradictory positions in the male sexual drive and household discourses. Yet girls do not on the whole feel free to forego relationships with boys, for the reasons that Clare illuminates. Her identity as an attractive girl is at stake. According to McRobbie (1978) adolescent girls' main goal is 'to attract and keep a boy'. There are ostensibly few pay-offs and plenty of risks: the danger of being called 'slags' [Cowie and Lees, 1981], no enjoyment of the kind of sex that boys practise, the experience that the boys are fools anyway. Their investments in their own identities. Boys are necessary simply because in the only discourse in which being attractive can be understood, being attractive means being attractive to the opposite sex.

Attractiveness and femininity

It is within the practices of gender-differentiated discourses concerning sexuality that girls' and women's gender identity is re-produced. In the following quote, Clare explores why she felt in a weak position later on when she did get involved in a long-term relationship with a man:

Clare: I mean, with Phil he was very loud and domineering, and I was very quiet and weak. He was strong, and I was weak. I think that was the main thing. And I was more feminine.

Wendy: What did that involve?

Clare: Looking pretty. I think it relates back to when I said that when I was little I was the good, pretty little girl. It's to do with – the fear – being frightened of not being attractive enough.

Wendy: To keep him?

Clare: Mmmm.

Attracting a man is the defining feature of Clare's femininity. Keeping him, according to the male sexual drive discourse, means continuing to be attractive to him. This is the crucial recurrent interest in Clare's take-up of the object position in the male sexual drive discourse. In order to feel herself as gender-appropriate, she thus feels driven to be in a couple relationship with a man. These practices re-produce certain sexual and couple practices, and re-produce both gender difference and the inequality of women's position in the dominant discourses concerning sexuality.

They have shown that the practice of heterosexual couple relations (including sexual relations) is a site where different discourses concerning sexuality are available to produce different knowledges or meanings through which practices are mediated. Within this general usage of discourse analysis what is of particular significance is how the gender-differentiated nature of these discourses affects women's and men's

powers and therefore the investment they have in taking up gender-appropriate positions and practices. Girls and women actively engage in certain heterosexual practices in order to re-produce their gender identity.

Heterosexual practice and the construction of women's sexuality

However, the investments of those participating in sexual relations are no more unitary than the powers conferred on them through their positions in discourses. In the following extract, Clare indicates that her sexuality was completely subordinated to the need to be attractive:

Clare: I think my understanding of my own sexuality when I was an adolescent was about zero. I mean it felt like doing this thing which meant you had to attract boys – to be attractive to them. There wasn't anything else. But even later, when I began fucking men, it was actually an extension of that.

That this need to be attractive produced her as passive in heterosexual sex is illustrated below. Clare and I discover the similarities in the way that our sexuality and gender was reproduced in the practices which were a product of the male sexual drive. (The take-up of a position as object in the discourse of male sexual drive, motivated by the interest in being attractive, constructs the practice of heterosexual sex.)

Clare: Well, I don't know, the term 'sexuality' means something quite different now. I don't think I felt I had a sexuality.

Wendy: I was never actually aware of having a spontaneous desire, that somehow seemed to be initiated by me, which I could then act out.

Clare: Right, yes. That's it.

Wendy: . . . Except the desire to attract a man, and follow it through. Clare: Right. It was that which was powerful for me.

Wendy: Although, if I was attracted to a boy, and we went out together, or something, I was always – y'know, wanting kisses and cuddles, and funbles, and . . . I don't know – the kind of things that would signify that it was getting more intense.

Clare: Yes, but I think that was because of what it signified, rather than because I actually liked it.

Wendy: Yes, and even that had a kind of genital goal. Because even though I didn't know at that point what we did, I knew that that was the most risky place.

Clare: Yes – I knew that. But I can't say that I enjoyed it. But then I didn't enjoy screwing very much either. I didn't know that I didn't, even. I feel very ashamed – I feel it's an awful admission. I actually

had my first orgasm with Ken. I mean, I was sleeping with men for that long, and I never had one. I mean, I didn't think I was, and I wasn't sure, and for the life of me I wouldn't ask. It took me a long time to realize – well that I had masturbated and reached orgasm. I didn't know it was the same thing. I just thought it was something rather peculiar. I did masturbate when I was younger but I associated it – not one iota – with sex. I suppose later it was a certain kind of confidence which I had, which meant that I was more determined to get what I wanted. Even though I wasn't quite sure what that was. I mean, I think I was probably very passive.

Wendy: That passivity thing – I think is tied up with confidence. Er, with me, in short relationships, where I didn't actually . . . know a man very well, I never trusted the man enough for me to be active. Or, another way of putting it would be – to show myself as someone who had . . . desires.

Clare: I think that's right – for me. I was passive – because I didn't know how to express myself and also because I didn't know what to do. And because I felt judgements were being made of my sexual competence. And I had no idea, whether or not I was doing it right.

Wendy: The criterion that I evolved – of doing it right or not, was . . . um . . . ministering right to a man's needs, to what turned him on. If he seemed to enjoy it. And it was all about his sexuality.

Clare: Yes. Right.

Wendy: . . . I mean, that's how I learned to be sexual.

Clare: . . . Doing things that men liked. Yes.

Wendy: And in that sense I was quite active – I took initiatives.

The suppressed in discourse and the multiple significations of sex

So far it might appear that men and women are so positioned by these different discourses that gender difference is well established and successful in producing men and women whose subjectivity is a unitary product of them. As it not rather surprising, then, that men often stay in couple relationships – even hang on to them when the woman wants out – and find immediate replacements when a relationship ends? (I'm not saying women don't too, but this is consistent with women's positioning in discourses and inconsistent with men's.)

