
SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY
THESIS 42
PSALTER LANE

Third Wave Feminist Analysis: An Approach to the Exploration of Discourses of Femininity

Janine Liladhar

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

(March 2001)

To Nathaniel and Fabian
without whom
this would have been written much sooner

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this thesis a number of people have supported me emotionally and in practical ways, whilst others have helped me to develop my ideas. For such reasons, and many others, my thanks go to Sara Mills; Evelyn Kerslake; Merja Makinen; Mary Peace; my students; David, Annette and Jo Beaumont; and Kesh Liladhar.

Janine Liladhar

Thesis submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Third Wave Feminist Analysis:
An approach to the exploration of discourses of femininity

ABSTRACT

This thesis suggests that whilst feminist theory has been, and remains, a significant political influence which has contributed to wholesale legislative and social changes, the climate in which this theory circulates is now markedly different from that of the 1960s, when Second Wave Feminism began. Consequently, a new form of feminist theory is developing, which attempts to respond to an increasingly more complex situation, without losing sight of the many important elements of the earlier work. This thesis is situated within this movement and I term the approach it takes Third Wave Feminist Analysis. Third Wave Feminism seeks to challenge sexism and to explore notions of femininity as they are manifested in texts, looking for both the restrictions these seek to impose on women and for the potential these offer for liberatory ways of behaving and being.

As this reference to texts might suggest, Third Wave Feminist Analysis is primarily a form of literary criticism. However, it does not only draw on work from that discipline. Instead, it employs ideas and approaches used by feminists working in other fields, in order to formulate a more comprehensive analysis than was generally found in earlier feminist literary criticism. Moreover, the thesis is not limited to an exploration of only literary texts but also explores other cultural forms. This diversity is important because constructions of knowledge and subjectivity are enabled by *all* types of representations. Thus, interdisciplinarity moves analysis on from a straightforward identification of the 'facts' of literary cultures to an exploration of cultural identities, a step which is assisted by Third Wave Feminist Analysis's insistence on the importance of extra-textual features, including the analyst's own background knowledge of the society in which the texts being explored are produced and interpreted. The object of this emphasis on the cultural and the societal is a more equitable world; in other words, I am claiming that Third Wave Feminist Analysis aids feminist praxis.

As part of this attempt, Third Wave Feminist Analysis attempts to interrogate the ways in which femininity is defined in the case studies explored. In this thesis three texts in circulation in the 1990s are examined: Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1992); *The Rector's Wife* by Joanna Trollope (1991); and the TV Soap Opera archetype, the Soap Queen. As part of this examination, femininity is understood as one of a number of inter-connecting discourses which not only reflect but shape gender. Thus, discourses disseminate social and institutionalised values and also create them, influencing people's behaviours and attitudes, although individuals do have the potential to resist or challenge this influence. A recurrent discursive theme in the three case studies explored here is the association of femininity with the 'private' or domestic realm of home and family. In many ways, this association is rooted in an outdated notion of femininity; the Victorian concept of the feminine domestic ideal. To this extent, this thesis argues that its case studies are implicated in the promulgation of anachronistic discourses. However, all three texts also subvert this ideal in a number of ways and the ways in which this subversion occurs are also explored.

Third Wave Feminist Analysis:
An exploration of the discourses of femininity

Contents

Introduction

The Aims of and Context for Third Wave Feminist Analysis

This thesis will suggest that whilst feminist theory has been, and remains, a significant political influence which has contributed to wholesale legislative and social changes, the climate in which this theory circulates is now markedly different from that of the 1960s, when Second Wave Feminism began. Consequently, a new form of feminist theory is developing, one which attempts to respond to an increasingly more complex situation. Some of these complexities have arisen as a response to feminism's advances. For example, attempts to formulate an inclusive politics, which also retains an awareness of differences between women and groups of women has proved to be both demanding on feminist scholars and productive of much exciting and dynamic work. This thesis, in outlining a form of Third Wave critique, strives to emulate the best elements of this relatively recent work. However, other changes to the contemporary climate are less welcome. One of the reasons why feminist theory is constantly needing to adapt is that, just as it makes advances and certain forms of overt sexism become unacceptable in a number of situations, so other, more subtle forms, of sexism continue to circulate, whilst new types of less overt sexism also come into circulation. Third Wave feminism seeks to challenge all forms of sexism, now matter how subtle or difficult to confront. Thus, my main aim is to formulate a type of feminist analysis which can incorporate the strengths of earlier feminist theorising, whilst developing it to better suit an ever changing context. Additionally, I aim to explore notions of femininity as they are manifested in a specific range of texts. I look for both the restrictions these seek to impose on women and the potential they hold to offer liberatory ways of behaving and being.

As this reference to texts might suggest, Third Wave Feminist Analysis is primarily a form of literary criticism. Feminist literary criticism has made a significant impact on the academy and the publishing industry. Yet, feminist literary criticism is a relatively new form of scholarship. It was not until the 1970s that feminist criticism began to constitute a body of study with its own distinct identity, with the publication of

works by such scholars as Kate Millett (1970) and Elaine Showalter (1977). However, the genesis of this body of work did not ensure it immediate influence, nor even recognition, since, in its early days, feminist criticism was not only, "beyond the border of the traditional academy" but also "invisible" (Humm, 1998: 195). Yet, although feminist criticism did not achieve immediate acceptance into the academy, it is now well established, as is evidenced by, for example, the fact that feminist literary theory, "has become part of the core curriculum in the majority of institutions of Higher Education"(Mills and Pearce, 1996: 1).

However, although feminist literary criticism has been influential in shaping and changing what is meant by literary criticism, so that it now incorporates a, "remarkable diversity of theories, methods, and concepts", some feminist literary criticism has, perhaps, been less flexible than the broader discipline has proved to be in many ways (Abrams, 1984: v). This more rigid work is characterised by a backward looking approach, which relies almost exclusively on earlier feminist scholarship, without making a rigorous critical engagement with many of its limitations (for example, see Goodman, 1996). Whilst the earlier work has been of significant influence and its importance should not be underestimated, many elements of this work need to be refined or even rejected in order to give it a contemporary relevance and, thus, it is not enough for new scholarship to simply rely on the earlier material. Many feminist scholars are involved in this necessary revisionary project. Such writers are working to adapt earlier feminist theory, retaining those aspects which continue to be advantageous and jettisoning or altering those that no longer fulfill a useful purpose. This thesis combines elements of a number of such recent feminist studies and terms these types of enquiry, as well as my own ensuing critiques, Third Wave Feminist Analysis.

Although Third Wave Feminist Analysis is fundamentally an approach that is sited within a literary critical tradition, it does not only draw on work from that discipline. Feminist criticism has always been interdisciplinary to the extent that it combines textual analysis with an interest in the social construction of gender.

However, much productive work which is useful to feminist literary criticism is found in other disciplines and many feminist scholars studying literature have realised that by ignoring disciplinary boundaries and employing ideas and approaches used by feminists working in other fields, a more comprehensive analysis ensues. Consequently, throughout this thesis, whilst I mainly draw on a literary critical tradition, I also, at times, draw on work which cannot be defined simply as 'literary criticism'.

Moreover, the thesis is not limited to an exploration of literary texts but also explores other cultural forms. This breadth is important because, as Maggie Humm suggests, "all representations, literary or otherwise, are what make constructions of knowledge and subjectivity possible. Through representations we shape our identities and our worlds" (Humm, 1998: 194). Moreover, "[b]y destroying the idea that literary theory is a bounded entity, feminist literary theorists move on from simply identifying the 'facts' of literary cultures to cultural transformations" (Humm, 1998: 195). In other words, a broad exploration, "can bring about a more equitable world" by, "help[ing] us, even requir[ing] us, to think about cultural identities in a new way" (Humm, 1998: 194). Thus, Third Wave Feminist Analysis tries to assist in the goal of re-construction, a task, "sometimes called feminist praxis" and as part of this attempt it focuses on femininity (ibid.). Indeed, in many ways, this thesis is an attempt to define that term, at least as it is articulated in the case studies that I explore. However, in order to assist a reading of the thesis, and its early parts in particular, in the next section I offer a brief discussion of *femininity*, as well as a short exploration of a connected term: *discourse.* I then identify the three key texts studied and, finally, outline the structure of the thesis as a whole.

Two Key Terms: Femininity and discourses

Femininity is adopted from the Latin, "*femina*, meaning woman or, properly, 'the suckling one' or 'the sucked one'" (J.Mills, 1991: 81). Circa 1386, *femininity* entered the English language to denote not only, "female nature" but also, "the characteristic quality or assemblage of qualities pertaining to the female sex" (ibid.). Often these qualities have been defined stereotypically as including such characteristics as

passivity, docility and weakness. Thus, for example, Mary Wollstonecraft defined femininity as, "[w]eak elegancy of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manner" (Wollstonecraft, 1798 cited in Kramarae and Treichler, 1992 :157). Whilst this thesis will argue that femininity is more multi-faceted than such definitions suggest, this historical tendency to characterise femininity as associated with weakness is still manifest contemporaneously, to some extent, in transferred uses of the term: in music *feminine* denotes that the final chord of a piece occurs on a weak beat; and in stylistics a rhyme which ends on an unstressed syllable is termed a *feminine* rhyme (J.Mills, 1991: 81).[1]

Many of the sources I cite in this work, for example, Rich (1976), conceptualise femininity as arising from femaleness, that is, biological sex. However, others argue that femininity is the product of particular societies rather than of biology, in other words, "sex is physiological, while gender... is cultural" (Mary Anne Warren, 1980 cited in Kramarae and Treichler, 1992: 173). Thus, gender is about culturally and historically specific expectations of how women and men are supposed to be and to behave, rather than about what they necessarily are. Whilst much feminist theory argues that such gendered expectations are oppressive for both men and women, generally, it understands women to be more oppressed by femininity than men are by masculinity.

However, whilst, "the distinction between sex, binarised physical anatomy, and gender, the cultural interpretation and expression of the sexed body, has marked second wave feminisms... [now] gender has become an increasingly problematic and contested site" (Owen, 2000: 220). Consequently, some theorists, whilst defining sex as physical and gender as social, then blur this distinction: for example, Goodman uses the terms "gendered male" and "gendered female" (Goodman, 1996). Although she offers no explanation of this seeming contradiction, this may be an attempt to interrogate our usage of the terms and a similar attempt is found in Garber's (1992) study of transvestism. In her discussion of the Chevalier d'Eon, "a diplomat who

became an actress" and "the most famous transvestite in Western history", Garber describes how, "The London Stock Exchange took bets on his gender"; refers to an announcement as, "seem[ing] to declare his gender as male"; and discusses the outcome of a courtcase as, "contingent on the establishment beyond a doubt of d'Eon's real gender" (Garber, 1992: 259-262). Garber's use of gender, rather than sex, in these instances is explained by her earlier argument that, "the old division 'between the sexes'" is in fact, "a gender test" (Garber, 1992: 15). She supports this assertion through a discussion of the use of signs on public toilets.[2] Whilst these are intended to separate the sexes, "[t]he signs on the doors do not contain pictures of sex organs" (Garber, 1992: 15). Rather, often, although not always, they show, "a figure dressed in male clothes - trousers - and a figure dressed in female clothes - a skirt or dress. Yet no one (except perhaps transvestites and transsexuals) interprets these signs literally" (Garber, 1992: 14). As Garber points out, a woman wearing trousers would not normally go through the door marked with a figure in trousers, whilst a male priest in a soutane would not, "head for the door with the skirt" (ibid.). Consequently, Garber concludes that,

> [t]he restroom as site of gender identification accords with a child's earliest training in the use of public accommodations... and therefore with some of his or her earliest public declarations of gender difference... In other words, this is all about *binaries*. The old binarism, the old division 'between the sexes', the ultimate grade school taboo (boys' room/girls' room) becomes a gender test (Garber, 1992: 15).

Moreover, as I will argue in more detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, it is not only that the distinctions between sex and gender are blurred but, also, that there is no clear cut division between either femininity/masculinity and female/male, since neither sex nor gender are fixed and stable categories. Ien Ang (1996), for example, posits femininity as a shifting identity which women may continually construct and reconstruct; whilst Angela McRobbie (1996) notes that women's and girls' magazines manifest a series of

different female subjectivities which may complement or contradict each other. Additionally, Judith Halberstam (1999), whose work I explore in more detail in Chapter 7, considers the lesbian female-to-male transsexual to argue that there is a fragmentation of the concepts of both sexuality and sex. Such approaches are helpful and inform the approach taken here because, whilst they allow for the mutability of the supposedly fixed binaries of sex/gender, feminine/masculine, female/male, they also allow for a discussion of *women*. Such a discussion is important because it can illustrate the ways in which 'real women' are materially oppressed by gender. Despite the advances of feminism (which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 1), women during the 1990s, the decade in which my case studies are based, remained more socially and economically disadvantaged overall than men.[3] For example,

> [i]n Britain, according to figures from the Low Pay Unit, the overall pay gap in 1991 stood at £42.44 billion. A fair distribution of pay between men and women would require the transfer of £21.22 billion in earned income from men to women. Full-time women still earn only around 70 per cent of male earnings (Faludi, 1992: 397).

One reason for this discrepancy is that men hold more senior posts than do women[4]. So, for example, a survey conducted in 1991, "showed that fewer than 2 per cent of the directors of companies in the FTSE 100 Index of top firms are women... at around only *eighteen* women" (Faludi, 1992: 399-400). However, the retention of the term *women* is not unproblematic, since it can be understood as implying that women are a heterogeneous group, whilst, in fact, women's gendered experiences are also mediated by their race, ethnicity, dis/ability, age, class and sexuality, amongst other factors. In order to try to avoid suggesting a fallacious heterogeneity, then, this thesis always tries to specify precisely which women, or groups of women, are invoked by the use of the word at any one time.

In summary, when femininity is used in this thesis, it does not denote femaleness, or biological sex. Rather, it denotes a range of characteristics and types of behaviour expected of women. Since these expectations are a construct of the society in which they circulate, they vary from society to society and may even vary according to different groups within one society. However, despite such differences, these qualities are often defined stereotypically and, consequently, gendered expectations are conceptualised within feminist theory as oppressive for both men and women. However, I would argue that women are more oppressed by femininity than men are by masculinity. Yet, neither femininity and masculinity are discrete categories and gender is a shifting identity, which may be coherent or may be self-contradictory, encompassing illogical or incompatible aspects.

Gendered expectations and the confutation of such expectations are circulated through discourses. Whilst I explain this term at length in Chapter 3, in essence, I use *discourse*s, drawing on a modified form of Michel Foucault's work, to mean attitudes, statements or beliefs that disseminate social and institutionalised values and also create them. Discourses have the potential to influence people's behaviours and attitudes, but individuals also have the potential to resist or challenge this influence. I do not conceptualise discourses as necessarily fixed, even though certain patterns may persist or dominate. Rather, I understand discourses as fluid and open to challenge and change, or even to being reconstituted in their original form after undergoing change. Furthermore, the use of discourses in the plural is intended to indicate, as I have already suggested, that there are a range of femininities in circulation at any one given time, not only in different geographical regions but also within any one region. Thus, for example, in the UK at the time of writing, what a white lesbian woman means by *femininity* may not be the same as what a Black heterosexual man means by the same word.

Case Studies

The three texts which I examine as part of my exploration of discourses of femininity are Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1992); *The Rector's Wife* by Joanna Trollope (1991); and the figure of the TV Soap Opera archetype, the Soap Queen.[5] These were all in circulation in England, amongst other places, in the 1990s and, thus, they share a contextual specificity which assists commentary on that context. These particular texts, rather than others, were chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, they reveal the complexity of discourses of femininity in the 1990s. All, to differing extents, articulate anachronistic discourses of femininity, in other words they suggest attitudes to women's behaviour that are associated with an earlier historical period, attitudes that seem outdated for the 1990s (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of anachronistic discourses). This is particularly apparent in the ways in which these texts discursively limit women to the 'private' realm of the domestic, home and 'the family'. Thus, they serve to highlight the ways in which women continue to be oppressed, despite the advance of feminism, and, so, indicate the continuing need for feminist theory. However, all are open to more radical, feminist interpretations which offer ideas for alternative ways of being for women, since all, again to differing extents, undermine the notion of a masculinised public domain and a feminised domestic sphere. Consequently, all of these texts resist a closure around gender: neither masculinity nor femininity can be defined in terms which position it as totally independent of the other. Thus, whilst these texts reaffirm an oppressive form of gender, simultaneously they undermine the very assumptions upon which such constructions of gender are based and in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 I offer case studies of each text to reveal many of the ways in which they both oppress and liberate women simultaneously. I now end this introduction by outlining the structure of the main body of the thesis.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis has the following outline. In Chapter 1, I explain both the theoretical and political history of Third Wave Feminist Analysis, a complex way of exploring a range of texts which is rooted in Anglo-American and French traditions of feminist literary

criticism. These two traditions and their similarities and differences are outlined, along with their historical origins in first and second wave political feminism. Furthermore, I relate the French feminist tradition to structuralism and poststructuralism. Third Wave Feminist Analysis is also sited within a tradition of Marxist feminist literary criticism and a form of critique that grew from it: materialist feminist criticism. Chapter 1, therefore, explains that Third Wave Feminist Analysis originates from this range of different traditions: the Anglo-American and French traditions of feminist literary criticism; Marxist feminist literary criticism; and materialist feminist criticism. However, none of these traditions are adopted unquestioningly and none are accepted in their entirety. Moreover, although Third Wave Feminist Analysis is an integration of a form of materialist theory with poststructuralism, this integration is not seen as providing a comprehensive, unproblematic approach. Consequently, Chapter 1 ends by arguing that this integrated approach should not be adopted narrowly and, instead, suggests that Third Wave Feminist Analysis should remain open to a range of other influences, besides those indicated here, both from within and outside of literary criticism.

In Chapter 2 "Defining Third Wave Feminist Analysis", I describe how Third Wave Feminist Analysis works and also consider the implications of this approach. Additionally, I explain that Third Wave Feminist Analysis is a development of Mills' notion of "post-feminist text analysis" (S.Mills, 1998(b)). Mills, too, draws on earlier feminist theorising, whilst also finding aspects of it inadequate to the difficult task of feminist praxis. Her approach outlines a useful way to retain a continuing commitment to praxis, whilst avoiding some of the limitations of the earlier work. Although I adopt a modified form of Mills' approach, I reject her term for this approach, "post-feminist text analysis". Thus, in Chapter 2 I also explain and justify this decision by exploring the debates about the meanings and implications of the term post-feminism. I also justify my decision to use the term Third Wave Feminist Analysis instead, by considering the connotations of this phrase. Finally, Chapter 2 closes with a consideration of a number of further elements that I suggest should be explored as part of a Third Wave Feminist

Analysis but that are not incorporated in Mills' post-feminist text analysis; that is, *truth status*, *transitivity*, *agency* and the form of the texts' *address to the reader*.

In Chapter 3, "Discourses and the Body", I explain that Third Wave Feminist Analysis is not, of itself, a theory; rather, it is a set of strategies from which the analyst may pick those procedures which seem most appropriate for the texts she is exploring. However, Third Wave Feminist Analysis is based on theoretical work and, moreover, it is underpinned by a theoretical approach; feminist discourse theory. This use of feminist discourse theory is an integral part of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis because this type of analysis conceptualises femininity as a set of discourses; rather than femininity being conceived as an inherent characteristic of women, femininity is understood as being produced by attitudes and beliefs expressed through language and other meaning-making systems. However, although femininity is not automatically inherent in the body, there is a relationship between discourses and the body. This is an important connection for the materialist position I adopt, since this argues that discourses can have a material impact on both the body and the psyche. This impact can be marked externally or can become internalised. However, although I argue that discourses can become embodied, that is not to suggest that they become fixed within the body in permanent and unchanging ways and, in order to further clarify this point, Chapter 3 contrasts the notion of embodied gendered discourses with the conceptualisations of the body and gender within essentialist thinking.

In Chapter 4, "Discourses of the Public and Private Spheres", I argue that, however femininity influences women, whether it is embodied, physically or psychically, or whether it is marked on the exterior body, its deployment is often a tactical move, albeit one which may bring adverse consequences. I explore a range of the ways in which such a tactic can be exploited through a discussion of Beverley Skeggs's (1997) use of Bourdieu's classification of capital, within which masculinity and femininity are forms of capital which can be exploited to gain cultural or social advantages. However, I also argue that the value of femininity is

often limited and is often lower than the value of masculinity, particularly in the labour market. I then suggest that one factor which contributes to the undervaluing of femininity in this area is the public/private dichotomy, which associates the private sphere with women and imbues it with stereotypical, feminine qualities and which also associates the public sphere with men and imbues that with stereotypical, masculine qualities. This polarity is sited in Victorian ideals of a white, middle-class femininity. Yet, despite the fact that it is now anachronistic, and despite the fact that it ignores Victorian working-class women's experiences, as well as those of women living in a feudal society in earlier times or in other geographical locations, the exploration of this particular gendered dualism is necessary, since it is central to the texts I examine in Part II of this thesis. Finally, Chapter 4 also suggests that these texts' reliance on this stereotypical identification of masculinity with the public sphere and femininity with the private sphere contributes to an adverse material impact on women's lives by representing few work roles that women can easily access and by tending to restrict women to less remunerative positions.

Having offered a theoretical explanation of Third Wave Feminist Analysis in Part I, in Part II I offer three case studies which illustrate how this approach to texts works in practice. In Chapters 5 and 6 I offer my own Third Wave Feminist Analyses of two novels from the 1990s; *A Thousand Acres* (Smiley, 1992) and *The Rector's Wife* (Trollope, 1991). In Chapter 5, I consider the ways in which *A Thousand Acres* contributes to the production of what we understand as femininity in a range of complex, even contradictory, ways. In the Chapter 6, I argue that just as *A Thousand Acres* simultaneously bolsters and undercuts the association of femininity with the private realm, similar processes are evident in *The Rector's Wife*, although to different extents. I justify the explorations of these representations of femininity as a contribution to feminist praxis, since I argue that many women understand what it means to be a woman by drawing on textual mediations of the term femininity. Thus, these books' simultaneous reinforcement and subversion of discourses of a domestic

femininity represent a variety of forms of femininity which their women readers may take up or reject. Yet, novels are only one cultural form that women draw on, consciously or unconsciously, when making, unmaking and remaking their feminine identities. Therefore, in Chapter 7, I explore a further form which, arguably, reaches a larger female audience than novels do: the TV Soap Opera. In so doing, I also illustrate the flexibility of Third Wave Feminist Analysis by showing that it can be applied to visual as well as written texts.

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, Chapter 8, I briefly draw together the main arguments that have been made throughout the work: that femininity is not an essential characteristic but is a range of variable characteristics that are both reflected in and informed by a whole range of discourses. I suggest that the most useful means of exploring femininity is by taking a complex analytical approach which I term Third Wave Feminist Analysis, which retains a feminist political agenda, whilst also rejecting the overly simplistic stance of much of the earlier work. Finally, I also discuss the implications of my analysis. However, in order to substantiate the claims I make for Third Wave Feminist Analysis, I need, firstly, to describe that form of analysis and, secondly, to illustrate how it works in practice. Therefore, I now begin this justification with Chapter 1, in which I offer the theoretical background of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis.

Footnotes

[1] This, therefore, may be an example of what I earlier described as an "anachronistic" discourse (see p.8 above).

[2] Garber bases her discussion on Lacan's earlier consideration of "'urinary segregation'" (Lacan, 1977 cited in Garber, 1992: 13).

[3] Whilst the statistics may have changed in the interim between the publication of the studied texts and the publication of this thesis, the basic premise (that there are

significant inequalities between women and men, to the overall advantage of the latter) remains accurate.

[4] This notion of gendered, vertical occupational segregation, where women tend to be clustered at the lower levels of skill, responsibility and pay, whilst men are clustered at the higher levels, is one which I explore further in Chapter 4.

[5] As is implied by this list, I do not only use *text*, "in the familiar sense of 'set text' - one of the canon of [so-called] great books'" but, also, I use it, "more abstractly to refer to the trace or record of a communicative event, an event which may be performed in words but which may equally take place in images or in a combination of words and images" (Montgomery, *et al.*, 1992: 2). In other words, I use *text* to refer to each object of my study. Moreover, in line with a practice adopted by, for example, Mills (1994), I use *reading* to refer to not only reading but, also, viewing and listening, depending on which type of text is under discussion.

Part I

Third Wave Feminist Analysis

Chapter 1: The Theoretical Background to Third Wave Feminist Analysis

Introduction

This chapter aims to explain the theoretical and political history of what I am calling Third Wave Feminist Analysis, a complex way of exploring a range of texts. This is rooted in, but moves beyond, both the Anglo-American and French traditions of feminist literary criticism.[1] I begin this chapter, therefore, by reviewing both of these traditions and, in order to elucidate them further, I also explore their historical origins in first and second wave political feminism. Furthermore, I note that the French feminist tradition, in part, derives from and reacts to structuralism and poststructuralism. However, my aim is not to accept unquestioningly either the French or the Anglo-American traditions, nor their antecedents, and therefore this chapter also outlines both the usefulness and the drawbacks of much of this. Subsequently, a similarly sceptical approach is taken to Marxist feminist literary criticism and a form of critique that grew from it: materialist feminist criticism. However, I then suggest that a more useful approach to texts can be attained by integrating a form of materialist theory with poststructuralism, with the caveat that this should not be adopted narrowly, but, rather, in a way which is open to a range of influences both from within and outside of literary criticism.

The Origins of Feminist Literary Criticism[2]

Feminist literary criticism, broadly speaking, is an interdisciplinary approach which focuses on gender politics. It rarely confines itself solely to textual analysis; rather, it looks at the text within the society in which it was produced in order to discover what this tells us about what gender means in that particular context. It emphasises the ways in which discrimination against women is manifested in texts and how this can be resisted and countered. Unlike many other academic approaches, therefore, feminist literary criticism is not simply a theoretical approach; it also has political aims, which are summarised as feminist praxis (see p. 3 above).

Kennedy argues that feminist literary criticism grew from two main developments. Firstly, she contends that it developed from, "the international women's movement of the 1960s", the so-called second wave of feminism (Kennedy, 2000(a): 306. Also see Morris, 1995(b): 109 ff.).[3] Such groups called for a range of political and social changes and were instrumental in creating a culture in which these were able to happen. For example, as I note in Chapter 4, in Britain, increasing numbers of women achieved financial independence in the 1970s as the number of women in the labour market increased by 6% more than the figure for the 1950s. Moreover, once in the paid work force, women's rights were improved by a series of acts of social and employment legislation, some of which I also discuss in Chapter 4. This movement also saw the founding of a number of 'consciousness raising' groups which have been characterised by the slogan "The personal is political" (Kramarae and Treichler, 1992: 333). This summarises second wave feminists' fundamental belief that personal experience is neither individual nor isolated, rather it is, "social, political, and systemic" (ibid.). This system of social and political constraints is usually conceived of as more oppressive for women than men and is termed *patriarchy* and I return to a discussion of patriarchy later in Chapter 2. However, here, I note that another main characteristic of second wave feminism was a, "demand for greater sexual freedom for women, [including] outside conventional heterosexual relationships and within lesbian ones" (McPherson, 2000: 209). Additionally, this demand led to a call for further political changes, such as "[l]egalised birth control and abortion [and] legal reform for victims of domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence and rape", although the emphasis or the underlying arguments were slightly different to those found in many of the calls for changes to other legislation, such as employment law (McPherson, 2000: 208-9). Whilst employment debates often rested on arguments about equality, much of the debate concerning this second group of issues, such as birth control, rested on arguments about women's rights, "to control their own bodies" (McPherson, 2000: 209).

The women's movement which began in the 1960s is known as second wave feminism in order to both differentiate it from an earlier political movement and

indicate its relationship to it. This earlier movement, first wave feminism, began around 1860 and started to decline in 1918 and it secured rights that were previously denied women in the newly "transformed western societies" (McPherson, 2000: 208).[4] Although this was an international cause, the specific factors which gave rise to this movement and the relative importance of any one element varied according to, "the specific national or even regional circumstances", so that the history of first wave feminism is characterised not only by its internationalness but also by a national distinctiveness within that internationalness (ibid.). However, such factors included: the processes of industrialisation, "which undermined house-hold production and established a hierarchy between the male-dominated public sphere and the female-dominated private one"; and the upsurgence of, for example, "liberal-democratic ideologies, socialism, evangelical Protestant Christianity, and social reform movements, especially abolitionism and temperance [which] propelled a wide spectrum of women to challenge their exclusion from the public realm" (ibid.). Whilst the first wave incorporated a wide range of concerns and aims, and encompassed a diversity of ideological positions, by 1900 there was a, "growing agreement amongst activists that success on key legal, educational and economic issues could not be gained without greater political leverage, and thus the vote emerged as a unifying objective for feminists of all persuasions and in many nations" (McPherson, 2000: 208-9). Although there were early victories in some countries, such as New Zealand where women won the vote in 1893, there were bitter defeats elsewhere, often in spite of sustained and militant campaigns, such as that undertaken by the British suffragettes (McPherson, 2000: 209). Various works of feminist literary criticism came out of and followed on from the first wave, such as Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1928) and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). However, whilst these were, "significant precursors [of] feminist literary criticism", such early works were relatively isolated and it was not until the early 1970s that feminist criticism began to constitute a body of study with its own distinct identity (Kennedy, 2000(a): 306).

Feminist Literary Criticism

As I argued in the previous section, feminist literary criticism is interdisciplinary and focuses on gender politics. This focus encompasses both how gender politics are manifested within texts and what this manifestation reveals about the significance of gender in the society in which the texts were produced. However, feminist literary criticism does not limit itself to only considering gendered differences and is more accurately defined as, "a critical form of knowledge which analyses the role that literary forms and practices, together with the discourses of literary criticism and theory, play in perpetuating or challenging hierarchies of gender, class, race and sexuality" (Kennedy, 2000(a): 306). Yet, neither the identity nor the emphasis of feminist literary criticism have ever been homogeneous: these have varied according to the identity and political perspective of the individual critic or group; moreover, they have changed through time as critics have responded to and developed the work of their predecessors. I begin my review of the changing nature of feminist literary criticism by outlining the mainly Anglo-American tradition which grew directly out of second wave political feminism and which, as I will illustrate, shared many of the preoccupations and aims of that movement.

Anglo-American Feminist Literary Criticism

Initially, Anglo-American feminist criticism was primarily concerned with challenging the notion of the canon in two main ways. Firstly, critics noted that the texts which constituted the canon were mainly male-authored and that their representations of female characters tended to be largely negative and stereotyped. For example, Kate Millett (1970) used the notion of 'literary reflection' to document the ways in which many canonical authors represented women as sexual objects whose needs were subservient to those of the text's male protagonists. Thus, such critics,

> argued that images of women in male literature do not reflect female experience, but rather, reflect misogynist stereotypes of woman. Consequently, the literary canon should not be regarded benignly, as a collection of great texts, expressing

universal truths and humanistic values, but as texts that are deeply structured by social and sexual ideologies (Kennedy, 2000(a): 306).

Secondly, in a shift that has been termed *gynocriticism* by Elaine Showalter (1982), critics sought an alternative tradition to the male canon in women's writing believing that this would offer examples of more positive representations of women. For example, Elaine Showalter (1977) drew attention to a tradition of neglected women novelists from the nineteenth and twentieth century.[5] As a result of such studies, both, "canonical authors such as Jane Austen, the Brontës, George Eliot and Virginia Woolf and neglected writers such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Kate Chopin... quickly became fixtures in an alternative female canon" (Kennedy, 2000(a): 306). Additionally, Showalter highlighted the pressures that inhibited women's writing, including their material circumstances, such as economic dependence and social pressures. The most significant of these was the pressure to conform to the dominant definition of femininity, which did not incorporate the notion of woman-as-writer. Any women's writing produced in these circumstances could thus be regarded as a significant achievement.[6]

Many of these early gynocritics, such as Showalter, believed that femininity hindered women's creativity. However, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979) took a more complex position. They combined a social constructionist perspective with a psychoanalytical approach to suggest that femininity was not only a constraint on women's creativity but also, simultaneously, a source of creative tension. They argued that women writers of the last century had a set of fears and anxieties about their identities as creators since, at that time, childbearing was considered the only natural form of female creativity and all other forms of creativity were considered harmful to women's physical and mental health; leading to infertility, on the one hand, and madness, on the other. Additionally, Gilbert and Gubar contended that an unlicensed female imagination was seen as an indication of unlicensed female sexuality. Thus in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Bertha Rochester is interpreted as a mirror image

of the eponymous heroine, able to express what both Jane *and* Brontë are unable to articulate: their anger at women's confinement within the domestic sphere and within their bodies.[7]

Although gynocriticism was an important stage in feminist criticism, it was not without its limitations: in creating an alternative 'women's' tradition, it constructed a canon that was just as exclusive, in its own way, as the male tradition had been, since most of the writers it privileged were middle-class, white and (ostensibly) heterosexual. Additionally, its interpretations of texts were also problematic, as noted by, for example, both Gayatri Spivak (1985) and Terry Lovell (1987). The latter argued that the texts that Gilbert and Gubar identified as subversive were often more complicit with existing power structures than they allowed, since such works privileged heterosexual romance and marriage. Spivak, like Gilbert and Gubar, also offers a reading of *Jane Eyre* but positions this alongside an interpretation of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) which posits a history of Bertha before she becomes 'the madwoman in the attic'. Spivak's work is located within post-colonial feminist literary theory which reacted against two main tendencies: the lack of address to gender issues in mainstream post-colonial theory; and universalising within feminist work. So, Spivak critiqued other feminists' tendency to focus on the white, central female characters in such texts as *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. She made a complex use of poststructuralist theories, a theoretical position I explore shortly, to argue that this kind of reading ignores both the production and marginalisation of other characters and, consequently, that feminists that make such readings are implicated in imperialism. In an alternative, post-colonial interpretation of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Spivak argued that, even as Rhys attempted a re-writing of *Jane Eyre,* the constraints of the genre she adopted, the novel, meant that she could not avoid re-writing from the perspective of the coloniser. Thus, Christophine the Martiniquan maid, whilst treated sympathetically to some extent, is still, ultimately, marginalised within the novel.

Chiefly as a result of such debates about feminist literary criticism, in many European and North American countries, women's writing became accepted into the academy as part of the curriculum, both within mainstream literature courses and separately as part of women's studies. This move was facilitated by the publication of a number of women-authored texts that were previously out of print. Many such works were re-printed by the new feminist publishing houses, such as The Women's Press and Virago. The latter was launched in Britain in 1978 with the re-publication of Antonia White's *Frost in May* (first published 1933). The anonymous afterword to subsequent Virago Modern Classics, such as Elizabeth Taylor's *At Mrs. Lippincote's* (1988), explained that Virago was, "dedicated to the celebration of women writers and to the rediscovery and reprinting of their works". Moreover, its aim was, "to demonstrate the existence of a female tradition in fiction which is both enriching and enjoyable", since, "[t]he Leavisite notion of the 'Great Tradition' and the narrow, academic definition of a 'classic', has meant the neglect of a large number of interesting secondary works of fiction". However, this afterword contains a number of contradictions that suggest that there is an unresolved tension between the canon and women writers. Firstly, the imprint is being established as an alternative, female canon: these books are 'Modern Classics' part of a female tradition ignored by F.R.Leavis. Furthermore, often these books are described as "'greats'", "classics of comedy or storytelling" (ibid.). Yet, these books are also relegated to the ranks of "secondary works of fiction" and are often chosen not because they are 'greats' but because, "they illuminate particular aspects of women's lives". For a feminist publishing house, the fact that the book is illuminating about women's lives is reason enough to publish it. However, by focusing on the canon, the afterword appears to position the publishers as needing to apologise for choosing books for reasons other than their literary worth. Despite this, during the 1970s such feminist publishing houses were vital, along with academic courses focusing on women's writing, in establishing interest in female authored texts and in making such texts available.

Thus, the Anglo-American tradition has contributed to shaping both the academy and publishing practice. In essence, it is based on traditional literary criticism and concerned with the representation of female characters. Moreover, it can be summarised as having two main aims: that of challenging the notion of the canon, for example, by uncovering the sexism inherent in many canonical texts; and that of both uncovering and valuing a specifically female tradition of writing. However, there is one significant strand of Anglo-American feminist criticism in the 1970s which cannot be categorised by this summary of the dominant forms of this tradition. This is a body of work described as the 'female aesthetic' which uses literary styles and forms that are seen as coming from a specifically female experience and much of which blurs the distinction between critical and creative writing. This type of creative work challenges many of the assumptions of Anglo-American criticism. For example, Alice Walker's essay "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" (1977) is a feminist exploration of both the expression and the suppression of Black women's creativity and, whilst this draws on *A Room of One's Own*, it also makes use of biography and personal testimony, prose fiction and poetry. Adrienne Rich (1979) advocated a similar search for an avant-garde form of writing which she located as sited within lesbianism. Rich understood lesbianism as a form of experience available to all women, since she did not define this as only having or desiring, "genital sexual experience with another woman" but as also experiencing, "many more forms of primary intensity between women, including the sharing of a rich inner life" (Rich, 1980 cited in Kramarae and Treichler, 1992: 228). Subsequently, other writers challenged the dominant Anglo-American tradition. Audre Lorde (1984), for example, argued that most of such work was flawed since it drew upon the methods and language inherited from a male critical tradition: 'the master's house'. Additionally, Lorde, along with a number of other lesbian critics, attacked the heterosexism of much existing literary criticism, both feminist and non-feminist. As part of this attack they challenged male-defined concepts of femininity and examined lesbian images and strategies. During the same decade that Lorde was posing this challenge, other feminists were questioning, not the language and perspective of contemporary theory, but the very definition of theory itself. For example, the American

scholar Barbara Christian (1987) argued that defining theory as abstract logic privileged a Western philosophical tradition and excluded the theorising of people of colour which is found in story-making and story-telling, riddles and proverbs. However, during the previous decade, the 1970s, when the female aesthetic was burgeoning within the Anglo-American tradition, another strand of feminist criticism, termed *écriture féminine*, was developing in France.

French Feminist Literary Criticism

As will become apparent, there are a number of similarities between the female aesthetic and *écriture féminine* and just as the former is distinguished by some commentators from the dominant form of second wave feminism, so, too, is the latter. Many observers, such as Showalter (1985), see the Anglo-American and French feminist critical traditions as in opposition, with the first concerned with the analysis of experience and issues such as the canon, whilst the second focuses on more overtly theoretical issues. Moreover, *écriture féminine* makes a stated opposition to some elements of the Anglo-American tradition by suggesting that, "disregarded" women's writing is, "too deeply embedded in patriarchal language and therefore in patriarchal ideology to be truly emancipatory" and, consequently, "the work of their recovery... indirectly supports patriarchy's fundamental identification of 'woman' as other from and inferior to the normative, standard-setting 'man'" (Wills, 2000: 213). Although I will later challenge this clear distinction between these two different traditions, I will argue for retaining a sense of this separation, since, I will argue, *écriture féminine* can be characterised as a transitional phase between second wave feminist literary criticism and what I am terming Third Wave Feminist Analysis. However, before I discuss *écriture féminine* and the ways in which it can be seen to enable the development of Third Wave Feminist Analysis, firstly, I consider the origins of *écriture féminine* in poststructuralism, which itself developed as a response to structuralism. As Sara Mills suggests, *écriture féminine* can be characterised as arising in part out of, "the contradictions and conflicts within structuralism and poststructuralism" and I now

discuss each of these in turn and, moreover, consider the relationships and tensions between them (S.Mills, Pers. Comm., November, 2,000).

As Chris Weedon explains, "[p]oststructuralism refers to a body of diverse theories", all of which, "take as their initial point of reference the structural linguistics of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure" (1857-1913) (Weedon, 2000: 397). Some of the earliest and most influential theorists include the philosopher and critic, Jacques Derrida; the psychoanalyst and theorist, Jacques Lacan; philosopher and writer, Michel Foucault; critic and theorist, Julia Kristeva; and writer and cultural critic, Roland Barthes who was, "the first to give Saussure's ideas general currency" (Stuewe, 1999: 986). Saussure was responsible for challenging the dogma, dominant in western thinking since the Enlightenment, that language was, "a system of nomenclature, a collection of words which each had one-to-one correspondences with easily identifiable objects" (Stuewe, 1999: 985). Instead, he conceptualised language as, "a system of differentiations", meaning that linguistic differences are understood as "'differences without positive terms,' established through mutual opposition (as with the phonemes that distinguish 'pen' from 'den') rather than by extralinguistic reality" (ibid.) In other words, any language is a system constituted of a number of elements. Moreover, these elements are entirely defined by their relations to each other within that system. However, although this suggests that linguistic signs are, essentially, arbitrary, this does not suggest that they are either irrational or incomprehensible. Rather, their arbitrariness highlights the social processes through which each language's particular character is produced. Thus, society and language are understood, "as coming into the world at the same time, since social life would be impossible without a mutually understood signifying system and such a system could develop only within a social context" (Stuewe, 1999: 986).

As Mills points out, it was, not only in structuralist writings, but, also, in poststructuralist theory that there was, "a major break with previous views of language and representation" (S.Mills, 1997: 8). Both groups of theorists resisted, "seeing

language as simply expressive, as transparent, as a vehicle of communication, as a form of representation" (ibid.). Instead, they, "saw language as a system with its own rules and constraints, and with its own determining effect on the way that individuals think and express themselves" (ibid.). However, poststructuralism, whilst sharing many of the premises of Saussure's work, "originated as a reaction *against* structuralism" (Gutting, 2000: 701, emphasis added). Additionally, it subsequently, "transformed the theory of meaning and the assumptions about subjectivity" found in structuralism (Weedon, 2000: 397). Thus, poststructuralists, "go... beyond Saussure" to, "insist that the meaning of a particular signifier is not fixed in the sign but is plural and changing" (Weedon, 2000: 398). This mutability can best be described by drawing on Derrida's principle of *différance* which, "implies that meaning is the effect of a temporary fixing of signifiers within a system of differences in which meaning is always subject to challenge and fixity constantly deferred" (ibid.). In this way, poststructuralism undermines Enlightenment beliefs that it is possible to describe the world accurately through language. Furthermore, because poststructuralism posits subjectivity as neither rational nor intentional, it questions the status of the rational subject of western thought. Rather, subjectivity is understood as, not only embodied and a consequence of power, but, also, as fractured and constantly in the process of being discursively produced through the influence of both conscious and unconscious forces.

Building on the work of such poststructuralists as Lacan and Derrida, a number of scholars, chiefly, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigiray, Julia Kristeva and Monique Wittig, used the concept of *écriture féminine* to explore their concern, "with the deep structures of language" in which they sited, "both women's oppression *and* the potential for freedom and dissent" (Wills, 2000: 213, emphasis added). Thus, as I have already suggested would be expected from a poststructuralist approach, *écriture féminine*'s focus is, "the textual, representational and linguistic, and discursive" rather than, "the historical and material conditions of women" (ibid.). Although these theorists formulate different approaches, they all deploy, "a strategic revaluation of the feminine" (ibid.). This is achieved by their refusal, "to accept the traditional Western dualism which

separates and constructs as opposites mind and body" (Price Herndl, 1991: 331). This refutation is based on an understanding that the first pole of this binary polarity, the mind, is characterised as male; whilst the second pole, the body, is seen as female. Thus, within the terms of the binarism, being a woman is, "antithetical to writing, an activity said to be restricted to the intellect" (ibid.). In essence, these French feminists challenged this polarity in two main ways. Firstly, they celebrated women's association with the body, "thereby refusing the subordination of body to mind" (ibid.). Secondly, they refused to accept the separation between the two. Their use of phrases such as, "'[w]riting the body' or 'letting the body be heard' are clearly attempts at refuting the sense of writing as a strictly mental thing" (ibid.). Thus, whilst *écriture féminine* criticises some Anglo-American, feminist literary criticism as inadvertently supportive of patriarchy, it identifies itself as an attempt to, "value and reclaim the 'Other' side of the binary division, privileging the 'feminine' and previously denigrated qualities of unreason, fluidity, formlessness, darkness, and especially, body" (Wills, 2000: 213). Thus, one of *écriture féminine's* main objectives is, "[t]o undo and de-stabilise these binaries, and to unsettle the power relations between them" (ibid.).

Moreover, *écriture féminine* undermines the linguistic, syntactical and metaphysical conventions of Western writing, since it uses a writing style which is, "distinctively lyrical, disjunctive, impassioned, and deeply subjective" (ibid.). Consequently, it is characterised by absences, ruptures, the irrational, the chaotic and *jouissance*, a term which is "strictly untranslatable" but, "is the word used for orgasmic pleasure" and, thus, conveys, "an excess of pleasure... bliss or ecstasy", although it also conveys, "a surplus of profit taken in other ways" (Ferrell, 2000: 280). Some French feminist critics, such as Irigaray (1974), have attempted to create a critical form of *écriture féminine* by emphasising textual pleasure and by using devices such as puns and neologisms. Although some critics, including Kristeva (1977), maintain that *écriture féminine* can be employed by either women or men, many, including Cixous and Irigaray, argue that it is more likely to be produced by women; further, women have an interest in writing in this way because of its subversive qualities which could counter

their oppression. Moreover, *écriture féminine* is gendered by the qualities ascribed to it which, "correspond to culturally determined gender codes: *his* language is rational, logical, hierarchical, and linear; *her* language is a-rational (if not irrational), contra-logical (if not illogical), resistant to hierarchies, and circular" (Price Herndl, 1991: 331). This association of the feminine with the irrational and illogical is developed in *écriture féminine* to embrace the extremes of irrationality and illogicality: madness, darkness and mystery. Although Domna Stanton (1980), one of the earliest critics to introduce French feminist theory into Britain and the U.S.A., argues that this represents a revalorisation of feminine stereotypes, Nina Baym disagrees and argues that the theory of *écriture féminine* is closely tied to a theory of the "feminine personality" which originates in Freudian theory and which is itself underwritten by a "profound misogyny" (Baym, 1991: 160).

Other opposition to *écriture féminine* is sited in the fact that, although it rejects language which oppresses or excludes women, it seeks to substitute this rejected language with one that is, "situated in and draw[s] its vocabulary from the female body" (Wills, 2000: 214). Thus, "Wittig privileges the lesbian body... as the site of meaning", whilst Cixous uses "profoundly biological" metaphors in her writing, such as "the 'white ink' of maternal breast milk" (ibid.). Similarly, Irigiray, "uses the physical image of 'two lips' touching and speaking together as a metaphor for women's writing", while Kristeva, "associates the liberatory and fruitfully disruptive potential of the semiotic with the trope of the maternal body" (ibid.). The opposition to such use of language, as Wills (2000) outlines, is founded in claims that it is essentialist. However, some scholars argue that such criticisms arise from a misunderstanding which is itself based on an oversimplification of these French feminists' arguments. Sue Vice notes that more complex and more productive readings have been made by, amongst others, Diana Fuss, who argues that, "the reliance on the form of the female body is a rhetorical ploy"; Elizabeth Grosz, who interprets the 'two lips' as a symbolic means of representing female sexuality more positively than had previously been possible; and Margaret Whitford, who suggests that Irigiray adopts western culture's way of symbolising

women as natural and ahistorical, yet does so in an ironic way and with subversive intent (Vice, 1998: 170). Moreover, Toril Moi (1985) broke down the perceived opposition between the Anglo-American and French traditions through an analysis of the main characteristics of these criticisms (although she excluded Black feminist theory). Moreover, she introduced the possibility of incorporating the two traditions.

Poststructuralism has influenced not only *écriture féminine* but, also, other areas of feminist scholarship, in a number of ways. I return to the importance of this influence in the next chapter where I discuss the use of discourse theory both in this thesis and elsewhere. However, here, I summarise the importance of poststructuralism for feminism by noting that *différance* has proved an attractive and useful concept to feminist scholars, since it, "opens up meaning to political struggle" (Weedon, 2000: 398). Additionally, poststructuralist feminists accept Foucault's argument that knowledge and power are inter-connected and, moreover, all knowledge is partial, that is to say, it is not only incomplete but, also, it only represents particular forms. Furthermore, knowledge, "exists in many competing forms which represent conflicting groups and interests" and, "should be judged not by reference to truth claims but by its effects in the world" (Weedon, 2000: 398-9). Poststructuralist feminism, therefore, insists on non-universalising narratives that have no foundationalist status and can allow for both cultural and historical specificity and, thus, it has facilitated a contestation of, "the authority of traditional guarantees of meaning, such as religion, science and nature, metanarratives which feminists have criticised for their patriarchal androcentrism" (Weedon, 2000: 398). Additionally, as I argued earlier, poststructuralism has enabled feminists to challenge the notion of binary oppositions, such as that constructed between culture and the body which has tended to locate women outside culture. More controversially, poststructuralist feminism has also, "questioned the sovereignty of experience" (ibid.). I suggest this is controversial, since, as I noted earlier, second wave feminism is characterised by a belief that personal experience is social, political and systemic, rather than individual and isolated. Thus, experience is fundamental to much of that period's feminist epistemology, since experience supports the personal as

political. Because poststructural feminism, not only questioned, "the sovereignty of experience", but, also, "truth [and] unified subjectivity", its arguments were, "fiercely contested by... [amongst others] Marxist feminists who see them as necessary to political struggle" (Weedon, 2000: 398).

Marxist Feminist Literary Criticism

As Stevi Jackson notes, many feminists, "looked to Marxism" to answer the question on which most feminist theory of the 1970s and early 1980s was focused, that is, the question of, "how can we account for women's subordination?" (Jackson, 1998(a): 12). However, in order to better explain Marxist Feminist Literary Criticism, I shall, firstly, contextualise it by reviewing mainstream Marxist literary theory, which began with the early commentary on literature of both Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). Marxist literary theory aims, "to *explain* the literary work more fully... [through] a sensitive attention to its forms, styles and meanings", all of which are understood as, "the products of a particular history" (Eagleton, 1990: 207, f. pub. 1976). It is premised on an understanding of history which posits, "[t]he social relations between men [*sic.*]... [as] bound up with the way they produce their material life" (Eagleton, 1990: 208). This production is constituted by two main structures. The first is the economic 'base' or 'infrastructure', the terms used to designate the relationship individuals and groups of individuals have to the means of production and examples of such bases or infrastructures include feudalism and capitalism. The second is the 'superstructure' which emerges from this economic base and, "whose essential function is to legitimate the power of the social class which owns the means of economic production" (ibid.). The superstructure is constituted by specific forms of law and politics, in other words, a certain kind of state. Additionally, it is constituted by particular types of social consciousness, including the political, religious, ethical, aesthetic, which Marxism designates as ideology. I define the term ideology at greater length in Chapter 3, here, however, I note that, basically, for Marx and Engels ideology, "signifies the way men [*sic.*] live out their roles in class-society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true

knowledge of society as a whole" (Eagleton, 1990: 213). Just as the superstructure functions to legitimate the power of the social class which owns the means of economic production, ideology also functions to legitimate the power of the ruling class. However, whilst, ultimately, a society's dominant ideas are its ruling class's ideas, an ideology is never a simple reflection of those ideas (Eagleton, 1990: 208 and 209). Rather, "it is always a complex phenomenon, which may incorporate conflicting, even contradictory, views of the world" (Eagleton, 1990: 209). In developing these ideas, Althusser, who I discuss in more detail shortly, offered a "reconstruction" of Marxism in which he made a "radical break with previous conceptions of ideology", arguing that it, "represents a subject's imaginary relation to his or her real conditions of existence" (Homer, 1999: 19, 20 and 21).

Within this materialist theory of history, literature, along with other art forms, is seen as powerful, since although Marxist criticism, "denies that art can *in itself* change the course of history... [yet] it insists that art can be an active element in such change" (Eagleton, 1990: 209-10). Moreover, art is understood as both a part of a society's ideology and, also, part of its superstructure. In other words, it is, "an element in that complex structure of social perception which ensures that the situation in which one social class has power over the others is either seen by most members of the society as 'natural', or not seen at all" (Eagleton, 1990: 208). Consequently, to understand a particular artform, such as literature, is to understand the whole social process of which it is a constituent. As part of this attempt at understanding literature, Althusser's, "reformulation of ideology" was influential in, "point[ing] to the way in which texts embodied particular ideologies, not in terms of their content or their overt political message, but in relation to their form and the way in which they constituted specific kinds of reading or viewing subjects" (Homer, 1999: 21). Subsequently, Pierre Macherey argued that the received forms of literary criticism sought to resolve texts' contradictions, ambiguities, and absences, in order to understand its 'full' and 'proper' meaning. Thus, texts came to substituted by 'ideal interpretations' and, consequently, literary criticism, "replace[d] the text itself with its own 'normative' value judgments"

(ibid.). Instead, Macherey argued for a different kind of analysis one which, as he terms it, shows an awareness that, "the text says what it does not say" (Macherey, 1990: 215, f. pub. 1966). In other words, literary theory should be premised on the understanding that a text, "is not self-sufficient; it is necessarily accompanied by a *certain absence* without which it would not exist" and any understanding of a text, "must include a consideration of this absence" (ibid.). Thus, the usefulness of Marxist criticism, for Macherey, was in, "resist[ing] and expos[ing] the ideological nature of traditional forms of criticism by revealing the incompleteness, discrepancies, and silences, within the text" (Homer, 1999: 21). Moreover, Macherey influenced the development of literary criticism by establishing the study of the ideology of the literary form as a legitimate subject for Marxist criticism. Thus, Terry Eagleton developed Macherey's project in two main ways. Firstly, he attacked "the inherently ideological character of previous forms of literary criticism", especially that which was influenced by the form of liberal humanism characteristic of F.R.Leavis (Homer, 1999: 21). Eagleton attempted the, "demystification of 'liberal bourgeois humanist' notions", that is, "that art somehow 'transcends' its time, that it can be 'explained' by individual psychology, that the artist is a 'creator', and that aesthetics is merely a question of 'style'" (Habib, 1999: 333). Secondly, "he sought to define what he saw as the proper concerns of a materialist criticism that could break with the ideological character of both literature and criticism and produce 'a science of the text'", arguing that criticism should be located outside of the space of the text in the alternative space of scientific knowledge (Homer, 1999: 21).

Eagleton also outlines the relationship between art and ideology which, he warns, is not easily understood. Initially, he summarises two "extreme, opposite" explanations: one, "that works of literature are just expressions of the ideologies of their time"; the other, that literature, "always transcends the ideological limits of its time, yielding us insight into the realities which ideology hides from view" (Eagleton, 1990: 214). However, he rejects both of these and compares them with Althusser's account which he acknowledges is incomplete but prefers as more nuanced than the other two accounts. In Althusser's explanation, Eagleton notes that just as, "[i]deology signifies

the imaginary ways in which men [*sic.*] experience the real world", so, too, does literature by offering us an experience of, "what it feels like to live in particular conditions, rather than a conceptual analysis of those conditions" (ibid.). However, this is not to suggest that art is a passive reflection of that experience. Rather, art is confined within ideology, yet, simultaneously, distanced from it. This process of differentiation continues until the text allows the reader, "to 'feel' and 'perceive' the ideology from which it proceeds" and, in so doing, "it allows us to 'see' the nature of that ideology, and thus begins to move us towards that full understanding of ideology which is scientific knowledge" (ibid.).

Althusser's work was subsequently developed by Macherey who distinguished between 'fiction' and 'illusion'. Essentially, Macherey used illusion to mean ideology, which he further defined as the material which the writer works on. However, in the process of working on an ideology, the writer transforms it, giving it a definite shape and structure. By, "fixing it within certain fictional limits... art is able to distance itself from it, thus revealing to us the limits of that ideology... [as a consequence] art contributes to our deliverance from the ideological illusion" (Eagleton, 1990: 214-5). As Eagleton concludes, the relation that both Althusser and Macherey outline between literature and ideology is, "deeply suggestive" (Eagleton, 1990: 215). For both of these critics, ideology,

> is more than an amorphous body of free-floating images and ideas; in any society it has a certain structural coherence. Because it possesses such relative coherence, it can be the object of scientific analysis; and since literary texts 'belong' to ideology, they too can be the object of such scientific analysis. A scientific criticism would seek to explain the literary work in terms of the ideological structure of which it is part, yet which it transforms in its art: it would search out the principle which both ties the work to ideology and distances it from it (ibid.).

Thus, there is a significant similarity between Marxist literary criticism and feminist literary criticism: both are theories about the power of the world outside of the text and the impact that that extra-textual world has on the literary imagination. This helps to explain the continuing attractions of Marxism for a number of feminist literary critics. For example, Lynne Pearce and Sara Mills, whose work I return to shortly, argue for a continued use within feminism of Marxist theory, albeit in modified or reinvented forms, for four main reasons. Marxist theories, "are theoretical frameworks, which, through constant engagement and interrogation, have been developed to... address current issues"; "are the only ones which have so far been developed which consistently and systematically concern themselves with economic relations and with historical and contextual information"; "have been developed to explain and, more importantly, combat oppression and injustice"; and, finally, still hold, "immense explanatory power and resonance" (Pearce and Mills, 1996: 186). Moreover, as Jackson observes, Marxism offers, "an analysis of oppression as systematic, built into the structure of society" (Jackson, 1998(a): 13). Consequently, it enables women's subordination to be conceptualised, "as neither given by nature nor an accidental feature of relations between men and women" but, rather, as originating in the social (ibid.). Moreover, because it is a theory of social change, Marxism suggests the possibility of a more egalitarian society for the future. Showalter suggests that it is such reasons that led to a number of influential English feminist critics, such as Mary Jacobus, Rosalind Coward, Michèle Barrett, Juliet Mitchell and Cora Kaplan, combining, "Marxist theoretical interest in the production of ideology of literature with feminist concerns for women's writing" (Showalter, 1992: 77).

Materialist Feminism

However, although "the Marxist feminist encounter has had important outcomes for literary theory", there have been difficulties in combining Marxist theory and feminism (Rein, 2000: 321). "Marxism was developed to explain capitalist class relations - the exploitation of the proletariat", whilst feminism's main focus is *gender* relations within patriarchy, even though these relationships may be considered alongside other issues,

including class (ibid.). Thus, there was a tension that was difficult to reconcile and in order to modify Marxism to accommodate gender relations a number of different forms of Marxist feminism were developed. Some theorists sought to retain existing Marxist conceptual frameworks and to fit feminist analysis into these, whilst others essayed radical reworkings of Marxism and took from it only what was useful for feminism. For example, Hennessy notes that a movement which termed itself "materialist feminism", "emerged from feminist critiques within marxism" in the 1970s (Hennessy, 1993: xi).[8] This term was used rather than "'marxist feminism' on the basis of an argument that marxism cannot adequately address women's exploitation and oppression unless the marxist problematic itself is transformed so as to be able to account for the sexual division of labor" (Hennessy, 1993: xi-xii). This transformation was needed because, "[w]ith its class bias, its emphasis on economic determinism, and its focus on a history exclusively formulated in terms of capitalist production, classic marxism in the seventies had barely begun to analyze patriarchal systems of power" (Hennessy, 1993: xii).

Thus, as Jackson notes, along with Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean (1993), Hennessy has "reinvented" the phrase 'materialist feminism' (Jackson, 1998(a): 25). As the above discussion of Hennessy might indicate, the scholars responsible for this reinvention acknowledge their debt to Marxism. They also articulate an awareness of the potential problems inherent within poststructuralism's focus on language, discourse and representation; that is, that this focus can both inhibit the development of a political perspective and lead to the disregarding of material oppression. However, at the same time, whilst retaining a commitment to Marxism and being wary of the potential implications of many aspects of poststructuralism, simultaneously, they seek to embrace the focus on language and subjectivity, aiming to produce what Jackson describes as, "a more materially grounded discourse analysis" (Jackson, 1998(a): 26).[9] Often, this type of analysis not only suggests that discourses originate in the material world, but, also, that they effect a material impact on that world. Thus, in *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse* (1993), Hennessy argues that materialist feminism aims to, "find

ways to anchor feminist analysis in our recognition of the continued brute force certain social totalities like patriarchy and racism still exercise, at the same time acknowledging that the social construction of 'woman' is never monolithic" (Hennessy, 1993: xi). So, by the 1990s, materialist feminism was characterised by its attempts to, "problematize 'woman' as an obvious and homogeneous empirical entity in order to explore how 'woman' as a discursive category is historically constructed and traversed by more than one differential axis", such as 'race', sexuality, class and ability/disability (Hennessy, 1993: xii). Thus, materialist feminists, "insist on one of the strongest features of feminism's legacy - its critique of social totalities like patriarchy and capitalism - without abandoning attention to the differential positioning of women within them" (ibid.). Hennessy argues that this is particularly important in contemporary society because the global economy is expanding in such a way that patriarchy and capitalism are becoming both more exploitative and more securely established. In summary, she argues that this means there is a need, "to take seriously the notion that discourses have a materiality", an argument which I develop more fully in Chapter 3 (Hennessy, 1993: xiv).

As I have already noted, Pearce and Mills argue in favour of a Marxist form of feminism (see p. 32 above). In so doing, they also make a case against materialist feminism, although they do see some advantages to this approach. They acknowledge that the, "change of terminology signals... not so much a coming to a theoretical dead-end with Marxism, but a move towards the relationship between feminism and Marxism as 'unfinished business', as something which still needs working through" (Pearce and Mills, 1996: 185). Moreover, they welcome the influence of materialist feminism, "in forcing Marxism in general to move towards new theoretical positions which are more able to account for current socio-economic and cultural situations" (ibid.). However, they suggest that there is a lack of coherence in the positions taken on this 'unfinished business' by, on the one hand, Landry and Maclean and, on the other, Hennessy. Consequently, Pearce and Mills define this kind of materialism as underdeveloped and undertheorised. Moreover, they argue that it is inconsistent and unsystematic in its

approach to economic relations and other contextual factors; and that it lacks both a fundamental opposition to oppression and the, "immense explanatory power and resonance" which Pearce and Mills assign to Marxism (Pearce and Mills, 1996: 186).

Whilst I share Pearce's and Mills' concerns about such forms of materialist feminism, I have decided to adopt this term in reference to the development of the notion of Third Wave Feminist Analysis in preference to Marxist feminism. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, despite these significant differences between Marxist feminisms and materialist feminisms, essentially, both agree that women's oppression is determined by societal structures and, thus, they are concerned with both analysing and changing the material conditions in which women live. Adopting the term materialism stresses this important similarity. Secondly, although a Marxist feminist approach does not exclude a discursive approach, discourse theory does tend to be more associated with materialism than with Marxism.[10] Since discourse analysis is a significant element of my own approach, as I will explain in the next chapter, this importance is more clearly signaled by the use of the term materialism than it would be by the term Marxist.

Whilst materialist feminism is concerned with, "the existence of structural inequalities", poststructuralist feminism has been criticised, for, "discount[ing] the world of 'things' in favour of 'words'" (Jackson, 1998(a): 25). However, whereas Marxist and materialist feminisms have, in many ways, been positioned as, "irreconcilable" with poststructuralism, yet some scholars have troubled this notion, as the above discussion of Landry and Maclean and Hennessy indicates, and as does the earlier citation of Weedon who stresses the historical and cultural specificity of poststructuralist feminism (see p.10 above). Since this thesis is an attempt to combine a form of materialist feminism with a type of feminist poststructuralism, I now outline one particular reading of literary texts that also combines such approaches, that is, an interpretation of two women-authored texts made by Lynne Pearce and Sara Mills (1996).

A Feminist Literary Criticism Which Combines Materialism With Poststructuralism

In analysing the novel *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood (1972) and the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1892), Pearce and Mills, in a move which locates them close to Terry Eagleton's position, adopt a type of Marxism evolved from the work of Louis Althusser and Pierre Macherey.[11] Pearce and Mills suggest that Althusser's argument, that ideology represents a subject's imaginary relation to the real conditions of existence, is a useful critical tool which exposes texts as, "reveal[ing] to us the workings of the ideologies that they themselves are inscribed by" (Pearce and Mills, 1996: 189). Moreover, they approve his argument that, "ideological knowledge (that is, knowledge which masks the reality of the relations between groups of individuals and institutions) is supported by having an institutional base", since this, "concretizes ideology, making it more of a material practice, rather than simply a form of 'false consciousness'" (ibid.). Moreover, he devised a related concept which has proved to be very useful to literary criticism, that is, the idea of interpellation. This is used to explain how it is that individuals come to be governed by these 'ideological state apparatuses' (ISAs). Interpellation posits that, "individuals are constituted as subjects through the process of being called upon to recognize themselves by a range of ideological knowledges" (ibid.). With reference to Macherey's work, Pearce and Mills engage particularly with his concept of the 'not-said', which they explain as, "an 'unspoken sub-text', which, by its very telling silence, interrogates and undermines what is represented by the dominant message of the text" (ibid.). In Macherey's paradigm, ideology is suggested as a contradictory entity. It is constituted by a mixture of competing of ideas which are unable to attain coherence. The silences and gaps of a text are a direct result of this incoherence and signify, "the 'papering-over' of difficult questions and issues" (Pearce and Mills, 1996: 190). Pearce and Mills suggest this approach as compatible with a poststructuralist one, since, "a Macherayan reading, like a deconstructive one, is concerned with identifying the 'gaps' in a given text and speculating on what they reveal" (Pearce and Mills, 1996: 190-1). Furthermore, this is an example of Eagelton's notion of 'a science of the text', which I outlined earlier and wherein criticism is positioned outside of the text.

Finally, in developing their hybrid Marxist, poststructuralist approach, Pearce and Mills also look to Althusser's use of psychoanalysis. Althusser adopted a model of the psyche which had been developed within psychoanalysis and added to this a Marxist model of social structures, to enable a description of the individual subject as constituted from a complicated negotiation with social forces. Within this model, the notion of the 'imaginary' is highly significant, since this,

> constitutes the failure of individuals to recognize that the ideological forces by which they are interpellated are neither real nor inevitable. They are thus the victims of social relations that they perceive to be natural and determinate, but which are imposed upon them by a variety of social institutions or ISAs (ibid.).

As Pearce and Mills observe, there are parallels with Lacanian theories of subjectivity here, since, within Lacanian writings, the Imaginary describes a child's pre-Oedipal identification, "with its mirror-image before it has acquired an autonomous sense of self" (Pearce and Mills, 1996: 191-2). Subsequently, the child enters language, or the Symbolic order, and there are parallels between this process and the operations of the Imaginary. During the mirror phase, the infant mistakenly believes itself to be a unified whole with control of its own physicality. Similarly, the speaking subject in the symbolic order mistakenly believes that itself and its utterances are one and also, mistakenly, assumes itself as the author of the meaning of these utterances. Thus, for both Lacan and Althusser, "the subject believes that s/he is in control of a situation which is, in fact, determined by structures within the dominant culture. It is just this 'delusion' that allows, on the one hand, for our existence as social beings... yet on the other, for our manipulation by the forces of the State" (Pearce and Mills, 1996: 192). However, there is a significant difference between these two theorists in terms of "possible modes of resistance" (ibid.). Within an Althusserian paradigm, the subject is 'trapped' in a particular ideological mind-set until she is exposed to an oppositional or alternative ideology which enables her to recognise that she is oppressed; whilst within a Lacanian paradigm, the subject's potential resistance is inscribed in the transition to

the patriarchal Symbolic Order. However, this is not to suggest that, "the dialogue between the two 'imaginarys'" cannot be used productively, indeed, as Pearce and Mills argue, they can (ibid.). However, in order for that to be able to happen, the different origins of these 'imaginarys' must be heeded: the one is rooted in the social and cultural; the other in the psychic.

Pearce and Mills conclude that by positioning a Marxist-feminism within a more general poststructuralism it is possible to negotiate the inherent tensions of a Marxist-feminist practice, since this combination can accommodate irresolution with respect to the competing claims of patriarchy and capitalism. Moreover, since both poststructuralism and Marxist-feminism are concerned to, "read texts 'against the grain', so that the various ideologies which they inscribe (and are themselves inscribed by) are routed out and exposed", combining the two approaches has a further advantage (ibid.). When brought to literary criticism, this combination can ensure that texts are not only a means of understanding how ideologies have oppressed women but, also, how women have sometimes complied with this oppression and sometimes resisted it. Therefore, texts can be reinterpreted in a way that is productive for feminism.

So far in this chapter I have outlined a history of feminist literary criticism which has traced this heterogeneous body of work back to first and second wave feminism. I have reviewed two distinct and influential strands of criticism: the Anglo-American, which is concerned, primarily, although not exclusively, with representations of women characters in both female and male authored texts and with the construction and constitution of the canon; and the French, poststructuralist tradition known as *écriture féminine*, which is overtly theoretical and, chiefly, concerned with the analysis of language. I have also reviewed the influence of Marxist literary criticism on feminist theorising about texts, both in a form which is termed Marxist feminism and in an allied form known as materialist feminism. Finally, I outlined an approach taken by two feminist literary critics, Pearce and Mills, and noted that they combined a type of poststructuralism with a form of materialism. It was important to offer this particular

review since, whilst the influence of all of the forms of feminist literary criticism outlined in this chapter can be seen on my own theoretical perspective, that taken by Pearce and Mills is perhaps the most significant. However, there remains one influential feature of much recent, feminist literary criticism that has not yet been discussed: interdisciplinarity. I end this chapter, therefore, by explaining the relationship between my own work and this concept.

Interdisciplinarity

A significant characteristic which marked much 1980s' and 1990s' feminist literary criticism was its willingness to embrace the ideas of feminists working in other disciplines. Whilst, as I have already explained, feminist criticism has traditionally been interdisciplinary, combining textual analysis with an interest in the social construction of gender, during the 1980s, this inter-disciplinary approach broadened to incorporate work in disciplines previously overlooked. For example, feminist critics looked to gender theory in science, such as Evelyn Fox Keller's (1986) feminist critiques of the construction of science; and in history, for instance Joan Scott's (1988) discussions of an approach which is both feminist and poststructuralist. Such interdiciplinary approaches developed in feminism as many women in different disciplines realised that it was only by working alongside theorists in other fields who were analysing the same problems that they themselves were analysing that they could come to an adequate analysis. For example, philosophers, psychologists and linguists all analyse language but from different perspectives and with different focuses. By drawing on each others' work, rather than working in isolation, a less fragmentary, more holistic analysis is possible.

Thus, as I have argued elsewhere (see Liladhar, 1999(c)), by the 1990s, it became increasingly difficult to discuss feminist literary criticism in isolation. Consequently, in her discussion of the 1990s, as part of a review of feminist literary criticism, Kennedy (2000(a)) focuses not on feminist literary criticism alone but on its relationship with Queer theory and cultural studies. Moreover, during that decade, a

number of important feminist studies were anthologies which placed explorations of literary texts alongside examinations of media texts or other popular cultural forms. For example, in Bonner *et al.* (1992), essays on gender and genre and the short story are juxtaposed with essays on science fiction, blockbuster novels, TV Soap Operas and stand-up comedy. Similarly, the use of interdisciplinary approaches to explore a range of generic forms can be found in S.Mills (ed.) (1994) and Skeggs (ed.) (1995). The juxtaposition of seemingly disparate cultural forms and the use of a range of theoretical perspectives enabled a number of insights which would not have been possible with a more strictly literary approach. Moreover, this type of interdisciplinary approach recognises that oppression cannot be adequately analysed by looking at one cultural form, such as literature. Oppression is multi-determined and, therefore, can only be understood through the exploration of a range of sources. Consequently, in this thesis I draw on work by scholars who cannot be defined simply as 'literary critics'. However, that is not to suggest that this thesis is not primarily literary criticism. Rather, it is to indicate that, at times, elements of the approaches of other disciplines have been appropriated to assist the uncovering of gender issues within texts that is not possible by a strictly literary analysis. Such appropriations will be both justified and elucidated at the point of use.

In summary, this broad, non-exclusive approach is needed since a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, like much feminist scholarship of the 1990s, is characterised by, "a newly self-conscious concern with *difference*" (Mills and Pearce, 1996: 6) It seeks to combine a poststructuralist approach with, "a more material sense of the differences (cultural, historical, 'racial', etc.) that distinguish women from another" (ibid.). Whilst this, "frustrate[s] our ability to talk about ourselves as a homogeneous group", this complexity is not viewed as disadvantageous, rather it is seen as productive since it encourages the embracing of "new possibilities", not only from a range of feminists working within literary criticisms but, also from other disciplines, too (ibid.). Of course, this use of work from other fields is not unprecedented; as Maggie Humm observes, literary theory is no longer, "a bounded entity" (Humm, 1998: 208). Chapter 2 now

explains in more detail what is meant by the term Third Wave Feminist Analysis, as well as indicating how this approach is applied in practice.

Footnotes

[1] Feminist literary criticism is also known as feminist literary theory (for example, see Kennedy, 2000(a)). Feminist literary criticism and feminist literary theory were originally conceptualised differently; "[t]raditionally, criticism refers to the practical aspect of literary study - the close reading of texts - while theory examines the philosophical and political underpinnings of interpretive and evaluative practices, including the construction of the category of 'literature'" (Kennedy, 2000(a): 306). However, as Kennedy also notes, these two approaches are not necessarily discrete and this thesis combines them both in its exploration of literary texts.

[2] Much of this section has its origins in an article entitled "Feminist Literary Criticism" (Liladhar, 1999(c)).

[3] Whilst, for reasons of convenience, I have here adopted the term 'second wave feminism' and, whilst I will later refer to an earlier political movement as 'first wave feminism', yet these terms are problematic. As Kathryn McPherson observes, "although the 'woman question' garnered much less media and popular attention in the 1920s through [to the] 1950s, women involved in socialism, communism, the peace movement, as well as suffrage societies across the globe, continued to work towards improving the position of women" (McPherson, 2000: 210). Usage of the terms first wave and second wave to refer to two distinct but similar movements which, respectively, precede and follow the period from the 1920s to the 1950s, implicitly overlooks the political activism of these three decades.

[4] Although a similar periodisation is accepted by other scholars (for example, see McPherson, 2000), such versions of the origins of feminism have been challenged as only representing one particular group of feminists (see, for example, Kramarae and

Treichler, 1992: 164). Moreover, it should be noted that the term feminism is applied to the earlier periods retrospectively, since this term, "did not come into popular use until the 1910s" (McPherson, 2000: 208). This earlier activism is sometimes termed proto-feminism.

[5] However, subsequently, Showalter (1989) questioned the premises upon which her own earlier work was based. In a move which situates her close to the earlier position taken up by Millett (1970), Showalter argued against a gynocritical approach, suggesting instead that feminist critics now needed to focus on gender and sexual difference in texts by men as much as by women.

[6] Although I have sited the 'reclaiming' of women's writing in the 1970s, that is not to suggest that this project ended then. For example, in the 1980s, Jane Spencer (1986) explored the work of a number of neglected women writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. This exploration of an earlier period enabled her to claim that women writers played a much more important role in the development of the novel than had been allowed by other (male) historians of the genre. Moreover, as Mills and Pearce note, the work of "making female authored-texts visible... needs to be sustained" (Mills and Pearce, 1996: 6). This work remains particularly important for Black and lesbian female authors, since "visibility is still an issue for these groups" (ibid.).

[7] More recently, Christine Battersby (1989) has discussed creativity from a different perspective, arguing that it is closely associated with 'genius', a characteristic, "that generations of scholars, creative writers have given a male gender" even though, "many of the qualities praised by the advocates of genius includes stereotypically 'feminine' characteristics (intuition, emotion, imagination, etc.)" (Battersby, 1989: 2 and 4).

[8] Whilst I have used the more conventional use of the capital 'M' for Marxism throughout this thesis, Hennessy adopts the lower case form.

[9] I define the term *discourse analysis* in detail in Chapter 3. However, for the purposes of this chapter it can be summarised as a concern with a range of attitudes, beliefs and ideas which are understood as having the capacity to influence or even control the ways in which individuals think and behave, although they also have an inherent capacity for resistance.

[10] I implicitly explain this assertion in Chapter 3.

[11] Mills and Pearce also draw on a form of critique practised by Georg Lukàs (1885-1971). However, as they suggest this type of criticism is not as readily integrated with a poststructuralist approach as is the work of Althusser and Macherey, I have, therefore, focused my discussion on these two latter critics.

Chapter 2: Defining Third Wave Feminist Analysis

Introduction

This chapter aims to describe how Third Wave Feminist Analysis works in practice and to outline what its implications are. This draws on an approach used by Mills to develop what she calls, "post-feminist text analysis" (S.Mills, 1998(b)). Like my own work, Mills' work, too, draws on earlier feminist theorising, whilst also finding aspects of much of it problematic. Her approach outlines a useful way to retain a continuing commitment to feminism, whilst avoiding some of the problems of the earlier work. Consequently, I outline Mills' approach in some detail later in this chapter. However, before doing so, I explain my decision to reject Mills' term for this approach, "post-feminist text analysis", through an exploration of the debates about the different meanings and implications of the term post-feminism. I also justify my decision to use the term Third Wave Feminist Analysis instead, by considering the connotations of this phrase. Finally, in drawing on Mills' work, I have found that there are a number of elements in texts that I wanted to explore, that are not addressed by her approach. In this chapter, therefore, I will modify her approach, by also considering *truth status*, *transitivity* and *agency*, and the form of the texts' *address to the reader*. However, I begin by discussing the term post-feminism.

The Background to and Component Elements of Third Wave Feminist Analysis

Post-feminism[1]

Mills is not the only contemporary scholar to have adopted the term post-feminism. For example, Ann Brooks uses it to signify, "a useful conceptual frame of reference encompassing the intersection of feminism with a number of other anti-foundationalist movements including postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism" (Brooks, 1997: 1). Moreover, she argues that it represents feminism's, "maturity into a confident body of theory and politics, representing pluralism and difference and reflecting on its position in relation to other philosophical and political movements similarly demanding change" (ibid.). However, she also acknowledges that post-feminism is a highly problematic term. This point is made by other commentators. For

example, Whelehan argues that post-feminism is an individualistic approach which, whilst it credits feminism with "furthering women's independence", yet it also, simultaneously, dismisses it, "as irrelevant to a new generation of women who no longer need to be liberated from the shackles of patriarchy because they have already 'arrived'" (Whelehan, 2000: 3). Additionally, Elspeth Probyn notes that, although post-feminism has been taken as representing, "a political and semiotic playfulness", by, for example, Angela McRobbie, Probyn herself is warier about it, since she conceptualises it as akin to "new traditionalism [which] hawks the home as the 'natural choice' [for women] - which means, of course, no choice" (Probyn, 1997: 130).

Moreover, in the work of such critics as Susan Faludi (1992) post-feminism is used to mean *anti*feminist, a backlash against feminism.[2] Faludi sees the backlash as omnipresent, arguing that it is manifest in all forms of the media; the fashion and 'beauty' industries; the worlds of politics and the academy; popular psychology; the workplace; and the medical establishment. She summarises the articulation of this attack on feminism by noting that the backlash argues "that the struggle for women's rights is won... [and women are] free and equal" (Faludi, 1992: 1). However, she observes that the backlash then argues that women, "have never been more miserable" (ibid.). This paradox is explained by, "[b]lam[ing] it on feminism": "[w]omen are unhappy precisely *because* they are free. Women are enslaved by their own liberation... The women's movement... has proved women's own worst enemy" (Faludi, 1992: 2). Finally, and perhaps most significantly, post-feminism is often (mis)interpreted as indicating a break with feminist politics. Just as Whelehan argues that, "the prefix 'post' signifies 'going beyond' and 'discarding the essence of'", Brooks, too, observes that, "[t]he concept of '*post*'... can be the subject of misconception" and can, imply, albeit perhaps unwittingly, that the feminist agenda has been attained (Whelehan, 2000: 90 and Brooks, 1997: 1). Thus, although Mills clearly explains that in using the term post-feminist she does *not* intend to suggest, "that feminism itself... [is] no longer necessary since equality of opportunity for women ha[s] been achieved", Whelehan dismisses such claims by arguing that although many 'post-feminists' deny a transcendence of

feminism, nevertheless, they still make, "a clear attempt to create a separation between feminism's 'political' identity and its 'academic' theoretical one, which suggests that the politics somehow could be optional" (S.Mills, 1998(b): 235 and Whelehan, 2000: 90). In summary, although the term post-feminism can be used positively within feminism to signify a complex and inclusive approach, it has undesirable connotations, too, since it can be (mis)read as indicating the abandonment or downgrading of feminist politics. Therefore, the phrase 'Third Wave Feminist Analysis' is used here rather than 'post-feminism'.

Third Wave Feminism

The term Third Wave Feminist Analysis derives from the phrase "third wave feminism"[3]. I use this phrase, since it is, perhaps, less controversial than post-feminism and, also, since it echoes the terms used to describe the earlier two significant movements of feminism; the first wave and the second wave. Thus, the expression Third Wave Feminist Analysis indicates that I acknowledge that my own work is rooted in these earlier movements because, as Whelehan cautions, "it would be misguided to cast off some of this century's most important [feminist] thinkers" (Whelehan, 2000: 13). Moreover, as she also urges, it is essential, "to acknowledge how important feminism has been to social progress and that feminist perspectives on rape, for example, have enabled important shifts in the legal system, police practices and the public perception of the crime" (Whelehan, 2000: 11 and 20). My retention of a similar terminology can be understood as making this acknowledgment, even though it is not my aim to work here for wholesale political and legislative change. Rather, because, "[t]here is much that needs to be re-evaluated in any assessment of second-wave feminism", it is my intention to contribute to the ongoing development of feminist theory by, "consider[ing] deficiencies in previous arguments and supplement[ing] them with fresh ideas", thereby adding in new dimensions to the earlier work (Whelehan, 2000: 13 and 83).