The meaning of sex is no more unitary than the discourses which compete to define the practice of sex. In this section I want to show how suppressed significations coexist with those expressed. Rather than seeing what is suppressed as something which is directly reducible to the Oedipus Complex, or as invisible in the sense that the suppressed meanings have no

effects (that is tantamount to the suppressed being non-existent and meaning being unitary). It will show how for men there are continued investments – to do with power – in defining women as subjects of the have/hold discourse, thereby suppressing their own wishes to have and to hold. One participant in my research wrote the following about the man she was in a relationship with:

If he's saying he has no expectations, no needs, then I can't let him down. If I can't let him down, he has more power. He has the power to hurt me, but I don't have the power to hurt him.

Her observation is a beautifully clear recognition of the relation between knowledge (discourse) and power. As long as she and not he is positioned as the subject of the have/hold discourse, unequal power is the consequence.

What does a man want?

It's obvious to men who have achieved a minimum of insight into their feelings that men's wants are not made explicit in sexist discourses. One of the men who participated in my research expresses needs more in keeping with women's as they are articulated in the have/hold discourse, at the same time as being aware of the contradictions:

Sam: The thing that has caused me the most pain, and the most hope is the idea of actually living with Jane. And that's in the context of having tried to live with three other women before. And each time the relationship's been full of possibility. I don't want to live on my own. There's too many things all wrapped up in coupling. There's too many needs it potentially meets, and there are too many things it frustrates. I do want to have a close, a central-person relationship, but in the past, the negative aspects outweighed the positive aspects dramatically. Or my inability to work through them has led me to run.

What happens to men's needs for a 'close central-person relationship' as Sam put it? The negative aspects, which occupy the other side of Sam's contradiction, are not to do with free sexuality (although in the extract below he specifically refers to that discourse in order to gain say it):

Sam: I'm very frightened of getting in deep – and then not being able to cope with the demands that the relationship's making. You see, a lot of these things aren't really to do with sexuality. They're to do with responsibility.

In this quotation from Sam, there is an elision between getting in deep and responsibility. This occurs through the lack of clarity about whether

Sam was frightened of getting in deep himself, or of the women doing so. In the following extract from Sam, the effect of the woman's position in the have/hold discourse is to protect Sam's own deep feelings. It is a further illustration of the relation between power and knowledge – the effect of discourse in action. It shows the idea of women requiring commitment being reproduced as a result of men's projected fears:

Sam: I'll tell you something – which I don't know what it means but I'll say it anyway. When I say to somebody, who I'm making love to – I'm close to, when I say, 'I love you, I love you' it's a word that symbolizes letting go. The night before Carol went away, she was saying it, and then I started saying it to her, when we were making love. What frightens me is that word, it's an act of commitment. Somebody suddenly, expects something of me. They've said something, that's the first word in a long rotten line towards marriage. That when you fall in love, you're caught up in the institution. And it's been an act of principle for me, that I can love somebody, and feel loved, without feeling any responsibility. That I can be free to say that I love somebody if I love them. Be free to feel. I can feel it quite unpredictably. It can hit me quite unexpectedly. And I think I worry about it because I can be quite sentimental.

The power of the meaning 'I love you' for Sam was that he felt close to someone and it was a 'letting go' of his emotions. This is dangerous because of the power it confers on someone else: the other in the sexual relationship. As soon as Sam has said this, the signifier 'letting go' is suppressed by its capture in the discourse, which positions women as requiring commitment. The fear which is generated because this can 'hit me quite unexpectedly' is sufficient to produce its repression, its falling to the level of the signified. Thus gender difference in the discourse 'women requiring commitment' is reproduced.

However, there is a contradiction which remains: men still have needs for the intimacy of a heterosexual relationship. A man writing in *Achilles Heel* (an anti-sexist men's magazine) suggests that this is the only place where men can get these needs met:

For men (heterosexual) sex works out as a trap because it's the only place where men can really get tenderness and warmth. But they have no skills to evoke these things because there is nothing in the rest of our lives that trains us to do this. So we come into this where we want warmth and intimacy and we don't know how to get it. But it's the only place it exists so there's this tremendous tension for men, getting into bed with women. (*Achilles Heel*, 2, 1979, p. 9)

This quotation again illustrates that sex can be a cover for men's need for intimacy to be met. The reproduction of women as subjects of a

discourse concerning the desire for intimate and secure relationships protects men from the risk associated with their own need (and the consequent power it would give women). Their own simultaneous position as object of the have/hold discourse and subject of the male sexual drive discourse enables them to engage in the practice of sex, and thus get what they want without recognizing those needs or risking exposure. 'Sex' as male drive therefore covers for the suppressed signification of 'sex' as intimacy and closeness. Because the practice itself does not require verbalization, the suppressed signification is not necessarily recognized. These significations (not necessarily conscious) are completely woven in to the practices of sex, suppressed as they are with the aid of the male sexual drive discourse. This is illustrated by Sam's immediate association when asked how a woman makes him feel: 'It's a closeness, isn't it . . . going to sleep, cuddling close. Feeling - I mean, I don't worry about burglars. I think I feel a lot more secure.'

Unlike a reply from within the discourse of male sexual drive, such as it turns me on', Sam's response captures significations normally suppressed through projection: closeness and security.

A man's fear of 'getting in deep' requires theorization in its own right. What are the strong feelings that are evoked by women with whom they have - or want - sexual relationships, which are invested in suppressing their own emotions and projecting them on to women?

Desire for the Other, power relations and subjectivity

In the following extract, Martin describes forcefully what happens to him when he feels a little attracted to a woman. 'The account imposes on my analysis the question of the irrational in couple relations.

Martin: People's needs for others are systematically denied in ordinary relationships. And in a love relationship you make the most fundamental admission about yourself - that you want somebody else. It seems to me that that is the greatest need, and the need which, in relationship to its power, is most strongly hidden and repressed. Once you've shown the other person that you need them, then you've made yourself incredibly vulnerable.]

Wendy: Yes, I agree. But I think there's a question about - how much you show yourself to be vulnerable.