Due to the fact that I not only draw on earlier feminist theory but also seek to develop it in productive ways, I wanted to not only identify this thesis with the earlier work but, also, to signal a distance between them. Some of the limitations of earlier feminist critiques are, partly, because feminism is always, "a messy and repetitive business since it blurs intellectual boundaries and concerns itself with real lives as well as the ephemera of images and representations, and needs to be aware of cultural variance in its perception of how women are treated and represented all over the world" (Whelehan, 2000: 23). For these reasons this work, too, will necessarily have deficiencies, oversights and problems of its own. However, these limitations should be minimised because this thesis at least *attempts* to explore the inherent 'messiness' of feminist theorising; some of the earlier work was flawed precisely because it did not seem to try to overtly engage with this 'messiness'. As Mills (1998(b)) suggests in her assessment of second-wave feminism, and as was apparent from the earlier discussion of, for example, gynocriticism, much of the earlier work was based on simplistic assumptions about women and women's oppression. Moreover, it overlooked other important variables besides gender, "such as age, race, class, sexual preference/orientation, age and disability" (S.Mills, 1998(b): 239). Additionally, since Mills' focus is feminist text analysis, rather than feminism more broadly, she distinguishes a number of further limitations in feminist literary criticism not raised by Whelehan. Mills argues that earlier feminist literary criticism often "ignored *context* and thus took individual words in texts as always carrying the same meaning"; failed to acknowledge that a range of readings are available, not only to groups of individuals but, also, to one particular individual; and, "assumed a simple binary model of power relations" which overlooked, "the productive nature of power relations as well as their restrictions" (S.Mills, 1998(b): 239 and 240).

In response to such issues, other feminist critics, too, have adopted the phrase third wave feminism. Kathryn McPherson notes that towards the end of the twentieth century within feminist theory, "[d]ifferences, rather than commonalities, were emphasised, prompting some... commentators of the 1990s to claim that the second

wave of feminism is over and that the... third wave(s) of feminism has begun" (McPherson, 2000: 209). Similarly, Heather Zwicker uses the term third wave feminism to describe a form of feminism which counters such concepts as, "global sisterhood and the universality of gender, which supposed that women could stand outside national formations" (Zwicker, 2000: 359). Instead, it "recognise[s] nationality, along with race, class... sexuality and ethnicity, as a significant axis of gender differentiation among women" (ibid.). Additionally, Lynn Meskell cites Judith Butler (b. 1956) and Gayatri Spivak (b.1942) as examples of theorists, "who are sometimes referred to as third-wave feminists", that is, feminist scholars, "who acknowledge the additional subjectivities of age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation" (Meskell, 2000: 27). Thus, my adoption of the term Third Wave Feminist Analysis also has the advantage of implicitly positioning my work within what is becoming a tradition of more inclusive kinds of theoretical approaches. Moreover, many of the theorists who adopt such approaches, such as Butler and Spivak, focus on language, discourse and representation, as do I and, therefore, the term, Third Wave Feminist Analysis conveys this particular emphasis. In the next section, I outline the main concerns of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis and, since my approach has been significantly influenced by Mills' Post-feminist text analysis, I begin by summarising Mills' approach.

Developing Post-feminist Text Analysis and Making A Third Wave Feminist Analysis

Mills articulates many of the concerns that I have already defined as central to a Third Wave Feminist Analysis. She argues for the need to adopt an approach,

> which recognises [that] the context in which texts are produced and interpreted has been profoundly changed by the impact of feminism... [is] aware of the context of words... analyse[s]... [them] at the level of discourse as well as at the local level of occurrence [and] thus... consider[s] the relation between lexical items and what are conventionally regarded as extra-textual features. It must be aware of the different levels of sexism within a text... it must analyse gender in relation to race, class and other variables... [and it must] see that there are, within

> the parameters of the textual and discursive constraints, multiple interpretations of terms and discourses as a whole... Such an analysis must also be able to trace elements which have been omitted from texts, yet which may still exert a discursive pressure on the text (S.Mills, 1998(b): 241/2).

I now consider each of these requirements and clarify their significance for a Third Wave Feminist Analysis.

Firstly, I discuss Mills's initial argument, that is, that it is important to acknowledge that the context of textual production and interpretation has been fundamentally changed by feminism. I have already argued that feminist scholarship has provided a range of analytical and critical tools and theoretical approaches that can assist a complex reading of a range of texts and I now develop this point to consider some of the ways in which feminism has both identified and countered sexism in language use. Revealing and challenging sexism is an important project for feminism, since sexism is a significant factor in women's oppression. Since my concern in this thesis is with textual analysis, I will now, therefore, not only define the term but, also, consider sexism in language use. However, in a move which also addresses Mills' second argument, I will then argue that a consideration of language in isolation is inadequate, as an exploration of context is also needed in order to achieve a fuller understanding of the operations of sexist language. I begin, however, by defining sexism.

As Lorraine Code notes, sexism was coined in the late 1960s, "to refer to social arrangements, policies, language, and practices enacted by men or women that express a systematic, often institutionalised belief that men are superior, women inferior" (Code, 2000(b): 441). However, "sexism cannot be isolated from the larger political and economic forces responsible for the exploitation and oppression" of other subordinated groups, such as Black men, since its, "cognitive and political force derived initially from its association with practices that women and men had learned to recognise as

'racist', in a period of increasing awareness of oppressions suffered in affluent western societies by people other than white men" (Steady, 2000: 10 and Code, 2000(b): 441). Such oppressions are achieved by sexist practices, which,

> range from the seemingly simple, such as referring to women as 'girls', or treating women as delicate or physically/mentally incapable, to the larger and more complex, such as discounting a woman's refusal of sexual activity with assertions that 'no' does not mean 'no', to workplace attitudes and policies that extend oppression into women's working lives by confining them to female-designated jobs on grounds only of their sex, to restricting women's/girls' participation in sport (Code, 2000(b): 441).

Sexism specifically in language use, also termed sexist language, is defined, simply, as, "the portrayal of male dominance in language structure and language usage" and is characterised as, "'[o]ne of the most powerful means of perpetrating masculinist interpretations of the world'" (Kramarae and Treichler, 1992: 412 and Stanley, 1979, cited in ibid.). As Deborah Cameron (1998), amongst others, observes, there is a range of forms of sexist language. Firstly, she notes that in English, although not all languages, there are, "many resources simply for drawing our attention to gender. Males and females are given gender-specific names, are commonly addressed using gender-marked titles... are sometimes described using different words... and are almost always referred to using gender-marked pronouns" (Cameron, 1998: 149). Moreover, often, "the rules of English" not only *demand* that these distinctions are made but, also, "embody a number of implicit assumptions about relations between men and women (ibid.). This is seen, for example, in the convention that, "the 'unmarked' or default gender is masculine. Traditionally, the masculine pronouns... are used for 'generic' cases... [whilst] a number of common words referring to persons have an unmarked form for male persons and a special, 'marked' form for female ones... *manager* and *manageress* or *actor* and *actress*" (ibid.). However, this is not, "purely a question of grammar", since such usage is, "symbolically insulting... it's like the way we say

'Kleenex' for all tissues... In English, male human beings are constantly presented as the leading brand" (Cameron, 1998: 149 and 152). Furthermore, "[a]nother implicit assumption found in some areas of language is that women are fundamentally *sexual* beings: applied to them apparently neutral words take on sexual connotations (compare 'an honest man' and 'an honest woman')" (Cameron, 1998: 149).

Feminists have made concerted efforts both to alter such conventions, "particularly the 'unmarked masculine rule'" and to, "coin or popularise new terms (such as 'unwaged' rather than 'non-working' for women who do not have a job outside their homes)" (Cameron, 1998: 149-150). However, the problems of sexist language do not only lie in linguistic form. "For instance statements made in the media are not infrequently androcentric and sexist *though the words they use are not formally marked* - like the report on, "a Birmingham man who went on trial for attacking his *next door neighbour's wife* with a machete" (Cameron, 1998: 152). As Cameron observes,

> [t]here is no explicit gender-marking on the word *neighbour* (it is not like *actress*), nothing that prevents us from using it in relation to either sex, and (unlike the case of *nurse*) no clear cultural stereotype associating the role of 'neighbour' with one sex more than the other. Yet... the author... uses *neighbour* as if it could only refer to men (ibid.).

Thus, as Mills 1995(a) also observes, in order to uncover sexism in language it is not enough to look simply at individual words, nor even specific phrases or sentences, important thought that project is. Rather there is a need to also consider them at discourse level, by which I mean they need to be explored in terms of the attitudes and beliefs which underpin them. In other words, "[b]ecause linguistic forms depend for their full interpretation on social context, including mutually accessible cultural knowledge, the question of whose beliefs and values inform this cultural knowledge is crucial to understanding how meanings are socially constructed" (Ehrlich, 2000(a): 140).

When this cultural knowledge is needed in order to understand texts, it is often termed "background knowledge" (Montgomery *et al.*, 1992: 224). Background knowledge is defined as the knowledge that the text assumes that its readers will share due to a shared cultural context. As Christie's (1994) work observes, readers may not have the relevant background knowledge assumed by a text. Without this understanding, it is not possible to reach a full understanding of a text's meaning. One element of background knowledge which a Third Wave Feminist Analysis emphasises is an awareness of the generic form of the text under exploration and I now define genre and then explain why it is significant in this type of textual analysis.

Abrams summarises genre as, "a type or species of literature, or... a literary form" (Abrams, 1984: 70). This may mean, simply, the "three overall classes" of literature: poetry, prose and drama (ibid.). However, genre is often used to denote more than these three categories: in addition to signifying these divisions it can also denote other classes within them.[4] So, for example, prose can be sub-divided into novels, novellas and short stories and each of these can be further categorised into such genres as detective fiction, science fiction, Gothic novels, westerns and romances.[5] Generic conventions include subject matter, plot, character and closure, as well as language, form and length (Walder, 1995). However, as Bonner observes, "no one sits down, defines a genre and then creates the first example" (Bonner, 1992: 94(a)). Rather, "genres are recognised retrospectively, when it becomes apparent... that several texts share a similar form and characteristics" (ibid.). Once a genre has been discerned by writers, critics and readers, the generic characteristics, "function above all as marketing categories, ensuring that a reader can find more of the 'same kind of thing', and reducing a publisher's risk of providing a product that may not be bought" (ibid.).[6]

However, generic conventions need not necessarily be complied with: "the writer may play *against*, as well as *with*, the prevailing generic conventions" (Abrams, 1984: 71, emphasis added). For example, Chinua Achebe notes how African novelists, aware that, "the novel is a peculiarly Western genre", have altered the form in a way

that is comparable to the changing of Western music by people of African origin (Achebe, 1990: 278, f. pub. 1974). In making this claim he asks, "did not the black people in America... take the trumpet and the trombone and blow them as they had never been blown before, indeed as they were not designed to be blown? And the result, was it not jazz?" (ibid.). Additionally, in understanding the significance of generic categorisation for analysis, it needs to be noted that not all genres are equally valued.[7] The distinction between the status of various genres is remarked upon by Imelda Whelehan who argues that, "genre writing, such as crime, romance or science fiction, is often viewed derisively as... rather 'Art'-less... 'pulp fiction' implies trash - with its connotations of disposability and transitoriness; just as 'Literature' implies good-quality serious art 'for all time' (Whelehan, 1994: 219).[8]

In summary, *genre* indicates a form that is not to be defined narrowly by its narrative characteristics but, more broadly, by,

> a set of constitutive conventions and codes, altering from age to age, but shared by a kind of implicit contract between writer and reader... the writer may play against, as well as with, the prevailing generic conventions; for the reader, such conventions function as a set of expectations, which may be controverted rather than satisfied (Abrams, 1984: 71).

Within Third Wave Feminist Analysis it is important to situate the text under examination within its generic conventions. Although Abrams suggests that "the writer may play against... the prevailing generic conventions" it is not clear how much scope writers have to do so. Moreover, texts which conform to convention tend be constrained by this conformity in other ways. For example, in Chapters 5 and 6, I will suggest that *A Thousand Acres* is restrained in its ability to challenge a traditional form of femininity and one restrictive pressure may be that of conforming to the demands of a traditional form, that of the 'literary' novel. So, it may not only be that generic conventions lead readers to expect certain statements but, also, that they lead texts to making specific

statements. This is also important because newer forms, which tend to have accumulated fewer conventions and, moreover, to feel their burden weigh less heavily, may be less constrained by generic conventions and more able to contravene them. In breaking with these conventions, it is possible that the texts are freer to break with other conventions and, thus, to make more radical statements.[9]

This understanding of the relevant background knowledge assumed by a text is also important, since, whilst individual statements may seem inoffensive, when considered alongside a range of other seemingly innocuous utterances or texts, their meaning changes from inoffensive to oppressive. Thus, addressing texts at the level of discourse also helps to meet Mills' third requirement: by considering the extra-textual context of a given text, an awareness of the different levels of sexism within a text will necessarily follow. However, this is not to suggest that a thorough exploration of a text's socio-political and historical context is needed. Rather, it means that in developing a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, the analyst should draw on elements of her own background knowledge of the culture in which the text is both produced and read. However, since her own background knowledge will necessarily be individual, this approach risks an exclusionary reading. In order to avoid this risk, therefore, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis needs to be sensitive to its own partiality. This sensitivity should be manifest through articulating an acknowledgment that other individuals or groups might, indeed, probably will, interpret the texts under consideration differently due to their own, different background knowledge.

Although, like Mills, I have stressed the importance of uncovering sexism, as this brief discussion of background knowledge might suggest, doing so is not always a straightforward task. It is not only that a considerable degree of processing is often required to uncover the unstated assumptions and beliefs underpinning sexist assertions but, also, that whilst individual statements when considered in isolation might not be interpreted as sexist, they become so due to the combination of practices in which they are located. When a number of, "relatively inconsequential" practices aggregate they

can, "cumulatively marginalise women/minorities" and produce what is known as, "a chilly climate" (Prentice, 2000: 84). Thus,

> [m]uch like the 'ton of feathers' syndrome, a chilly climate is produced by a variety of micro-inequities such as: denying the status and authority of women and minorities through sexist comments, anecdotes or 'jokes'; excluding or impairing access to information; evaluating male and female behaviour and experience differentially; and signaling lesser importance through words, behaviours, tone or gestures which indicate that women and/or minorities do not need to be taken seriously (ibid.).

Moreover, as Mills (1998(b)) suggests, whilst many people hold sexist opinions, fewer may be willing to air them publicly than in the past, due to the success of feminist activists in making overt sexism less acceptable than it once was. Paradoxically, then, feminists may have inadvertently made their task more difficult, since much sexism has, "become more indirect or subtle" (S.Mills, 1998(b): 237). Moreover, as Whelehan (2000) argues, the possibility of identifying sexism has been further complicated by the rise of 'the lad'. She defines a 'lad' as being, "self-centered, male-identified, leering... obsessed by sport... naughty but nice" and as manifesting, "a certain boylike vulnerability [which] supposedly [makes] up for his deficiencies" (Whelehan, 2000: 5). The 'lad' articulates both, "a series of common wisdoms about maleness and a firm assertion that there are psychological as well as physical explanations for the current cultural division of gender roles" (ibid.). Since this latter assertion is often presented in an ironic fashion, it is difficult to challenge; "as long as the [sexist] message is intended as a 'joke' no one can touch you for it" (Whelehan, 2000: 69). However, the problem with 'laddism' is not only located with particular 'laddish' individuals, rather it is symptomatic of a broader cultural trend. In other words, since this phenomenon can flourish in contemporary British society, this is an indication that this culture is one which can tolerate, even endorse, this particular form of sexism.

In summary, the context for current feminist literary theory is significantly more complex than the context of earlier feminist work, even though the kind of sexism that was identified in the late 1960s still exists and women continue to be oppressed through a range of practices, including in both spoken and written language use. However, a consideration of language alone overlooks the societal attitudes and beliefs which have contributed to that usage. Thus, an analysis of language needs to be combined with an exploration of whose values have informed the cultural knowledge that underpins that language. Moreover, a consideration of other social practices which collude with sexist statements is needed, in order to consider the cumulative effect of practices which might seem innocuous or innocent when considered individually. Moreover, sexism has, in many instances, become more nuanced in recent years and the possibility of identifying sexism has been further complicated by the rise of a form of sexism which exploits irony and 'humour', thus deflecting, perhaps even preventing, challenges. Thus, often a great deal of processing is required to uncover the operations of sexism. However, whilst this makes the task of feminist analysis more difficult, the legacy of more than thirty years of feminist theorising means that the tools to perform this task do exist. Much of this body of theoretical work has also argued that it is not enough to consider only a text's sexism: other oppressive practices must be addressed, too. Like Mills, I, too, have stressed that it is necessary to consider other variables besides gender, such as class, race and sexuality. As I have already argued, other forms of oppression are inextricably inter-linked with sexism and any form of feminism which overlooks this is itself as oppressive as the sexism it seeks to counter. One way to avoid such oppressive practices is to manifest an awareness that multiple readings of texts are possible, not only because texts are capable of generating a range of meanings, but also because the reader plays an important role in interpreting these meanings and different readers may make different readings of texts. I now discuss the suggestion that texts can generate more than one meaning by briefly considering the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). I follow this consideration by outlining one of the ways in which cultural studies has influenced literary criticism's understanding of the role of the reader in interpretation.

Bakhtin was one of the earliest scholars to describe the polysemic nature of texts. Like Althusser, Macherey and Eagleton, discussed in Chapter 1, Bakthin, too, was influenced by Marxist theory. He took, "discourse, or the word, as his focal point... [and] join[ed] a philosophy of language with a philosophy of literature" (Patterson, 1999: 74).[10] Although influential in many ways, "[h]is broadest influence on literary history has arisen from his ideas regarding the history of literature and especially the development of the novel" which, "he views not as a genre but as a force of interaction between language and life" (ibid.).[11] Thus, literature does not stand apart from society, nor does it simply reflect or represent it, rather, it, "reflects the forces of dialogic exchange but also is itself such a force" (ibid.). In his discussion of the "novelization" of genres other than the novel, Bakhtin argues that during periods, "when the novel becomes the dominant genre... almost all the remaining genres are to a greater or lesser extent 'novelized'" (Bakhtin, 1995: 263, f. pub. 1981). By this he means that,

> the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality... [it] sparks the renovation of all other genres... [and] infects them with its spirit of process and inconclusiveness (Bakhtin, 1995: 263).

Thus, for Bakhtin, genres are not only polysemic but also evolving and, thus, their meanings may change over time. However, whilst Bakhtin writes of the "openendedness" of "novelized" forms, I do not want to argue that texts and words can legitimately be interpreted in any way the reader chooses; there are parameters for meaning dictated by a range of factors. As Mills phrases it, whilst there are, "multiple interpretations of terms and discourses as a whole", yet, still, these are made, within the parameters of the textual and discursive constraints" (see p.49 above). However, that is not to suggest that readers have to collude with the text and its values. This possibility for resistance has been explored by feminist scholars, such as Janice Radway (1984). Radway's study is based on a theory that was first articulated within the field of cultural studies which has had a profound influence on literary criticism's understanding of the

reader's role in interpretation. Before reviewing this influence, however, firstly, I define cultural studies.

Cultural studies explores *any* element of contemporary culture which it defines as encompassing, "both the texts and the practices of everyday or 'popular' culture" (Thornham, 1998: 221). Cultural studies engages, "critically not only with developments in cultural and film theory but with the American mass communication tradition of media research" (ibid.). As a consequence of its broad-ranging nature a paradigm of the text-reader relationship which accounts, "for the *whole* of the communicative process, not just for texts, or for 'effects' on audiences" became necessary. (ibid.). Perhaps the most influential model is Stuart Hall's, which describes the "moments" in which meaning is produced: the moment of production, when meaning is "encoded"; the moment of the text; and the moment of reception, when meaning is "decoded" (1973). Within this model, each moment is,

> envisaged as the site of a struggle over meaning... not only are *texts* the site of a struggle over meaning; audiences, too, will be engaged in this struggle... Because the reader/spectator's *position* in this social formation may be different, however... the meanings 'preferred' by the text may be negotiated or even opposed by the reader/spectator (Thornham, 1998: 221/2).

This paradigm of textual interpretation has been influential on feminist theorising to the extent that it facilitated a movement, "beyond the analysis of the textual positions constructed for the (imagined) female spectator to explore the actual readings which women made of such texts" (Thornham, 1998: 222). Thus, Radway was able to conclude that the women romance readers she studied were often "resistant" to the meanings encoded in the romance texts (Thornham, 1998: 223). [12] In summary, as Christie observes, texts are, "polysemic (i.e. capable of generating a range of meanings)", although, "the 'meaning' of a text is not retrievable solely from the

information encoded in that text", since the reader also makes a, "contribution to the interpretative process" (Christie, 1994: 47 and 48).

So far in this section, I have discussed Mills' argument that extra-textual features, particularly context, need to be considered in textual analysis. Context has been explained as constituted of, for example, feminism, sexism and cultural knowledge. I have suggested that cultural consideration of such elements facilitates the uncovering of different levels of sexism in a text, as well as enabling a sensitivity to other forms of oppression, including racism. The only one of Mills' arguments not explored in this section is her final point, that is, that it is necessary to consider not only what is present in the text but, also, what is absent from it. This point has already been noted as an important part of Third Wave Feminist Analysis, since in Chapter 1 I considered the Machereyan principle that in order to understand a text it is necessary to be aware that the text is not self-sufficient and can only be constituted as it is because of what has been omitted from it as much as because of what has been included in it. In summary, I have argued thus far that a Third Wave Feminist Analysis is concerned with both textual and extra-textual features and that it focuses on sexism, alongside a range of other oppressive practices. I will later argue, both in the following brief discussion and in the more extensive discussion in Chapter 3, that power is not only understood as oppressive within a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, rather it is also understood as an inherently productive force. However, although such operations of power are also key concern for Mills, this seems to have been omitted from her summary of post-feminist text analysis. Since a Third Wave Feminist Analysis is also concerned with power and power relations, I now briefly explain how I conceptualise the operations of power.

Within a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, power is not understood as necessarily monolithic. That is to say that power is not conceptualised as something an individual or group of individuals imposes on another individual or group of individuals unless, or until, the latter can forcibly seize it for themselves. As Mills writes elsewhere, power is not, "simply about preventing someone from carrying out their wishes and limiting

people's freedoms" (Mills, 1997: 19). Rather, "power is dispersed throughout social relations" and, "it produces possible forms of behaviour as well as restricting behaviour" (ibid.). Since a monolithic paradigm of power relations has often been assumed in theorising about patriarchy, I now offer a discussion of that term. This will have the advantage of not only elucidating my own understanding of power but, also, make clear what precisely I mean when I use the term patriarchy in this thesis.

Patriarchy

In essence, "[p]atriarchal societies enshrine the assumptions that heads of state must be male and male voices rightfully dominate public/private spaces" (Code, 2000(a): 378). Millet (1970) introduced the concept as a relevant subject of study for second wave feminism, wherein patriarchy came to be understood as, "hierarchical relations between men and women" (Code, 2000(a): 378). These relationships are, "manifested in familial and social structures alike, in a descending order from an authoritarian - if oftentimes benevolent - male head, to male dominance in personal, political, cultural and social life, and to patriarchal families where the law of the father governs" (ibid.). Patriarchal assumptions may be governed by, "the idea that women and men occupy complementary but equal positions", yet this notion of equality is not realised in practice, since, within patriarchy, the female position is always constructed as, "necessarily subordinate", due to the, "patriarchal beliefs that it is right and proper for men to command and women to obey" (ibid.). Thus, within this definition, power is understood as being imposed by one group (men) on another group (women). There seems to be no scope for women to resist this imposition of power, nor for women to exert power over men. However, whilst this summarises one definition of patriarchy, within feminist theorising a range of positions are taken on the concept of patriarchy. I now outline some of these before explaining how I use the term. I begin by considering some Marxist usages of the term patriarchy.

As I indicated in Chapter 1, for Marxist theorists, no aspect of human life can be understood, "in abstraction from the social organisation of material productivity", and

this premise extends to gender power relations (Code, 2000(a): 379). Just as Marx and Engels argue that the capitalist division of labour involves the bourgeoisie owning the means of production, although it is the proletariat who produces the labour, so, too, Engels, "depicts the capitalist nuclear family as a microcosm of the social structure, with the husband occupying the position of the bourgeoisie, and the wife that of the proletariat" (ibid.). Furthermore, he attributes, "the privatisation and denigration of household labour to the tenacity of this family form" and, consequently, "urges women to reject private domestic labour by entering the public world of productive work" (ibid.). His solution to the problems of childcare and domestic work is that they should become, "public, collective responsibilities" (ibid.). Subsequently, in the 1970s when patriarchy first became a systematic subject of study for feminist scholars, "[h]ardened Marxists" rejected the notion of patriarchy and "insisted that women's oppression was rooted in capitalist social relations" (Jackson, 1998(a) 13). However, an alternative paradigm of Marxist feminism developed which, "recognised male domination as a systematic feature of modern society and did not generally reduce women's subordination to a side effect of capitalism" (ibid.).

However, whilst Marxist theorists located patriarchy within a specific historical context, arguing that it arose with the rise of capitalism, as Jackson observes, other feminist positions on patriarchy define it is an ahistorical concept, applicable to, "past societies based literally on the rule of fathers, but... not... our own" (ibid.). However, this definition, too, is disputed since some feminists, such as Walby (1986), "sought to historicise it" (Jackson, 1998(a): 13). Yet other definitions of patriarchy locate it in men's control of women's sexuality and reproduction: Monique Wittig (1992), for instance, interprets heterosexuality as a class relationship, based on not only sexual relations but labour relations, too. However, this is not the only way of conceptualising patriarchy in relation to heterosexuality, for example, Sheila Jeffreys (1990) contends that patriarchy is maintained by both sexual violence and sexual exploitation. Within psychoanalytical theory, patriarchy is understood as having become internalised in the unconscious, although this position, too, is contested. For example, Lorraine Code takes

issue with the notion that, "the internalised father... [is] the corner stone of the late-twentieth-century western social order", arguing that this position makes it, "difficult to see how women.... can detach themselves sufficiently" to make critical judgments on patriarchy (Code, 2000(a): 379).

This range of different positions on the term patriarchy indicates that there is no one simple definition. However, a disadvantage of many uses of the term is that they tend to suggest it as a, "'grand theory' which seeks to explain all aspects of women's subordination" and, in so doing lack a certain sensitivity, "to local contexts and differences among women" (Jackson, 1998 (a): 27). Therefore, I do not define patriarchy as a system which gives all men power over all women and thus inevitably leads to women's subordination. Rather, I use patriarchy to indicate that women are often discriminated against, either by individuals or institutions, in ways which serve the interests of many men. Moreover, a similarly systematic process does not operate in favour of women to men's disadvantage.[13] However, despite its systematicity, patriarchy may oppress different women or groups of women in different ways and some women will even circumvent its operations, at least at times. In other words, when I use the term patriarchy I am mindful that, "the practices which oppress women are not uniform, since women are not a homogeneous group; some women negotiate for themselves positions of institutionalised power and others accrue power to themselves by negotiating with the seemingly powerless positions which they have been allotted" (S.Mills, 1997: 93/4).

In these first two chapters, I have now described the historical context for Third Wave Feminist Analysis and discussed in some detail Mills' approach on which it is based. Furthermore, I have clarified the position that Third Wave Feminist Analysis takes on patriarchy. I now consider three other textual elements that are also taken into account within my framework: truth status; transitivity and agency; and the form of the texts' address to the reader and in the next section I define these terms and explain their implications within a Third Wave Feminist Analysis. However, in essence, truth status

and address to the reader are considered because they are two factors that can complicate a simplistic understanding of the polysemic nature of texts, since both of these limit the number of feasible interpretations. In contrast, transitivity is of significance because, "[t]he patternings of transitivity choices in a text can reveal its predispositions to construct experience along certain lines rather than others" (Montgomery *et al.*, 1992: 76). Thus, analysing transitivity is useful in uncovering the values which underpin texts or are implicit in them. This is, therefore, a useful tool in exposing particularly subtle forms of sexism, as well as in revealing other assumptions based on cultural knowledge.

Truth status; transitivity and agency; and address to the reader.

In the earlier section "Third Wave Feminist Analysis", I argued that texts are capable of generating a range of meanings, that is, they are polysemic. I also suggested that the meanings of a text are not only constructed by the information encoded in the text, but also that the reader plays a part in the interpretative process. However, I also argued that texts have a "preferred" reading, by which I mean that there is a particular interpretation which is encoded within the text, although as readers, we do not have to accept this reading; however, if we do not do so we are, to some extent, "reading against the grain" (see, for example, Pearce (1991)). How a preferred reading becomes encoded within a text is complex. However, for the purposes of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, three elements have a particular significance: truth status; transitivity and agency; and the address to the reader. I now discuss each of these in turn.

In his discussion of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Walder argues that there is, "a hierarchy of voices in the novel in terms of what we might call their 'truth status'" (Walder, 1995: 39). He suggests that when the narratorial voice adopts an "authoritative tone", this implies that the reader should accept the information being offered as "objective" and "true" (ibid.). In such a situation, then, Walder argues, the narratorial voice has a high truth status. However, this claim needs to be modified, since whilst Walder's argument may generally be true, it is not always so. Additionally,

Walder suggests that the term truth status may also apply to different characters within the book besides the narrator, some of whose judgments we are invited to accept, others to reject. However, this invitation might be playful or misleading since, staying with the example of *Pride and Prejudice*, we are invited to afford a high truth status to Elizabeth Bennett at the beginning of the novel, but it is some time before it becomes apparent that her seemingly authoritative judgments are false and biased because of her feelings of pride and prejudice. It is not until the end of the book, when she has reassessed her earlier judgments in light of what has actually occurred, rather than what she believed to have happened, that she deserves her high truth status. Yet, whether we are misled in accepting an allocated truth status or not, it is clear that texts can manipulate the reader to understand some of the positions within the text as more, or less, valid. Within texts that accept, condone or promote gender stereotypes, it is likely that female characters will have a lower truth status than male ones, since, within stereotypical views of gender, authority tends to be assigned to masculinity rather than femininity.

Transitivity is a type of linguistic analysis known as systemic linguistics. This form of analysis is based on Halliday's (1985) model and, in essence, transitivity is, "a way of describing the relationship between participants and processes in the construction of clauses - basically, 'who (or what) does what to whom (or what)'. Transitivity relations and the roles of participants depend upon the kind of process encoded by the main verb in a clause" (Montgomery *et al.*, 1992: 74). Whilst there are a number of different types of such processes in English, for the purpose of my analysis I focus on one main type: material action processes.[14] Material action processes are effected by verbs such as *mend, sew, clean* and *sweep*. They, "involve roles such as an agent (someone or something to perform the action) and the affected (someone or something on the receiving end of the action)" (ibid.). Thus, in Montgomery *et al.*'s example of "John broke the lock": "John" is the agent; "broke" the process; and "the lock" the affected (ibid.). However, what is of particular interest for my analysis is the passive form of material action processes. This occurs when, "the agent in a clause is not... the grammatical 'subject' of the verb (i.e. the phrase which precedes the verb)" but

when, rather, "the subject is the affected" (ibid.). So, using the same example again, the passive form is "The lock was broken by John". Within this new formulation: "the lock" is both the subject and the affected; "was broken" the process and verb; and "by John" the agent. Since the passive, "focuses attention on the affected (rather than upon the agent)", it "allows the agent to be omitted" (Montgomery *et al.*, 1992: 75). With this further change, the sentence can then be re-written as: "the lock was broken". Here, "the lock" is the affected and "was broken" the process. There is no overt agent. Again, this is key to constructions of gender within texts, since female protagonists in texts concerned with gender stereotyping are often assigned the role of the affected. This reinforces stereotypical conceptions of feminine passivity. Moreover, when the agent is omitted, this sentence or clause formulation often obfuscates the workings of patriarchy; if there is no clear agent, then there is no person or institution to whom responsibility can be allocated.

Finally, I consider the concept of the text's address to the reader. Texts may address their readers directly or indirectly. A famous example of direct address is found in Brontë's *Jane Eyre*: "Reader, I married him" (Brontë, 1966: 474, f. pub. 1847).[15] Here, there seems little doubt about the addressee: any reader of the book. However, as I argue in Chapter 5, other texts which appear to direct their address to any reader, actually direct it at very specific groups of readers and this is often achieved through a form of indirect address, an important aspect of which, "is the use of background knowledge" (Montgomery *et al.*, 1992: 224). However, as I will argue later, such knowledge is often associated with particular groups of people and if the reader does not belong to the relevant group, s/he is not the intended recipient of the text's meaning. This is particularly significant for an exploration of gender, since, when texts draw on background knowledge in the form of gender stereotypes, they not only exploit these but may, also, reinforce them.

Although all of the features discussed above need to be considered when producing a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, not all of them will necessarily need to be

explored in depth; judgment needs to be exercised by the analyst who must decide which features are most significant when analysing a particular text. Thus, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis affords a freedom to explore those aspects of the texts which are the most salient to interpretation. However, before offering my own Third Wave Feminist Analyses, firstly, in Chapter 3 I define two further key terms for this form of analysis: firstly, discourse theory since, as I have already outlined, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis is underpinned by a discourse theory approach; secondly, the body, since I will argue that discourses have a material impact on the body.

Footnotes

[1] As both Alice (2000) and Brooks (1997) note, the term post-feminism (also written as postfeminism) has a longer history than recent debates always acknowledge, since it was first used in the United States of America in the period following on from the achievement of a number of new rights for women, including the right to vote (1920). However, my discussion focuses on the recent uses and debates, since these were the most influential factors in my decision to abandon the term.

[2] However, as Alice (2000) notes, Faludi was not the first feminist to discuss a backlash against feminism: this term had already been used by, amongst others, Oakley and Mitchell (1997) in their consideration of the myths surrounding feminism's achievements and failures.

[3] By using this phrase I do not intend to suggest a straightforward analogy between my own work and the American movement termed "third-wave feminism" which Chelsea Starr suggests is constituted by, "a wide body of both popular and academic works of the 1990s... which set the stage for feminist resistance to the post-feminist decade" (Starr, 2000: 474). Thus, whilst Whelehan (2000) categorises Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth: How images of beauty are used against women* (1991) and Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The undeclared war against American women* as post-feminist texts, to Starr these are examples of third-wave feminism, since they are, "especially concerned with

issues facing adolescent girls and young women" and are characterised by anger which is, "used as a mechanism to provide voice to girls who had been silenced in society and within feminism" (Starr, 2000: 474). It is third-wave feminism's focus on *young* women that marks it as most significantly different from my conceptualisation of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis since this form of analysis attempts to be inclusive of more groups of women. However, there are also significant similarities between the two approaches. For example, the American theorists challenge, "much of the feminist culture established by previous feminist generations in an ongoing dialogue" (ibid.). In essence, they offer "a standpoint feminism... concerned with personal aims and with wide social and cultural change accomplished in part by becoming cultural producers" (ibid.).

Standpoint feminism can itself be defined as establishing, "its starting points and testing grounds in women's experiences" and arguing, "that no version of empiricism - feminist or otherwise - can offer sufficiently radical analyses of the structural factors that shape women's practices and consciousness in 'the everyday world', where authoritative knowledge derives from the experiences of the dominant" (Code, 2000(c): 461). It is rooted in both, "Marxist theory and second-wave feminist consciousness raising" and draws,

> an analogy between bourgeois/proletarian divisions under capitalism and masculine/feminine divisions under patriarchy... examin[ing] how patriarchal ideology represents women's subordination to men as natural, just as capitalist ideology represents proletarian subordination to the bourgeoisie as natural. As Marxist analyses start from the material-historical circumstances of the proletariat, so feminist analyses start from the material-historical circumstances of women to generate the consciousness-raising that enables informed feminist resistance (Code, 2000(c): 462).

Noted scholars in this field include Patricia Hill Collins, Nancy Harstock, Sandra Harding, Hilary Rose and Dorothy Smith, and I consider the work of the latter theorist

in Chapter 3 .

[4] *Genre* also carries a distinct meaning in the study of art where, in addition to being applied to different kinds, categories or sorts of paintings, it can further be used to denote, "a category of painting in which domestic scenes or incidents from everyday life are depicted" such as many of the works of the Dutch painter, Jan Vermeer (1632-1675) (Hanks, 1979: 607). However, in this chapter I focus on its use in literary studies.

[5]Each of these genres can be further divided into sub-genres.

[6] However, this marketing tool may be less straightforward than Bonner suggests, since some critics assert that, "*no* individual work is a perfect specimen of a genre... *All* works are more or less mixed in generic character" (Chatman, 1990: 106, emphasis added).

[7] I return to this point in Chapter 5 where I compare the status of the 'literary' novel with that of the Aga-Saga.

[8] Here, Whelehan uses genre not only to signify, "broad formal literary divisions (epic, tragedy, the novel, etc.)", in a similar way to that observed by Abrams, cited above, but also to signify popular, non-canonical literary works, within which she includes crime, romance and science fiction.

[9] In Chapter 6, I will develop this argument with reference to *The Rector's Wife.*

[10] Whilst Bakhtin defines discourse as the word, as I have already suggested, I interpret the term to mean the attitudes and beliefs that underpin statements. However, I explore a range of the uses of the term *discourse* in more detail in Chapter 3.

[11] Whilst the focus of Bakhtin's discussion is one particular cultural form, the novel, I

suggest his arguments can be broadened to signal the polysemia of a much wider range of texts. In his consideration of the novel, Bakhtin notes the ways in which it has shaped other cultural forms. Thus, he argues that other forms become 'open-ended' due to the influence of the novel. This seems to imply that such forms, as a result of their dialogue with the novel, also become capable of generating more than one meaning.

[12] See Pearce (1991 and 1994(b)) for a discussion of the extent to which it is valid to "read against the grain", that is to negotiate or oppose the text's 'preferred' meaning.

[13] However, some men claim that they are more systematically oppressed than women; American writer Warren Farrell (1986) argues that it is men who are the real victims of sexual harassment, for instance.

[14] Montgomery *et al.* (1992) identify four main processes: material action processes; mental processes; verbal processes and relational processes.

[15] This can also be explored in terms of transitivity, of course. Here the material action process is realised by the verb *marry*. The agent is the narrator, the eponymous heroine, and the affected is "him", Mr. Rochester. This challenges stereotypical femininity since it is the female protagonist who is active, the male passive.

Chapter 3: Discourses and the Body

Introduction

A Third Wave Feminist Analysis is not a theory (although it is based on theoretical work), rather it is a set of strategies from which the analyst may pick those procedures which seem most appropriate for the texts she is exploring. It is underpinned by a theoretical approach; feminist discourse theory. This use of feminist discourse theory is an integral part of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis because this type of analysis conceptualises femininity as a set of discourses; rather than femininity being conceived as an inherent characteristic of women, femininity is understood as being produced by attitudes and beliefs expressed through language and other meaning-making systems. Since the term discourse theory has been used to describe a range of approaches (see Mills, 1997), I begin this chapter by defining discourse theory in more detail and then I explore the relationship between discourses and the body which is an important connection for a materialist position which argues that discourses have an impact on both the physique and the psyche. In order to further elucidate my understanding of the body within a discursive approach, I contrast it with the conceptualisation of the body within essentialist thinking.

Defining Discourse

Comparing Discourses and Ideologies

In Chapter 1, I argued that the use of the term ideology has developed so that it now carries a range of differently nuanced meanings. For example, for Marx and Engels, ideology functions to legitimate the power of the ruling class and the term, thus, signifies the way values, ideas and images tie individuals to their class roles in society (see pp. 28-9 above). Individuals who accept these roles are victims of a form of 'false consciousness', that is to say, they accept the distorted version of reality that circulates through ideology as a true, rather than a false, representation. Since they cannot see society for what it actually is, they are unable to change that society. However, the attainment of a 'true' consciousness enables the uncovering of reality and allows for the possibility of social change. Althusser, on the other hand, argues that ideology

represents a subject's imaginary relation to their actual conditions of existence (see p. 29 above). He explains ideology as a material practice, rather than simply a form of 'false consciousness', since he argues that the ideological knowledge which masks the reality of the relations between groups of individuals and institutions is supported by an institutional base. Within an Althusserian paradigm, the subject is 'trapped' in a particular ideological mind-set, until she is exposed to an oppositional or alternative ideology which enables her to recognise that she is oppressed or until she manages to see the contradictions in the ideology. Developing Althusser's work, Macherey defined ideology as the material on which the writer works and argued that art contributes to freeing us from the ideological illusion by revealing to us the limits of that ideology (see pp.29-30 above). For both Althusser and Macherey, then, ideology has a certain structural coherence which allows both ideology and literature/texts to be subject to scientific analysis. Although there are differences between these different approaches, that of Marx and Engels and those of Althusser and Macherey, fundamentally, all of them encompass the possibility of resistance to ideology. However, for resistance to be possible, the ideology must, firstly, be recognised as an ideology. To achieve this recognition a certain amount of scientific knowledge is needed. Thus, whilst resistance is possible, it is only available to those who acquire the critical skills required to undertake the necessary, revelatory process.

Although I will shortly argue against the adoption of an ideological theoretical approach to texts, many scholars do still find it helpful. For example, as Mills observes, a number of theorists interchange between the terms *ideology* and *discourse*, making a calculated choice between the two, depending on which seems the most useful (S.Mills, 1997). Additionally, some theorists combine the two and work with a discourse theory approach which retains the use of the term ideology (for example, Bordo, 1992 (f. pub. 1988), whose work I explore later in this chapter; as well as Fairclough, 1989; and Hennessy, 1993). Moreover, much of the work on discourse by Michel Foucault, perhaps the most influential discourse theorist in the areas of cultural and literary studies, "has been an open discussion

and dialogue with the term ideology, and in some sense the term discourse has been defined in dialogue with and in reaction to the definition of ideology" (S.Mills, 1997: 32).

However, I have adopted a discourse theory approach rather than one which draws on an analysis of ideology because of four main reasons. Firstly, these two theories conceptualise resistance differently and I suggest the discourse understanding of resistance as ultimately the more optimistic of the two. As I argued earlier, the notion of resistance is written into the concept of ideology. However, because ideologies become naturalised, it is only those who have the analytical tools to critique them that are able to see the operations of ideologies at work. In contrast, as I will explain in more detail later in this chapter, within a discourse theory approach, the notion of resistance is inherent within the conceptualisation of discourses. Thus, even though it is accepted that this potential may not be realised, resistance is always possible for all individuals. Therefore, fundamentally, discourse theory seems to offer a greater and more democratic possibility for social change than does an ideological approach.

Secondly, although the notion of resistance to ideology is written into Marxist theory, many scholars who subscribe to the concept of ideology have overlooked this possibility. For example, as Evelyn Kerslake and I have argued elsewhere, some early feminist commentators on romance, such as Simone de Beauvoir (1949), Kate Millett (1970) Shulamith Firestone (1971) and Germaine Greer (1971), defined romance as a, "damaging ideology which conned women into colluding in their own oppression within heterosexual relationships" (Kerslake and Liladhar, forthcoming). In other words, such works, "implied a simplistic and negative process whereby individuals were duped into using conceptual systems which were not in their own interests" (S.Mills, 1997: 30).

Thirdly, such works do not allow for the two-way relationship that exists between the individual and an ideology, suggesting rather that ideologies are imposed upon individuals in a 'top-down' paradigm. However, as Sue Sharpe argues in her discussion of the influence of the media on teenage girls, the processes of influence are not one-way; "girls are not simple consumers of media images, they are also helping to produce them" (Sharpe, 1994: 65). Due to the commercial pressures on programme makers and magazine editors, for example, those involved in media production need to take into account what girls say they want to see in these forms or otherwise risk losing an important part of their audience.

Finally, I adopt a discourse theory approach rather than a straightforwardly Marxist one because, although the latter approach may explain why people co-operate with, and promote, ideologies that work in their own interests, it does not always explain why some people collude with their own oppression. Thus, early feminist work on romance does not explain why women collude in their own oppression within heterosexual relationships, other than by suggesting that they have been 'duped' into this by the romance. Feminism seeks to counter women's marginalisation and other forms of oppression, yet positioning women as 'dupes' in this way might contribute to their marginalisation and, furthermore, suggest that their oppression is inevitable.[1]

Having outlined the reasons why I do not use an ideological approach, I now outline the alternative discursive approach that I have adopted in this work. This approach is an integral part of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis. It has been formulated by drawing on the work of a range of feminist theorists, including Diane Macdonnell (1986), Dorothy Smith (1990), Susan Bordo (1992), Lois McNay (1992), Sara Mills (1997, for example) and Beverley Skeggs (1997). These scholars have all, to a greater or lesser extent, engaged with and adapted the work of Michel Foucault. In the next section, therefore, I not only define the term discourse but also outline Foucault's (1970) explanations of his approach. Additionally, I draw on more recent work, the re-working of Foucault, by theorists such as Bordo, Smith and Skeggs. These are amongst a number

of feminist scholars who have drawn on his works, such as *Discipline and Punish* (1979) and *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (1972). These writings analyse the discursive operations that construct what Foucault terms the 'docile body', that is a malleable body. Foucault is not primarily interested in gender, yet his work has proved useful to, "feminist understandings that make clear the links between the everyday body as it is lived and the regime of disciplinary and regulatory practices that shape its form and behaviour" (Shildrick with Price, 1999: 8). This advantage accrues because, even though gender is of "subsidiary interest to Foucault", his work makes it clear, "that it is the female body above all that is constructed and marked" by such disciplinary and regulatory practices (ibid.). His influence on Bordo's (1992) work, for example, which I discuss later in this chapter, is clear in her concern with, "how the processes of surveillance and self-surveillance are deeply implicated in constituting a set of normativities towards which bodies intend" (Shildrick with Price, 1999: 8). However, whilst Bordo explores the extreme example of anorexia, more routine practices are also involved in these processes, "diet, keep-fit, fertility control, fashion, health care procedures and so on are all examples of disciplinary controls which literally produce the bodies that are their concern" (ibid.). However, before I consider in more detail the implications of a Foucauldian conceptualisation of the materiality of the body, firstly, I outline what is meant by the term discourse theory.

Discourse and its Productive Potential

As Mills (1999(b)) observes, the original meaning in French of the word discourse was a treatise or speech on a subject and, as Ehrlich, notes the term is still used in English in the discipline of linguistics to mean, "a unit of language larger than the sentence" (Ehrlich, 2000(a): 139). However, Foucault offers an modified usage of this term, in which discourse, "encompasses not only all that is written or said, but also the unwritten rules and structures according to which those utterances and texts are produced" (Mills, 1999(b): 316). Thus, a discourse is not simply language or a text but also encompasses, "institutions, technical processes, patterns for general behaviour and pedagogical forms" (Macdonnell, 1986: 12). Moreover, not only is discourse a,

"specific structure of statements, terms, categories and beliefs" but, also, this structure is socially, institutionally and historically specific (Scott, 1992: 135, f. pub. 1988). However, this historical specificity is not absolutely precise because, "discourses tend to lumber on through time, being activated in circumstances where their use is anachronistic" (Mills, 1995(b): 73). For example, in my textual analyses later in this thesis I will highlight the continuing influence of Victorian ideals of femininity on contemporary British society. However, despite this suggestion that discourses have the potential for longevity, they do not continue indefinitely in exactly the same form and a discourse will no longer have validity when it, "finally conflicts with other discourses to the extent that its 'logic' becomes foregrounded and can no longer be regarded as 'self-evident' or 'transparent'" (ibid.). In this way a dominant discourse which has been naturalised, that is, generally accepted unquestioningly, at some point ceases to be so. Therefore, within discourse theory, there is an assumption that there is always the potential for individuals to realise the 'truth' or 'reality'. Thus, this is unlike ideological perspectives which, as I argued earlier, assume that a certain amount of skilled processing of ideology is required in order for the reality which it masks to be perceived.

I have also argued that discourse theory focuses on context. This emphasis is important, since it is premised on an understanding of, "discourse as language embedded in social interaction" (Ehrlich, 2000(a): 139). Thus, for feminism, a significant reason why discourse theory is useful is that it has broadened, "our conception of sexist linguistic representations beyond single words and expressions, and... turn[ed] our attention to the ways meanings are negotiated and modified in actual social interactions" (Ehrlich, 2000(a): 139). Moreover, an awareness of context incorporates the understanding that discourse is not a homogeneous term; discourses differ according to their context, the positions of those who articulate them and the positions of those to whom they are directed. For example, the term *dyke*, as part of discursive structures of sexuality, is often used as a term of abuse, "either for any lesbian or for any woman who rejected male advances" (J.Mills, 1991: 71). However, it

is also, "proudly used by lesbian and radical feminists today" to denote, "a strong, independent, aggressive, self-defined woman" (Kramarae and Treichler, 1992: 132).[2]

Although discourse theory's focus on context is rooted in the notion that language is embedded in social interaction, this emphasis on the social should not be misinterpreted as a focus on the personal. A discourse is not defined in, "its role in expressing an individual's 'feelings' or 'opinions'" but by, "its relation to other discourses" (S.Mills, 1991: 9). So, for example, in applying the notion of discourse to travel writing, Mills argues that one need not read it, "as expressing the truth of the author's life" but rather as, "the result of a configuration of discursive structures with which the author negotiates" (ibid.). Nor is it necessary to read travel writing as expressing the truth about other countries, even when a colonial text positions itself as 'truthful' since, "what the writer 'knows' and 'sees' is determined through large-scale discursive constructs" (S. Mills, 1991: 10). However, discourses are not only disseminated in written and spoken language; they can be articulated in other forms. For example, Dorothy Smith describes femininity as, "a textual discourse" which is, both mediated through and "vested in", "women's magazines and television, advertisements, the appearance of cosmetics counters, fashion displays and... books" (Smith, 1990: 163). Yet, items such as cosmetics and fashion do not only disseminate textual discourses when they are displayed for sale; they maintain this dissemination when they are displayed on the body. For example, as Shari Benstock argues the, "essence of the feminine" can be marked on the body by a range of, "stylistic flourishes" which are, "decorative, auxiliary, and *in*essential", a point to which I return later in this chapter (Benstock, 1991: xvi). In summary, "whatever signifies or has meaning can be considered part of discourse" (Macdonnell, 1986: 3-4). In whatever form discourses appear, though, they share a common feature: their productive potential. This potential resides in the fact that discourses are not conceptualised as reflecting or representing anything that exists prior to them, rather, "a discourse is something which produces something else (an utterance, a concept, an effect)" (S.Mills, 1997: 17). However, although discourse is potentially productive, it is also restrained because discourse is

produced by rules which, "are integral to discourse itself. Implicit in this... is the notion that the production of statements is constrained by rules" and I now outline in some detail the operations of such constraints (Mills, 1999(b): 317).

Constraining Discourse

In his lecture "The Order of Discourse" (1970), Foucault explores the ways that constraints operate.[3] He argues that, although discourse is constituted by and exists through the operations of desire, which wants discourse to be "infinitely open" or unrestricted; it is also constituted by and exists through the operations of institutions, which constrain and control discourse and insist that, "discourse belongs to the order of laws" and that its potency is derived from the institutions themselves (Foucault, 1970: 51). Analysing these conflicting forces, desire and institutions, reveals that, "the production of discourses is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures" which fall into three main categories (Foucault, 1970: 52).

Firstly, there are social procedures of exclusion, which, "operate in a sense from the exterior... [and] which have to do with the part of discourse which puts power and desire at stake" (Foucault, 1970: 56). These exclusionary practices include prohibition, which inhibits speech; the division between reason and madness, in which the former is valorised and the latter is either rejected or misinterpreted as rational; and the will to truth, or the search for knowledge, which privileges 'truth' and excludes the 'false'. With regards to this latter point, Foucault argues that, "[f]alse statements are those which are not circulated throughout society and which are not given institutional support of any kind (Mills, 1999(b): 317). In contrast, those statements, "which are considered to be true are placed in a position of some power by being repeated, and through being commented on by those in positions of authority" (ibid.). Therefore, Foucault is suggesting that there is nothing, "inherently true or factual about a statement or text" and, moreover, advocating, "an analysis which focuses on the rules which societies develop to keep certain statements in powerful positions in relation to other texts and

statements" (ibid.). However, these three exculsionary practices, prohibition, the reason/madness divide and the will to truth, do not occur discretely; the latter has "invaded" the former two systems, so that, whilst the will to truth, "constantly grows stronger, deeper and more implacable", prohibition and the reason/madness divide, "are constantly becoming more fragile and more uncertain" (ibid.).

Secondly, there are the internal procedures which occur when discourses are constrained through the limitational practices of classification, ordering and distribution and which are imposed either by the commentary, author or discipline. Commentary includes "major narratives, which are recounted, repeated and varied, formulae, texts, and ritualised sets of discourses which are recited in well-defined circumstances", all of which are preserved because they are believed to contain "a secret or a treasure" (Foucault, 1970: 56-7). Such utterances are characterised as both dominant and permanent, yet their further characterisation as containing "multiple or hidden meaning... [and an] essential reticence and richness" means that they are always open to being "re-actualised" (Foucault, 1970: 57). This reactualisation, "allows the (endless) construction of new discourses" in the form of secondary texts (ibid.). However, paradoxically, although, "the commentary must say for the first time what had, nonetheless, already been said", it must also, "tirelessly repeat what had, however, never been said" (Foucault, 1970: 58). Thus, the commentary-principle is also characterised by both repetition and sameness and this identity limits the chance-element in discourse.

Likewise, the author-principle limits the element of chance, although in this case it is achieved by, "the play of an identity which has the form of individuality and the self" (ibid.). The author-principle applies in literature, philosophy and science, areas in which it is conventional to attribute texts to an author. However, *author* is not used to mean, "the speaking individual who pronounced or wrote a text", rather it indicates, "a principle or grouping of discourses, conceived as the unity and origin of their meanings, as the focus of their coherence" (Foucault, 1970: 58). Therefore, the individual who

produces a text is understood as taking on "the function of the author" which prescribes what she does/does not write and in what form (Foucault, 1970: 59). The author-function varies with the context of text-production and is either received and accepted by the text-producing individual, or received and modified. Since the author-function is never rejected, the author-principle, like the commentary-principle, is, to that extent, a principle of limitation.

The final principle of limitation is the discipline-principle, "which permits construction, but within narrow confines" (ibid.). A discipline is defined by, "a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments" (ibid.). Additionally, "[f]or there to be a discipline, there must be the possibility of formulating new propositions, ad infinitum" (Foucault, 1970: 59). However, "a discipline is not the sum of all that can be truthfully said about something; it is not even the set of all that can be accepted about the same data in virtue of some principle of chance or systematicity", since each discipline, "pushes back a whole teratology of knowledge beyond its margins" (Foucault, 1970: 59-60).[4] In summary, the principle of discipline, like the principles of commentary and the author, is a principle of constraint. This is not to deny that disciplines and authors construct discourses, nor to deny that commentaries convey multiple discourses. Rather, it is to suggest that, "it is very likely impossible to account for their positive and multiplicatory role if we do not take into consideration their restrictive and constraining function" (Foucault, 1970: 61).

Finally, there is a third set of procedures which control discourses, this time by, "determining the condition of their application" and by, "imposing a certain number of roles on... individuals" (ibid.). These practices, which include ritual, societies of discourse and doctrine, do not, unlike prohibition, forbid outright certain utterances. However, they do have a constraining effect. For example, ritual makes some regions of discourse forbidden to speaking subjects who do not meet certain requirements. Ritual achieves this by defining a number of criteria for utterance, including:

> the qualification which must be possessed by individuals who speak... the gestures, behaviour, circumstances, and the whole set of signs which must accompany discourse... [and] the supposed or imposed efficacity of the words, their effect on those to whom they are addressed and the limits of their constraining value (Foucault, 1970: 62).

Similarly, societies of discourse have a limiting role, since, although they "function to preserve or produce discourses", they do not do so in order to disseminate discourses widely but, rather, "in order to make them circulate in a closed space, distributing them only according to strict rules, and without the holders being dispossessed by this distribution" (Foucault, 1970: 62/3).

This latter point is of key importance to literary criticism, since Foucault argues that the act of writing, which consists of not only the text itself but also the publishing industry and the writer, occurs in a society of discourse, as is evidenced by the difference between the writer and other subjects; the "intransitive nature" of the writer's discourse; the "fundamental singularity" which the writer ascribes to writing; and "the dissymmetry that is asserted between 'creation' and any use of the linguistic system" (Foucault, 1970: 63). Although, as this list of features suggests, this particular society of discourse is diffuse, yet it also imposes constraints. Similarly, 'doctrines', that is religious, political and philosophical tenets, are all both widely distributed and coercive. Doctrine enables individuals to, "define their reciprocal allegiance" through their agreed, "recognition of the same truths and the acceptance of a certain rule of (more or less flexible) conformity with the validated discourses" (ibid.). To this extent, then, doctrines are similar to scientific disciplines whose discursive control applies, "only to the form or the content of the statement, not to the speaking subject" (ibid.). However, doctrinal allegiance complicates this since it, "puts in question both the statement and the speaking subject, the one by the other" (ibid.). This occurs because,

> [d]octrine binds individuals to certain types of enunciation and consequently forbids them all others; but it uses, in return, certain types of enunciation to bind individuals amongst themselves, and to differentiate them by that very fact from all others. Doctrine brings about a double subjection: of the speaking subjects to discourses, and of discourses to the (at least virtual) group of speaking individuals (Foucault, 1970: 64).

In summary, Foucault argues that discourses are controlled by three principles of restraint: the social procedures of exclusion; the self-controlling procedures of discourses; and those procedures which both determine the condition of application of discourses and impose roles on individuals.[5] He urges action which corresponds to these three principles proposing, firstly, calling into question our 'will-to truth'; secondly, restoring to discourse its character as an event; and, finally, divesting theorising of a range of concepts, including the sovereignty of the signifier. He then outlines the methodological principles which are required in order to undertake these three tasks. The first is a principle of reversal, that is, of overturning or subverting the tradition which sees discourses as originating in and perpetuating from such sources as the author, the discipline and the will to truth. Rather, Foucault argues for a recognition that discourses are also constrained and diminished by such elements.

Such a recognition needs to be adopted in tandem with the second principle, which is a principle of discontinuity, that is, a principle that not only states that discourses are juxtaposed to and intersect with each other but, also, acknowledges that discourses can exclude each other. Thus, this principle opposes the assumption of unity in any given text, period or theme, as does the third principle, the principle of specificity which states, "we must not image that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher" (Foucault, 1970: 67). In other words, this principle states that discourses cannot be defined simply as an interaction between "pre-existing significations", rather, discourse is, "a violence that we do to things, or in any case a practice that we impose on them" (ibid.). Finally, Foucault argues that there is a

need for a principle of exteriority which is concerned with analysing the "external conditions of possibility" for a discourse, that is, that which gives rise to the appearance of a discourse and fixes its limits (ibid.). Thus, with its emphasis on the external, rather than the internal, this principle is opposed to the idea of any hermeneutic notion of a hidden secret or treasure in the text (see the discussion of the commentary on p.78 above).

In summary, Foucault argues that two main concepts, the event and the series, should regulate analysis, along with a number of inter-connected concepts: regularity, dimension of chance (aléa), discontinuity, dependence, transformation" (Foucault, 1970: 68). In conceptualising the event, Foucault argues that whilst this,

> is not of the order of bodies... yet it is not something immaterial either; it is always at the level of materiality that it takes effect, that it is effect; it has its locus and it consists in the relation, the coexistence, the dispersion, the overlapping, the accumulation and the selection of material elements (Foucault, 1970: 69).

A tangible and shocking example of the materiality of discourse comes in the work of Bordo (1992) who charts the increase in the growth of the number of cases of anorexia in this century. She notes that anorexia was first observed in 1945 and that by 1973 it was still a rare condition. However, by 1984, "it was estimated that as many as one in every 200-250 women between the ages of thirteen and twenty-two suffers from anorexia" (Bordo, 1992: 90-1). Although she acknowledges that the condition is, "a multidetermined disorder", she sees a range of contemporary discourses, including dominant discourses of femininity, as being implicated in the increase in young women suffering from anorexia. For example, she explores the historical and contemporary, "[a]nxiety over women's [supposedly] uncontrollable hungers", both sexual and emotional, as evidenced in such diverse sources as witch-hunters' handbooks and the works of Dorothy Parker (Bordo, 1992: 103). Bordo argues that the,

"mythology/ideology of the devouring, insatiable female" contributes to the female anorexic's internalised image of herself as voracious (ibid.). The anorexic controls this perceived voracity through controlling her hunger, something which she sees as outside of, and separate from, herself. Bordo argues that the problems caused by discourses of femininity which associate it with emotional neediness and sexual hunger are compounded by discourses of femininity which associate it with androgyny. She draws attention to a range of media images which feature, "a woman... [who] is not yet a woman" and sees their influence at work in interview responses from anorexics who express their "disgust" at what they see as their bodies' "womanish fat" and who express their preference to be, "a child forever", that is, by remaining thin (Bordo, 1992: 105 and 100). The materiality of such discourses is reflected not only in the increasing number of young women suffering from anorexia but also in the horrifying statistic that fifteen percent of anorexics die of the illness (Bordo, 1992: 98).

Foucault not only argues that discursive events should be conceptualised as always taking effect at the level of materiality but, also, that they should be conceptualised as being a, "homogeneous series which, however, are discontinuous in relation to each other" (Foucault, 1970: 69). This tension can be reconciled by thinking in terms, "of caesurae which break up the instant and disperse the subject into a plurality of possible positions and functions" (ibid.). Consequently, "we must conceive relations between these discontinuous series... [by or through] a theory of discontinuous systematicities" (ibid.). Mills suggests that there are two main types of systematicity: a, "systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context"; and a systematicity of, "the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving" (S.Mills, 1997: 17). When there is a degree of systematicity of either kind present, then it is possible to talk about "a discursive structure" (ibid.) For example, two such inter-connected discursive structures are femininity and masculinity, which are detectable, "because women and men behave within a certain range of parameters when defining themselves as gendered subjects. These discursive frameworks demarcate the boundaries within which we can negotiate

what it means to be gendered" (S.Mills, 1997: 17-18). However, as Ien Ang argues, within these defined parameters there is a diverse range of, "textual construction of possible *modes of femininity*" and this results in women, "construct[ing] and reconstruct[ing] their feminine identities" (Ang, 1996: 94 and 92). In other words, "[w]omen are not just the passive products of socialisation: they are active; they create themselves" (Smith, 1990: 161). This creative process may be undertaken consciously, for example, Bell *et al.* discuss the deliberate construction of a stereotypically feminine appearance by some 'lipstick lesbians' (1994).[6] However, it may also be undertaken less self-consciously by a participant who is unaware that such a process is at play and it is often in such instances that the problems associated with the (re)construction of feminine identities is apparent. The examples of young women suffering from anorexia indicate that as a result of taking up particular textual discourses of femininity, painful, even fatal, consequences can ensue. Moreover, not taking up textual discourses of femininity can also lead to difficulties of varying degrees. For instance, Bradby (1994) argues that although Madonna's appearance, considered alongside her song lyrics, can be interpreted as, "providing resources in a discourse that challenges the dominant view of female sexuality", the very fact that she is challenging rather than taking up a dominant paradigm of femininity also leads to her being read as a "whore" or "tart" (Bradby, 1994: 69). However, verbal abuse is not the only consequence: physical violence and other attempts at restraint are often inflicted on women who decline to conform to femininity. For example, see Mills's discussion of the use of the scold's bridle, "a kind of ironframework" which, "restrained the tongue" as a punishment for women who talked 'too much' (J.Mills, 1991: 210); or Keith Thomas's (1980) account of the persecution of a number of women as witches for manifesting anger and hostility.

In summary, although discourses are neither everlasting nor omnipotent, yet they are influential, since they can shape what we may all experience, know and desire and, through that, they may impact upon our behaviour, too. Although this influence is complex, it is likely that more people will be influenced by dominant discourses than by counter-discourses, since the former are more likely to have achieved naturalisation.

A degree of systematicity within a range of dominant discourses may be evident. Moreover, the power relations which result from such discourses can be characterised by, "a perfectly clear logic.... [and] perfectly decipherable aims and objectives" (Bordo, 1992: 93). However, that is not to suggest that this tactic was, "invented", either by individuals or by groups of individuals (ibid.). As Bordo argues in her discussion of anorexia nervosa, "the social manipulation of the female body emerges as an absolutely central tactic in the maintenance of power relations between the sexes over the last hundred years" (ibid.). However, she refutes the suggestion of, "a long-standing male conspiracy against women, or the fixing of blame on *any* particular participants in the play of social forces" (ibid.). Rather than being managed by individuals or groups of individuals, within a discursive approach, power is generally considered as being, "exercised by the *process* through which any discourse constitutes its subjects" (Crowley and Himmelweit, 1992(b): 65, emphasis added). However, this approach also acknowledges the possibility that *sometimes* power relations have been achieved through a conscious operation or direction. When this occurs, however, the individuals concerned cannot direct the power relationship's, "overall movement", nor engineer its "shape" since, "[t]hey may not even know what that shape is" and since they cannot anticipate the ways in which the dominated will respond (Bordo, 1992: 93).

In making my ensuing analyses of some specific articulations of discourses of femininity, like Bordo, I attempt to follow Foucault's principles and, like him, undertake two main forms of analysis. Firstly, I essay,

> critical analysis... [which] put[s] into practice the principle of reversal: trying to grasp the forms of exclusion, of limitation, of appropriation... showing how they are formed, in response to what needs, how they have been modified and displaced, what constraint they have effectively exerted, to what extent they have been evaded (Foucault, 1970: 70).

Secondly, I undertake,

> genealogical [analysis]... which puts the other three principles to work: how did series of discourses come to be formed, across the grain of, in spite of, or with the aid of these systems of constraints; what was the specific norm of each one, and what were their conditions of appearance, growth, variation (ibid.).

However, before making these analyses, I now develop the earlier discussion of materiality to further explore the relationship between discourses and the body.

The Impact of Discourses on the Body

As Crowley and Himmelweit note there is a "'dualistic' tradition", that they trace from Plato through Descartes to the current day, of drawing, "a sharp division between the body and the mind, separating them into two distinct elements" (Crowley and Himmelweit, 1992(b): 63). However, as Shildrick observes, these two separate elements have not been afforded equality of treatment and worth, as, "the body has long been the unspoken of abstract theory, dismissed from consideration as the devalued term of the mind/body split" (Shildrick, 63: 2000). As part of this rejection, the body has been conceptualised, "simply as a material and unchanging given, a fixed biological entity that must be transcended in order to free the mind for the intellectual pursuits of fully rational subjectivity" (ibid.).Moreover, this ability to transcend physicality and achieve intellectualism has been gendered, with, "such transcendence... [being] marked as an attribute of men alone, such that women remain rooted within their bodies, held back by their supposedly natural biological processes and unable to exercise full rationality" (ibid.). Shildrick suggests that there have been three main feminist responses to this alignment of women with the body: it has been, "rejected in the pursuit of intellectual equality according to a masculinist standard"; "reclaimed as the very essence of the female" (a position I explore in more detail shortly); or explored in an approach which, "emphasise[s] the importance and inescapability of embodiment as a differential and fluid construct, rather than as a fixed given" (ibid.). I have already situated my work as in line with this latter principle and I now elaborate my position, beginning by defining the body.

As Skeggs suggests, "[b]odies are the physical sites where the relations of class, gender, race, sexuality and age come together and are em-bodied and practised" (Skeggs, 1997: 82). However, I further define the body as the mental *and* physical site where not only the relations of class, gender, race, sexuality and age but, also, those of dis/ability and illness, or other changes such as menstruation or pregnancy, interact. Moreover, the body also bears the impression of the influence of discourses which may become embodied, practised or displayed on the outside of the body and I now briefly explain how each of these three effects may be manifest. Firstly, discourses may become embodied in clearly visible and measurable physical ways, and the extreme, physical impact of certain discourses on some young women's bodies is manifest in Bordo's discussion of anorexia which I discussed above. Secondly, discourses may be manifest in practices which ensue after they have become embodied as enduring mental and physical predilections, for example as subjectivity, a term which I define shortly (see p.95 below). Thus, a woman whose feminine subjectivity has been shaped by discourses of femininity which associate it with passivity, docility and weakness (see pp.3-4 above) may walk, sit and stand in different ways from a woman who sees her femininity as a potential source of strength and power (see the next section of this chapter, "Essentialism" below). Thirdly, as I argued earlier, discourses may be marked upon the body, for example, through clothing, jewellery and make-up. Before discussing these last two points further, however, I continue with my definition of the body. Since this eschews essentialised notions of the body and has, in many ways, been developed in reaction to essentialism, I begin by defining the term *essentialism* and exploring the relationship between the body and femininity. This additional exploration is intended to not only further distance my own perspective from essentialist thinking but also to further explicate my own theoretical position.

Essentialism

Essentialism is a belief in changeless 'essences' which constitute a given person or trait, such as femininity. Within feminist theory, essentialist definitions of femininity often celebrate it as, not only inherent within women, but also unique to them. Thus, it is not

conceived of as a social construct, although it does have a relationship with the social, since particular societies may be perceived as either valuing or undervaluing femininity. Often, although not always, this essence is conceptualised as sited in biological differences. For example, from the mid 1970s, Adrienne Rich began to celebrate the differences between women and men. She sought to identify female experiences and female biology, particularly the ability to bear children, as potential sources of strength and power for women arguing that,

> female biology - the diffuse, intense sensuality radiating out from clitoris, breasts, uterus, vagina; the lunar cycles of menstruation; the gestation and fruition of life which can take place in the female body... [is] a resource... [a] bond with the natural order, the corporeal ground of our intelligence (Rich, 1976: 39).

By focusing on the female body and some of its functions, and by positioning this as 'natural', this definition of femininity, seeks to include all women. It avoids exploring what femininity means in different historical, geographical and economic contexts and, instead, focuses on something which it posits as universal and unchanging: "female biology". In a further move towards inclusion, it acknowledges that certain biological experiences, conception, pregnancy and giving birth, "the gestation and fruition of life", are not experiences that will be shared by *all* women, since they are described as things which, "*can* take place". Thus, it is women's *potential* for motherhood, rather than the actuality of being mothers that they have in common.

However, the reference to, "the lunar cycles of menstruation" is less carefully nuanced, for two main reasons. Firstly, it suggests that the menstrual cycle follows a universal pattern which is connected to the cycles of the moon. However, there is no such connection. Moreover, anthropological evidence, "demonstrates considerable cross-cultural variations in all aspects of menstrual cycling" (Riessman, 1992: 135, f. pub. 1983). So, menstrual cycles are neither universal nor connected to lunar cycles. Secondly, the reference to, "the lunar cycles of menstruation" precludes women who

have never menstruated and further precludes those women who have menstruated in the past but have now stopped doing so. This group includes most older women, many anorexic women, some female athletes and some women with disabilities. It also includes many women whose menstrual cycle temporarily ceases when they find themselves in extremely stressful situations, such as war or times of drought or famine. Finally, it also includes a number of women who have stopped using chemical controls of their menstrual cycle, including contraceptive injections such as *Depo Provera*, but find that their periods do not return, at least for a while, after this usage has stopped. As this list of the groups of women who do not menstruate implies, lack of menstruation may be just as common as menstruation. Indeed, the absence of menstruation in women is widespread enough for the 'condition' to have been medicalised and termed *amenorrhoea.* However, paradoxically, this term, too, relies on a near-universal female experience of menstruation since amenorrhoea is defined as the, "*abnormal* absence of menstruation" (Hanks, 1979: 45, emphasis added). Thus, whilst Rich seeks to include all women in her definition of femininity by looking for physical similarities which over-ride or outweigh their contextual differences, she ultimately excludes women who do not menstruate. Furthermore, like the dictionary definition of amenorrhoea, she normalises menstruating women and, therefore, pathologises those women who do not menstruate. Thus, whilst it seeks to be inclusive and to encompass all women, this essentialist stance is, ultimately, exclusive.

More recently, in the 1980s and 1990s, a group of feminists whom Celia Kitzinger terms "matriarchal feminists", have adopted a similar essentialist perspective on femininity (Kitzinger, 1990: 25). Kitzinger explains that matriarchal feminism is typified by the Women's Peace Movement and that such theorists subscribe to the belief that there was once a time when society was controlled and organised by women and when womanhood was venerated in the form of a goddess or goddesses. They see femininity as concerned with creativity, empathy, intuition, nurturing, with the, "spiritual values of care and connection" and, most importantly, with motherhood (Kitzinger, 1990: 24).[7] Thus, this definition is narrower than that espoused by Rich,

since it does not focus on women's potential to bear children, rather it focuses on the assumption that all women will experience motherhood; further, it focuses on those characteristics which have stereotypically been associated with motherhood. This emphasis on maternity excludes those women who have not yet had, or will never have, children. It also excludes mothers who do not see their role in these stereotypical terms; it is possible to configure motherhood not as a nurturing role which encourages children's dependence but as an educative role which facilitates their independence, for example. Yet, in focusing on qualities such as nurturing, care and connection such a possibility is overlooked.

However, although I have suggested that a definition of femininity which arises out of matriarchal feminism is excluding, it is conceptualised by those who use it as an *in*clusive definition. This is evident when it is used in order to make links between diverse groups of women: "across centuries", by reclaiming, "the herbal wisdom of the eighteenth-century midwife or the spiritual powers of the mediaeval witch"; and across cultures, by recognising, "sisterhood with women of other nations and ethnicities" and by drawing on, "their symbols and rituals, their traditional crafts and skills" (Kitzinger, 1990: 24). However, such notions are based on a misapprehension since, as Sue Sharpe observes, the historic cross-cultural studies carried out by anthropologists such as Margaret Mead suggest, "there is no universal 'masculine' or 'feminine' personality" (Sharpe, 1994: 59). Those matriarchal feminists who claim 'sisterhood' with women from other cultures overlook those tribes which, such studies reveal, "either show characteristics that are undifferentiated by sex or they reverse the gender stereotypes found in modern industrialised society"; for example, the Arapesh, "a passive, gentle and non-aggressive people, all of whom take responsibility for looking after the children" (ibid.). Thus, both men and women in this tribe manifest what, within matriarchal feminism, are considered as feminine characteristics. Furthermore, Sharpe also observes that Mead's studies of other groups of people note that, "both sexes of the Mundagumor tribe demonstrate the characteristics that we understand as 'masculine', while the Tchambuli reverse many of our accepted differences" (ibid.). Thus, both men

and women in the former tribe manifest what, within matriarchal feminism, are considered as masculine characteristics, whilst the latter tribe assigns characteristics in the opposite way to which they are assigned within matriarchal feminism.

An additional difficulty with such essentialist perspectives is that they select only the best features that are stereotypically associated with women; intuition and nurturing rather than bitchiness and hysteria, for example. As Kitzinger phrases it, underlying such theories, "is the assumption that women are, by biological definition, morally or spiritually superior... women are good by biological fiat, virtuous because of our XX chromosomes, and our reproductive capacity. Women are the genetically superior race" (Kitzinger, 1990: 24 and 25). This reliance on such an assumption supports Kaplan's and Rogers' assertion that, in common with any other field of knowledge, "biology is not 'value-free'" (Kaplan and Rogers, 1990: 205). Such matriarchal feminism, "has been surreptitiously underscored by a host of assumptions, arguments, values (and prejudices) which are part of the biologist's social construction of reality" (ibid.). Kitzinger exonerates this bias to the extent that she acknowledges that, "in a hostile political climate, it is easy to see why an oppressed group might lay claim to an 'internal' spiritual or magical power" (Kitzinger, 1990: 25). However, she also argues against this 'easy' claim, submitting that, "when women's personal power is seen in literal terms, it leads, logically enough, to victim-blaming: if you're so powerful then whatever happens is your own fault" (ibid.). Moreover, as I argue throughout this thesis, power is much less monolithic than such accounts might suggest; one may lay claim to power only to find that that power has been undermined or overpowered by the force which it originally opposed. Furthermore, as Kitzinger also argues,

> it is not useful to naturalise history, or to biologise the social phenomena through which oppression is expressed: this serves only to obscure the political processes at work. It is unhelpful to disguise the social and political sources of power by focusing on internal personal power. It is destructive to sentimentalise women in other cultures or to romanticise women of past eras (ibid.).

Further problems with such versions of feminist essentialism are identified by Lynne Segal (1987). Segal accepts that, "if we generalise", then, "women are in many situations warmer, more sensitive and more caring of others than men... [and] usually seem less aggressive and competitive than men" (Segal, 1987: 5). However, she argues that this "'niceness'" is a consequence of the societal roles many women fill; it results from their, "primary involvement with mothering and caring for others" (Segal, 1987: 6). In other words, women are not *biologically* suited to the roles that they undertake, rather in undertaking these roles they *learn* the behaviours that are demanded by them and, as with other skills, may perfect them, or at least improve upon them, through practice. Indeed, "there is little scientific evidence for biological determinism", since, although, "there are certain basic reproductive functions which separate female and male biology into distinct categories, these sex differences do not extend to differences in cognitive function, and therefore cannot explain sex differences in behaviour" (Kaplan and Rogers, 1990: 209). Thus, it is clear that,

> debates around the differences between the sexes, the differences between masculinity and femininity, have often manifested confusion between the biological and the social context: biological explanations for sex differences have subsumed sociological explanations; and social differences have been seen, as if they result 'naturally' from biological differences (Kaplan and Rogers, 1990: 205-6).

In essence, because of its particular perspective on biology and the body, essentialism is, therefore, a means of explaining the social divisions between men and women without reference to social circumstances: femininity is seen as the logical result of femaleness, whilst masculinity is perceived as resulting from maleness. This admission of a 'natural' division between women and men, naturalises and relies on the assumption that, "men and women have always existed and will always exist" (Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1984: 149). Moreover, "the social phenomena which express our

oppression" are also naturalised, "making change impossible" (ibid.). This latter point is particularly important for Segal's arguments, since she not only contends that such skills as sensitivity and caring are learned by women rather than being innate in them, but also suggests that the acquisition of such skills is not necessarily to be advocated, as they have often been, "crucial to the maintenance of women's general subordination and economic dependence. While the virtues of maternal loving and caring are obvious, they have never been materially valued but instead applauded with the hypocrisy of cheap sentiment" (Segal, 1987: 6). Segal's arguments suggest that by asserting that women have a number of characteristics such as nurturing skills, empathy and so on, matriarchal feminists have done nothing that will materially improve women's positions in the society she discusses, that is, contemporary Western capitalist cultures.

Other theorists take up Segal's suggestion that biological or essentialised accounts of femininity are often used to the detriment of women. For example, Janet Bing and Victoria Bergvall contend that, since the inception of scientific writing, scientists have been preoccupied with "'scientifically'" accounting for differences between men and women (Bing and Bergvall, 1996: 7). However, in what proves to be a perfect exemplar for Kaplan's and Rogers' assertion that biology is not 'value-free' (see p.91 above), they cite the work of Edward Clarke (1873) who, "used the concept of vital force to argue against the education of women" (Bing and Bergvall, 1996: 7). His argument was that, "if the nervous system had a fixed amount of energy, any energy spent in the development of a woman's brain would be diverted from her reproductive organs and, hence, would be harmful to her health" (ibid.). In celebrating, "women's feminine virtues given to them by their biology" (Kaplan and Rogers, 1990: 206), matriarchal feminists position themselves very near to such an anti-feminist stance, since any reliance on, "the female-male dichotomy helps to strengthen the conviction that anatomy is destiny" (Bing and Bergvall, 1996: 7).

In conclusion, essentialist understandings of femininity posit it as something inherent within women's bodies, either within biological make-up or as a more nebulous essence. Whilst "the body" is an important element in my own approach, as my definition of the body in the earlier section of this chapter, "The Relationship Between Discourses and the Body" indicated, my understanding of the body is very different from such essentialist accounts and I now outline my own approach.

An Alternative Formulation of the Body and its Relation To Gender

As I argued earlier in this chapter, a post-structuralist approach to the body, such as I adopt in this thesis, "emphasise[s] the importance and inescapability of embodiment as a differential and fluid construct, the site of potential, rather than as a fixed given" (Shildrick with Price, 1999: 3). By, "positing... a textual corporeality that is fluid in its investments and meanings", it is, consequently, possible to, "put into question the givenness and security of the so-called natural body" (Shildrick with Price, 1999: 1). This, "concern with the irreducible interplay of text and physicality... posits a body in process, never fixed or solid, but always multiple and fluid" (Shildrick with Price, 1999: 6).