Martin: But you do, just by showing that you're soft on somebody. It seems to me when you've revealed that need, you put yourself in an incredibly insecure state. You've before managed by not showing anyone what you're like. By showing them only what is publicly acceptable. And as soon as you've shown that there is this terrible hole in you - that you want somebody else - then you're in an absolute state of insecurity. And you need much more than the

empirical evidence that somebody likes you . . . You become neurotically worried that you're not accepted. Now you've let them see a little bit that's you. It'll be rejected. It's not so bad when a false exterior is rejected. The insecurity gives someone else power. I don't mean any viable self-exposure. I just mean any little indication that you like the other person.

Martin's experience of attraction leaves us with a pressing question: what is that provides us with the irrational charge in sexual attraction? It is the quality of this experience which precipitates Martin's vulnerability and resistance. [I call this experience 'desire for the Other', and by the use of this concept, link in to psychoanalytic theory for an explanation: desire for the mother is repressed, but never extinguished. I reassesses itself in adult sexual relations.]

I want to stress the effects of this subjective experience. Martin's 'desire for the Other' produces a feeling of intense vulnerability which in turn motivates him to exercise whatever powers he can muster in relation to women to whom he feels attracted. Sexist discourses serve this precise function. By reading himself as object of the have/hold discourse he can suppress the recognition of his dependence on a relationship with a woman. As long as he reads the woman as subject of the have/hold discourse he can camouflage his desire. If he succeeds, he can sustain the relationship and meet some of his needs while both remain unaware of them. That this has power effects even when its suppression is not total, is illustrated in the following account by Martha, the woman with whom Martin has a relationship.]

Martha: All these things that we've been talking about hand such power to people. Martin and I go up and down like a see-saw. There are days when he's in another city, and needing me, and suddenly I'm powerful and can dictate terms. We're back here, and I'm wanting a close, reciprocal, warm, working-out relationship, and suddenly he's powerful, because he doesn't want to give it. It really is dynamic . . . every day of our lives. It really is working less and less well. This business of having needs is so humiliating, because it makes one vulnerable.

Wendy: And shifts the power. . .

Martha: And shifts the power - exactly. Her experience of the effects again bears witness to the way sexist discourse is productive of power - for men. [No, in sexual play?] In the following extract Martha refers to the more general oppressive effects of Martin's resistance to the power he experiences her having in the relationship:

Martha: I put up with it, rather than saying, 'No, this is not the way I want to be treated'. I want to be treated as a complete person,

someone who has feelings and ideas and intuitions that are actually worth taking notice of. No room is allowed for me to be myself, fully because it might be too powerful an intrusion on his actions. To be accepted one hundred per cent means that the other person has to be strong enough . . . to keep their own integrity in the face of you being one hundred per cent yourself. It's so hard to find men who might be committed to taking those risks.

Her moving testimony to the effects on her of Martin's power is a specific example of the experience of gender difference: it points to the psychological characteristics which are consistent with – and reproduce – sexist discourses where woman is the inferior 'other'.

Misrecognition of men

When men behave warily and defensively, women do not necessarily read it as stemming from their vulnerability or dependence. This is because women too are subject to the production of meanings through dominant discourses. The available assumptions about men are that they are, for example, powerful, rational, autonomous, in control and self-confident. These features are, by definition, positively valued in sexist discourses. The effect is to foreground men's qualities and conceal their weaknesses and to do the opposite for women. Positioned within such discourses women misread themselves as easily as men. Clare's account of her relationship exemplifies this misrecognition:

Clare: That guy, I didn't even know he was so dependent on me.
Wendy: That's so often the way men play it. But it's also so often the way that women read it.

Clare: Oh, it's two-way. Precisely. His behaviour was very stereotypical, really. I thought he was a competent person – but he didn't think he was at all. He was outwardly confident – domineering – which actually made me feel incredibly oppressed.

Wendy: How long did it take you to realize that?

Clare: Oh, a long time. I didn't realize he was dependent on me, till I left him, I had no idea. That's the extent we both managed to keep this from each other. And when I look back on it, I realize that I should have known. It's always the same set of signs that I misread. The very signs that I took to signify of confidence, were, for him – well, he actually used it as displays of confidence, but they were, actually, exactly the signs of his lack of confidence, like – talking too much . . . being opinionated and things that I couldn't bear. And when I read it back as lack of confidence, I could see. . . . He was so insecure inside – and I didn't know. Quite a lot of things changed in our relationship. When I first met him, he had a Degree, and I had a

Certificate and I wanted a Degree and he encouraged me. But I mean, not only did I do that . . . but I actually got far higher qualifications than he did. So that also made him feel unconfident. And I hadn't realized that either. We did things like . . . both applying for Open University teaching. I got it, and he didn't. It didn't occur to me it was a problem. Of course it was a problem for him.

It was possible for Clare to understand this as misrecognition because the process was uncovered when she left him. However, it is relevant to point out that this kind of misrecognition does not simply cease to operate through a rational process of learning by experience. The irrationality of women's desire for the Other also demands analysis:

Wendy: What you said – about not being able to read his dependence on you – I think that's true of you and Ken.

Clare: Um, yes, I've been told that before, but I still don't know how to know it.

Wendy: Yes, it's the kind of thing, y'know, when like, somebody kind of breaks, and expresses themselves on a different level. Like Phil did when you left – like Jeremy did when I left. He actually felt like a different person.

Clare: Yeah. Phil felt like a different person. Why is it then that I can't get hold of that knowledge about Ken? Why can't I see it? Cause I can't. Um . . . it's very silly 'cause I know where my power lies.

Desire and the signifier 'woman'

Misrecognition of the Other of desire, when it is an opposite-sexed Other, is not explicable simply by the existence of gender-differentiated discourses. I will argue, through analysing Jim's account, that the way in which 'woman' signifies for him has a history going back to his desire for the mother. The argument is an illustration of Lacan's slogan 'the desire for the Other is the desire for the mother' (Lacan, 1977, p. 286).

Like Sam, Jim is aware that he is frightened by strong emotions. Again like Sam, there is an elision between his own and the woman's emotions:

Wendy: And was it that the girls wanted to be more intimate?

Jim: Yeah – I was frightened of making that kind of commitment, that kind of involvement, 'cause I thought I'd be let down, because of what happened the first time, when I was so unreserved about how I felt. I think that really affected my life incredibly, that first time I fell in love.

Wendy: Why was having a relationship with her such a burden?

Jim: She was very strong and very emotional – that's pejorative,

but I mean she had strong reactions, so that I didn't actually feel safe that I wasn't going to be knocked out, or sucked in by her.

It transpires that Jim's fear of her strong emotions was a projected fear of his own.¹⁴ He feared them because it felt unsafe to feel so strongly for a woman. As many men experience with their first sexual relationship – particularly if it is with an older woman – their lack of defences leave them painfully hurt when the relationship ends. As I have argued above, this constitutes the investment in reading the woman as the subject of the have/hold discourse.

What does Jim want that he's so afraid of losing that he can't have it in case he loses it?

Wendy: What was it that you wanted out of a stable relationship with Jeanette?

Jim: Well, I think support. Knowing that there was somebody who was going to be on my side, that I could talk about things that were affecting me and they would more or less automatically be important to her. And that she would be able to give me strength in that way. Very classic. Like my parents' relationship. But it was me who set the agenda, and she fitted in, and in a way that's what I wanted. Someone who wouldn't actually challenge me. There's a gaze of uncritical, totally accepting love that I find really attractive. 'I'll love you forever, whatever,' – is really a powerful gaze. And that's a mother's gaze.

I have considered in greater detail elsewhere (Hollway, 1982) the implications and theorization of this mother/Other link. Here I will give one further instance of the way that seemingly unimportant day-to-day relationships are suffused with meanings which must be explicated in terms of 'desire for the Other' and how the woman of the relationship is linked to the mother. Another woman Jim had a relationship with said:

I was feeling preoccupied with other things, so I suppose not paying him much attention. Jim got at me twice – about tiny things, in a way that felt antagonistic. When I pointed it out we tried to do some work on it. Blank. Then he came up with the word 'oranges', as if from nowhere. When he thought about it a bit he said it had something to do with his relations with women. If a woman peeled an orange for him, it showed that they cared for him. Then he said that his mother used to do it for him, even when he could do it for himself.

Desire has a history through its occupancy of certain significations – in this case, who peeled oranges. It does not express itself through the rationally accessible layer of meaning – it couldn't be included in the

definition of oranges. But when it comes up in the practice of peeling oranges this meaning is there as a presence. For Jim it is part of a wider set of significations around proof of loving and caring through women doing things for him. It is consistent with the common experience of women in relationships with men that men get them to do things for them when they are 'objectively' unnecessary. The suppressed signification is 'I'll do it for you because I love you'. The signifying chain from mother to Other is historically unbroken for men, although, according to Freudian theory, savagely repressed.¹⁵

Implications for changing gender difference

In this part I have shown that the positions which are available in discourses do not determine people's subjectivity in any unitary way. Whilst gender-differentiated positions do overdetermine the meanings and practices and values which construct an individual's identity, they do not account for the complex, multiple and contradictory meanings which affect and are affected by people's practices. Specifically, men's sexuality is not plausibly accounted for by their positions as subject in the discourse of the male sexual drive and object in the have/hold discourse. 'Sex' signifies in many ways at once. The fact that a man succeeds in reading his sexual complementarity positions – only means that the discourse provides the means whereby other significations can be suppressed. Yet 'desire for the Other' is present through the metaphorical axis (see p. 214) and affects practices. Thus the knowledge produced by the male sexual drive discourse confers power on men which, in a circular way, motivates them recurrently in taking up that position. This is a specific example of the power-knowledge relation that Foucault theorizes (see Introduction to section 2, pp. 115–18). If the woman is unable to resist her complementarity positioning by having access to an alternative discourse and practice, or if her investment in being so positioned is paramount,¹⁶ the couple will reproduce the discourse and thus the existence of gender difference in practices and subjectivity.

What makes this analysis different from one which sees a mechanical circulation of discourses through practices is that there is an investment which, for reasons of an individual's history of positioning in discourses and consequent production of subjectivity, is relatively independent of contemporary positions available. According to my account this is an investment in exercising power on behalf of a subjectivity protecting itself from the vulnerability of desire for the Other. Otherwise power could only be seen as a determined feature of the reproduction of gender-differentiated discourses, which would be left untheorized or reduce to a biological or economic determinism. Instead I have tried to show by

concrete example that the interest is specific and part of the history of men and women (in different ways).

I believe that the heterosexual couple relationship (or sexual relationship) is a crucial site for the reproduction of gender difference because of 'desire for the Other'. In chapter 6, it is suggested that the vulnerability of subjectivity and the consequent interest in exercising power is true in some measure of all relations. An analysis of race or class difference could follow many of the same principles but it could not rely in quite the same way on the concept of 'desire for the Other'. This issue raises the question of the relation between desire and 'desire for the Other' in psychoanalytic theory (see Introduction to section 3, pp. 215-16).

The analysis is of political importance because it indicates the nature of the problem involved in changing gender difference. It is not only the social division of labour. We have indicated that there are problems with the Oedipus Complex as an explanation (see Introduction to section 3, p. 215). Furthermore, it is not a problem to be addressed at the level of discourses alone, critical as that is. The reproduction of gender-differentiated practices depends on the circulation between subjectivities and discourses which are available. The possibility of interrupting this circle is contained in a grasp of the contradictions between discourses and thus of contradictory subjectivities. While one set of desires may be suppressed, along with their signification, by the dominant sexist discourses, the contradictions are never successfully eliminated. They are the weak points in the stronghold of gender difference: taking up gender-appropriate positions as women and men does not successfully express our multiple subjectivities.