However, in arguing that, "the body is a discursive construction [that] is not to deny a substantial corpus, but to insist that our apprehension of it, our understanding of it, is necessarily mediated by the *con*texts in which we speak" (Shildrick with Price, 1999: 7). Thus, Judith Butler (1993), whose work I return to in Chapter 7, argues that any reference to the body is not merely an allusion to the body but an influence on its changing formation. In other words, "language and materiality are fully embedded in each other" (Butler, 1993: 69). Thus, my concern here is, "the forms of materialisation of the body, rather than the material itself" (Shildrick with Price, 1999: 7). So, I do not conceive the body as "fundamentally stable" nor as an "acultural constant" (Bordo, 1992: 92). Rather I perceive it as, "in the grip... of cultural practices... Our bodies, no less than anything else that is human, are constituted by culture" (ibid.). This point was implicit in my earlier discussion of Bordo's study of anorexia but can be further

illustrated by brief reference to the work of Alison Jaggar (1983). She notes that in many ethnic groups, "the relatively smaller size of females... is often directly due to the social fact that the nutrition of females is inferior [to male's] because of their lower social status" (Jaggar, 1992: 85, f. pub. 1983). The discursive structures in these societies are patriarchal, valuing masculinity over femininity and rewarding it with larger portions of more nutritious food, thus resulting in manifest physical changes and differentials. However, as I explained earlier, I do not only argue that discourses may become embodied in such clearly visible and measurable physical ways but also that they may be embodied, as enduring dispositions of the mind, for example as subjectivity (see p.87 above). Moreover, I also argue that discourses may not only be embodied but also marked upon the *outside* of the body and I now explore these two further relationships between discourses and the body, beginning with the suggestion that discourses may be embodied in the form of mental predispositions.

One way of conceptualising dispositions of the mind is by the notion of subjectivity, which I now define by drawing on the work of Ien Ang and Joke Hermes (1991). Subjectivity can be described, "in terms of the multiplicity of subject positions taken up by" individuals (Ang and Hermes, 1991: 119). Subjectivity, "is never finished" but is, rather, "constantly in reproduction... and transformation" (ibid.). To this extent, then, "a female person cannot be presumed to have a pregiven and fixed gender identity as a woman... Being a woman can mean many different things, at different times and in different circumstances" (ibid.). In order to describe how this process of reproduction and transformation occurs, Ang and Hermes make a distinction between gender definitions, positionings and identifications and I now discuss each of these in turn.

Firstly, for Ang and Hermes, gender definitions are, "produced within specific social discourses and practices" and they, "articulate what is considered to be feminine or masculine in culture and society" (ibid.). Gender definitions and the discourses which produce them are always context specific and, although, "they often contradict and compete with each other" they are not, "equally powerful" (ibid.). So, for example,

despite feminist discourses, inequitable gender power relations are generally maintained by dominant gender discourses. These dominant discourses, "assign different roles, opportunities, ideals, duties and vulnerabilities to 'men' and 'women' that are classified as normal and are very difficult to break out of" (Ang and Hermes, 1991: 120). It is the assumption of these locations that Ang and Hermes describe as gender positioning. Which gender position is taken up, and to what extent, is, they argue, dependent on an individual's gender identification.

Ang and Hermes stress that the process of taking up a gender position is neither, "mechanical" nor, "passive" (ibid.). Rather, they argue that there is, "an emotional commitment", which they also term an "investment", which is, "involved in the taking up of certain subject positions by concrete subjects" (ibid.). This investment, which may be either conscious or unwitting, rational or irrational, means that, "there will be some satisfaction or pay-off or reward... for that person" (ibid.). However, there may also be some sense of ambivalence about the beneficial outcomes because these may be contradicted by other, less positive, consequences. Ang and Hermes favour the term 'investment' as it avoids biological and psychological connotations and allows for processes of negotiation. This is also close to Skeggs' position, which I explore and adopt, with some modifications later, since she sees femininity and masculinity as, "cultural resources" upon which individuals may capitalise (Skeggs, 1997: 8). As well as arguing that individuals make an investment in taking up a subject position, Ang and Hermes also see power as implicated in the process, arguing that individuals, "invest in positions which confer on them relative power" (Ang and Hermes, 1991: 121).[8] However, they note that, not only can, "an empowering position in one context... be quite disempowering in another" but also, "in any one context a person can take up both empowering and disempowering positions at the same time" (ibid.). Social and cultural pressures are also important influences and often lead to: "female and male persons... invest[ing] in feminine and masculine subject positions [respectively]" (ibid.). Ang and Hermes argue that these factors lead to, "the recursive production of social relations between men and women" (ibid.). However, this,

> is not the same as mechanical reproduction because successful gender identifications are not automatic nor free of conflicts, dependent as they are on the life histories of individual people and the concrete practices they enter into... In other words... this theoretical perspective suggests... that *the construction of gender identity and gender relations is a constant achievement in which subjects themselves are complicit* (Ang and Hermes, 1991: 121, emphasis added).

Here, Ang and Hermes use the post-structuralist argument that subjectivity has no fixed core or essence, but is shaped by a number of factors, which may include language. For them, subjectivity is, therefore, "an open-ended, contradictory and culturally specific amalgam of different subject positions" (McNay, 1992: 2). A significant advantage of this position is that women are not posited as, "a global sisterhood linked by invariant, universal, feminine characteristics" (ibid.). As I argued earlier in this chapter, this is a significant tendency within much feminist essentialism. Another advantage of the post-structuralist position is that it allows for femininity becoming embodied within women as part of their subjectivity and thus can help to explain why, "for many women, femininity is both an integral part of their sense of self and at the same time a position still to be sought after" (Mills, 1992(b): 271). Thus, many women understand femininity as being embodied within themselves but still conceptualise it as something which they have to actively produce and which eludes them.

One feminist theorist who adopts such a perspective is Naomi Wolf (1990). Wolf argues that the popular concept of "beauty" is a "myth" (1990). As part of this myth, "beauty" is conceptualised as something which can readily be recognised since it exists, "objectively and universally" (Wolf, 1991: 12, f. pub. 1990). Within discursive structures of masculinity and femininity, "[w]omen will want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it" (ibid.). Wolf suggests that these structures are, at least in part, influenced by theories of evolution, since she argues that

this embodiment is constructed as, "important for women and not for men" and that, within this perspective, this situation is perceived as "necessary and natural",

> because it is biological, sexual, and evolutionary: strong men battle for beautiful women, and beautiful women are more reproductively successful. Women's beauty must correlate to their fertility, and since this system is based on sexual selection, it is inevitable and changeless (Wolf, 1991: 12).

Despite the clear illogicality of such arguments (for example, there is no correlation between beauty and fertility), Wolf suggests that they are very influential since, whilst the beauty myth is premised on an understanding of beauty as being physically embodied, she argues that it produces another form of embodiment, as it shapes women's subjectivities by generating, "low self-esteem for women" (Wolf, 1991: 49).[9] Despite this negative consequence, many women want a beautiful appearance since beauty plays the same role in women's status-seeking, "as money plays in that of men: a defensive proof to aggressive competitors of womanhood or manhood" (Wolf, 1991: 30). Moreover, "women are so well schooled in the beauty myth that we often internalise it: many of us are not yet sure ourselves that women are not interesting without beauty" (Wolf, 1991: 84). However, Wolf acknowledges that there is a paradox inherent within the "beauty myth"; whilst "beauty" is perceived as physically embodied, and whilst it may be embodied in the form of subjectivity, yet it is also understood as something which needs to be 'marked' on the outside of the body. This marking can be achieved through items such as cosmetics, shampoos and perfumes which are the products of a multi-billion dollar "beauty" industry.

In a position that is akin to Wolf's, Lisa Tuttle suggests that not only can femininity be embodied in the form of, "attributes, virtues and deficiencies... speech, posture, behaviour and attitude" but, also, it can be "displayed" through, "costume" and "bodily adornments" (Tuttle, 1986: 106). Although these "adornments" will differ according to cultural and historical location, for Susan Brownmiller they are often

associated with discomfort and pain, as in the examples of foot-binding, neck-rings and corsetry. However, for Jill Dawson, "beautifying treatments" can also be, "about pleasure for yourself, taking pleasure *in* yourself and your looks" (Dawson, 1990: 19) and for Dorothy Smith, too, they can be associated with, "having pleasure, having fun" (Smith, 1990: 202). In the earlier discussion of Ang and Hermes, I began to explore the suggestion that an investment in femininity can bring both advantages and disadvantages. My quotation here of the disparate positions of Brownmiller, on the one hand, and Dawson and Smith, on the other, is intended to suggest that I, too, adopt a similarly ambivalent position on the outcomes of femininity, as was also indicated by my earlier discussion of Bordo.[10] Additionally, in Part II of this thesis I return to the notion of marking femininity on the body, when I compare the appearance of the Soap Queen to that of the Drag Queen, amongst others, by drawing on the work of Judith Butler to argue that "[t]he essence or identity" that external appearances "purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means" (Butler, 1990: 136). However, I now continue to discuss the marking of discursive femininity by noting that femininity is signified, not only by appearance, but also by behaviour.

The following list summarises the characteristics that a group of students attributed to femininity:

> politeness, concern with conversation going well, deference, not pushing yourself forward as a person; not wanting to succeed, being vulnerable, emotional, intuitive, incompetent, not being strong, being fragile, not swearing, self-denigrating, not posing yourself as serious; working on your beauty without wearing too much makeup, being attractive, having neat and tidy hair, wearing clothes which are soft, flowing and delicate, being small, not taking up too much space, caring for others, avoiding taboo subjects, sitting with your knees together, being modest, not aiming for scientific, factual statements, hedging your statements, displaying conformity (S. Mills, 1992(b): 272).

Throughout the list there are references to the importance of appearance; femininity is marked, for example, by "neat and tidy hair" and "clothes which are soft, flowing and delicate". However, femininity is not only displayed through appearance but also through conduct. This is also intimated by the above list, for example, by the inclusion of such imperatives as "not posing yourself as serious". However, whilst appearance is marked on the body and behaviour is manifested by it, the relationship between these and embodiment is not as distinct as this discussion has so far implied and I will now argue that conduct and appearance can result in embodiment in the form of dispositions of the mind.

As Skeggs suggests, not only is there, "a fine line between embodying and displaying dispositions", this line can be crossed since, "the different feminine performances that... women make have... implications for their subjective constructions" (Skeggs, 1997: 102 and 98). For example, "glamour and desirability are... the means by which the material and semiotic are translated into the affective and experienced as a structure of feeling" (Skeggs, 1997: 98). In other words, performing can lead to becoming. However, Smith argues that any intentionality in this process must be obscured, since, if femininity is to be considered 'real', rather than, say, ironic, "[a]ppearances must express character or personality rather than testify to the art of the maker... if the interpretive circles of the discourse of femininity are to interpret feminine appearance as a document of a woman's inner reality" (Smith, 1990: 200). Thus, to mark femininity successfully demands a degree of both effort and judgment, since there is a delicate balancing act between doing enough and doing too much: for example, the feminine woman has to wear *enough* make-up ("too little and she's a drab or slattern" (J. Mills, 1991: xvii)); she must have expended time, effort, care and skill in constructing her appearance; but, she must not appear to be *overly* constructed ("too much make-up and she becomes a jezebel" (ibid.)).

Conclusion

In summary, discourses can impact upon the body and can cause the body to change. This change can be marked externally and be manifested in appearance and behaviour. However, manifesting certain traits can lead to them becoming embodied, since this manifestation can shape subjectivities. A feminine subjectivity is continually being made, un-made and re-made in response to the range of sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory, discourses. The fluidity of subjectivity and the heterogeneity of discourses means that it is hard to measure the precise influences discourses have on individuals' subjectivities. However, this influence is somewhat clearer when discourses are embodied physically rather than psychically, since, whilst it is still difficult to point to exactly which discourses have been implicated, yet discursive impacts are often both visible and measurable. Although it is possible for discourses to influence individuals without their compliance or cognisance, this is not always the case. It may be more helpful, therefore, to conceptualise the relationship between individuals and discourses as two-way, although with the addendum that this two-way relationship may be an unequal one at times. Whilst I have so far offered a lengthy discussion of the power of discourses, I have afforded less discussion to the role of the individual in this relationship. I now turn to this in the next chapter, "Discourses of the Public and Private Spheres" which explores the ways in which women may deploy and capitalise on femininity.

Footnotes

[1] Subsequent to the earliest feminist theorising of romance, this issue was addressed by some later work which, "revalued romance", seeing it as, "a place in which [women could] explore their own gendered identities, social and emotional desires, and life-expectations", at least within the parameters of their heterosexual relationships (Pearce and Stacey, 1995: 13). For example, see Radway (1987).

[2] However, this is not to suggest that these two different understandings of the term have equal validity; it is likely that the former is the dominant discourse, the latter a

counter-discourse. The difference between dominant and counter discourses can be clarified by reference to Mills (1997) who argues that conventional, Western medical science is more likely than 'alternative' therapies to be legitimated and promoted within the medical establishment (S.Mills, 1997: Chapter 1).

[3] I deal with this article in some detail, since it is the basis for my conceptualisation of discourse.

[4] One example of such a process at work can be seen in an approach which has been used in the History of Science. This is known as the 'two-track model' and Moore (1998) notes that it dominated History of Science from the 1930s to the 1970s. In this model, science is defined as what is contemporaneously known as 'true' and the past is studied in the light of this: "[e]very theory, every researcher, every institution then turns out to be on either the 'right track' or the 'wrong track', either steaming towards present-day truth or straying onto sidings. Only *real* science progresses because that's what we *mean* by science" (Moore, 1998: 97).

Just as disciplines limit what can be said, similarly, as I argued in Chapter 2, generic form constrains what can be articulated (see pp. 52-4 above). For example, Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey note that a discursive approach which shows a concern for genre, "looks for the system or pattern underlying a particular sign system or cultural practice (such as 'romance') and reveals its pervasiveness across a range of texts or social situations" (Pearce and Stacey, 1995: 24-5). "[T]he codes, conventions and narrative patterns" present in the texts allow, even demand that, certain utterances are made (Pearce and Stacey, 1995: 27). However, they also prevent the articulation of other utterances. I explore the importance of genre in more detail in the case studies of *A Thousand Acres* and *The Rector's Wife*.

[5] Moreover, he suggests that four main themes of philosophy collude with these three principles of restraint. Firstly, he argues that, "Western thought seems to have made

sure that the act of discoursing should appear to be no more that a certain bridging... between thinking and speaking" (Foucault, 1970: 64). In other words, Foucault suggests that philosophy excludes discourse from its exploration of the processes of thought and speech. Secondly, philosophy perpetuates the notion of the founding, originating subject, whom philosophy, "give[s] the task of directly animating the empty forms of language with his aims" (ibid.). Thirdly, philosophy conceptualises meaning and significance as pre-given and, finally, philosophy promulgates the idea of 'universal mediation' which suggests that things or events indiscernibly transform themselves into discourses as they reveal the secret of their own essence.

[6] I return to Bell *et al.*'s discussion in Chapter 7.

[7] In contrast, masculinity is seen as associated with, "the male values of competition and domination" and with a, "fear of intimacy" (Kitzinger, 1990: 25).

[8] This notion of the possibility of conscious and advantageous investment in femininity is important to a Third Wave Feminist Analysis because this can prevent the automatic positioning of women who invest in femininity as dupes (see p.72 above).

[9] Moreover, it, "materially... undermine[s] women's advancement" since the "central rule" of the beauty myth is, "for every feminist action there is an equal and opposite beauty myth reaction" and such reactions include a range of anti-women employment laws and employment practices (Wolf, 1991: 20 and 28).

[10] This ambivalence is deepened by my awareness that the disadvantages of femininity are not easily evaded, since, as I have already suggested, femininity can even have adverse consequences for women who do not invest in it (see p.82 above).

Chapter 4: Discourses of the Public and Private Spheres

Introduction

In Chapter 3, I argued that the discourses of femininity may be embodied, physically or psychically, or they may be marked upon the body. In this chapter I will argue that, however femininity influences women, its deployment is often a tactical move, albeit one which, as I argued earlier (see p.82 ff. above), may bring adverse consequences. I explore a range of the ways in which such a tactic can be exploited through a discussion of Beverley Skeggs's (1997) use of Bourdieu's classification of capital. Within her categorisation, masculinity and femininity are forms of capital which, "can be used as cultural resources" (Skeggs, 1997: 8). I suggest that femininity can be deployed tactically to gain paid employment because it has some value as a form of cultural capital in the labour market. However, I also argue that this value is limited and is, generally in that context, lower than the value of masculinity. I then suggest that one factor which contributes to the undervaluing of femininity in the labour market is the public/private dichotomy. This dualism seeks to construct, "separate gendered social space for men and women" by identifying the private sphere with women and imbuing it with stereotypical, feminine qualities (such as intimacy, irrationality, partiality and sentimentality); and by identifying the public sphere with men and imbuing it with stereotypical, masculine qualities (including rationality, objectivity and competitiveness) (Green, 2000: 412). This gendered dualism is central to the texts I examine and, therefore, an exploration of the public/private dichotomy is important to assist their interpretation, since, as I have already argued, although a range of interpretations of a text can be made, it is only possible to uncover that which has been encoded in the text if there is an awareness of the cultural knowledge underpinning that text. A further reason why it is necessary to discuss this stereotypical identification of masculinity with the public sphere and femininity with the private sphere is that, as I will argue in this chapter, these processes of identification have an adverse material impact on women's lives by reducing the number of work roles that women can easily access and by tending to restrict women to less remunerative positions. For these reasons, therefore, uncovering the operations of the public/private dichotomy and

challenging the assumptions on which it is based is an important part of feminist praxis. I also explain in this chapter that this polarity is sited in Victorian ideals of a white, middle-class femininity which ignores Victorian working-class women's experiences, as well as those of women living in a feudal society in earlier times or in other geographical locations. However, although I argue that the public/private dualism continues to circulate, this can be defined as an anachronistic discourse, as, "[c]urrently, about 41 per cent of the world's women aged fifteen and over are economically active" (Mandell and Momirov, 2000: 499).

Femininity: A Capital Resource

In this section I draw on and modify the work of Skeggs to suggest that femininity, whether it is embodied or displayed on the body, can be seen as a "resource", a form of "capital" which can be deployed in order to access other forms of capital (Skeggs, 1997: 8).[1] Although Skeggs argues that this process involves a "trade", I avoid this term since this implies that the capital is handed over irretrievably in exchange for something else (ibid.). Whilst time, money, skills and effort may have been invested in femininity, it is *these* that are traded rather than femininity itself, which can remain unaltered after a capital transaction. However, before exploring the ways in which femininity can be capitalised on, I now identify the three main forms of capital and explain which of these encompass femininity.[2]

The first type of capital, *economic capital*, uses the term *capital* in the way in which it is probably most widely used and understood by economists, that is, to include income, financial inheritances and financial assets, such as savings, endowments, stocks and shares and so on.[3] The second type, *cultural capital* exists in three forms. Firstly, it can occur in an embodied state, as both mental and physical predispositions, as I have argued that femininity can be. Secondly, it can exist in an objectified state, "in the form of cultural goods", so this, too, incorporates femininity but, in this instance, it is when it is displayed *on* the body, for example, in the form of jewellery or clothing (Skeggs, 1997: 8). Femininity, then, can be classified as belonging to one of two forms

of cultural capital: the embodied or the objectified kind. However, there is also a third form of cultural capital which exists in what is known as, "the institutionalised state" and which results in, "such things as educational qualifications" (ibid.). Whilst the connection between femininity and this form of cultural capital is not so immediately apparent, there is a link, as I will suggest shortly when I argue that femininity can be more easily deployed than masculinity to access certain educational qualifications. However, firstly, I conclude this identification of the main types of capital by noting that the final one is *social capital*; "resources based on connections and group memberships" (ibid.). This, then, is, "capital generated through relationships" and may include, for example, interpretive repertoires, vocabulary, accent, cultural knowledge, cultural references and social standing (Skeggs, 1997: 8).

In summary, within this paradigm, gender is understood as either embodied cultural capital, or objectified cultural capital. It may be used as a resource which can be exploited to gain either the third type of cultural capital, economic capital, or social capital. For example, the working class women in Skeggs's (1997) study all undertook courses designed to train them to work in the caring professions and, as I argue later in this chapter, historically, caring has been constructed as a feminine characteristic. These women deployed this embodied form of cultural capital to secure a further form of cultural capital, institutionalised capital, in the shape of educational qualifications. This second form of cultural capital was then exploited when they acquired jobs in the caring sector and thus achieved some economic capital. A second example is offered by Smith who observes that a feminine appearance assists access to, "the social world of heterosexual young men and women" (Smith, 1990: 193). However, it should be noted that this will only apply with certain groups; within others, a different, 'unfeminine' appearance might be more likely to ensure access. For example, Joe Wood (1998) explores Japanese sub-cultural groups, membership of which is gained by imitating a particular kind of Black American culture. For some of these groups, this involves participating in, "the graffiti-writing, break-dancing, loose-fitting-clothes culture of hip-hop" (Wood, 1998: 46). For example, Wood describes a female

"blackfacer" as, "swamped by an oversized shirt and a pair of Tommy Hilfiger jeans" and as moving with a, "macho swagger and dancer's grace" (Wood, 1998: 45).[4] Within dominant Western discourses of femininity, such as have been adopted by this group, only her "dancer's grace" would be interpreted as feminine. However, such femininity is not the most valuable form of cultural capital within her social circle. Rather, her emulation of a particular form of Black American culture is what has ensured both her access to the group and her continuing acceptance therein. Notwithstanding such examples, I acknowledge that Smith's argument does have some validity; within particular groups the deployment of femininity, an embodied or objectified cultural capital, may lead to membership of a social group, thus affording social capital.

However, just as economic capital can only be used in those places where it is recognised as legitimate (sterling can be spent in England but not in France, for example), cultural capital can only be successfully deployed when legitimation is afforded it. So, although feminine conduct and appearance in a job interview can be successfully deployed to gain a job, this is generally only true for certain types of job. As I write this thesis, women are entering the 'public' domains, such as the world of employment, in unprecedented numbers; "according to census statistics there has been a remarkable post-war increase in women's paid employment... The female share of the labour force has increased from 29 per cent in 1931 to 31 per cent in 1951, 37 per cent in 1971, and 45 per cent in 1987" (Lewis, 1992: 65; also see Walby, 1990: Chapter 2). Moreover, this trend continues. In 1998, the percentage of all women in the labour market increased to 72%, from 70% in 1997, resulting in women constituting 44% of all those in work, an increase from 42% in 1997 (Thair and Risdon, 1999). However, this masks the fact of horizontal occupational segregation, that is, "the fact that women and men predominate in different kinds of occupation" (Mandell and Momirov, 2000: 499). So, whilst the deployment of femininity in a job interview might, for example, gain a woman a secretarial post (see Pringle, 1988), it would be unlikely to secure her a position as a manual labourer (such as a builder) or as a manager. Additionally, in many situations, even when femininity is legitimated, "the ability to capitalise on... [it]

is restricted" (Skeggs, 1997:10). This is often due to vertical occupational segregation, that is, "the fact that within occupations, women tend to be clustered at the lower levels of skill, responsibility and pay" (Mandell and Momirov, 2000: 499). For example, in the public library sector in the UK in the 1950s,

> both masculinity and femininity could be traded for paid employment. However, they did not have equal value in this transaction: the ability to capitalise on femininity was restricted to obtaining... junior and middle-ranking posts... [which] offered only limited opportunities and power (Kerslake and Liladhar, 1999: 500).

Similarly, for the women in Skeggs's study, although they did achieve some economic capital, this, too, was limited; the jobs for which their training qualified them were low paid and, often, only part-time. Although this transaction did not yield a high return, yet it, "did offer potentially greater rewards than unemployment" (Skeggs, 1997: 102). In summary, femininity for the women in Skeggs's study was, "not a strong asset to trade and capitalise on" (Skeggs, 1997: 10-11). Rather it was something which could be, either wittingly or unwittingly, deployed tactically. [5]

Within Skeggs's work, tactics, "are determined by the absence of power" and, "have more to do with constraints than possibilities" (Skeggs, 1997: 10). However, there may be the possibility to gain some power since, "tactics constantly manipulate events to turn them into opportunities" (ibid.). Whilst I retain use of the term *tactics* throughout this thesis, in order to talk of a *tactical deployment of femininity*, my use of the term carries slightly different connotations from Skeggs's use of the term. This difference is due to the fact that I do not conceptualise femininity as necessarily being associated with, "the absence of power". [6] As I argued above, a feminine appearance may gain a woman access to certain social groups or to particular roles within the labour market. However, I do suggest that in many, if not most, situations it has less potential for power than masculinity, as was suggested by the library labour market

example. Moreover, I consider the outcomes of deploying tactical femininity as being less certain than they seem to be within Skeggs's interpretation. This uncertainty is articulated by Smith, who notes that when a woman tactically deploys a feminine appearance, "its intended meaning is established by discursive texts outside her control" (Smith, 1990: 182). Thus, there is a difficult balancing act to achieve in tactically deploying femininity in order to achieve capital gains, whilst avoiding the creation of unwanted, possibly undesirable, effects, too. Again, Smith is of help here; when a woman enter domains that have previously been male dominated, "there are problems about locating a style that... preserves the signature of femininity (and hence does not challenge male hegemony)" without undermining, "her competent presence" (ibid.). In order to successfully manage this balancing act a woman may not only deploy femininity but also, simultaneously, use tactics which, "avoid membership in the discourse of femininity" (Smith, 1990: 182). These secondary tactics oppose, "the interpretive closure of the discourse of femininity giving her permission to exercise her competence" (Smith, 1990: 183). However, there is always a tension between such interventions of femininity into the public realm and the public/private dichotomy. This tension is apparent in a range of arenas and I now explore two of these; social science and political theory. Of all of the possible areas for exploration I elected to examine these two because they play a significant role in shaping public policy and legislation and, consequently, they can materially impacting on women's lives in far reaching ways.

The Gendering of the Public/Private Dichotomy

The Gendering of the Public/Private Dichotomy In Sociology

In her discussion of sociological theory, Artemis March (1982) identified three ways in which women are rendered invisible within such writings, and, consequently, banished from this area of the public domain. Beverly Thiele has summarised these as: "Exclusion"; "Pseudo-inclusion"; and "Alienation" (Thiele, 1992: 26, 27 and 28, f. pub. 1987). "Exclusion" is used to describe writings in which women do not feature at all and Thiele suggests that exclusion has two forms: the more obvious form where

women are simply overlooked; and the more "subtle" form which she terms, "disappearance" (Thiele, 1992: 26-7). This latter term applies when, "women are, for no given reason, simply dropped from the discourse" (ibid.). She argues that an example of disappearance can be seen in the work of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) who, "assumes an initial State of Nature in which men and women are explicitly equal and in which women have natural authority over children", but who, "ends up with a Commonwealth entirely inhabited by men" (Thiele, 1992: 27). Thiele notes that no explanation is offered as to, "[w]hy women never make it into the Commonwealth" (ibid.). She continues, this naturalisation of women's exclusion might, to some extent, explain why women's, "relation to civil society has continued to plague liberal and social contract theorists ever since" (ibid.). However, academic work which has appeared since Thiele's has posited feasible working solutions to such problems. For example, Ruth Lister (1997) posits the notion of a social contract which affords equitable citizenship to women and men by acknowledging the specifically gendered nature of a range of civic and other responsibilities. [7]

The second way in which women are rendered invisible in sociology, through pseudo-inclusion, applies to work in which women are included, but are then marginalised. Thiele differentiates this from exclusion by explaining that within pseudo-inclusion, "[w]omen become defined as... anomalies, exceptions to the rule which can be noted and then forgotten about" (Thiele, 1992: 27). By way of illustration, she draws attention to a study on suicide where the data on female suicides contradicts the scholar's theory as to why people commit suicide; rather than amend the theory or acknowledge that it is not universally applicable, "he embarks on a long explanation of the peculiarities of women's nature" (ibid.). The third and final way, alienation, is applied to work where androcentric categories are used. Thiele explains this by stating that alienation occurs in the work of scholars who, in spite of any commitment they have to, "the subject of women" take a perspective which, "interferes with their interpretation of women's experiences" (Thiele, 1992: 28). She cites as an

example the work of Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) which includes a, "description of women's oppression as *class* oppression" (Thiele, 1992: 28).

In addition to her explication of March's critique of the three ways in which women are rendered invisible, Thiele extends this analysis to suggest five, "techniques of invisibility" (Thiele, 1992: 28). She argues that these are used by political thinkers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and Karl Marx (1818-1883), to exclude women from the public sphere. The first technique is "decontextualisation" which is explained as, "abstracting from real people... to make generalisations about 'Man', 'Society'" (Thiele, 1992: 29). The second technique is "universalism" which, "obscures bias in decontextualisation"; whilst the third is "naturalism" whereby, "what is 'natural' ceases to require an explanation" and whereby, "[n]atural man and natural woman often imply quite different things" (Thiele, 1992: 35 and 30). The fourth technique is the use of dualisms, such as public/private, which, "differentiate male from female and invest [the] male pole with positive value and [the] female with negative value" (Thiele, 1992: 35). The fifth and final technique is "appropriation/reversal", where images from woman-centered processes are, "stolen... and reversed for male scholarship", for example in, "Marx's use of the term reproduction" (Thiele, 1992: 35 and 32). Thiele argues that in using reproduction to refer to, "the reproduction of daily life, the reproduction of the work force", Marx did not simply draw an analogy; rather, he "appropriated" the symbolism for "male process" and, thus, deprived birth of, "its meaning and significance" since, "for Marx, men make history and themselves, women *merely* make babies" (Thiele, 1992: 32). In summary, women are rendered invisible in works which exclude them; in works which include them but subsequently marginalise them; and in works which alienate them through a use of androcentric categories. Moreover, women are excluded from the public sphere by works which generalise about 'Man' and 'Society' and obscure such bias; naturalise certain social situations; use gendered dualisms; and appropriate images from woman-centered processes.

The Gendering of the Public/Private Dichotomy In Political Theory

As the mention of political thinkers such as Hobbes, Engels, Mill and Marx might imply, discourses of a masculinised public domain and a feminised private sphere also inform much political thinking which, in turn, shapes the constitutions of many Western countries. For example, liberalism has a long tradition in Britain and has served to form the present informal constitution, political outlook and other discursive frameworks. It has been suggested that liberalism appears to be a, "basis for feminist ideals" since: it rejects the, "'natural' order of things"; is an, "individualist, egalitarian, conventionalist doctrine"; and opposes patriarchalism which, "claims that hierarchical relations of subordination necessarily follow from the natural characteristics of men and women" (Thiele, 1992: 209 and 215). However, despite its basis in such assumptions, liberalism has also rendered women invisible, since, as Thiele puts it, "denied entry by the front door, patriarchy crept in at the back" (Thiele, 1992: 215). This was possible because liberalism believes in a clear demarcation of the personal from the political sphere, or the "private" from the "public". As Elizabeth Frazer observes, liberalism traditionally differentiates the, "domestic realm... the realm of the body, of emotional and intimate ties and so on", from the economy and polity, that is, "the realm of state power and authority" (Frazer, 1998: 57). Consequently, early liberals could, and did, reject natural authority as a basis for government, whilst maintaining that the family was a separate realm where a father had a natural authority over his children, and a husband had a natural authority over his wife. For example, John Locke argued that, "free and equal beings had created a ruler to regulate their lives and what they had created they had some right to control" (Thiele, 1992: 215). However, he also argued that husbands had a 'natural' authority over their wives. Therefore, according to Locke, women were subordinate, not 'equal beings' and were to be excluded from being citizens of the state; thus women were relegated to the realm of the private.

Later liberals, such as John Stuart Mill, did question Locke's argument, contending that women should share in political life. However, their fundamental belief in the separateness of private and public, personal and political, prevented the

formation of a coherent and credible argument. For example, Mill did not agree that women's position as wives and mothers should exclude them from public life, yet by his acceptance of, "the separation of domestic from public life" his argument for enfranchisement is undercut: "how can wives who have 'chosen' private life develop a public spirit?" (Thiele, 1992: 216). Furthermore Mill, "hoped and expected that women would stay in their sphere" (Thiele, 1992: 215). Additionally, Thiele suggests, liberalism makes a second distinction of public and private within which "private" means, "the market... the economy... our 'social' as opposed to our 'political' life" (Thiele, 1992: 215). Since the family can thus be omitted from liberal discourse, liberalism can, "more plausibly pretend that we are indeed the private and isolated individuals on which it rests. In seemingly universal concern over the limits of the state and the freedoms of individuals, liberalism talks in effect of a world occupied by men" (Thiele, 1992: 215).

Thiele's analysis is flawed to the extent that it cannot encompass liberal legislation designed to assist women's access to the public sphere. For example, there was a number of British Acts of social and employment legislation in the late 1960s and early 1970s which seem to accept an inter-relationship between the public and the private. There were three main pieces of social legislation which addressed 'private' issues: the 1967 Abortion Act, which legalised abortion on social as well as medical grounds; the 1974 decision to provide free contraception on the National Health Service; and the 1969 Divorce Reform Act, which facilitated less costly and complex divorce proceedings (see Lewis, 1992). One of the potential effects of these three pieces of legislation is that they could lead to more women working in the labour market; the first two Acts allowing more choice about when, or if, to have children and the third Act leading to more women needing to take paid employment in order to become financially self-supporting. Furthermore, these Acts which had the potential to add more women into the pool of people participating in paid employment were accompanied by employment legislation which explicitly attempted to improve women's position in the labour market. The first, the 1970 Equal Pay Act,

implemented in 1975, brought about some immediate gains in diminishing sex differentials in pay rates, although it has been argued that there were few longer term benefits; the second, the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, prohibited discrimination in recruitment and deployment on the grounds of sex; whilst the third, the 1975 Employment Protection Act, guaranteed the right to maternity leave and prohibited the dismissal of women because of pregnancy (see Lewis, 1992 for further discussion).

These pieces of legislation were important in removing the more blatant aspects of sex discrimination. Furthermore, they were instrumental in positioning sex discrimination as a problem, not only for the individual worker but also for the employing organisation. Following on from the social and employment legislation, during the 1970s there was a general increase in women's participation rates in the labour market (see Liladhar and Kerslake, 1999(a), for a summary of these increases). However, as I argued earlier, the growth in the number of women in the work force can be traced back to at least the 1950s. So, it is possible that the increases witnessed in the 1970s would have occurred even if the legislation had not been enacted. Moreover, if the increase is credited to the legislation, then this was of only limited success, since sex segregation persisted and women workers continued to be grouped with other women workers both horizontally, in the same types of jobs, and vertically, in the lower reaches of an occupation. So, for example, by 1977, only two of the 108 most senior posts in English public library posts were held by women; women were virtually excluded from high salary public library posts; and were over-represented in lower status, less well paid work (Ritchie, 1979). The limited success of this legislation might suggest that there is some validity to Thiele's assertion that there is an intrinsic opposition between liberalism and a discourse of a feminised public sphere which served in some way to restrict the impact of the Acts. Thus, whilst liberal feminism argues, "that specific legal and social policy changes are the necessary tools for rectifying women's inferior position", it seems that, used alone, these tools are not enough to complete the task (Maynard, 1998: 253).

Therefore, even when liberal legislation was implemented with the express aim of assisting women's movement into the public sphere, it cannot be interpreted as wholly successful. As I have already suggested, this may be due, in part, to the intrinsic opposition between liberalism and a discourse of female citizenship. Furthermore, such legislation is based on an assumption that women have special needs, that is, needs which are different from men's and which mean that women need assistance to participate in the public domain of the labour market on equal terms with men. In other words, such liberal legislation is based on a premise that, in the public sphere, women are at a disadvantage in relation to men. Therefore, whilst the legislation discursively constructs women as being able to participate in the workplace, it simultaneously suggests that, without help, they would be unable to do so, thus implicitly reinforcing discourses of the public as masculine, the private as feminine. As this last clause suggests, such legislation cannot be seen in isolation; it is only part of a range of discourses about the public and the private and, as I illustrate later in this chapter, a number of other discourses serve to associate the private with femininity and the public with masculinity.

The main final explanation for the limited success of the liberal legislation might be seen in the origins of the Acts. The conflicting messages inherent in them are further complicated by the fact that this legislation arose from the same parliamentary constitution which had earlier actively restricted women (albeit only white women) to the private sphere. In response to the labour shortage of the 1950s and 1960s, the British government chose to recruit workers from the Commonwealth, rather than taking steps which would have enabled British women, mainly married women and mothers, to return to the workforce. Such wielding of political power to restrict (some) women to the private sphere is a clear example of what Aveen Maguire terms the first "face of power" (Maguire, 1992: 19, f. pub. 1985). I now briefly explore her discussions of the faces of power since she argues that these work together to exclude many women from the public sphere.

The Three Faces of Power and Their Role in Reinforcing The Public/Private Dichotomy

Maguire writes of the "three faces of power" which she argues restrict women to the private sphere (Maguire, 1992: 20). The first of these, she explains, is, "visible in direct action where force or might are used, or in public decisions, taken on publicly discussed issues" (ibid.). She explains this by offering the example of a doctor responding to a female patient who is a victim of domestic violence by prescribing Valium rather than addressing the violence she suffers by, for example, referring her to a refuge, the police or an organisation such as WAVE (Women Against Violence). This can be seen as restricting the woman concerned to the private sphere, since no escape route from the domestic violence is offered; rather she is given a drug which will serve to help her better tolerate her intolerable situation. The second face of power, Maguire continues, "can be seen in attempts to stifle an issue as it emerges, or in attempts to redefine or reshape an issue into something less threatening" (ibid.). She adds, "[a]t this second level, power is most successful when it can prevent a threatening issue from getting 'onto the agenda' at all" (Maguire, 1992: 21). By way of an example of the second face, Maguire identifies those people who proposed the anti-abortion amendment to the Irish Constitution in 1982, "[a]ware that EEC membership might make legal abortion an issue in Ireland, they attempted to pre-empt the whole debate" (ibid.). The third and final face of power is, "the hardest to discern" and is used, "to manipulate people's perceptions so that they are unaware of having a grievance" (Maguire, 1992: 20). Maguire cites as an example here the influence of advertising, which manipulates women into aspiring towards unattainable ideals and encourages those who fall short of these ideals to feel dissatisfied with themselves. This argument is similar to the case that I made in Chapter 3, where I argued that the 'beauty' industry led to women feeling a sense of low self-esteem if they failed to match the requirements of the 'beauty myth' (see pp.97-8 above). Maguire concludes that, "[e]ncouraging women to spend their energy in combating this false sense of inadequacy, in attempting to live up to these false ideals is a very effective method of controlling them" (Maguire, 1992: 24). In other words, if one expends time and energy

on one's appearance and home, one has less time and energy to expend in the public world of work, for example. Any potential for success is further undermined, since success is often predicated on self-confidence and feelings of inadequacy are more likely to produce low self-esteem, rather than self-confidence.

Although I have positioned Maguire's arguments as close to my own, this position does need some modification, as her arguments are more absolute than my own. For example, in her discussions of advertising, Maguire suggests that *all* women will inevitably be affected in the *same* way by their exposure to advertisements and that the results of this exposure will *necessarily* be negative, which implies that she locates herself within a Marxist ideological paradigm. As I argued in Chapter 3, when applied in such a monolithic way this perspective is problematic, since it understands individuals as being fooled into using conceptual systems which work against their interests (see the section "Comparing Discourses and Ideologies", p.70 ff. above). Moreover, whilst Maguire allows for women taking up a position which is close to the femininities they see in advertising, her approach does not acknowledge that this may be done only partially, or that a woman may decide to try not to take it up at all, as I argued earlier may occur (see p.84 above). Neither does it allow for the fact that this a two-way process; just as women may be influenced by such advertisements, advertising may be influenced by women. Women may exert such influence directly, for example, if they are part of a marketing team. They may also indirectly influence particular advertisements: as I argued in Chapter 3, commercial pressures lead those involved in media production to take into account what their audience, including women, say they want to see in the media (see p.73 above). This indirect influence can also occur when women are part of focus-groups; are complainants; or are part of a group of women who boycott a product. Since Maguire's paradigm sees the influence as being imposed upon women without any scope for their resistance, it cannot explain either how counter ideologies come to be formed. However, despite these caveats, as I have argued, it is the case that some women do fall victim to the 'beauty myth' and feel inadequate when their attempts to satisfy its requirements fail. By modifying Maguire's

statements to argue that the three "faces of power" combine with other factors to restrict *some* women *at some times* to the private realm, it can then be argued that these are part of a larger discourse that associates femininity with the private and domestic and masculinity with the public. I now discuss further the public/private dichotomy and continue to deconstruct it through an exploration of a range of texts whose contents suggest that the dichotomy has caused some difficulties for their writers.

Struggling With The Public/Private Dichotomy

During World Wars I and II, the binary opposition of public/private created a dilemma for British newspaper and magazine copywriters and government propagandists, when they strove to encourage women into work and were faced with the quandary that paid work was seen as unfeminine and, therefore, potentially undesirable. In World War I the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* approached this problem by emphasising the dainty femininity of women war workers,

> I could not help contrasting the dainty little khaki-clad miss, curls peeping from underneath her spongeback hat, with the setting. She might have stepped out of a West End Revue. Actually she was a checker, fulfilling her important and appointed task amidst the scream and noise and steam, the clanging of a thousand hammers (unnamed author cited in Beddoe,1989: 11).

The femininity of the checker is signified by "dainty little", the diminutive "miss" and the coy personification of her hair in "curls peeping", since, within stereotypical notions of femininity, "[t]he essential characteristics of femininity have generally been understood to be passivity, docility, and weakness" (J.Mills, 1991: 81). It is heightened by the juxtaposition of these terms with the discordant onomatopoeic words which are associated with her job: "scream... noise... steam... clanging... hammers", since these accord with stereotypical masculinity which has been understood to include, "virile strength, vigour [and] assertiveness" (J.Mills, 1991: 81). The impact of these onomatopoeia is reinforced by the use of rhyme and alliteration ("scream... steam").

A similar response to this quandary can be found in an example of World War II propaganda when a,

> Ministry of Labour leaflet for the shipbuilding industry encouragingly explained: "The average woman takes to welding as readily as she takes to knitting once she has over come any initial nervousness due to sparks. Indeed the two occupations have much in common, since they both require a small, fairly complex manipulative movement which is repeated many times combined with a kind of subconscious concentration at which women excel (Holdsworth, 1988: 76).

Although welding requires a, "fairly complex manipulative movement", this is not to be seen as unachievable by the feminine woman, since the public world of work, shipbuilding and welding, is brought into the domestic realm by being likened to knitting. Moreover, the movement is "small" and does not require any intellectual prowess, since the only "concentration" it needs is sub-conscious. As I argued in Chapter 1, Western philosophising traditionally separates and constructs as opposites mind and body, characterising the former as male, the latter as female, thus, distancing the task from the realm of the intellect implicitly positions it as feminine. Other, more recent responses to this public/private dilemma are found in the treatment of police women, both by the Home Office and in newspaper reports. Sarah Boseley and Maggie O'Kane note that, in 1964, *The Daily Express* ran the headline, "'Women power: see how the nyloned girl in blue used it last night', and went on to tell the story of heroic Margaret Cleland who rescued a child from a rooftop and declared: 'I've laddered my nylons'", thus, "proving beyond reasonable doubt, that she had retained her femininity" (*The Guardian*, October 9th, 1996). A similar discourse appears to have influenced the decision, taken in 1970, to introduce a blue and white polka dot blouse as part of policewomen's uniform in the London Met.

Challenging The Dichotomy

Thus, over an extended period of time, a discourse which associates women and femininity with the private and, often by implication, men and masculinity with the public, can be found in a number of diverse sources. However, this binarism has not gone unchallenged. Women have illustrated by their everyday lives that the distinction between public and private is spurious, for example, by taking paid employment in, "the privacy of their own home" including by "taking in washing, needle-work, lodgers, running a small shop" (Phillips, 1992: 98, f. pub. 1987). This work, by its very nature, is difficult to quantify, but in London, "the traditional site of women's wear production", it was estimated that homeworkers produced half of the fashion output (Coyle, 1992: 169, f. pub. 1982). Furthermore, women are increasingly taking paid employment outside of the home, "in 1988, 70% of British women of working age (15-59 years), were in paid employment or seeking work compared with only 56% in 1971" (McDowell, 1992: 183, f. pub. 1991). Moreover, as I noted earlier in this chapter, by 1998 this figure had risen to 72% and, significantly, this increased percentage, unlike the earlier one, excluded women seeking work and only included those women actually participating in the labour market.

Another challenge to the positioning of women in the private sphere has come in the form of feminist theoretical work. Firstly, some such writings have supplemented 'private' areas to social science. For example, Ann Oakley challenged the "status" of housework as "non-work" and criticised definitions of work that were, "narrowly based on employment or productivity" (Oakley, 1992: 136 and 124, f. pub. 1974). She counters, "the sociological trivialisation of housework" by stressing that, "women's activities in the home constitute work, albeit financially unrewarded" (ibid.). She argued that housework has a sociology and pinpointed the sexist biases of a sociology that ignored it. Secondly, other feminist theoretical works have shown that 'public' institutions interfere in 'private' life. For example, Carole Pateman illustrates how the 'public' institution of the welfare system is instrumental in upholding a "patriarchal structure of family life", a 'private' institution (Pateman, 1992: 227, f. pub.

1989). She cites the example of the British and Australian cohabitation rule which, "explicitly expresses the presumption that women necessarily must be economically dependent on men if they live with them as sexual partners. If cohabitation is ruled to take place, the woman loses her entitlement to welfare benefits" (Pateman, 1992: 232). Thirdly, yet other feminist theoretical works have deconstructed the public/private dichotomy. Linda J. Nicholson (1984) has argued that Marxist and liberal theorists' suggestions that social economic divisions were inevitable and universal were misguided. She believes that feminists need to challenge this suggestion of inevitability and reveal the particular combination of circumstances that is responsible for such divisions. She argues that if these differences are seen as sited in specific power structures and social institutions in specific geographical and historical contexts, then they can be seen as transient and open to being challenged, even changed. Although, as Alison Andrew suggests, Nicholson's work, "does not do justice to Marxist theory" since, Marxism, "does absolutely insist that it is looking at a particular kind of society (industrial capitalism) in a particular historical period. In this account, the separation of home and workplace is seen as specifically linked to the rise of industrial capitalism" (Andrew, Pers. Comm., 1992). However, Andrew acknowledges a significant problem with Marxist theory by noting that, "[w]hat is *not* explained by conventional Marxism and is, therefore, naturalised/ universalised is why it should be women who are allocated to the home" (ibid.).[8]

In conclusion, there have been a range of challenges to a discourse which associates women and femininity with the private and, often by implication, men and masculinity with the public. Many women's everyday lives illustrate that the division between public and private is untenable: some because they work from home; others because they take paid employment outside of the home. Additionally, since the Victorian period, women's and men's involvement in voluntary work has also challenged the dichotomy. Moreover, feminist scholarship has made 'private' areas legitimate subjects of study in social science; has illustrated that 'public' institutions are implicated in upholding private institutions; and has deconstructed the public/private

dichotomy by challenging mainstream political theory. Yet, despite these challenges, there remains a dominant discourse which associates the domestic with femininity and this is particularly evident in constructions of the family, for example, in both sociological and political theorising.

Femininity and the Family

In this section, I explore the interplay between discourses of the family and discourses of femininity. However, I begin by defining the family as it is understood in sociological theory. Diana Gittins argues that such theoretical works have often defined the family by, "four basic functions" (Gittins, 1992(a): 67). The first of these is, "common residence" which, she explains, is usually referred to by the term "household"; "[i]t is generally assumed that a married couple, or parent and child(ren) will form a household and that family implies and presupposes 'household'" (ibid.). The second basic function is, "economic co-operation", "a very broad term... [which] can encompass a wide range of activities from cooking to spinning to resources in terms of people and skills" (Gittins, 1992(a): 67 and 68). The third and fourth basic functions, "reproduction" and "sexuality" are inter-connected and are included, Gittins suggests, on the supposition of, "heterosexual relations, at least at times" (Gittins, 1992(a): 67 and 69). She further suggests that these latter two functions are, "intimately bound up with social definitions and customs of marriage" (Gittins, 1992(a): 69). So, in summary, in many sociological definitions, family is taken to mean a heterosexual couple and their biological children, all living in the same household, without any non-family members.

However, as Gittins argues, such a concept of the family is by no means universal. For example, Eastern and Southern European peoples and African and Asian peoples often live in extended families; either because it is traditional to do so or for economic reasons. Additionally, other more fluid arrangements exist, for example, Gittins writes of a Samoan tradition where the children choose in which household they will reside (Gittins, 1992(a): 67). Moreover, the concept of the family outlined in the

preceding paragraph obfuscates the existence of significant gender power relations and material inequalities. As Gittins observes, "households... entail the distribution, production and allocation of resources... [including] food, drink, material goods... service, care, skills, time and space (Gittins, 1992(a): 68). Although the term "economic co-operation", "implies an equal distribution of resources... yet this is seldom so" (ibid.). As a United Nations Report (1980) advises, "[w]omen... perform nearly two-thirds of its work hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property" (cited in Exley (ed.), 1993: 13). Even when such blatant injustices are absent, there are clearly delineated gender roles in many families and these are both informed by and reflected in the texts I explore in Part II. Finally, this concept of the family relies on an assumption of, "marriage as a long term relationship between a man and a woman" (Gittins, 1992(a): 69). Again, this is a universalising assumption which denies the possibility of other types of relationships. Yet, as Gittins highlights, "it has been estimated that only 10 per cent of all marriages in the world are actually monogamous; polyandry and polygyny are common in many societies, just as serial monogamy is becoming increasingly common in our own" (ibid.). Moreover, she adds that marriage is not only a heterosexual institution; although same sex marriages are not recognised in law in the UK at the time of writing, yet a number of gay and lesbian couples here undertake a form of ceremony and live in such a way that their relationship would be commonly termed a marriage were they not a same-sex couple; a similar situation exists elsewhere, for example, in Holland and some of the states in the United States of America.

In summary, Gittins argues that sociological definitions of the family are too narrow; obfuscate gender inequities; and assume marriage as a long term relationship between one man and woman. However, what her account overlooks is that concepts of the family are often further raced in a very particular way: all of its members are deemed to share the same racial origins. Elsewhere I have written about the ways in which everyday encounters deny the existence of 'mixed race' family relationships, specifically those between white mothers and their black children (for example, see

Liladhar, 1999 (a) and Liladhar, 1999 (b)). [9] I explained in these articles that my sons, Nathaniel and Fabian have one white, English, parent, myself, and that their father is a first generation British-Indian. I have related how people have assumed that I am not the mother of my older son, Nathaniel, because he is 'dark-skinned' and I have compared this to the experiences of anthropologist Kirin Narayan who is of both Indian and German ancestry. She has concluded that, "for those of us who are mixed, *the darker element in our ancestry serves to define us* with or without our own complicity" (Narayan, 1997: 30, emphasis added). Thus, a midwife described Nathaniel as an "Asian baby" even though she watched me, a white, English woman, give birth to him and even though he was born in England; whilst, some of Nathaniel's friends who have not met me, have assumed that his mother is not white because they, too, have defined him according to the 'darker' elements of his ancestry. Thus, the normative family tends to be conceptualised as a group which shares the same physical characteristics, commonly termed 'race'; and which is made up of a heterosexual, long term couple who live in the same household as their own biological children.

The association of femininity with this normative family originates partly in white, Victorian, middle and upper class definitions of femininity. It ignores the fact that women and girls in feudal societies had always worked (see Anderson and Zinsser, 1990). Moreover, Victorian working-class women undertook a variety of paid jobs both in and outside of the home, including 'slopwork', that is, needlework; factory work; and domestic service, in positions such as cooks, housemaids and general servants (see Golby, 1986). However, such realities were ignored by a dominant middle-class Victorian discourse of femininity which incorporated the concept of "the feminine-domestic ideal" (Skeggs, 1997). This involved a range of domestic routines based on those of the middle classes in which, "moral precepts" were incorporated, often in the form of maxims such as "'cleanliness is next to godliness'" (Skeggs, 1997: 46). As Skeggs notes, "[p]articular feminine roles and functions, such as the feminine-domestic ideal, were allocated a special status and importance and represented as a desirable and unsurpassable goal to which all women would naturally aspire and gain moral

superiority from" (ibid.). Although represented as a goal to which "*all* women" would aspire, I will suggest shortly that in England, although not necessarily elsewhere, Black women were generally not permitted to achieve this domestic ideal because of discourses of Black female sexuality. However, first, I acknowledge Skeggs's suggestion that, in some ways, this notion of the domestic ideal can be interpreted as a discourse of a powerful, influential femininity since, "[t]he education of working-class women in the 'domestic ideal', was seen to be the solution to national social order" (Skeggs, 1997: 46). Yet, as Skeggs herself notes, this interpretation needs modification. Because the domestic ideal was part of an attempt, "to create a middle-class hegemony in which the practices of the newly formed bourgeoisie were defined against the condemned excesses and extravagances of the aristocracy", so "[i]deologies of domestic responsibility and respectability involved a negotiation and redefinition of bourgeois beliefs and values" (ibid.). Consequently, distinctions *between* women could be constructed and, "only those who achieved the domestic ideal could articulate their superiority" (ibid.). So, the domestic ideal not only served to distinguish middle and working class women from aristocratic women, but also to distinguish groups of working class women from one another since 'respectable' working class women could, and did, define themselves, "against the 'rough' working class" (ibid.).

Furthermore, 'respectable' working class women came to define themselves against women who were perceived as sexually over-active, that is, women who had a sexual partner outside of marriage or had more than one sexual partner, since domesticity and sexuality became established as oppositional. Being perceived as respectable relied upon one's adherence to, "a complex set of practices and representations which defined appropriate and acceptable modes of behaviour, language and appearance... [and which] operated as both social rules and moral codes" (ibid.). Skeggs suggests that this definition of respectability excluded Black women, since they failed to satisfy these rules because they were marked both as sexually permissive and as sexual pollutants. This suggestion is supported by the work of Felly Nkweto Simmonds which notes that discourses of Black female sexuality have their,

"roots in the history of slavery" within which Black women were, "labelled sexually promiscuous because it was important that... [they] supply the labour force" (Simmonds, 1992: 214, f. pub. 1988). However, Anne McClintock (1995) has observed that, under imperialism, the domestic routines of white colonials were often undertaken by 'native' servants who were required to conform to their mistresses' standards. Consequently, the mission system trained indigenous people, both male and female, in what would be required of them as servants working under such colonial regimes. Thus, Skeggs's claim needs to be modified by reference to its specificity: within Victorian England, although not necessarily elsewhere, Black women often could not find access to respectability because of racist discourses of sexuality. Additionally, such anachronistic discourses may still operate contemporaneously as Simmonds (1988) suggests in her discussion of Spike Lee's film, *She's Gotta Have It* (1986). It is also noteworthy that this opposition between domesticity and sexuality served to not only reinforce the raced and classed feminisation of the domestic arena but also to implicitly masculinise the public sphere since, "[female] respectability only occurred inside the home and not in the public realm of the streets" (Skeggs, 1997: 46).[10]

Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter I have argued that femininity is a form of cultural capital which can be exploited to achieve limited economic and social capital. The advantages of femininity are further restricted because the outcomes of deploying tactical femininity are uncertain. Moreover, when femininity is invoked in the public domain, there is always a tension, since femininity is discursively associated with the private realm, which is dichotomously opposed to the public one. This construction is not wholly successful nor omnipotent, yet it has proved resistant to both its inherent contradictions and a number of concerted challenges. The power of a discourse of a feminine domestic realm is illustrated in the notion of the normative family which originates in part in white, Victorian, middle and upper class definitions of femininity. This incorporated the concept of the feminine-domestic ideal which gave women a particular moral status, although it was not open to all women. The discussion in this

chapter concludes the outline of the theoretical concepts which underpin the particular form of Third Wave Feminist Analysis practised in this thesis. In the subsequent three chapters, I offer case studies of Third Wave explorations of texts in order to illustrate the usefulness of such an approach for feminism.

Footnotes

[1] Skeggs, in turn, formulates her concept of capital by drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

[2] Again this distinguishes my position from Skeggs's who argues that there are four types of capital: the three that I cite, economic, cultural and social capital; plus "symbolic capital" (Skeggs, 1997: 8). Skeggs argues that the three former types of capital become transformed into symbolic capital once they are legitimated. After legitimisation they can then be capitalised upon. However, since I need to retain a concept of the three distinct types of capital, I prefer to continue to refer to these as economic, cultural and social capital and to suggest that these can be found in both legitimated and unlegitimated forms.

[3] Although it does not include forms of capital which are not monetary, such as houses, since, for Bourdieu, these are defined as cultural goods, a sub-category of cultural capital.

[4] "Blackfacers" is the term applied to Japanese people who, as part of their attempts to emulate certain forms of Black American culture, "darken their skin with ultraviolet rays" (Wood, 1998: 43).

[5] She distinguishes this tactical use from a strategic one since, unlike tactics, strategies, "have institutional positioning and are able to conceal their connections with power.... strategy is organised by the postulation of power" (Skeggs, 1997: 10).

[6] Although it is possible that those women who have the least power may feel that they need to tactically deploy femininity more often than women who have more power feel that they need to do so.

[7] Lister's social contract perspective sees rights and responsibilities as playing a part within the contract, without the two being inextricably linked. This enables her to argue that those who are unable to fulfil their civic responsibilities, for example because of domestic responsibilities, can still be afforded rights and be enabled to exercise them.

[8] Here, Andrew is referring to contemporary, Western, industrialised societies. This division may operate differently in other cultures, see, for example, Daphne Spain's *Gendered Spaces* (1992).

[9] Jayne Ifekwunigwe (1999) makes a similar point, including in her discussions of the "one drop rule" which dictates that a person with *any* black ancestors is deemed to be black and, thus, their white ancestors become written out of their history. Explorations in novel form of what it means to be a member of a 'mixed race' family can be found, for instance, in *Chapati & Chips* by Almas Kahn (Springboard, Castleford, 1993) and *The Girl With Brains In Her Feet* by Jo Hodges (Virago, London, 1998). For a poetic exploration of the same theme see *The Adoption Papers* by Jackie Kay (Bloodaxe Books Limited, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, 1992).

[10] For a further discussion of the sexualisation of the public sphere for women see also, for example, Foucault's (1972) *History of Sexuality*, Volume 1.

Part II

Third Wave Feminist Analysis in Practice

Chapter 5: Case Study One: *A Thousand Acres*.

Introduction

So far, I have argued that a Third Wave Feminist Analysis is a set of strategies used to explore texts, which is based on a form of feminist discourse theory. This form of analysis focuses on gender, without overlooking other variables, to uncover the different levels of sexism in texts. One way in which this is achieved is by a consideration of context, which involves an awareness: that cultural knowledge is needed to find a text's preferred reading[1]; that additional social practices collude with sexist and other oppressive utterances; that feminism has been instrumental in uncovering sexism but, possibly, also inhibited the articulation of some more overt expressions of sexism. This consideration of context also facilitates an awareness of material oppression which is, moreover, understood as multi-determined and, so, best recognised through the analysis of a range of types of texts. In uncovering sexism in such diverse forms, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis retains a feminist perspective by drawing on and developing earlier feminist theory, sometimes from disciplines other than literary criticism.

However, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis understands that not only language but, also, other forms convey meaning and argues that the articulation of discourses, in whatever form, shapes (and is itself shaped by), rather than simply reflects, reality. Thus, it conceptualises discourses as powerful and, moreover, locates that power in a capacity for both repression *and* production. However, it does not necessarily situate this power in individuals, or group of individuals, although it acknowledges both that these may wield power and that they may benefit from the operations of discourses. Rather, in general, it understands power as being exercised through the process in which discourses constitute subjects. In other words, the potential of discourses is manifest by their influence on individuals. I have already explained that a Third Wave Feminist Analysis understands that, whilst meanings might be encoded into texts, however problematic the notion of encoding is, readers may not always be able to interpret these in the 'preferred' way. Moreover, coded meanings can be resisted and, thus, the reader, as well as the text, contributes to the creation of meaning. Hence, meaning is never

fixed but always plural and changeable. Additionally, this notion of a resisting reader acknowledges that, although discourses exert power over individuals, individuals can exercise power, too. They can manifest power by declining to take up discourses, whether this decision is taken wittingly or unwittingly. Conversely, they can manifest power by taking up discourses and, again, this may be done consciously or unconsciously. Additionally, in some instances, they may use them as a type of capital to be deployed tactically in order to achieve another form of capital. However, the outcomes of either of these two steps are uncertain and can be either beneficial or disadvantageous.

Additionally, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis deconstructs binary polarities, considers texts' absences and omissions and interrogates received wisdoms or conventional interpretations to challenge 'truths' and 'knowledge'. It conceptualises discourses as distinct events and, therefore, both anticipates and accepts a lack of clarity and cohesion between them. In other words, it understands that discourses are often contradictory. Yet, it also incorporates the possibility of a degree of systematicity both between discourses and in their effects. Additionally, it understands that discourses are not equally powerful and explains the dominant discourses as those which normalise certain states or roles. Although, within a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, discourses are not conceptualised as having a physical existence, they are understood as having a material impact, including on the body: through a temporary marker on the outside of the body; or through a longer lasting change to the physique or the psyche. Thus, the body is configured as a substantial corpus, not in the sense that it is a fixed entity but, rather, in the sense that is a site of potential, in process, fluid and multiple. Similarly, subjectivity is conceptualised as fractured, in the process of being discursively produced. However, this description of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis should not be understood as entirely prescriptive; the analyst's judgment always needs to be used in order to decide which aspects are more or less relevant and, by way of illustration of how this approach works in practice, I now offer my own Third Wave Feminist Analyses of two novels from the 1990s; *A Thousand Acres* (Smiley, 1992),

which I explore in this chapter and *The Rector's Wife* (Trollope, 1991), which I explore in the next chapter. However, firstly, I explain why I decided to produce an analysis of these two particular books.

The Rationale Behind the Choice of Texts

In many ways, this choice of texts can be argued as being random, since it is not possible to justify privileging these two books over all of the novels ever written, or indeed any other art or cultural products, particularly as within the materialist approach to texts that I advocate, *all* works of art are considered as potentially a force for change or part of the cultural force I am analysing.[2] However, the choice can be justified. Both novels are by female authors and center on female protagonists and, moreover, *The Rector's Wife*, as an Aga-Saga, belongs to a genre which is specifically written with a female audience in mind (see Philips 1996).[3] Therefore, their exploration fits within the tradition of feminist literary criticism in which I have situated my own work (see Chapter 1). However, by analysing these two texts alongside each other, I avoid one of the problems of gynocriticism, that is, establishing an alternative 'high art' female canon, since, although *A Thousand Acres* is a canonical work (having been awarded The Pulitzer Prize), and although both *A Thousand Acres* and *The Rector's Wife* contain literary allusions (a point to which I return shortly), *The Rector's Wife* is a popular, or 'low', cultural form. Although Philips suggests that the Aga-Saga, unlike other women's genres, such as Mills & Boon romances, "has achieved a measure of literary respectability" as indicated, for example, by its discussion in the literature sections of the Sunday broadsheets, this does not mean that the Aga-Saga is conceived as 'high' art, since, as Philips is careful to acknowledge, it has only achieved a *measure* of literary respectability (Philips, 1996: 49). Moreover, as Mills observes, the jokey, rhyming nickname has a dismissive or disparaging tone which denies suggestions of a serious engagement with the form (Mills, Pers. Comm., 1998).

Yet, whilst *The Rector's Wife* is a popular, rather than a 'literary' novel, both this Aga-Saga and *A Thousand Acres* allude to earlier literary, that is, canonical, works.

The former draws on Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857), whilst the latter re-works Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1605). Both contemporary novels appropriate the plot-lines of these earlier works and re-write them, avoiding their mainly masculinist perspective and offering a gynocentric and, in some ways, feminist, one instead and this is another important reason why I wanted to explore these texts here.[4] *Madame Bovary* is centered on a female protagonist and the eponymous heroine is portrayed sympathetically, to the extent that she is represented as being stifled in a claustrophobic marriage and that the text allows her a type of escape, in the form of an adulterous affair. However, this understanding portrayal is undercut somewhat both by the tone, which is, as Drabble suggests, "impersonal"; and the dénouement, Anna Bovary's suicide, which seems to suggest that there is no possibility of life outside of the confines of marriage for a 'respectable' woman of the period (Drabble, 1985: 353). In *King Lear*, whilst Cordelia, Lear's youngest daughter, is presented as loyal, honest and loving, the play's focus is very much on the eponymous hero, who is present on stage for most of the play and who is represented as, "a man more sinned against than sinning" (III, iii, 59-60). Moreover, Goneril and Regan, his two older daughters, are characterised as manipulative, avaricious and sexually incontinent; in summary, as "unnatural" (II, iv, 276). Additionally, at times, it is Goneril and Regan who are portrayed as responsible for driving their father mad (for example, see II, iv, 282-4). Both Trollope and Smiley re-work these largely negative representations of femininity and a Third Wave Feminist Analysis of both novels is concerned with the way this is achieved. I do not simply celebrate these works and, thus, provide a homogeneous model of femininity, as gynocriticism has so often done (see, for example, Showalter (1977) discussed on p.18 above). I also note the ways in which these texts, too, provide sexist conceptualisations of 'the feminine'. This not only affords a more complex picture of discursive constructions of female characters but also indicates how these texts are implicated in sexism, thus assisting one of the aims of Third Wave Feminist Analysis: countering sexism.

A Third Wave Feminist Analysis of *A Thousand Acres*

As the title suggests, the story of *A Thousand Acres* is set on a farm. The family structure of the main protagonists remains the same as in *King Lear*; a father and three daughters, the elder two of whom form an alliance. As in Shakespeare's play, these family members are all white, able-bodied and heterosexual. Briefly, the story is that Larry, an American farmer, decides to transfer ownership of his thousand acres of land to his three daughters, Ginny, Rose and Caroline. Ginny and Rose, who live on the farm, although in separate households from both Larry and each other, agree to the transfer. Caroline, a lawyer who has moved away from the family farm, questions the wisdom of the transfer and consequently finds herself excluded from it. After ownership of the land is passed to Ginny and Rose, it becomes apparent that Larry is experiencing mental health difficulties. After a confrontation with his two eldest daughters, he leaves the farm and moves in with a fellow farmer, Harold Clark. [5] Later Caroline and Larry are reconciled and she takes him to live with her. Caroline, hoping to regain the land for Larry, then brings a court case claiming mismanagement of the farm against Ginny and Rose and Ginny's husband, Ty. [6] Caroline's attempt is unsuccessful but the court case results in bankruptcy for Ginny and Rose and the farm is sold. In the interim between the courtcase and the enforced sale, Ginny has attempted to murder Rose for having an affair with Jess, whom Ginny had previously slept with. She has also left Ty and the farm to take up paid employment as a waitress. At the novel's end, Rose dies of cancer and Ginny becomes guardian to Rose's two daughters, Pammy and Linda. [7]

Reinforcing Anachronistic Discourses

In a number of ways, *A Thousand Acres* both draws on and contributes to anachronistic discourses which associate masculinity with the public world and femininity with the private realm of the family and the domestic. Therefore, I begin this analysis by identifying a number of ways in which this contribution occurs. However, some elements of the text which slightly modify this assertion are also discussed and, later in this section, in the sub-section "Undermining Anachronistic Discourses", I consider the

ways in which *A Thousand Acres* significantly counters such discourses, for example, by problematising the notion of a public/private polarity.

One of the main ways in which the novel articulates discourses of a masculine public world and a feminine private world, is through the stereotypical gender roles assigned to most of the characters in the book. As I noted in Chapter 4, women and girls in medieval societies had always worked and this work involved undertaking a range of tasks outside of the interior of the home (see Anderson and Zinsser, 1990). However, despite the fact that *A Thousand Acres* is set in an agricultural microcosm of the contemporary world, a microcosm that, in many ways, more closely resembles a feudal world than a capitalist one, and, despite the fact that the novel is, in essence, a re-working of *King Lear*, which was written in the seventeenth century and based on an early Irish and British legend (see Room, 1999), the division of labour does not replicate the divisions found in feudal societies. Rather, the paradigm is analogous to the capitalist division which is rooted in middle-class Victorian society and which associated work outside of the home with masculinity and domestic responsibility with femininity (see Chapter 4 above). For example, the day-to-day farm work is undertaken by the male characters and Ginny and Rose only work on the farm in exceptional circumstances, such as harvest-time. Ginny and Rose are positioned as "farmwives", meaning that they take responsibility for the houses and gardens on the farm and for catering to the needs of the farmers (Smiley, 1992: 120). Much of Ginny's and Rose's time is dedicated to domestic routines which are both daily and annual. So, for example, Ginny describes how, "I took down the curtains, the way I did *every* fall... and washed and bleached and ironed them" (Smiley, 1992: 285, emphasis added). The need for this ritual is naturalised, since Rose, too, performs a similar "spring-clean" on her own house and she and Ginny together spring-clean their father's house every year (Smiley, 1992: 227 and 225). This annual ritual is feminised since neither Larry, Ty nor Pete spring-clean. This association of femininity with the domestic is further naturalised in two main ways. Firstly, it is seen as inevitable that Ginny and Rose will

care for Caroline, then aged six, when their mother died, "[m]y father... simply declared that Rose and I were old enough to care for our sister, and that was that"; we,

> devote[d] ourselves to the aspects of child raising that we knew best - sewing dresses and doll clothes, baking cookies, reading books aloud, enforcing rules about keeping clean, eating properly, going to bed at a set time, saying 'ma'am' to ladies and 'sir' to Daddy and other men, and doing homework (Smiley, 1992: 63-4).

Ginny and Rose have gained this knowledge from observing their mother who, in turn, had gained her knowledge from watching their female neighbours (Smiley, 1992: 223). Secondly, the domestic is feminised by the way in which their mother is conflated with the house which, "belonged in every particular to her - [in] that she was responsible for it, but also [in] that damaging it was equal to damaging her" (Smiley, 1992: 224).

Since Caroline works as a lawyer, it could be argued that her presence in the novel mitigates against the suggestion that *A Thousand Acres* contributes to discourses of a wholly masculinised public world and a feminised private world. However, any potential mitigation is subverted by other aspects of the book. Firstly, although there are repeated references to Caroline's work as a lawyer, she is never actually depicted *at* work, in contrast to the many occasions in which Rose and Ginny are represented working as "farmwives". The only time we see Caroline in court is when she is a plaintiff. However, not only is her case unsuccessful, but also it becomes clear that she has misunderstood the basis on which the case must be fought. For example, when she is giving evidence the judge upbraids her, "'The mismanagement or abuse clause in the preincorporation agreement that is the occasion for this suit refers... to the farm properties only. You may not introduce the subject of your father and his relation to your sisters" (Smiley, 1992: 324). Additionally, in his summing up, the judge suggests that bringing the case, "may have constituted a frivolous misuse of this court, and Mr. Rasmussen [Caroline's husband] and Ms. Cook, in particular, should have bethought

themselves before they decided to carry a family fracas this far" (Smiley, 1992: 326). Therefore, the suggestion is that, at best, Caroline has shown poor legal judgement in this particular case; at worst, she may be a poor lawyer. Secondly, Caroline is positioned as aberrant within her home community. Rose tells Ginny, "'I remember when she was all of about five years old... and Caroline... said right out, 'When I grow up, I'm not going to be a farmwife.' So Mommy laughed and asked her what she was going to be, and she said, 'A farmer'" (Smiley, 1992: 61). Ginny makes no comment on this anecdote; she simply laughs, as did her mother originally. Thus, Caroline's ambition is seen as ludicrous, since women becoming "farmwives", and only "farmwives", is the norm in the world of *A Thousand Acres*. Thus, the context of the story is a location where anachronistic discourses of femininity and domesticity have continued to dominate. More recent conflicting feminist discourses do not figure, although, as I will argue later, the construction of some of the female characters and the position adopted by the text have been shaped by feminism.

The final way in which Caroline's position in the public world of paid employment is subverted is by the reaction she is afforded by the other characters who do not take her seriously in her role of lawyer. Early in the novel Ginny relates the meeting between Caroline and Jess,

> Caroline shook hands with Jess in her brisk, lawyer's way that Rose always called her 'take-me-seriously-or -I'll-sue-you' demeanour... she was young for a lawyer. I tried hard, for her sake, not to be amused by her, but I could see, right then, that Jess Clark was a little amused, too (Smiley, 1992: 13).

Thus, Ginny, Rose and Jess are all amused by the idea of Caroline as a lawyer and respond as if she is a child playing at a grown-up role. Her immaturity is heightened by the juxtaposition of the above extract with a description of Jess as, "sophisticated and self-assured" (ibid.). Her inept handling of the court case suggests that their assessment of her is correct: they are therefore established as having a higher "truth status" than

Caroline. As I argued earlier, authority can be assigned to not only the narrative voice but also different characters within a novel (see p.64 above). Here, authority is assigned to Ginny, Rose and Jess who are all positioned as adults; whilst authority is denied Caroline who is positioned as a child. Moreover, Jess's authority is reinforced by his possession of 'sophistication' and 'self-assurance'; whilst Caroline's authority is further undermined by her ineptness. It is their authority which assigns a high truth status to Ginny, Rose and Jess and Caroline's lack of authority which allocates her a low truth status; the reader can trust their judgement over Caroline's and, thus, she is further undermined.

A second factor which might be seen to mitigate against the suggestion that *A Thousand Acres* contributes to a masculinisation of the public world and a feminisation of the private world is that the male characters are depicted completing domestic tasks. For example, Ginny remarks that Larry, "needed little help with his domestic routine. The dishes from his dinner were already rinsed and in the dish drainer. The counters were wiped and the floor swept. In fact, he had always been a living example of the maxim, 'Clean as you go'" (Smiley, 1992: 66). However, this observation is preceded by the words, "[b]ut apart from cooking, clothes washing and major housecleaning" and this modifies this description of Larry's domesticity in a significant way, since the beginning of the extract actually reads, "[b]ut apart from cooking, clothes washing and major housecleaning, Larry needed little help with his domestic routine" (ibid.). In other words, Larry is represented as somebody who can complete minor, relatively quick to do, unskilled tasks (putting plates into a dishwasher, for example) but only if somebody else has completed the more demanding and more time consuming tasks needed to keep the household in order and to facilitate the completion of the less demanding jobs. Similarly, whilst Ginny can characterise Ty as, "an orderly man" who throws, "his socks and underwear in the hamper, his work clothes in the work clothes bin", Ty does not then wash, air and iron these clothes; such tasks fall to Ginny (Smiley, 1992: 257). Furthermore, this is again, within Ginny's terms, seen as natural, since Ty's putting of his own dirty clothes in the laundry hamper (but then not washing

them) is presented as all, or possibly more, than could be expected of him; appended to Ginny's observation that Ty is, "an orderly man" is the comment, "I'd never had any complaints about that" (ibid.).

So far, I have suggested that there are a number of processes at play in *A Thousand Acres* which draw on anachronistic discourses to naturalise the feminisation of the domestic domain: farm work is undertaken by the male characters and housework by the female characters, with only limited domestic duties undertaken by the men; furthermore, these gendered roles are naturalised; and this naturalisation is reinforced as Caroline's professionalism is undermined. I now suggest that *A Thousand Acres* further draws on and contributes to anachronistic discourses of feminised domesticity, since it draws on notions which are akin to Victorian concepts that associate a certain kind of femininity with respectability. As I argued in Chapter 4, the achievement of the 'domestic ideal' signified a woman's superiority over other women who failed to achieve it (see p.125 above). This anachronistic discourse is evident in *A Thousand Acres*, since it is the female characters who undertake responsibility for the respectability of their families. Moreover, this respectability is seen as inextricably connected with appearances. [8]

Elsewhere in the novel, appearances are seen as of fundamental importance. For example, Ginny alludes to "[t]he paramount value of looking right"; and Rose surveys her family checking that they appear, "'Respectable to the core'" (Smiley, 1992: 199 and 213). The importance of appearing respectable for both the male and the female characters is most marked in the period leading up to the courtcase. Mr. Cartier, Ginny's and Rose's lawyer, explains that Caroline's lawyer will be unable to prove the claim of abuse and will be unlikely to be able to prove the claim of mismanagement. Despite this, he advises Ty and Pete, "'you've got to farm like model farmers until the court date. That means working together yourselves, finding help, and getting the harvest in in good time'"; whilst he advises Ginny and Rose, "'[a]nd you ladies, you wear dresses every day, and keep the lawn mowed and the porch swept.'" (Smiley,

1992: 284). The gendered roles here, which associate male respectability with the satisfactory completion of work routines and female respectability with domestic routines, draw on discourses of feminine respectability as only able to occur within the home (see p.126 above). There is a further gender difference: whilst the male characters can achieve respectability though work, the female characters need to take an additional step and mark their respectability on their bodies in the form of clothing. Although Mr. Cartier acknowledges that his latter piece of advice is a joke, "in part", he then suggests that it is, in fact, a serious piece of advice to be ignored only at the cost of severe material consequences, saying, "'appearances are everything with a clause like this. If I have to, I'll call some of your neighbours to attest to your skills, and their lawyer will call neighbours to attest to your mistakes. If you look good they won't be able to touch you'" (ibid.). Furthermore, when Rose exclaims, "'This is ridiculous'" he responds, "'[i]t's millions of dollars... Millions of dollars is never ridiculous'" (ibid.). Cartier's advice is validated to the extent that Ginny does follow it and, of course, they do win the courtcase. No connections are made between this success and the characters' whiteness. Yet, by drawing on my earlier discussion of Black female respectability, it is possible to argue that the fact that these characters are all white means that the text can afford them an easy access into respectability (see pp.125-6 above).

However, whereas following Cartier's advice does contribute to Rose's, Ginny's and Ty's courtroom victory, the wisdom of this advice is brought into question when Ginny takes following it to extremes and appears to be suffering from a compulsive behaviour disorder,

> [o]nce you made a good appearance your goal, you could... spend an hour or two vacuuming the tops of the floor mouldings in the house with an attachment you'd never used before, then go back over what you'd done with a sponge dampened in ammonia, then again with furniture polish... The grass could be edged and trimmed and raked and rolled for the great open invisible eye of The Neighbours to judge and enjoy... There could be no limit to your schedule. Even though you

had washed the supper dishes as you were cooking, you could jump up from the table when a serving dish got emptied and wash it and dry it and put it away before finishing your beans. You could follow your husband from the door to the sink, and sweep the dust from his boots into the dustpan and throw it away before he had finished washing his hands, and then you could take the towel he had dried them with and run it downstairs to the washing machine while he was sitting down to his food... That Eye was always looking, day and night, even when there were no neighbours in sight (Smiley, 1992: 285-6).

The extreme nature of Ginny's new domestic routine is signalled by a number of factors, including the statement, towards the middle of this extract, that, "[t]here could be no limit to your schedule". This sense of an infinite job is reinforced by a number of other elements, including the length of time spent on tasks, "an hour or two vacuuming the tops of the floor mouldings", and the other unnecessary measures taken to ensure total cleanliness: once the floor mouldings have been vacuumed for an hour or two, they then can be cleaned twice more, once, "with a sponge dampened in ammonia, then again with furniture polish". The extremity is also signalled by the juxtaposition of a large number of verbs, for example, in the description of the grass which, "could be edged and trimmed and raked and rolled". The regular rhythmic beat and the alliteration on "r" reinforce the suggestion of both repetitive routine and inevitability. Similarly, in "you could jump up from the table when a serving dish got emptied and wash it and dry it and put it away before finishing your beans" Ginny's activity is described by a number of material action processes positioned in close proximity, "jump... wash... dry..." and so on. The sense of bustling activity is heightened, since these tasks are not only important but, also, urgent and must be completed without delay, "before finishing your beans" and "before he had finished washing his hands".

Although Ginny's domestic routines here are presented as excessive and extreme, as a mental health problem in the form of a compulsive disorder, yet in some ways this obsession is naturalised. Firstly, the above extract is preceded by the

observation that, "I was so remarkably comfortable with the discipline of making a good appearance" (Smiley, 1992: 286). This can be interpreted as essentialising Ginny's compulsive disorder: she is presented as comfortably, 'naturally', able to pursue these routines. Moreover, its excessive and compulsive nature is both masked and contained by the use of the word, "discipline" which suggests self-control and self-regulation, even though these are clearly absent from Ginny's behaviour (see Foucault, 1979).[9] Secondly, this behaviour is naturalised by the use of the inclusive pronoun "you". This may be read as not the second person pronoun but the, "indefinite pronoun... anyone" and, thus, may also be read as a form of direct address to the reader (Allen and Schwarz, 1998: 1944). Within the latter interpretation, "you" stretches beyond the text to implicate the reader in this behaviour. However, this should not be read as implicating all readers. A knowledge of heterosexual, gender stereotypes suggests that "you" is directed to a female reader. Moreover, the domestic realm has persistently been associated with femininity throughout the book. The implication is, therefore, that such an obsessive cleaning routine could be embraced quite 'naturally' by all female readers of the text. This implication is reinforced when Rose's main response to Pete's death is to clean, albeit with an ironic awareness of the humorous interpretations of this reaction: "'You should see the kitchen cabinets. I wiped all the jars with soapy water and put down new shelf paper. Edged in black for widows'" (Smiley, 1992: 296). Not only is Ginny's completion of obsessive housework here naturalised, but, also, the amount of work this involves her in is denied, as is apparent from a consideration of the passage's use of transitivity. The material action process "emptied" is preceded by "got" in the phrase "the dish got emptied". Here the affected is the dish. Since this phrase is in the passive form, there is no agent and the dish is both the subject and the affected. In focusing attention on the affected, the agent is omitted from this formulation (see p.64 ff. above). Thus, Ginny's work in emptying the dish is overlooked; it is as if the dish emptied itself.