In the final part of this chapter I shall argue that gender difference is maintained, that is, reproduced in day-to-day interactions in heterosexual couples, through the denial of the non-unitary, non-rational, relational character of subjectivity.

Splitting the differences

The following introductory extract describes splitting between a gender-differentiated pair of characteristics: expressing feelings and giving support. The exclusion, through projection, of one 'side' of this pair is made possible by the way their meaning already contains a specification of what is gender-appropriate. The difference is re-produced in the subjectivities of each member of the heterosexual couple.

Jim: The thing got specialized, as it were polarized, where one person does the feeling. My relationship with Jeanette, who I lived with for many years, developed in such a way that she was responsible for doing the feelings - she was the one that got upset, and I

was the one who was coping, providing support, kindness, et cetera. And so what that meant was that I didn't get to express any feelings and she didn't get to express any support. And so what that means is that both sides are completely prevented from experiencing what the other person's 'job' is. Which means that you get a completely shrivelled - a completely incomplete - idea of what's going on.

Two important points emerge from this comment. First - and most obviously - the content of the split is predictable from discourses specifying gender difference: it was the woman whose job it was to do the feeling. Our common-sense experience of this split is through the naturalistic assumption that it is part of women's natural make-up. In consequence, this characteristic of their relationship was not read as a relational dynamic; it was read as aspects of their personalities. Jim said that at the time he firmly believed that he was just not a 'feeling person'. Whereas traditionally this would have been considered a positive characteristic, in the humanist and feminist climate of the post-1960s, he felt that it was a lack. None the less, the effect of the denial, through projection of these feelings, was experienced as part of his 'personality', that is as something fundamental and unchangeable. Clearly then, it is vital to understand the mechanisms whereby gender-differentiated characteristics - such as expressing feelings - are located in one member of a heterosexual couple. By focusing on the mechanisms, I am able to avoid seeing the effect as a once-and-for-all accomplishment of sex-role socialization. Instead I am seeing it as a dynamic which is constantly being re-produced in day-to-day couple relationships. I shall illustrate this in due course.

The second point emerges from the opposition which is implied between expressing feelings and giving support. This is not a logical pair of opposites, but you probably took it for granted when you read it (which illustrates the power of gender-differentiated discourses to construct our assumptions). The value which we are obliged to accept in order to make sense of this opposition is that people, usually women, who express feelings need support because expressing feelings is a weakness. 'Doing the feelings' is equated with 'getting upset'. Conversely the person, usually a man, who gives support is thus obliged to position himself as someone who is strong enough not to have feelings. The logic of the opposition is not contained in the meaning itself, but rather in the judgement attached to it. In our society, the judgement is a sexist one: expressing feelings is weak, feminine and in contradistinction to men's rationality. With the value - which is indeed inextricable from the meaning once it is seen as inserted into the discourse - comes power difference. Men can support women who are subject to the unfortunate bane of feeling and thus men are superior. As I have already argued, this constitutes a substantial investment in taking up such a position recurrently in relations. I have

already shown how it can be the fear of their own feelings, signifying weakness, which is concealed by the manoeuvre. Now I shall show how splitting, through projection and introjection, operates as a defence. This accounts for the mechanism whereby gender-differentiated positions in discourses are reproduced.

This splitting is contradictory. Giving support implies not being able to ask for support, as I shall demonstrate in the example of Beverley and Will below. (Again there is not a logical opposition involved – support can in principle be mutual.) In this part I therefore want to clarify two issues raised by the idea of characteristics being split through gender difference into women and men. First, the interpersonal dynamic must be theorized – and this is where psychoanalytic theory's non-unitary, non-rational subject and the unconscious and its ability to theorize relations come into play. Second, the space for movement in the gender-differentiated content of these splits must be specified. Here, the contradictory subject positions offered by coexisting and inconsistent discourses, and the consequent production of multiple meanings and powers, offer the necessary theoretical perspective.

Repression and rationality

How does this mechanism of splitting work? In the following extract, I look at an example in detail and link it to my concept of investment. Will is describing an occasion when he became aware of his feelings, and how they were related to a change in Beverley's position. One of the methodological (and theoretical) questions raised by the use of the concept of splitting is that – by definition – it is not observable while it is in operation. It feels like the natural state of affairs in a relationship, what personality psychology would deal with under the rubric of 'individual differences'. Here Will is able to describe it because for 'one and a half minutes' the splitting dynamic was ruptured:

Will: In a relationship for me, this 'frozenness' of certain feelings is really terrible. Much more of the time than I would like, we're doing this specialization job. There's maybe a split second in which I feel in touch with the set of feelings that I'm not normally responsible for, and that I don't particularly avow. And I don't even know if I feel them. And I think, 'Shit I actually felt that'. For two or three weeks I don't feel anything about it again, and I have to say, 'Well, at that moment I don't feel anything, but I do remember.' I mean at one stage, Beverley said [sighs], 'Well, maybe we should have an abortion,' and I suddenly burst into tears. Now it was very peculiar, because I'd actually been the person who'd been saying, 'You really should think about having an abortion,' you know, I was giving all

the excellent reasons, 'cause normally – and this might be the Catholic thing – she has always said, 'No, an abortion is terrible.' And for me, it's just a matter of convenience. If she wants one. If it interferes with her studies, then we'll certainly wait two or three years. So I felt quite knowledgeable about it all, and there was no problem.

Wendy: Yes, this is Will, being the rational, reassuring side of the relationship.

Will: Yes, that's right. So it's my job to make her think about it. And then she actually thought about it, and she decided, maybe she would. And I burst into tears, which was completely unexpected for me. And I felt terribly depressed. And for that split second – it lasted about one and a half minutes – I knew that I actually did not want her to have an abortion. I mean, one of the things she's actually said to me is, 'I don't know whether you want to actually have this child or not' and I've said, 'Of course I want to have this child.' And at one level that's certainly true. But I didn't actually feel it in the same way. And I had to hold on to that feeling, because it went very quickly. A breakdown of that division or specialization is quite rare, and it's difficult to break out of that type of role – that division of labour. So I had to hold on to those moments of knowledge.

Wendy: What you said about Beverley saying, 'I don't know what you feel about having this baby' – at one level you knew that this was absurd; you'd said a hundred times, 'I'm into having this baby,' but you'd repressed a lot of the feelings – [Will: Mmm] – for fear that you might be disappointed. So actually, she's right. Because apart from those moments, the feelings that you have about it aren't coming over and that's the information that is so lacking.

Will describes the rational arguments that he put forward in a way which exemplifies how they were devoid of his own desires. The experience of the issue is summarized by his comment, 'I felt quite knowledgeable about it all'. The effect is summed up as 'there was no problem'. His position in relation to Beverley shows what he was not taking on himself: 'It's my job to make her think about it.' Will's account of what happened next illustrates the usefulness of the idea of positions in discourses. Beverley resisted the 'gender-appropriate' position. Rather than remaining the receptacle of all the non-rational feelings about abortion, Beverley adopted the position that Will had been occupying: 'She actually thought about it and she decided, maybe she would.' Will's ability to repress his feelings of wanting a baby were conditional on positioning Beverley so that she would want it (despite rational considerations, which he, not she, was representing). When this unconscious strategy failed, the effect was 'completely unexpected'. His defence against strong feelings that he

wanted a baby – the mechanism of projection – had broken down. It did not, however, break down for long. This demonstrates how the evanescence of feelings is the result of their repression by the defence mechanisms.

Defence mechanisms and social relations

The importance of this extract is that it illustrates the link between psychodynamics on the one hand, which affect (in this case) a man's experience of an issue and his understanding of his identity, and on the other the effects on social relations and gender difference. Will's repression was not just an intrapsychic matter. A theory of the 'unconscious' is not just about personal well-being and individual treatment. Repression is a dynamic with social and political effects. However, the effects are not comprehensible if we stay within the framework of psychoanalytic theory. The latter has had a tendency to concentrate on processes and structures (the processes of splitting, defence mechanisms, identification and the structures of the unconscious, conscious and desire). Ignoring content, the conclusion – erroneous in my view – which psychoanalysis tends to draw is that the content of desire is inserted in infancy (most likely to be theorized as at the Oedipal stage). The political implications are thus not dissimilar from socialization theory: the continuous changes which characterize the social domain and are not linked to generational change are left out of the picture because there is no account of how these changes in content are produced in subjects' positions in multiple discourses; of what is suppressed and expressed; and of the content of splits. Discourse analysis provides a way of understanding the content of the split: what in this case Will calls 'being in charge of patriarchal reassurance' because 'somebody else's needs or fears or anxieties are greater than mine.' Why did Will believe that he was the stronger of the two? I have illustrated how the availability of a position in discourse which is positively valued and which confers power must be accompanied by a mechanism at the level of the psyche which provides the investment to take up this position. I have also argued that the investment in these positions is produced in the individual's history. Will's history is no exception:

Will: Women are developing strength, which is in a way what I wanted, because when I was at school – I mean, women were nothing and I hated it. Because I couldn't think of them as equals. I felt them as people with whom I could only have a false relationship. I felt really bad about that. And I used to read novels in which there were strong women, with whom I could talk because actually the women I found around were not like that.

Will experienced and positioned women through sexist discourses. He despised women for being weaker than him. The effect of the discourses

was misogynist. Women were associated with weakness and consequently negatively valued. The following extract shows how these feelings about strength and weakness produce and are re-produced by Will's own contradictory subjectivity. He is responding to a woman who has been saying how she feels uneasy about being powerful with other women.

Will: Yeah but you feel that. Now you see I feel that in spades. If I fight, I fight from the wrong side. So I am constantly feeling like an elephant walking around with lots of eggshells, and I hate people for being eggshells. And I hate myself for being an elephant. I really fight feeling very kind to lots of people. When people were kind to me in that way, I used to lap it up, and hate me for needing it. And them.

Will's discomfort is with his own weakness: needing other people. If he can't accept this in himself, it is no wonder that he cannot accept it in women. In this respect he wanted women to be equally strong. There is a contradiction between this and the effects of splitting which means that he will position women as weaker because of his investment in being strong, the effect of which is to project the unwelcome feelings of weakness. The following extract illustrates this dynamic. Will is continuing the account of their decision whether to have a baby:

Will: We were having a conversation about something which at the moment I've repressed. Oh yes, it was about the small matter of pregnancy and having a child. I can't imagine how I forgot about that. [Laughs] And I was in a sort of reassuring mood. And what she said was she was very worried about it – it was at the end of quite a long conversation – and she'd been saying how she felt and I'd been doing my reassuring bit. It sounds so ludicrous but it wasn't at all. I said, 'In my mind, I'm prepared for every eventuality.' Right, and this was some way of saying, 'If you want an abortion, we'll have an abortion, and if you don't want an abortion, we won't have an abortion.' And she said quite sharply, and nastily, 'You mean we could have the child and then strangle it immediately afterwards!' And I burst into tears, because what her saying that meant was, 'You've been talking in a completely abstract way without any feeling whatsoever.' And that got me out of my reassuring general thing. I'd actually felt all that, yet I'd also felt quite distant. I felt I was the reassuring one, y'know, I was feeling anxious for myself, yes, but she was much more anxious and therefore I had to say we were prepared for every – blah blah. And that sharp remark – it just tore away that sheath over my emotions. That sheath of being in charge of patriarchal reassurance. The point is that if anything makes me feel – and it's incredibly easy for me to feel – that somebody else's

needs or fears or anxieties are greater than mine I immediately shift into this caring thing.

Sarah: Yeah but, can you stop there a minute? Because do you really feel that theirs is greater than yours?

Will: I don't know whether it's true, I always tend to think that other people's needs to talk or needs to work things out are greater than my own. Because in a sense I have this fantasy of myself as quite strong.