The final main way in which the public/private dichotomy is gendered in *A Thousand Acres* is in the representations of ownership of land. Prior to the time when

Larry transfers ownership of his farm to Ginny and Rose, farmland is mainly presented as rightly belonging to the male characters. Early in the novel, Ginny relates the history of the farm. Although she describes it initially as having been bought by both of her great-grandparents, Sam and Arabella, in 1890, by the time she relates the expansion of the farm in the 1930s, ownership has slipped to the men in the family; "my father and grandfather added two more pieces [of land]" (Smiley, 1992: 23). Moreover, ownership clearly rests with Larry in the early sections of the book, since it is his to transfer over to his daughters. Evidently, this transfer troubles the suggestion that land-ownership is masculinised, since the farm is passed over to Ginny and Rose.

However, this transfer is depicted as a mistake in a number of ways. Firstly, although it is not clear whether Larry was experiencing mental health difficulties before he gave up the farm or whether his insanity occurs as a result of giving up the farm, either way, giving away ownership of the land to women becomes associated with madness in *A Thousand Acres*: either Larry was mad to do it or doing it drove him mad. Secondly, Ty explicitly comments that the transfer was a mistake, "'[f]or years it was right and we prospered and we got along... Then Rose got selfish and you went along with her, and then it was all wrong" (Smiley, 1992: 342). Although Ginny passionately disagrees and offers an alternative interpretation, this alternative perspective is not necessarily supported by other elements of the text. Ginny's view, as expressed to Ty, is,

> 'I can remember when I saw it all your way! The proud progress from Grandpa Davis to Grandpa Cook to Daddy. When 'we' bought the first tractor in the county, when 'we' built the big house, when 'we' had the crops sprayed from the air, when 'we' got a car, when 'we' drained Mel's corner, when 'we' got a hundred and seventy-two bushels an acre... But then I saw what my part really was. Rose showed me... You see this grand history, but I see blows. I see taking what you want because you want it, then making up something that justifies what you did. I see others getting to pay the price, then covering up and forgetting what the price

was. Do I think Daddy came up with beating us and fucking us on his own? ...No, I think he had lessons, and those lessons were part of the package, along with the land and the lust to run things exactly the way he wanted to no matter what, poisoning the water and destroying the topsoil and buying bigger and bigger machinery, and then feeling certain that all of it was 'right', as you say' (Smiley, 1992: 342-3).

Ginny exposes what she sees as the price of male landownership, a price which is presented as inevitable; child abuse is inextricably interwoven with owning land and the power that this affords, since "beating" and "fucking" children are "part of the package".

Yet, despite this powerful counter-argument to male landownership, it is also possible to identify ways in which the text also suggests that femininity and landownership are incompatible. Ultimately, Rose and Ginny are responsible for losing ownership of the farm which has been in their family for approximately a hundred years. Additionally, Caroline has contributed to the reasons for the loss by bringing the courtcase against her sisters. This seems to imply that, whereas the male members of the family held the land in custody, passing it on from one generation to the next over an extended period of time, once the female members of the family had sole custody of the land they proved themselves unable to retain it. This may suggest that Rose's bitter assessment of her and Ginny's position on the farm is valid. She tells Ginny, "[y]ou were as much his [Larry's] as I was. There was no reason for him to assert his possession of me more than his possession of you. We were just his, to do with as he pleased, like the pond or the houses or the hogs or the crops" (Smiley, 1992: 191). Although this is framed in the past tense, by the end of the book when the farm is lost, it seems to have retained current validity: since Ginny and Rose cannot be successful owners of the farm, perhaps they are implicitly positioned as being in the category of the *owned*, part of the goods and chattels of the farm. Thus, just as Ginny was positioned as having no agency in the emptying of the dinner dish, so, too, are Ginny

and Rose here positioned as lacking agency. The final way in which *A Thousand Acres* appears to support male landownership over female landownership, despite the caveats noted above, is that although the text manifests considerable ambivalence about male landownership, as I have shown, it does validate this in some ways; female landownership is not validated in any way.

Undermining Anachronistic Discourses

So far in this section, I have argued that *A Thousand Acres* both relies on and reinforces anachronistic discourses which masculinise the public domain and feminise the private realm. However, I have also noted a number of points which modify this argument although these modifications, too, have been qualified. The public/private dichotomy is undermined by Caroline's job as a lawyer, but this subversion is of limited value, since Caroline has a low truth status in the novel. It is further undermined because the male characters do undertake some domestic tasks, but this is not a fundamental challenge to gendered roles as they only complete minor household chores. Moreover, the main female characters are awarded land-ownership, however, they are unable to retain this. Additionally, Ginny's attempts to achieve domestic respectability result in mental health problems. I now further modify this argument, that is that *A Thousand Acres* draws on and strengthens anachronistic discourses, by noting the ways in which this novel simultaneously challenges the public/private dichotomy that I have identified that it bolsters. Smiley's novel challenges this binarism through the conflation of 'public' and domestic work and this conflation occurs in three main ways. Firstly, since the work conducted by the main male characters is farmwork, their place of work is also their home; there is no significant physical distinction between the two places. Secondly, this work is often described in terms that are also associated with the domestic realm. So, for instance, Ty performs "bedtime checks" of the farm; Larry and Pete are described, "cleaning and oiling the combine" and Larry's work routines are analogous to Ginny's and Rose's spring cleans: he, "so organised his work that the drainage-well catchment basins were cleaned out every spring and the grates were painted black every two years" (Smiley, 1992: 75, 169 and 45). Finally, the

differences between farm work and domestic work are minimised by direct comparisons such as, "just as farmers love new, more efficient equipment, farmwives are real connoisseurs of household appliances" (Smiley, 1992: 120).

The second significant way in which the public/private binarism is challenged is by Rose's bringing the 'private' matter of her and Ginny's repeated rapes by their father into the public domain; as Ty, explains, "'She told me. She's told everybody'" (Smiley, 1992: 340). Slightly earlier in the novel Rose implicitly explains her reasons for disseminating this information,

> the thing is, he's respected. Others of them like him and look up to him. He fits right in. However many of them have fucked their daughters or their stepdaughters or their nieces or not, the fact is that they all accept beating as a way of life. We have two choices when we think about that. Either they don't know the real him and we do, or else they do know the real him and the fact that he beat us and fucked us doesn't matter... This person who beats and fucks his own daughters can go out into the community and get respect and power, and take it for granted that he deserves it (Smiley, 1992: 302).

Not only has Rose made the private public by discussing the 'domestic' issues of incest and child-abuse but also she has reconfigured them as societal problems: "beating" and "fucking" daughters does not only happen in isolated homes but is known about and tolerated across all spectrums of the community in which the book is set. The public world is, thereby, implicated in this private matter and Rose's speech can be seen as arising from feminist discourses which have challenged the public/private polarity (see p.120 ff. above).

In response to Rose publicising the incest and abuse, Ty remarks to Ginny, "'I think people should keep private things private'" (ibid.). However, his position is not supported by the text. He has a low truth status due to a lack of authority which is

suggested by his manner of delivery which implies that he is being irrational, "[h]is voice was rising as if he could barely contain himself" (ibid.). Furthermore, although Ginny understands his perspective, "I recognised how all these things sorted themselves in his mind", she resists being positioned in the same way, even implicitly; "we could never see them [all these things] in the same way... [and] so I didn't nod" (ibid.). Additionally, the language used by Rose seems to suggest that the text is advocating her perspective. She has a high truth status in this extract and gains authority from the repetition of the phrase "the fact" and from the fluent, insistent pace of the speech. Moreover, the passage's use of "fuck" has a strong impact. It has a shocking effect, not only because the word is taboo but also because it is applied to "daughters... step-daughters... (and) nieces" who are positioned as victims, since they are without agency in the process. Moreover, dominant discourses of femininity and language construct femininity and swearing as mutually exclusive. For example, the influential linguist, Robin Lakoff (1975), suggests that women are more likely than men to use 'mild' expletives, such as *darn*; whereas men are be more likely than women to use 'stronger' expletives such as *damn* or *shit*. More recently, other commentators have accepted this assertion that women feel a need to 'cleanse' their language and attempted to explain it by recourse to notions of social expectations and constraints.[10] For example, Kramarae and Treichler note that, "[f]uck is more taboo for women than it is for men, even when women use it to describe what has happened to them" (Kramarae and Treichler, 1992: 171).[11] Additionally, Jane Mills argues that the expression, *to swear like a fishwife*, indicates the extent to which, "speech is integrated into a basic notion of femininity" (J.Mills, 1991: 90). She suggests that femininity, "functions as a strong mechanism of social control", influencing women to be, "'nice' and 'ladylike'" and to, "carefully monitor their language and behaviour" (ibid.). This suggestion is to some extent supported by the circulation of the popular expression, "It's not ladylike to swear" and by the work of Sara Mills who contends that femininity may act as a, "constraint" (S.Mills, 1992(a): 13).[12] Thus, gendered discourses of language use also mean that Rose using "fuck" here is shocking.

The shocking effect of this extract is heightened by the juxtaposition of the taboo words and subject matter, uttered by a female character, with words and phrases to do with acceptance and assimilation: "respected"; "like"; "look up to"; "fits right in"; "accept"; "respect"; "power"; and "deserves". This use of language is all the more remarkable, since elsewhere in the book the language is, generally, restrained, even understated. For example, Pete's death is related in the following way, "he drove his own silver truck into the quarry and drowned, and nobody knew whether it was an accident" (Smiley, 1992: 286). It is a bald relation of events with little adornment: the only superfluous word is "silver", applied to his truck. It is bereft of emotion and contrasts dramatically with the passion and vehemence in Rose's language in the above passage.

The third main way in which the private/public binarism is subverted is in the representations of Ginny's work, both paid and unpaid. When Ginny takes a job it is as a waitress: this resembles the role which she had previously, on an unpaid basis, in the home and, thus, the divisions between public/private, work/home, paid/unpaid are blurred. Ty notices this when he visits Ginny at work. She tells him, "'Have the blueberry pancakes and the sausage. That's the best. I'll bring a pot of coffee'" and he replies, "'Funny how we fall into this pattern'" (Smiley, 1992: 338). However, this pattern of Ginny being the caterer is not only evident in her relationships with Ty; it is also marked in her dealings with her father. For example, Larry eats at Ginny's every Tuesday. However, he treats these occasions less like a family meal and more like a visit to a restaurant, "[h]e expected to come in at five and sit right down to the table. When he was finished, he drank a cup of coffee and went home" (Smiley, 1992: 48). Since it is Ginny who cooks and serves the food, Larry's behaviour positions her as a professional caterer. Indeed, this is acknowledged by Ginny when she observes, "My *job* remained what it had always been - to give him what he asked of me, and if he showed discontent, to try to find out what would please him" (Smiley, 1992: 115, emphasis added).

The final main way in which the public/private binarism is challenged in *A Thousand Acres* is by the ways in which it reveals that the public world of industry can impact on the private lives of individuals. Ginny has had five miscarriages and, until Jess arrives, had assumed that these were due to 'natural' causes. However, Jess explains that the miscarriages are likely to have been caused by nitrates in the agrochemicals seeping into the well water which supplies the farm. Moreover, Ginny notes that they will remain in her body long after the miscarriages they caused are over, "[l]odged in my every cell, along with DNA, are molecules of topsoil and atrazine and paraquat and anhydrous and ammonia and diesel fuel and plant dust, and also molecules of memory" (Smiley, 1992: 370). This is an example of the damage that can occur when discourses become embodied. Discourses of capitalism, which often privilege profit over individuals and the environment, have had a material impact on the character Ginny's body, changing its chemistry and causing her to miscarry.[13]

However, *A Thousand Acres* does not only challenge the public/private binarism by revealing that these two are not as separate as many discourses imply; it also challenges the gendering of the binarism and this is achieved mainly through a process of de-naturalising the feminisation of the domestic role. Domestic work is presented as unrewarding and futile: in spite of Ginny's compulsive cleaning, there remain, "stains that simply didn't respond to the products available for removing them. Shit, blood, oil, and grease eventually held sway in spite of the most industrious efforts" (Smiley, 1992: 328). Additionally, domestic work is dehumanised; Ginny observes, "I started one load of wash and took another outside and began to hang it on the clothes line. *I was a good machine*" (Smiley, 1992: 263, emphasis added). Finally, the undervaluing of domestic work is made explicit; on a visit to an antiques shop Ginny looks at some antimacassars, "[t]he most expensive one in the stack was six dollars, an elaborate pineapple design done in the finest thread. I held it up, imagining the work that had gone into it. Six dollars. It made me sad" (Smiley, 1992: 270).

Conclusion

In summary, *A Thousand Acres* contributes to the production of what we understand as femininity in a range of complex, even contradictory, ways. Most of the characters are assigned gender stereotyped roles and their assumption of these is naturalised. Furthermore, these roles draw on long established, even anachronistic, discourses of femininity in a way which can be interpreted as implying an inevitability to the continuing association of femininity with the domestic realm. The only female character who is allocated an *a*typical role, Caroline, is represented as inept and unprofessional in that role. Yet, this normalisation of the feminine-domestic ideal is troubled in a number of significant ways: the public/private polarity is deconstructed by the conflation of these two supposed opposites; the attempt to comply with the feminine-domestic ideal leads to Ginny experiencing mental health problems; and the 'private' realm of the home is the site of rape and other forms of physical abuse. Thus, *A Thousand Acres* simultaneously bolsters and undercuts the association of femininity with the private realm and in Chapter 6 I suggest that similar processes are at play in *The Rector's Wife*, although to different extents. Following the exploration of *The Rector's Wife*, I will return to my consideration of *A Thousand Acres*. In this subsequent investigation I will consider how the meaning of this novel has changed and what further, new conclusions can be made about it, by virtue of the reading of the Aga-Saga having been made. Re-visiting Smiley's novel in this way is an important part of a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, since, as I argued in Chapter 2, in making this form of interpretation, the analyst should always consider her knowledge of the culture in which the text is both produced and read. In offering a detailed reading of *The Rector's Wife* I am providing a broader picture of late twentieth-century discourses of femininity and this wider contextual information may enable new insights into *A Thousand Acres.*

Footnotes

[1] Of course, though, this is not to suggest that it is not possible to interpret a text without the requisite cultural knowledge. Rather, it is to imply that the *encoded reading* cannot be made without an understanding of the assumptions that underpin the text

under consideration.

[2] Moreover, other factors than the theoretical influenced the choice. Originally in writing this thesis, I intended to set the discussion of *The Rector's Wife* and *A Thousand Acres* alongside the exploration of two romance texts from the 1970s; *The Library Tree* (Peake, 1972) and *Imogen* (Cooper, 1978). Such a juxtaposition would have assisted a consideration of where there were discontinuities and where there was coherence in discourses of femininity across the two decades. However, the word limit for this thesis meant that, if more texts were included, only relatively cursory textual analyses could be offered. Therefore, I decided to allow for fuller explorations of *A Thousand Acres* and *The Rector's Wife* by omitting the discussion of the romance novels. The romances have been explored elsewhere (see Kerslake and Liladhar, forthcoming).

[3] For a fuller definition of the form, also see Philips (1996).

[4] This is, of course, similar to a project undertaken in a range of works by a number of feminist authors, such as Carter (1977), Namjoshi (1981) and Atwood (1983). Such writers strive to re-work a number of fairy-tales and myths, often in such a way that the traditional, stereotypically "passive female" protagonists are recreated as "enterprising heroines" (Kelly, 2000: 191).

[5] The 'Gloucester' sub-plot is provided by the story of Harold and his sons, Jess and Loren.

[6] By this stage in the novel Rose's husband, Pete, has been killed in a drinking and driving incident.

[7] Much has, of course, been omitted from this partial account. However, my aim was to provide a frame of reference for the analysis. More details will be provided, as necessary, in the ensuing analysis.

[8] Although at one point in the book Ginny notes, "'Looks aren't everything'", this assertion is atypical and can be read as simply a means of silencing the Christian minister, Henry Dodge, whom Gimny dislikes intensely and whose beliefs are disagreeable to her (Smiley, 1992: 266).

[9] As I argued earlier, within Foucauldian theorising the body is understood as 'docile', that is, as susceptible to the operations of a range of disciplinary and regulatory practices that shape both the body's form and its behaviour (see Chapter 3 above). Here, then, although the character of Ginny is represented as *self*-controlled and *self*-regulated, it is possible to interpret her as being controlled and regulated by the inter-connected discourses of femininity, respectability and domesticity.

[10] I have borrowed this metaphor from Deborah Cameron who uses the term "verbal hygiene" as, "a collective term for a diverse set of normative metalinguistic practices based on a conviction that some ways of using language are functionally, aesthetically or morally preferable to others" (Cameron, 1995: 36).

[11] Of course this quotation assumes that "'fuck' is something that happens to you rather than something you do" (S.Mills, Pers. Comm, 1999).

[12] However, as Sara Mills acknowledges, many women circumvent this constraint. Also see Liladhar, 2,000.

[13] My decision, informed by my own (feminist) political position, to focus on femininity here has, inevitably, resulted in the omission of other readings of the text; for instance, an ecologist might have explored at length the representations of the use of chemicals in farming and their impact on both the people and the environment of the novels, elements of the text to which I only allude briefly

Chapter 6: Case Study Two: *The Rector's Wife*

Introduction

In Chapter 5 I made a Third Wave Feminist Analysis of *A Thousand Acres* and concluded that Smiley's novel contributes to the production of femininity in complicated, sometimes contradictory, ways. Gender stereotyped roles are assigned to characters and there is a normalisation of the feminine-domestic ideal. However, this concept is troubled through, for example, the deconstruction of the public/private binary and the exposure of the potential cost of conformity to the feminine-domestic ideal. Just as *A Thousand Acres* simultaneously bolsters and undercuts the association of femininity with the private realm, similar processes are evident in *The Rector's Wife*, although to different extents. I begin this chapter by outlining the story-line of *The Rector's Wife* and then consider the ways in which this book contributes to, and yet counters, sexist discourses.

A Third Wave Feminist Analysis of *The Rector's Wife*

The 'rector's wife' is Anna Bouverie and, like Madame Bovary, she, too, feels "trapped" in her marriage (Trollope, 1991: 110). Anna is forty-two years old, works from home as a part-time translator and has been married to Peter for twenty years. Their marriage has been characterised by emotional and financial difficulties for some time but these problems are exacerbated when, at the beginning of the book, Peter is turned down for promotion to Archdeacon.

Anna and Peter have three children. Of the older two, Charlotte lives away from home and is studying at university, whilst Luke is a sixth former who leaves home temporarily, mistakenly believing his mother to be having an affair with a new neighbour, Patrick O'Sullivan. The younger child, Flora, is ten years old and still living in the family home. Flora is being bullied at the local, primary state school, Woodborough Junior, so Anna decides to send her to the nearby private school, St. Saviour's. Anna arranges an additional job, working in a supermarket, in order to cover the cost of the fees. Although Flora is awarded a free place, Anna still takes the job and

does not tell Peter that Flora has a scholarship. Both her husband and son, and to a lesser extent Charlotte, disapprove of this job, since they believe it is not worthy of Anna and because they are ashamed of, or at least embarrassed by, the job's low status. Moreover, a number of Peter's parishioners express their disapproval, too, although their disapproval is not so much located in the type of work that Anna is doing but in the fact that she is working at all; to them, being a rector's wife is a job in itself.

Whilst she is working at the supermarket, Anna begins an affair with Jonathan Byrne, the brother of the newly appointed Archdeacon, Daniel Byrne. During the same period, Peter inadvertently learns two things which have significant impact. Firstly, he discovers that Flora's school place is free; both the fact that Anna has deceived him and the fact that he then forces Anna to resign place further strain on their marriage. Secondly, Peter is incorrectly informed that Anna is having an affair with Patrick. Subsequent to hearing this misinformation, Peter is killed in a car crash, although it is not clear whether he crashed deliberately, or whether the crash was an accident caused by his distress. During her bereavement and during her earlier marital problems, Anna is supported emotionally by her mother, Laura, and, to a lesser extent, by her mother-in-law, Kitty. Following Peter's death, Anna builds a new life for herself and her children: they live in a house which Anna owns, rather than one which belongs to the church, and Anna works as a language teacher at St. Saviour's. Anna continues her affair with Jonathan but lives independently from him.

Reinforcing And Undermining Anachronistic Discourses

Just as *A Thousand Acres* draws on and contributes to anachronistic discourses which associate masculinity with the public world and femininity with the private realm of the domestic, so, too, does *The Rector's Wife*. However, although in my discussion of *A Thousand Acres* I was able to disentangle the process of affirmation from the process of subversion, I have found this less easy in my discussion of *The Rector's Wife* because, within this second book, the two processes seem to be more intimately interwoven. Therefore, I now consider alongside each other a range of the ways in

which *The Rector's Wife* draws on or reinforces anachronistic discourses and, yet, also undermines them.

Firstly, *The Rector's Wife* exploits anachronistic discourses when its characters draw on these as part of their interpretative repertoire. For example, although, as a deacon and former missionary, Isobel Thompson is a woman of some standing in the public institution of the church, Peter characterises her "approach to Christianity" as, "a fussy *housekeeping*, a *domestic* preoccupation with women and children and primary schools" (Trollope, 1991: 74, emphasis added). Moreover, Peter does not limit this characterisation only to Isobel. He likens her approach to that of, "most of the other women deacons in the diocese" and, thus, implicitly reduces the faith of many of the female characters in the novel from the elevated level of the spiritual down to the level of the mundane (ibid.). However, whilst Peter relies on an anachronistic association of femininity with the domestic domain, the text does not endorse this link. I suggest this lack of endorsement is evident because Peter does not have a high truth status within the novel and his low truth status is constructed in a number of ways. Firstly, Peter lacks authority because he has poor judgment of people and their inter-personal relationships. For example, the friendship between Anna and Isobel, "was not a friendship Peter understood" and "[h]e could not see why Anna did not find her [Isobel] dull" (Trollope, 1991: 73 and 74). However, Anna loves Isobel because they are "easy" together and because Isobel is, "dear, patient and wise" (Trollope, 1991: 73 and 30). Secondly, Peter's inherent poor judgment is exacerbated by the bitterness he feels over his promotion disappointment. This failure leaves him, "crippled... boiling with misery and quite immobilized by it", to the extent that he thinks of himself as "quite trapped... I can't think what to do next" (Trollope, 1991: 14 and 83). Additionally, it has a malign impact on his judgment of and behaviour towards other people; he evaluates this change in the observation that, "[a]ll softness in him seemed imperceptibly, involuntarily, to have hardened. He didn't feel in the least interested in love or goodness or kindness; the only thing that stirred him was a determination not to give in" (Trollope, 1991: 180). Finally, Peter's judgment is further called into question by

the suggestion that he is mentally ill and that this illness is causing him to think and act in 'irrational' ways. For example, Daniel excuses Peter's unloving and domineering behaviour to Anna, behaviour which Daniel does not condone, with the explanation, "'He's a sick man'" (Trollope, 1991: 199).[1] Thus, whilst one of the characters in the text, Peter, uses an anachronistic discourse of domestic femininity in order to enable him to make sense of his world, in allocating him a low truth status and, thus, showing his judgment to be flawed, the novel critiques, rather than supports, such an association.

However, *The Rector's Wife* does reinforce anachronistic discourses in other ways, for example, by allocating the majority of its characters outdated, stereotypical gender roles: most of the full-time, paid/salaried jobs are assigned to the male characters, whilst few of the female characters have full-time paid employment.[2] Of the main protagonists, Peter, Jonathan, Patrick and Anna, all three male characters have full-time jobs. However, whilst Anna is still 'the rector's wife', she has either part-time work or unpaid work; it is only when she is widowed that she takes up full-time work. Moreover, her main paid work at the beginning of the book, as a technical translator, is undertaken at home. Although Anna finds translating "dreary work", it has the advantage of being "private", which is important as "Peter had discovered that his five villages [which constitute his parish] would not like him to have a working wife" (Trollope, 1991: 4).[3] So, Anna's paid employment becomes associated with the 'private' realm of the home, rather than the 'public' world of work and, thus, the public/private boundaries are blurred. This blurring is increased because the job is performed in a distinctly unprofessional environment; Anna works in her bedroom, using a typewriter donated by a parishioner, on an "incongruous" table given to her by her mother (Trollope, 1991: 8). Moreover, Anna's approach to translating becomes increasingly amateur, in the pejorative sense of the word, and, by the time she resigns from the supermarket, she has been sacked by the publishers for not meeting deadlines. Thus, Anna's working from home is an example of one way in which *The Rector's Wife* exploits and reinforces anachronistic discourses (by the allocation of outdated,

stereotypical gender roles, that is, full-time work for men and part-time or no paid work for women), yet, simultaneously, also undermines the gendered public/private binary (by blurring the boundaries between the public space of paid employment and the private space of the home).

The boundaries between public/private are blurred further within the text because a number of the male characters also conduct their paid work from home. For example, Peter hosts a Parochial Church Council meeting in the rectory dining room (Trollope, 1991: 12), whilst Daniel and Jonathan both have a study in Daniel's house. Moreover, Jonathan is working there because he is taking a sabbatical term, a period which might be characterised as a time when one's employer pays one not to do the job one is usually paid to do. Additionally, Daniel's work impinges on his 'leisure' time to the extent that, one evening, when the brothers are having coffee together, Daniel receives so many telephone calls that, "Jonathan wondered if the Church of England and City of London foreign-exchange dealers had almost comparable telephone bills" (Trollope, 1991: 116). The public/private boundaries are further eroded when Peter's paid work becomes conflated with a form of domestic employment when some of his former parishioners are described as "demanding lodgers" (Trollope, 1991: 26). A further way in which the public/private distinction is undercut is by the representation of women's paid work as similar to their domestic, unpaid work. This point is made, for instance, by Anna. When she is being trained on her first job at the supermarket, "facing up", that is, putting the stock onto shelves and then placing it in the required position, she makes the comparison between her paid work and her unpaid work by joking, "'I think I'll go straight home and face and present the larder'" (Trollope, 1991: 50). Earlier, I argued that in *A Thousand Acres* farm work is often described in terms that are also associated with the domestic realm and, moreover, that the differences between farm work and domestic work are minimised by direct comparisons between the two forms of labour (see pp.144-5 above). I also suggested that such descriptions and comparisons challenge the public/private dichotomy by conflating 'public' and

domestic work. So, too, Anna's joke about replicating a paid, 'public' task in an unpaid 'private' capacity, also functions to conflate the two poles of the binarism.

Furthermore, the public/private division is undermined by a number of references to the voluntary work conducted by the female characters that underpins not only the public institution of the church, but also that of the armed forces. Anna, as well as a range of female parishioners, perform a number of tasks, from cleaning the church to delivering the parish newsletter, which free Peter up to undertake those jobs which are considered more appropriate for his status as both a rector and a man, such as conducting communion. This reliance on unpaid, female labour is presented as systematic and unvalued when Marjorie explains that her daughter, Julia, was married to a sailor and,

> 'while he was away, Julia became responsible for all the wives and mothers and girlfriends of the men on his ship. They rang at all hours, all the time. She travelled all over England seeing these women, in her own time, at her own expense. When the task Force returned, her husband was promoted, went off with a WRNS officer and the Navy never even said thank you. Not a postcard. Nothing. As a service wife she was expected to do all that and feel honoured to do it' (Trollope, 1991: 227-8).

Additionally, the representations of these public institutions blurs the distinction between public and private further because both are portrayed as having a significant influence on the 'private' domains of both home and family. Anna's life is considerably affected by the Church's choice of which geographical location to allocate Peter. For example, the choice of location dictates the kind of homelife they are forced to lead; the move to Birmingham, to a "slum parish", results in Anna and Peter spending six years, "bringing up Charlotte and Luke with chicken wire tacked across inside their bedroom window, and a security system worthy of Alcatraz" (Trollope, 1991: 4). Furthermore, this form of powerful and malignant influence is not presented

as restricted to the institution of the church. On learning that Flora's friend Marie has gone, "'to Germany... With her father. He's a corporal'", Anna reflects that, "[h]alf Flora's school were Army children. They lived briefly in the great camps round and about, and then vanished" (Trollope, 1991: 4). Again, it is Marjorie who summarises the systematic nature of this by observing, "'Church or Army, what does it matter, they're all the same. Fill a man with notions of duty and obligation and then expect the wife to feel privileged to fall in with him. Makes me sick'" (Trollope, 1991: 227).

It is not simply that these enforced relocations remove choice as to where families live and that the locations dictate how they will be able to live but, also, that they result in some familial instability: Anna and Peter begin married life in Oxford where Peter is at theological college; they then move to a suburb of Bristol when he is given his first "brief curacy" (Trollope, 1991: 23); "[t]he moment she had settled... Peter was given his first parish", so they move again (Trollope, 1991: 24); and then, "[t]he day she brought Luke home from hospital Peter was offered a slum parish in another diocese, in Birmingham" (Trollope, 1991: 25). These last two quotations are particularly telling, since they represent the moves as being against Anna's interests. They also present them as beyond her control, through their use of Peter as the affected in the material action processes instigated by the church ("Peter was offered"). It can be argued that the use of this linguistic device here denies or underplays the impact of the moves on Anna, since, unlike Peter, she is not named as the affected. However, there is an implicit causal relationship between Anna's actions and the ensuing enforced moves; thus, "[t]he moment she had settled", the family is moved and, "[t]he day she brought Luke home", the family is moved again. This suggestion that responsibility for these moves can be assigned to Anna is supported by the fact that there is no overt agent in these phrases ("Peter was given his first parish" and "Peter was offered a slum parish"). Although Peter is allocated a position whereby he is passive (he "was given" and "was offered"), there is no named agent doing the giving or offering. Whilst, on one level, clearly the implied agent is the church, yet there is enough indeterminacy here for Anna to be suggested as a feasible substitute. Moreover, Anna actually is the named agent in

other sections of this extract ("she had settled" and "she brought Luke home"). In summary, on the one hand, a public institution, the church, is represented as impacting on the private realm of a particular family. Yet, on the other hand, the fact that the church has played a role in this process is denied by an implication that the responsible agent is a member of that family. Thus, the family unit is suggested as both self-regulated and self-contained as, indeed, 'really' private.

The public/private boundaries are further eroded in *The Rector's Wife* by the airing of private matters in the public domain. Just as 'private' matters relating to Ginny's family were discussed in public in *A Thousand Acres*, so, too, the personal and marital difficulties that Anna and Peter are experiencing are discussed by their parishioners; "[i]t was known throughout the parish - Celia Hooper felt it was her duty in supporting Anna to disseminate this knowledge - that Anna would be very upset if it was even hinted at that she could not manage it this year" (Trollope, 1991: 122). No matter is deemed to be 'too private' for public discussion, as Anna observes "'Nothing's private, is it? You can't breathe in a village'" (Trollope, 1991: 33).

Moreover, in giving the supermarket job to Anna, the text subverts anachronistic discourses of a feminine private realm and a masculine public space to the extent that it moves Anna's aspirations, "beyond the confines of the family and home" (Philips, 1996: 50). Philips (1996) suggests that, generally in the Aga-Saga, such a move outside of the home represents part of the main female protagonist's search for self-fulfillment. Thus, Anna's supermarket job, "whatever its reality", still, "represented the best taste of independence" that she had had for twenty years (Trollope, 1991: 64). However, this subversion is limited, since the search for independence was not Anna's primary reason for taking the job, which was, rather, to pay Flora's school fees. Moreover, when this is no longer necessary, Anna decides to use the money not for herself but for other members of her family, for example, by helping Luke to raise enough funds for a planned trip to India. Additionally, even though Anna is offered training and promotion prospects at the supermarket, she declines these (Trollope,

1991: 88). Thus, her work is represented as of little importance to Anna and, moreover, its significance to others, both individuals and institutions is minimal, apart from its pecuniary advantages, since it is, "achieved without ultimate disruption to the family structure or to the social order" (Philips, 1996: 53). Finally, Anna's foray into the public world of work, at this point in the novel, anyway, is short-lived, since Peter forces her to resign.[4] This also undercuts the public/private distinction, since Peter feels he has the right to interfere in Anna's public role because of his personal relationship to her and, without Anna's permission, tells the supermarket manager, "'So from the end of this month, my wife won't be working for you any longer'" (Trollope, 1991: 183). However, his assumption is challenged by the text when the supermarket manager, Mr. Mulgrove, reflects that,

> [w]hen he had first begun at Pricewell's... it was quite common for husbands of women with jobs in the store to organise their wives' working lives for them... But things had changed now. Mr. Mulgrove doubted that any of his female workforce even consulted their husbands about where or when they should work. He supposed that vicars were a bit old-fashioned (Trollope, 1991: 184).

Whilst the text positions Peter's construction of femininity as located in an earlier epoch, as "a bit old fashioned", yet, paradoxically, it also reinforces such anachronistic discourses by allocating most of its characters outdated, stereotypical gender roles. For example, Anna is portrayed as pre-occupied with the domestic realm. However, whereas in *A Thousand Acres*, Ginny's preoccupation with the domestic was often manifested as a concern for, even obsession with, cleaning and tidying, Anna is distanced from this particular aspect of domesticity. The family sitting-room is both overcrowded and untidy,

> [i]t contained the Knole sofa... too large for Laura's tiny flat, several lowering pieces of reproduction Jacobean furniture donated by Kitty... hundreds of books on shelves made by Peter out of bricks and planks and the unmistakable

> overlying detritus of family life... a pile of sheet music, several seed catalogues, a jersey of Luke's and Flora's latest piece of chain stitch in which a huge needle glittered (Trollope, 1991: 59).

Although the room is overlaid with the "detritus of family life", there is no articulation of a communal responsibility for this untidiness. Rather, Anna takes responsibility for the mess saying, "'When Peter married me, I was tidy... I seem to have slumped, as time's gone on'" (Trollope, 1991: 60). The state of this room indicates that Anna has fallen considerably short of the feminine domestic ideal. However, whilst that ideal was rewarded within the world in which *A Thousand Acres* was set, *The Rector's Wife* gives its approval to untidiness, rather than tidiness.

Firstly, this Aga-Saga condones untidiness when Daniel approves Anna's sitting-room saying, "'[t]idiness makes me nervous'" (ibid.). Daniel's endorsement is seen as a validation within the terms of the text because he is one of the characters of whom the text approves. This approval is indicated, firstly, when Daniel is likened to Anna: on seeing the interior of Daniel's car, "Anna reflected, this is how... their own car would probably look... if left to Anna; but Peter tidied it" (Trollope, 1991: 58). Secondly, this textual approval is indicated, when Anna endorses Daniel, saying, "'I think he's a lovely man'" (Trollope, 1991: 62). I argue that this comparison to Anna, as well as Anna's overt approval of Daniel, suggest that the text awards approval to his character, because the novel positions the reader to sympathise with Anna and to see events from her perspective. This positioning is achieved through the use of a device known as "focalization", which occurs when the story is presented by a third person narrator but, "we see largely through... [a character's] eyes" (Morris, 1995: 37). For example, when Daniel and Anna are travelling in his untidy car for the first time, he in the driver's seat, she in the front-passenger seat, Daniel is described literally from Anna's perspective, in that he is described from the side, rather than face on: "[s]he glanced sideways at Daniel's profile. It looked sturdy and peaceful and good-humoured" (Trollope, 1991: 58-9). Furthermore, he is described from Anna's perspective in the sense that it is her

character who offers this interpretation of his profile; she does later conclude that he has all of these characteristics and turns to him as a friend and confidant. Since the viewpoint offered throughout much of *The Rector's Wife* is Anna's, this has a cumulative effect in establishing and then increasing the reader's sympathy for her. Moreover Anna is presented as inherently attractive, as associated with colour and movement. At different times she wears a "voluminous purple cloak" (Trollope, 1991: 31); a "huge red skirt" (Trollope, 1991: 11); "amber glass beads" (Trollope, 1991: 37) and "a swirling dress with something bright wrapped round the waist" (Trollope, 1991: 70). In summary, her clothes "had a raffish distinction not usually associated with the wardrobes of the Church of England" (Trollope, 1991: 133). Thus, whilst the reader does not *necessarily* like the character of Anna, nor endorse her opinions, it takes a degree of resistance not to do so and, therefore, I suggest that an endorsement of Daniel's character is encoded into the novel in this way. Furthermore, he is elevated to an almost holy status. He is a former Benedictine monk, yet carries none of the (to the secular world) possibly unattractive connotations that may be associated with the monastic life, qualities such as asceticism, self-denial, reclusiveness and misanthropy, because he, "like[s] humanity" (Trollope, 1991: 89). Moreover, Daniel is a Biblical name, that of an Old Testament figure who was a prophet and the interpreter of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast (Daniel 2:4 and 5:17). Since his name is the origin of the expression, "[a] Daniel come to judgment", meaning, "[a] person who displays wisdom beyond his [*sic.*] years", there is also an implication that the Daniel in *The Rector's Wife* is also wise (Room, 1999: 318). This is confirmed, along with the appropriateness of his name, when he makes an accurate character assessment of Peter, observing that, "[h]e would clearly not be patronised; he would smell patronage in any apology, in any request for help made out of a desire to soothe sore feelings" (Trollope, 1991: 60). In summary, the text signals its approval of Daniel and, therefore, his commendation of Anna's untidiness is validated. In turn, the reader is positioned to validate it, too.

Secondly, untidiness is commended when a contrast is established between the house as it is when left to Anna's neglect and the house as it becomes when a number of female parishioners clean it, without Anna's permission or knowledge.[5] After their ministrations, "[t]he floor shone; the sink gleamed... the staircarpet had been brushed. In her bedroom the air was fragrant with polish" (Trollope, 1991: 138). Taken in isolation, these descriptions might be understood as indicating approval. However, that they do not do so is clear from the rest of the description. This implies that there has been an assault on Anna's senses, since the kitchen is described as, "smell[ing] *violently* hygienic" (Trollope, 1991: 138, emphasis added). Moreover, not only her senses but, also, her privacy has been violated, "[s]ome one strange... had made their bed" and she wonders, "[h]ad these unseen hands also been through her drawers, her medicine cupboard, her linen shelves, looking for letters and tranquilisers and compromising underclothes?" (Trollope, 1991: 138-9). This combined assault on both her senses and her privacy provokes a strong physical reaction from Anna. She is left "shaking"; "fighting with rage"; feeling "a spurt of fury"; and "winded by the effrontery of it, the intrusiveness" (Trollope, 1991: 138-9).

Additionally, the order that has been imposed upon the house is seen as not merely regulated but regimented and impersonal: "the cover was arranged with hotel-like precision, tucked trimly in under the pillows, smooth and neat"; "the piles of books on their bedside tables had been graded into pyramids"; in the bathroom, "[a]ll was shining and regimented. The toothbrushes stood in a sparkling tumbler, the towels hung in ordered oblongs"; whilst in the sitting-room, "[t]he furniture looked as if it were standing to attention" (Trollope, 1991: 138-9). The use of personification here, with the furniture seeming to stand to attention, implicates these items in the assault on Anna; it is not just that the parishioners have radically altered the house but, also, that the contents of the house have been forced into collusion in that alteration. Thus, there is a suggestion that the violation of Anna will continue long after the house has stopped being tidy. Moreover, in a further example of personification, where Peter's slippers are described as lying "smugly together by the wardrobe", Peter's response to the

housecleaning (an event in which he colluded) is implied; both the pair of slippers and their owner are complacent about the new order (Trollope, 1991: 139). Thus, his reaction serves to reinforce the assault and this reinforcement would be presumed to continue as long as Anna and Peter remain living in the same house. In summary, by arguing that Anna is distanced from the feminine-domestic ideal, I have contended that one way in which this distancing is effected is by the adverse outcomes that ensue when cleanliness and tidiness are invoked. As this argument suggests, when female characters other than Anna are associated with this form of domesticity, this is no straightforward stereotypical association of femininity with the domestic domain.