Several important relational dynamics are illustrated in this part of the chapter.

(1) The abstract mode is perfectly exemplified by Will's statement 'In my mind I'm prepared for every eventuality.' One important effect of this abstract mode of talking is that it purports to give people information, but the information it denies the other person is what really matters. It conceals value, importance, desire, the person's commitment to an issue or position. Beverley reflects this problem when she points out that despite the fact that Will says 'I want to have this child' her feeling is 'I don't know whether you want to have this child or not'. The effect of the abstract mode is that the information that comes over is not dependable: it leaves unsaid what is most important. In contrast, when Will burst into tears, Beverley told me that she got more information of the kind that she needed in order to make the decision than from Will's rational statements.

(2) The abstract mode is not simply 'rational' (by implication, desirable). It is invested. The effect of not providing the information that counts is not an arbitrary by-product. It protects Will's vulnerability. Suppression of feelings enables Will to occupy a powerful position of not minding, disguising his strong wishes to have a baby and protecting him from the vulnerability which would follow due to the fact that Beverley might decide against it.

(3) Repressed desires do not go away. The defence mechanisms of introjection and projection – the means through which they are expressed in displaced ways – are-*interpsychic*, that is, they are relational. This means that they are dependent on the participation of another. This other represents needs which are opposite, rather than just different. The opposition is a product of the principle that positive and negative value is imbricated in the meanings. What is projected onto another person represents the material which is unacceptable because of contradictions in the one who is doing the projecting. What is repressed is not just material whose repressed status is isolated from subjectivity. Freud maintained that repression was always related to a desire and vice versa, so that there is a principle of opposition. Repression of contradiction is thus a highly

complementary mechanism to the principle of opposition which is fundamental to gender difference. Hence, Will suppresses his feelings because of his vulnerability. They are more likely to be introjected by a woman because discourses have already conferred on her a position of doing the feelings.)

(4) The successful completion of the splitting still requires that Will can take up a position of rational reassurance (note that it is gendered: 'patriarchal reassurance'). The extract illustrates how this is made possible by the way he reads himself as stronger through sexist, gender-differentiated discourses. As he himself acknowledges, his deflection from his own feelings is through reading the other person as having greater needs, fears, anxieties than his. The discourse and the mechanism of projection work hand-in-glove: he is uncomfortable with his own needs. They don't go away. Rather he projects them. The moment he feels stronger than the other person, he can't help but shift into 'this caring thing'. His 'fantasy of himself as quite strong' is both the condition and effect of this dynamic condition because it invests him in that position (already differentially available to him as a man because of sexist discourses); effect because he can project his own weaknesses and thus his feelings of relative strength are reproduced. The continuity of Will's reproduction of his position as stronger requires a historical perspective: it is an investment which is inserted into his subjectivity.)

(5) Will's gendered subjectivity is articulated not in isolation but in relation to a woman: he wants her to be equally strong, not least because he can also get support and not take all the responsibility.¹⁹ On the other hand, he ends up positioning himself as stronger because of suppression and projection of the negatively valued character of feelings of vulnerability. It is important to recognize such contradictions because they challenge the smooth reproduction of gender difference.)

(A complementary production of this contradiction is evident in many women in heterosexual relations who feel that they want a man to be stronger than they are. Consistent with their history of positioning, they too reproduce themselves as needing support. Their investment, while not so clear cut as for men, is in getting looked after and being required to take little responsibility.²⁰ Yet because connotations of weakness and inferiority are carried along with their need for support, it contradicts their feelings of effectiveness and their experience of being strong enough to provide support.)

The circle of reproduction of gender difference involves two people whose historical positioning, and the investments and powers this has inserted into subjectivity, complement each other. When there remain contradictions in each person's wants of the other, there is ground for an

interruption of its reproduction. These contradictions are the products of social changes. It is through the kinds of social changes that I outlined at the beginning of this chapter that alternative discourses – for example feminist ones – can be produced and used by women in the struggle to redefine our positions in gender-differentiated practices, thus challenging sexist discourses still further. Changes don't automatically eradicate what went before – neither in structure nor in the way that practices, powers and meanings have been produced historically. Consciousness-changing is not accomplished by new discourses replacing old ones. It is accomplished as a result of the contradictions in our positionings, desires and practices – and thus in our subjectivities – which result from the coexistence of the old and the new. Every relation and every practice to some extent articulates such contradictions and therefore is a site of potential change as much as it is a site of reproduction.

Notes

- 1 Heterosexual relations seemed the most powerful site for the reproduction of gender difference, based as they are on the biological difference which over-determines individuals' positionings, both historically and in present interaction. Couple or sexual relations add the extra dimension of 'desire for the Other' (see Introduction to section 3, pp. 215–16) which I believe makes salient the power relations. Lesbian and homosexual relations too, this desire and power can produce gender-differentiated positionings. While in this chapter, I have not space to discuss this, chapter 8 of my thesis (Hollway, 1982) takes such an example and shows how – even with the variable of biological difference controlled (to use the terminology of psychological experiments) gender difference is produced: difference of positions in gender-differentiated discourses and thus powers and practices associated with them.
- 2 The same phenomenon occurs with colonized peoples. For example, Gustav Jahoda (1961) quotes Chamaian blacks generalizing in a derogatory manner about 'blacks', calling them superstitious, lazy, etc., in other words reproducing the racist discourses with which whites position them. Frantz Fanon (1968) addresses the same phenomenon in his analysis of black identity. He was one of the first to emphasize the importance of consciousness for political change and to use psychoanalytic theory alongside a radical political analysis of colonialism, to theorize the contradictions in the identities of black people in colonized countries.
- 3 Lewis Nkosi illustrates the same principle when talking about his experience of his Africanness in South Africa: 'I know that in my case I first discovered my Africanness the day I learned that I was not only black but non-white. . . . From that day onwards I began to regard this prefix *non* with absolute hostility. Everywhere I went in public places notices shouted at me 'non-whites only' and every time I read in the message it vividly brought to mind the crude fact that in the eyes of the world my life represented something negative, something 'non'. In that small prefix put before the word *white* I saw the entire burden

- and consequence of European colonialism: its assault on the African personality; the very arrogance of this assumption' (Nkosi, 1983, pp. 44–5).
- 4 I think this partly accounts for why the vast majority of transsexuals are men to women.
 - 5 The classic and oft-quoted demonstration of this contradiction is the experiment by Broverman *et al.* (1970). Clinicians judged what was considered 'mentally healthy' for adults, for men and for women. Traits which represented a normally healthy male and a normally healthy adult were highly correlated. Traits characterizing a normally healthy female were significantly different and, predictably, not highly valued.
 - 6 *Forum* magazine's emphasis on technique reflects this focus. The sexual partner is supposedly necessary 'to take part in reciprocal stimulation that will provide the maximum intensity of voluptuous sensations at coming off' (1971). The individualism of this discourse is characteristic of the epoch generally (see Introduction to section 1).
 - 7 The contrast between Jim's and Colin's positions demonstrates that men's positions and thus the meanings of sexual practices, are not determined even for men of similar age and background.
 - 8 By my use of 'subject' and 'object', I mean to emphasize the difference of position which is expressed in the grammatical differentiation between subject and object. In this use, subject is not equivalent to our general use of the term (see Introduction, pp. 2–3). Subjects occupy both positions in discourses, in that sense. Neither is object equivalent to the use made in some feminist theory, as in 'sex-object'. There it tends to imply that the position affords no agency and no power. As my analysis makes clear, I do not hold with this implication.
 - 9 While a fair amount of feminist work has been done concerning girls (McRobbie, 1978; Nava, 1982; Cowie and Lees, 1981) it is difficult to find work on boys which challenges dominant assumptions. However, see Willis (1978) and Wood (1982) for descriptions of working-class boys' relations to girls.
 - 10 This is the first instance of several sexual metaphors used by men in these accounts: getting in deep, letting go (p. 244), soft on (p. 246) and sucked in (p. 250). All refer to the danger of strong positive feelings for a woman and the metaphors all reflect a man's position in heterosexual sex. The unselfconscious use of these metaphors supports my argument that the significations of sex are closely bound up with the contradictions involved in 'desire for the Other'.
 - 11 Martin does not speak of himself directly, but this is typical of his style and the phenomenon of protection that I am illustrating. Generalizing is a way of distancing oneself from the risk associated with what one is saying. As there is no commonly accessible discourse which says what he is expressing here, I am confident that Martin is speaking about his own experience.
 - 12 See note 10.
 - 13 The feelings are likely to be similar whether the person in receipt of them is same or 'opposite' sex. So the choice (compulsion might be a more accurate word) concerning the gender of the loved object is a very important phenomenon to account for. Psychoanalytic theory does provide an account which answers these questions about desire, love and the irrational. However, in its present form, it emphasizes desire as a process at the expense of the meanings it occupies (and thus the social content). Lacan's theorization of the metaphorical

axis sees the chain of signifiers which desire has occupied as contained within the meaning of a word such as 'woman'. This historical chain runs from mother (the first Other) to woman/Other. The positions occupied in discourses in relation to a man – whether occupied by mother or woman – clarify how this historical chain of signification is produced. See pp. 250–1 for an illustration of this claim.

14 This is not to claim that these feelings weren't the woman's as well. It is the fear of them which indicates his own projection. Another person is a suitable vehicle for a projection precisely when they are subject to the same feelings themselves.

15 The account of (heterosexual) women's desire for the Other represents a further theoretical problem: how and to what extent does the girl transfer her desire for the Other from mother, where it is originally located, to father and thence to a man? In the Freudian account, for the girl unconscious meanings (what Lacan would call the metaphoric axis) slip from wanting to 'be' the penis (that is on identification with the father and continuing desire for the mother) to wanting to 'have' it and give the father a gift of a baby. I cannot enter into a detailed critique here. However if we see psychoanalytic theory as itself being subject to defence mechanisms operating in its (predominantly male) authors and reproducing sexist discourses, we can hypothesize that this formulation may be a reversal. The valorization of the penis would be a compensation for the power of the mother/woman to give birth and be reproduced through men's investment in this position in discourse. The process is similar to my analysis of Jim's and Sam's accounts (pp. 245 and 249–50) who accomplished a reversal through projection.

16 For a more detailed consideration of women's contradictory investments and powers in sexist discourses see Hollway (1983).

17 In this context, Jim means that his coping and strength were in response to Jeanette getting upset. Jim equates 'doing the feeling' with getting upset. Clearly there are other feelings like anger which are more associated with men. However, the slippage in Jim's usage is a common one. The question of who 'gives support' in heterosexual couple relationships is a good deal more complicated than this and is traditionally divided into gender-appropriate areas. For example it was clear from the earlier extract from Jim (p. 250) that Jeanette provided a great deal of emotional support for him. Between Beverley and Will, another couple in my research (see pp. 257–8), support was explicitly gender-differentiated: Beverley's was called 'mothering' and Will's 'paternal reassurance'.

18 It is particularly clear in Beverley's case that weakness is not a feature of who she 'is'. By this I mean a dynamic and a positioning which she unintentionally re-produces in new relationships and not her 'personality', as psychology might account for it. In a previous relationship she was not so positioned and her experience in this relationship is more recognizable as a relational dynamic: 'I feel like when I'm around you I lose all resolve. I feel completely weak and helpless. I don't know why it happens, why I let it happen.'

19 I have not developed or illustrated this claim here, but see Hollway (1982), chapter 7.

20 This may not be the case in practice, but if the investment has been inserted historically (a history of desire eventually linking back to the mother) it is not simply conditional on a rational view of the outcome. This is one reason why my use of investment in no way slides into a learning-theory explanation.

from Graham Cook 2007

PROBLEM