This connection is troubled further by the use of irony, which the text exploits to indicate disapproval of particular female characters who are, within the terms of the text, perceived as *too* interested in domestic neatness and cleanliness. For example, irony is used in the following representation of Celia Hooper, one of the women responsible for cleaning Anna's house. As well as cleaning and tidying,

> Celia had left something in the fridge. Anna opened the refrigerator door. Two perfect, technicolour salads lay on two matching plates (not Rectory plates) under plastic film. Anna banged the door shut... [Later, Peter] ate Celia's brilliant salad with relish, wiping his mouth at the end with the little scallop-edged paper napkin she had so daintily provided. Anna blew her nose on hers (Trollope, 1991: 138-141).

This extract implicitly critiques Celia and the type of domesticity she represents by the exploitation of verbal irony. Verbal irony is defined as,

> a statement in which the implicit meaning intended... differs from that which is... ostensibly assert[ed]. Such an ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, but with the implication of a very different attitude or evaluation (Abrams, 1984: 89).

Verbal irony can be "a straightforward case of an ironic reversal of the surface statement" (Abrams, 1984: 90). However, that is not the case here, where the use of irony is more complex, since the meaning and evaluations are, "subtly qualified rather than simply reversed, and the clues to ironic countermeaning under the surface statement... [are] indirect and unobtrusive" (ibid.). Such clues include instances where, "there appears to be something odd or wrong with the words and what they actually mean, so we must interpret the text by finding another meaning for it" (Montgomery, 1992: 138). Thus, in this example, whilst "perfect" and "brilliant" are usually understood as denoting approval, a different meaning is intended. That something is 'wrong' with this interpretation is indicated by the combination of these words with "technicolour", indicating an unnatural colouring which, in relation to food, might suggest an unhealthy, or at least unappetising, quality. The irony is reinforced by the use of repetition which also draws attention to the overly perfect (and, thus, unnatural) appearance of the food: "*[t]wo* perfect, technicolour salads lay on *two* matching plates".[6] Finally, the irony is reinforced by juxtaposition, that is, "the combination of two or more elements in such a way that the connecting links between them are suppressed, and where there is some degree of surprise or puzzlement in their close placement" and which, in this instance, "leads to a humorous effect", known as comic irony (Montgomery, 1992: 145 and 153). The comic irony here is achieved by the juxtaposition of the genteel description of "the little scallop-edged paper napkin... so daintily provided" and the use to which Anna puts it.

So far, I have argued that *The Rector's Wife* counters the concept of feminine domestic-ideal by assigning untidiness to Anna, a character with whom the text positions the reader to sympathise. Moreover, an overt expression of approval for untidiness is made by Daniel, a character who is afforded a high truth status. Additionally, the unwanted imposition of tidiness and (hyper)cleanliness is presented as a form of violation and the characters responsible for this assault are described by the use of mocking irony. However, as I noted earlier, whilst Anna is distanced from one particular aspect of domesticity, that is not to suggest that she does not manifest a

domestic preoccupation. Anna's domestic preoccupation is illustrated by her concern for and care of her children and, to this extent then, there is an implied approval of elements of feminine domesticity. This is manifested in Anna's detailed knowledge of her children's different personalities and by the practical support she provides for them. For example, she observes that whilst,

> Charlotte and Luke had managed school perfectly well, had made friends, had slipped effortlessly in and out of all of the required fads and fashions... Flora was different... cleverer... more elusive, more fragile (Trollope, 1991: 6-7).

As a result of observing her younger daughter, Anna meets Flora from the school bus everyday as a way of offering her, "miserable compensation for enduring Woodborough Junior" (Trollope, 1991: 2). This is in contrast to Peter: when he accompanies Flora to school on her first day at St. Saviour's, Anna comments that she, "'can't remember... [him] taking any of them to school before'"(Trollope, 1991: 111).

In other parts of the text, too, stereotypical gender roles are assigned and at times this allocation is naturalised. For example, the two unmarried, main male characters in the book both have housekeepers. Ella Pringle is Patrick O'Sullivan's housekeeper; "[s]he treated him as if she were his prep-school matron" and "[h]e needed Ella" (Trollope, 1991: 69). Thus, Patrick is positioned as a child, rather than an adult, unable to care for himself. In contrast, Daniel's housekeeper seems, at times, to cause him work, rather than to work on his behalf. For instance, "Miss Lambe helped him to unpack his books, holding each one with as much reverence as if it had been the Sacrament. It took for ever" (Trollope, 1991: 81). Yet, there is no suggestion that she should leave or he should fire her and that he should fend for himself. Having to manage with an incompetent housekeeper, therefore, is, it seems, easier for this male character than having to manage without a housekeeper at all. So, just as Patrick is presented as unable to care for himself, so, too, is Daniel. The other characters besides Ella and Miss Lambe who are single women, that is Isobel, Laura and Kitty, do not

have housekeepers. There is no overt comment on this, it is simply presented as self-evident that, whereas a single man would not be able to manage his own home, a single woman would be able to do so.

The assignment of stereotypical gender roles is further naturalised when the novel states, "[w]hen Charlotte was born, Anna stopped working" (Trollope, 1991: 22). This is naturalised, since there is no explanation as to why Anna stopped working on Charlotte's birth, that she would do so is, once again, simply presented as self-evident.[7] Additionally, Anna's role as wife continues after Peter's death when she achieves a quasi-reconciliation with him: she has his photograph on her dressing table; she remarks when she visits his grave, "'It's lovely now... I can leave you in peace, I can remember things without bitterness'"; and she envisages a future reunion, having chosen for his headstone the legend: "'Pray for me, as I will for thee, that we may merrily meet in heaven'" (Trollope, 1991: 248). Thus, being a wife is so natural, it seems, that the character Anna neither wants to, nor can, rescind this role on Peter's death. Instead, she automatically, 'naturally', continues with it.

Moreover, it is not only that Anna's position as wife is naturalised, it is also that it is presented as inevitable that she will take on the role that is constructed as being a part of that position. Thus, Anna acts as an unpaid secretary for Peter, fielding his calls and advising people when he will be free to speak to them (see, for example, Trollope, 1991: 7); her domestic responsibilities extend beyond the home to include cleaning the church and laundering the linen for services (Trollope, 1991: 41 and 27); and when the Parochial Church Council secretary resigns and there is no immediate replacement, Anna says, "'I have to take the minutes'" (Trollope, 1991: 12). Additionally, this process is presented as not only inevitable but inexorable, since it had happened in a similar way in another parish in which Peter served, where, "like water flooding slowly across low-lying land, [the parish] began to claim her" (Trollope, 1991: 22). Anna is aware of the potency of this process of annexation and on several occasions she announces her defiance stating, "'I married the man, not the job'" (Trollope, 1991: 21 and 54) and, "'I'm

Peter's wife, not an unpaid curate'" (Trollope, 1991: 55). Yet, despite her overt opposition to this process of being subsumed by the parish, such is its force that she seems unable to prevent it. In brief, this process of being taken over is presented as an inevitable consequence of being married to a rector: as Harry Richardson summarises it, "'if you marry a parson, you marry all that goes with it'" (Trollope, 1991: 55).

However, whilst this process is generally presented as inevitable, it is not always portrayed as such. For example, whilst the new rector's wife shows her intention of accepting the kind of traditional role that Anna resisted, the possibility of her being allowed to do so is represented as doubtful. For example, her attempts to take over the 'housekeeping' of the church, by introducing the use of polyester "easy care" altar cloths are resisted by some parishioners as "frightful" and "vulgar" (Trollope, 1991: 243-4). Moreover, this character's position is not endorsed by the text which signals disapproval of her by the adoption of an ironic tone (see fn. 5, p.175 below). Nor is the subsuming of Anna by the parish and the demands of being a rector's wife presented as desirable, since Anna is described regularly, as both physically and emotionally tired: just as, "Peter noticed that... Anna looked desperately tired"; and another priest's wife observes, "'Anna looks tired'"; so, too, a parishioner notes that Anna is, "'looking so tired'" (Trollope, 1991: 82-3; 124 and 140). It is true that the text does not suggest that it is only her role as a rector's wife that tires Anna. Her fatigue is caused by the multiple demands of family, home, paid work and unpaid parish work, as well as her unhappy marriage. However, the role expected of her as a rector's wife is implicated in her fatigue. So, the fulfillment of the role of rector's wife is sometimes portrayed as not necessarily inevitable and sometimes represented as injurious.

Moreover, a process of de-naturalising the feminisation of the domestic role more broadly is also evident. This occurs when domestic work is presented as unrewarding; as dehumanising and as demanding of great sacrifices. Firstly, domestic work is presented as unrewarding, since, as is typical in an Aga-Saga, and has been apparent in many places in this chapter, the plot of *The Rector's Wife* is fuelled by,

"difficulties with adolescent children, disillusionment with a husband [and] the tedium of domestic life and failed ambitions" (Philips, 1996: 50). Pivotal to these, is the heroine's nebulous but real sense of dissatisfaction which is made apparent from the beginning of the book and which echoes Betty Friedan's notion of, "the problem that has no name" (Friedan, 1963). Thus, whilst there is no overt reference to Friedan in the novel, it does draw on, or at least echo, feminist discourses which identify domesticity as problematic for women. Secondly, in a step which develops this negative characterisation of domestic work, domesticity is presented as having a dehumanising effect; for example, Anna describes herself with the phrase, "'I'm not a person, I'm simply a sort of function" (Trollope, 1991: 144).

Finally, the price that domestic work exacts on some women is made explicit by two (fictitious) references to the sacrifices it can demand. Firstly, Laura tells Anna about a woman she has met who,

> longed, only longed, to be a concert pianist but was literally forced by her ogrish father to nurse him while he died of drink and now her spirit is quite broken and all she can bring herself to do is dispense plastic cups of repellent coffee to OAPs going to Ferndown to see their married daughters (Trollope, 1991: 37).

The pathos of this story, which positions domesticity as responsible for not only stifling the woman in question's creativity and artistic ambitions but, also, her personality, is sympathetically treated because the character being discussed is also described as a, "poor child" (ibid.). Secondly, the narrative sketches in Isobel's history. As I explained earlier, she had been a missionary and,

> [s]he had loved it. She had loved the sense of purpose and the freedom and most of the Africans, and she had always supposed that she would stay there all her life, and finally die there, and be buried, like David Livingstone's wife, under a baobab tree (Trollope, 1991: 71).

Isobel's love for her work is stressed by the repetition of "loved". Moreover, just as romantic love is sometimes depicted as long-lasting, even eternal, so is Isobel's love for her work and for Africa: "she had *always* supposed that she would stay there *all her life*, and *finally die there*". However, when Isobel receives a letter from her mother explaining that she (the mother) has cancer and needs nursing, Isobel leaves Africa in order to fulfill that role. The text makes it clear that, within its terms, it was not reasonable to expect Isobel to give up the work she prized so highly. The letter is described as, "querulous" and it does not request Isobel's help but demands it. Whilst the text acknowledges that Isobel's mother has been advised that she will die soon, there is no expression of compassion for her. Rather it adopts an impatient, even irritable tone complaining that, "[s]he took five years to do it, five years of remissions and declines and suffering borne with no patience whatever... She lay in her carefully, fustily feminine bedroom... and tormented Isobel. Nothing was right" (Trollope, 1991: 71). Thus, Isobel's mother is depicted as ungrateful to her daughter, unreasonable in her demands and, moreover, selfishly hanging on to life ("[s]he took five years to do it, five years") and, thus, preventing Isobel from getting on with her life. Moreover, the text critiques Isobel's mother for doing so with poor grace. Everything she does, even down to the way she decorates her bedroom, is represented as having been done with the express intention of 'tormenting' Isobel. Thus, both Isobel and the text itself conclude that sacrificing her life in Africa "with its comparatively easy, impersonal requirement of Christian love" was too high a price to pay for being offered only "savagely difficult demands for daughterly love" in return (ibid.).

Moreover, a naturalisation of the assignment of stereotypical gender roles is countered in further ways. Firstly, the text makes explicit reference to its own use of stereotypes; when Jonathan proposes to Anna he asks her, "'to become a don's wife and thus exchange one set of stereotypes for another'" (Trollope, 1991: 219). Moreover, although Anna is positioned in her widowhood as continuing to be a quasi-rector's wife, she articulates her single state, as well as her determination to remain unmarried, saying, "'All that I'm interested in just now is independence... It means not being

subordinate... thinking and acting for yourself... not depending on any one else for your sense of value'" (Trollope, 1991: 241). This independence is facilitated because she takes work outside of the home: both in the form of unpaid work, when she initiates the establishment of a new diocesan project, "to help the wives of clergymen who got into difficulties... [with] a whole spectrum of domestic problems - lack of money, loneliness, marital misery" (Trollope, 1991: 242-3); and in the form of paid work when she takes a teaching job in St. Saviour's. Moreover, this independence is manifest in her changing relationship to property ownership. During her marriage she has lived in church-owned homes. On Peter's death she is offered another church-house rent-free but declines, saying, "'the Church doesn't owe me anything any more. I'm - ' She paused. She wanted to say 'free' but thought it would sound aggressive, so she said instead, 'Separate now'" (Trollope, 1991: 224). Anna opts, instead, to buy a house herself. However, this final statement of independence is undercut somewhat, due to the description of the house she buys. Other people do not covet nor even admire it; the estate agent had had the house "on his books for a year" and his assistant describes it as, "'ever so dark. Creepy... Terrible'" (Trollope, 1991: 230-1). Even Anna acknowledges that, "'It's a funny little house'" and that it is "'cramped'" (Trollope, 1991: 237 and 241). However, despite the inadequacies of Anna's house, her new position as a property owner in full-time work, who is single and who is prepared to vaunt her independent status, all combine to counter the naturalisation of the assignment of stereotypical gender roles found in other places in *The Rector's Wife*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have offered a Third Wave Feminist Analysis of *The Rector's Wife* in which I have explored the interconnected, complex and contradictory ways in which this twentieth-century Aga-Saga contributes to the production of discourses of femininity. I showed how anachronistic, gendered discourses of public/private spheres are drawn on by one character, Peter. However, I also showed that the text resists colluding with his avowed sexism. Moreover, I illustrated that the novel actively blurs the boundaries between these two supposedly distinct domains: both female and male

characters work from home; and paid work is likened to (often unpaid) domestic work. Moreover, the ability to do paid work is shown to be dependent on the completion of unpaid, voluntary work, which is also indicated as being an important, even vital, bolster to public institutions. These institutions, in turn, are represented as having a material impact on the family, although this representation is undercut somewhat by a contradictory suggestion that the family unit is self-controlling. Additionally, 'private' family matters are discussed publicly, and Peter uses his personal relationship to Anna as validation for interfering in her working-life, although his right to do so is not unchallenged by the text.

However, whilst this exploration has revealed that *The Rector's Wife* often resists colluding with sexist discourses of gendered public/private spheres, it is, nonetheless, still implicated in the reinforcement of such sexism. It allocates its characters stereotypical gender roles in the workplace and in the home. Moreover, often these sexist assignments are naturalised or presented as inevitable and the result of an irresistible force. However, this is not always the case. Whilst femininity is associated with domesticity in the sense of a nurturing maternity, it is vigorously distanced from domesticity in terms of the feminine domestic-ideal, as summarised by the precept "cleanliness is next to godliness". Moreover, in a number of different ways the cost that certain stereotypical gender roles exact from women is revealed. The novel also offers alternative paradigms to these roles, in relatively limited ways (such as when Anna takes the supermarket job) or in less restrained ways (such as at the end of the novel when Anna is successfully and independently established in the public world of work and home ownership).

In summary, the text is at the same time sexist and anti-sexist and it took a great deal of processing to reveal the complexity of the inter-weaving of these two contradictory processes. In many ways, then, my conclusions about *The Rector's Wife* are similar to the conclusions that I made about *A Thousand Acres* which, I argued, also contributes to the production of discourses of femininity in a range of complex,

even contradictory, ways. Once again, most of the characters are assigned gender stereotyped roles and their assumption of these is naturalised. Furthermore, these roles draw on long established, even anachronistic, discourses of femininity in a way which can be interpreted as implying an inevitability to the continuing association of femininity with the domestic realm. The only female character who is allocated an *a*typical role in *A Thousand Acres*, Caroline, is represented as inept and unprofessional in that role. Yet, this normalisation of the feminine-domestic ideal is troubled in a number of significant ways: the public/private polarity is deconstructed by the conflation of these two supposed opposites; the attempt to comply with the feminine-domestic ideal leads to Ginny experiencing mental health problems; and the 'private' realm of the home is the site of rape and other forms of physical abuse. However, my reading of *The Rector's Wife* seems to have uncovered it as a more subversive text than *A Thousand Acres*. A number of factors might be responsible for this, and many of these are beyond the scope of this thesis.[8] However, I want to raise the suggestion that the form of the texts might have been one of the influences on each novel's particular, political position. As I observed in Chapter 5, both novels allude to canonical, male-authored texts and both make feminist re-writings of these earlier works, to the extent that the female protagonists are presented with more sympathy than in the original versions. However, the text which presents fewer challenges to stereotypical gender roles, *A Thousand Acres*, is a traditional form, a prestigious, publicly recognised, 'literary' novel, a form which is, moreover, despite a number of feminist challenges to this connection, more frequently associated with male authors than female (see Chapter 1 above). However, the more subversive text, *The Rector's Wife*, is a newer generic form, the Aga-Saga, a form drawn on by female authors with a female audience in mind. It is possible, therefore, that the former is so constrained by the generic conventions and expectations of the more traditional form, as well as its gendering, that its scope for other forms of subversion is also restricted. In contrast, there is a chance that the latter has less generic history to limit its possibilities and, additionally, that the gendering of this form creates a space in which criticisms of the patriarchy may be made more fullsomely.[9]

In conclusion, I have made a Third Wave Feminist Analysis of these two novels, because I argue that many women understand what it means to be a woman by drawing on textual mediations of the term. Thus, these books' simultaneous reinforcement and subversion of discourses of a domestic femininity represent a variety of forms of femininity which their women readers may take up or decline. Yet, novels are only one cultural form that women draw on, consciously or unconsciously, when making, unmaking and remaking their feminine identities. Therefore, in Chapter 7, I explore a further form which, arguably, reaches a larger female audience than novels do: the TV Soap Opera. In so doing, I also illustrate the flexibility of Third Wave Feminist Analysis by showing that it can be applied to visual as well as written texts.

Footnotes

[1] Daniel's judgement, unlike Peter's, is one which the text validates, a point to which I return shortly.

[2] Similarly, with regards to the minor characters, paid employment is, again, generally associated with the male rather than the female characters, so, for example, whilst Harry Richardson is a retired Colonel, his wife, Marjorie's, 'job' was as a 'force's wife'. Although, more of the *un*married female characters are represented in full-time, paid employment, often they perform domestic work, for example, Ella Pringle works as Patrick's housekeeper, whilst Miss Lambe works as Daniel's housekeeper.

[3] Thus, whilst Anna would prefer to work as a language teacher, she stays with translating because teaching is, "[n]ot invisible enough" (Trollope, 1991: 5).

[4] This represents a break with generic conventions as identified by Philips since, she argues, usually in an Aga-Saga, the heroine discovers that she, "cannot 'find herself' outside the family unit" and, inevitably, returns to it of her own volition (Philips, 1996: 53).

[5] A second, and less marked, contrast is established when the new rector's wife, Dorothy Farmer changes the sitting-room to the extent that it becomes, "almost unrecognisable" (Trollope, 1991: 234). Following these change the room is described with words which connote both tidiness and sterility, in such a way that the latter seems to be an inevitable result of the former. The room is "newly painted" and "trimly furnished" and has only one picture, "a *quie*t landscape hanging *dead centre* over the fireplace" (ibid., emphasis added). Moreover, the plants are arranged in a line. There is no colour or vibrancy, qualities which the text values, as I illustrated earlier in this chapter in my discussion of Anna's appearance.

[6] Moreover, the use of repetition in "two matching *plates* (not Rectory *plates*)" stressing as it does that these are 'alien' plates, emphasises that both they and their contents constitute an uninvited and unwanted invasion of Anna's fridge (Trollope, 1991: 138).

[7] It is also worth commenting that this phrasing seems to imply that only paid employment is 'work' and that looking after a baby is not.

[8] For example, the politics of each author might have determined her stance on gender power relations. Alternatively, she might have been motivated to adopt her own particular perspective by commercial considerations.

[9] However, the decision about which text is more subversive is up for discussion and depends on the reader.

Chapter 7: Case Study Three: The Soap Queen

Introduction

In Chapters 5 and 6 I made Third Wave Feminist Analyses of two literary texts and argued that one of the advantages of this approach is that it allows for the exploration of both a 'high' art form, the 'literary' novel; and a popular cultural form, the Aga-Saga. Here I suggest a further advantage of Third Wave Feminist Analysis, which is that, although this approach is rooted in a feminist literary critical tradition, it is versatile enough to be used to examine other types of text than novels. I support this assertion by exploring the figure of the Soap Queen, which I posit as a textual mediation of femininity (see p.76 above). The literary critical background of Third Wave Feminist Analysis provides analytical tools which assist an exploration of a significant aspect of the context within which the Soap Queen appears, the television Soap Opera, since these tools can be used to consider the generic, narrative conventions of that form, a point to which I return shortly. However, since the TV Soap is a visual medium, a broader approach is needed to encompass an exploration of other signifiers, or carriers of meaning, than genre and narration. Later in this chapter I outline in more detail my decision to focus on one particular visual signifier, the Soap Queen's appearance, which is characterised by an exaggerated and overtly constructed femininity. However, here I note that, essentially, I emphasise her appearance because this not only reinforces and subverts discourses of a particular kind of femininity, in a similar way to *A Thousand Acres* and *The Rector's Wife*, but, also, because, unlike these novels, it destabilises constructions of masculinity and, moreover, threatens what Halberstam terms, "the binarism of homo/heterosexuality" (Halberstam, 1999: 131/2).

The additional interpretive tools I adopt here in order to make these claims are taken from a model of semiotics, loosely based on that suggested by Bakhtin (1965) who contends that all signs, including visual signs, carry meaning. Such a model, therefore, not only acknowledges that genre and narration are signifiers but, also, allows the analyst to move on to an exploration of visual signifiers as an important conveyor of meaning.[1] Moreover, Bakhtin's paradigm fits well with a Third Wave

Feminist Analysis, since, just as this latter approach accepts Foucault's contention that meaning is shifting, Bakhtin, too, argues that the meaning of signs is not fixed. Just as he suggests that forms other than the novel are capable of evolution and can become "novelized", Bakhtin also contends that signs, too, are capable of development and change (see p.57 above). However, although the meanings of signs change over time, at whatever stage of their development signs are read, they should never be interpreted ahistorically, since signs continue to carry the meanings associated with them in earlier historical periods and, thus, cannot be fully comprehended without an understanding of these earlier significations. Again, this tallies with the one of premises on which a Third Wave Feminist Analysis is built, since I argued earlier that a full interpretation of linguistic forms depends on social context, including background knowledge (see p.52 above). This understanding of the importance of shared cultural information was evident in the exploration of the two novels, when I suggested that a comprehensive interpretation of these books required some awareness of the two texts on which they were based: *King Lear* and *Madame Bovary*. Moreover, I also indicated that interpretation was facilitated by situating *A Thousand Acres* and *A Rector's Wife* within a relatively recent, feminist tradition of a subversive, re-working of long-standing narratives (see p.132 above).

Here, I suggest that a comprehensive reading of the Soap Queen, a visual, rather than a linguistic text, also requires a certain amount of background knowledge. Thus, in discussing the Soap Queen, I use Bakhtin's model of semiotics in a similar way to that adopted by Rowe (1995) to explore the heroine (or, perhaps more accurately, anti-heroine) Roseanne, in the sitcom of the same name. Rowe focuses on Roseanne's,

> use of comic conventions diachronically, to locate her in the *history* of a form, genre or topos as part of an ongoing working and re-working of comedic conventions that continue in Roseanne's television sitcom, her standup routine, and the very persona she has constructed (Rowe, 1995: 51).

In a similar way, I locate the role of the Soap Queen within a brief consideration of the conventions of the English TV soap. This assists not only an exploration of the generic, narrative conventions of the form but, also, the extent to which these both create and delimit possible meanings. However, I take a broader approach than Rowe's and also encompass a consideration of the Soap Queen's clothing and her other external displays of femininity, which I categorise as types of "vestimentary codes"; in other words, I define her costume as a sign system (Garber, 1992: 161). As Garber notes, such codes, "speak in a number of registers" and in my ensuing discussion, by decoding "which set[s] of referents [are] in play" in the Soap Queen's attire, I consider what this costume articulates about both gender and sexuality (ibid.). Firstly, I suggest that it invokes the concept of homovestism, that is, I argue that the Soap Queen adopts an exaggeratedly feminine costume and takes on the appearance of a sort of "'female female impersonator'" (Garber, 1992: 280). Additionally, I propose that a number of further, extra-textual referents are invoked simultaneously: the Drag Queen; the female bodybuilder; and the lipstick lesbian. However, before exploring this range of referents and considering how they inform what the Soap Queen expresses about gender and sexuality, I begin by locating the Soap Queen in a brief history of her form, Soap Opera, with a particular emphasis on its generic and narrative conventions.

Soap Opera

Soap Opera originated in 1930s' America as a series of daytime programmes which were sponsored by washing-powder manufacturers. Defining it currently is not necessarily a straight-forward process.[2] However, for the purposes of this discussion I take Soap Opera to be a popular television or radio melodrama.[3] It combines a concentration on emotions with, "various stylistic devices, particularly those associated with excess" and I return to this theme of excess in my ensuing discussion of Soap Queens (Bonner, 1992(b): 191). A Soap Opera is shown in at least weekly episodes and is not only episodic but also repetitive (see Brunsdon, 1989). Although the storylines are "endless", yet they are still "organised" (Geraghty, 1991: 11). Soaps are broadcast at peak viewing times and, "the genre... has expanded its occupancy of prime time

television" during the last twenty years (Bonner, 1992(b): 192). However, just as the Aga-Saga has attained popularity, without necessarily being assured of a serious engagement from its readers and critics (see p.131 above), so, too, Soaps have achieved a wide, popular audience, only to be "much maligned" (Bonner, 1992(b): 191). A further similarity with the Aga-Saga is that another defining feature of the Soap Opera is that it is associated with women. As with the Aga-Saga, this association seems to originate in the predominantly domestic storylines and settings. Moreover, just as the Aga-Saga is deemed to be a 'women's genre' written with a female readership in mind (see p.131 above), most of the viewers of Soap Operas are women. Finally, while the main protagonist of the Aga-Saga is, generally, female, Soap Operas feature a range of female characters. I now expand this suggestion that the Soap Opera can also be defined as a 'woman's genre' and, in so doing, I refer to a range of contemporary British Soaps, with a primary focus on *Coronation Street*.

Many commentators have defined TV soap operas as a 'woman's genre': as Ros Jennings has noted, "the concern in soap operas with interpersonal relationships, emotion and character has led to much theorisation of its feminine mode of address and its specific targeting of a female audience" (Jennings, 1998: 3). Christine Geraghty also describes Soaps as, "one of the litmus tests of the 'feminine'" (Geraghty, 1991: 40).[4] In support of this assertion she quotes one male viewer who stated, "'it's not manly to talk about soaps'" and it is as a response to such attitudes that many British soaps have made specific attempts to attract more male viewers (ibid.). The makers of *Eastenders*, for example, have focused a number of their episodes on male characters and what might be defined as 'male issues' such as impotence and "Viagra"; male domestic violence, from the perspective of the perpetrator rather than the victim; and how divorce affects father/child relationships.[5] Nevertheless, despite these innovations, Geraghty argues that the traditional framework that has attracted a female dominated audience is still apparent and that one of the main elements of this is a focus on family life. She suggests that this focus provides, "dramatic moments - marriage, birth, divorce, death - and the more day-to-day exchanges of quarrels,

alliances and dilemmas which make up the fabric of the narrative" (Geraghty, 1991: 41). In short, "[s]oaps offer a continually shifting kaleidoscope of emotional relationships" (ibid.).

A further element which has been suggested as a defining feature of the Soap has been its, "wide spectrum of female characters" (Geraghty, 1991: 17). For example, Marion Jordan classified the women in *Coronation Street* by the range of positions they hold including, "grandmother types, married women, [and] 'marriageable women' breaking down the latter into 'mature sexy women', 'spinsterly types' and young women" (cited in Geraghty, 1991: 17). Jordan's classification of the female characters in *Coronation Street* is largely accurate; there are, however, problems with Geraghty's assertion that these characters represent a broad range of female characters since, as the references to marital status imply, these characters are usually heterosexual. Additionally, when lesbian characters are introduced in to soaps they rarely curtail the dominantly heterosexual balance of the programmes, since often their role is characterised by two other phenomena. Firstly, as Ros Jennings' ethnographic study of lesbian soap viewers highlights, the appearance of the lesbian characters often conforms to heterosexual, rather than lesbian, notions of femininity: one respondent noted that Beth Jordache of Channel 4's *Brookside* does not, "look like a dyke" as, "she is so conventionally feminine" (Jennings, 1998: 7).[6] Secondly, as Nickie Hastie (1994/5) has pointed out, when lesbian characters are introduced, scriptwriters often fail to develop their storylines or their characters and thus their presence in the programmes is short-lived. For example, Hastie draws attention to *Emmerdale's* Zoe, "who discovered her lesbianism in Summer 1993. After a couple of coming out scenes and a visit to a gay club in Leeds, the scriptwriters seemed unable to decide what to do with her. There was little mention of Zoe's sexuality again until November 1994" (Hastie, 1994/5: 32).[7] Whilst accurate at the time, more recent developments in *Emmerdale* mean that Hastie's assertions need some modification. Since Hastie's article was published, Zoe has figured in *Emmerdale* much more with the storyline, at times, focusing on her relationship with a younger woman and the question of whether

they should have a child. Another exception to Hastie's claims has been *Brookside's* Beth Jordache. However, Beth was 'killed off', dying in prison of a mysterious illness, leaving Zoe as the only long-standing lesbian character in a British TV soap. This plot resolution can be cited to support Hastie's subsequent assertion that, although it seems incumbent on every British soap, except *Coronation Street*, to have, or have had, a lesbian character, "these are only characters who may all too soon disappear from our TV screens" (Hastie, 1994/5: 35).

Not only are the female characters in TV soaps usually heterosexual, they are also, and yet more specifically, usually working class, white, British and able-bodied. Of course, there are some exceptions to this assertion. *Brookside* makes class distinctions amongst the characters in obvious, perhaps clichéd ways, such as through contrasting use of accents; the presence or absence of books in the characters' homes; and their listening to either classical or popular music. Many programme makers are beginning to introduce more racial diversity but the makers of *Coronation Street* have been the least active in this area, although some changes are apparent. Fiona, a young Black British woman, became one of the most prominent women in the programme and was portrayed in a number of positive ways as a strong, independent-minded woman, successfully running her own hair-dressing business and, later, combining her work with bringing up her son, although this positioning was undermined by her persistent mishandling of her personal relationships. Moreover, she has now left the series.[8] Additionally, since there are few disabled women in soaps, the paradigm of femininity therein appears to be, not merely sited in family life and personal relationships, but sited specifically in white, working-class, able-bodied, heterosexual family life and personal relationships.[9] Thus, the textual construction of femininity here appears to locate it within the normative family that I discussed in Chapter 4.[10] To this extent, then, the representation of 'the family' is similar to that found in *A Thousand Acres* and *The Rector's Wife*. Yet, this normative familial femininity is not the only construction of possible modes of femininity offered by Soaps. As Geraghty notes, Soaps include "an usually large number of economically self-sufficient women"

who are, "seen to be capable in the business world" (Geraghty, 1991: 57 and 56). Whilst, as working class characters, this participation within the labour market might be an economic necessity, yet their depiction in paid employment in the public sphere is significant as offering an alternative construction of femininity to that which is rooted in Victorian domestic ideals, an alternative which women viewers may wish to take up. I now focus one particular type of these economically self-sufficient and capable characters: the Soap Queen. However, before developing these arguments about the subversive potential of the Soap Queen, firstly, I define the term itself.

The Soap Queen

A Soap Queen is a mature, overtly heterosexual, working-class woman who appears in the majority of episodes of one particular soap opera. In British Soaps to date Soap Queens have all been white and able-bodied. At the time of writing, current Soap Queens include Peggy Mitchell, played by Barbara Windsor in *Eastenders*, and Rita Sullivan, formerly Fairclough, played by Barbara Knox in *Coronation Street*. Former Soap Queens in *Coronation Street* include Elsie Tanner, played by Pat Phoenix, and Bet Lynch, later Bet Gilroy, played by Julie Goodyear; and in *Eastenders*, Angie Watts played by Anita Dobson. Newcomers to a series or young women cannot be Soap Queens, although they can have the makings of one. For example, Patsy Palmer who used to play Bianca Butcher in *Eastenders*, was described as having, "the potential to join the legendary soap queens" (Jackson, 1997/8: 22).

In addition to being, within their own socio-economic groups, successful business women, Soap Queens are also strong minded, independent thinking, straight speaking women. They are often portrayed as 'strong but vulnerable'. This sense of strength is captured by the comedian Jenny Eclair, who compares her own on-stage persona as "a battling blonde" with the Soap Queen (Eclair, Pers. Comm., 1999). The Soap Queens' vulnerability is often sited in their emotional life, since Soap Queens usually have a long string of disastrous heterosexual relationships behind them. By contrast to the temporary nature of their romantic relationships, Soap Queens often

maintain and sustain long-standing relationships with children, although this rarely occurs within a normative family.[11] They are further distanced from normative femininity by their appearance, which, as I have already noted, is characterised by excess and an exaggerated, overtly constructed femininity. This image leads Birch to position the Soap Queen as a, "female clown" who is, "overdressed and over represents the body" (Birch, 1997: 40). However, other commentators define her as glamorous: Michael Atavar describes Rita as, "a goddess of glamour" (*Celluloid Icons: Soap Queens*, 1996); another commentator describes Elsie Tanner as, "the strongest woman; the sexiest woman" (ibid.); whilst Tina Jackson summarised Soap Queens generally as, "the Elizabeth Taylors of the working-class screen, battling personal and on-screen heartbreak with defiant, feminine glamour and great dignity" (Jackson, 1997/8: 22). I suggested earlier, with reference to Skeggs, that glamour is one of a range of feminine performances that women make, "which have... implications for their subjective constructions" (see p.100 above). When considering the example of the Soap Queen, I will use Skegg's position to argue that, since the Soap Queen's glamorous appearance is excessive, relying as it does on a great deal of make-up, hair dye and brightly coloured, tight-fitting clothes, it constructs her as feminine and, thus, she offers women a textual mediation of femininity which they may, wittingly or unwittingly, adopt. However, and paradoxically, the very excessive nature of this glamour highlights the constructed nature of gender itself. Moreover, through its invocation of the Drag Queen, the female bodybuilder and the lipstick lesbian the Soap Queen's glamour also simultaneously subverts masculinity and the homo/heterosexual polarity, as I now illustrate by discussing the character who best epitomises the Soap Queen: Bet, of *Coronation Street*.

Bet's appearance is clearly carefully and elaborately constructed. She uses what is obviously 'bottle blonde' hair dye; a hairpiece; false eyelashes; and a great deal of make-up, often in bold colours, such as bright blue eyeshadow and fuchsia pink lipstick. She wears large, costume jewellery and this is often done with a sense of fun and/or irony; for example, at Christmas she often wears Christmas tree baubles as ear-

rings. A similarly sense of irony is created by her use of a cigarette holder in an affected, highly-self-conscious way, akin to the manner adopted by Noël Coward. Bet also regularly wears an animal print fabric, and fake leopard skin has become something of a trade mark for her. She usually wears very high stiletto heels and tight-fitting clothes underpinned by underwear which distorts the shape of her body to give an exaggerated curviness. She rarely appears without all of these trappings, as is usual for the Soap Queen. Her sporadic appearances without make-up, or at least, with only 'natural' make-up, and in dressing gown and hair curlers signals times of great personal and emotional trauma (Esther Sonnet, Pers. Comm., 1997). This occasional lapse contradicts Jackson's assertion that Soap Queens, "never let their image slip, even when their hearts are breaking" (Jackson, 1997/8: 22). However, notwithstanding the occasional lapse, the Soap Queen usually presents an excessively glamorous appearance and this can be interpreted as marking her, at one and the same time, as both feminine and masculine, heterosexual and lesbian and I now explain how these paradoxical categorisations can be attributed to the Soap Queen, beginning with reference to the notion of homovestism. Whereas transvestism can be defined as dressing in the clothes deemed within the society in which one lives as appropriate for the 'opposite sex', homovestism is dressing in the clothes deemed appropriate for one's own biological sex, but doing so in an exaggerated, even parodic way.

The female 'female' impersonator

Just as Garber (1992) suggests that Mae West's homovestism categorises her as a "female 'female' impersonator", I have argued that the Soap Queen, too, is a "female 'female' impersonator" (see p.178 above). By this, I mean that the Soap Queen exemplifies Joan Riviere's argument that there is no distinction between "genuine womanliness" and a facsimile or "'masquerade'" of womanliness; "they are the same thing" (Riviere, 1929 cited in Garber, 1992: 355). In other words, "[t]he woman constructed by culture is... already an impersonation. Womanliness *is* mimicry, *is* masquerade" (Garber, 1992: 355). Riviere's notion of masquerade has been suggested as applicable to all women who conform to a particular dominant definition of a

feminine appearance. For example, Lynne Carter, a female impersonator, argues that, "'women always wear a mask. It's made of cosmetics and fashion'" (Carter, 1971 cited in Garber, 1992: 280). Thus, the Soap Queen's adoption of cosmetics and fashion, which Benstock categorises as decorative, auxiliary, and inessential stylistic flourishes, can be read as disseminating a textual discourse which reinforces, even endorses, a stereotypically feminine appearance (see p.76 above). However, the appearance of the 'ordinary' woman, whilst a construct, has, by its very ordinariness, by its omnipresence, become a normative version of femininity and, thus, this is a construction rendered almost invisible. By contrast, the Soap Queen's exaggerated, excessive femininity, draws attention to itself and, in so doing, signals that what the TV Soap viewer is watching is, "a sign of the constructedness of 'woman'" (Garber, 1992: 280). Therefore, for some, although not all viewers, the Soap Queen's glamorous femininity will not function to reinforce this type of femininity, rather it reveals it as an artifice and, in so doing, exposes the falsity of essentialist definitions which site femininity as inherent within women (see p.76 above). However, as I argued earlier, in order to make a comprehensive interpretation of the Soap Queen, it is not enough to read her in isolation in this way. Rather, the interpretation needs to be expanded by reference to a certain amount of background knowledge and, as I suggested earlier in this chapter, the three most significant extra-textual features which need to be considered here are the Drag Queen; the female bodybuilder and the lipstick lesbian.[12] These are all invoked by the Soap Queen, since they adopt a similarly excessive costume to hers, and her appearance recalls theirs. I begin by considering the Drag Queen in order to reveal what a comparison of these two textual mediations of femininity (the Drag Queen and the Soap Queen) can reveal about the significance and signification of the Soap Queen.

The female impersonator

Just as the Soap Queen's excessive glamour invokes the notion of homovestism, it also invokes the notion of transvestism, since it echoes the image of the Drag Queen who often adopts a similar costume.[13] For example, Danny La Rue, who has appeared as a Drag Queen for over forty years, "sweeps on stage in... red velvet, white fur and

sparkles... a rhinestone-studded gown" (Gardner, 2000: 12). Moreover, he "drip[s] diamonds and lay[s] on the glamour with a trowel" (Gardner, 2000: 13).[14] Whether a Drag Queen is trying to 'pass' or whether, as in the example of La Rue, "you can still quite clearly see the male in the female", the result is that a biological male is 'doing' femininity (Gardner, 2000: 13).[15] The significance of this is discussed by Judith Butler (1990) and I now consider how her work can assist an interpretation of both the Drag Queen and the Soap Queen.

Butler's work is rooted in speech act theory, developed by John Austin in *How To Do Things With Words* (Austin, 1962 cited in Ehrlich, 2000(b): 457).

> Austin argues that certain types of verbs performative verbs such as *promise, bet, name*) do not merely describe or report a state of affairs, but instead have the capacity to perform actions when uttered under appropriate circumstances (e.g. 'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*' as uttered when smashing a bottle against the ship's stern) (Ehrlich, 2000(b): 457).

Butler adopts and adapts this concept of performativity to propose that, "gender is performative: it is not a trait that individuals possess, but rather is produced by way of the particular kinds of acts individuals perform" (Ehrlich, 2000(b): 457). Thus, as I noted earlier, in her work on the Drag Queen, Butler argues that his/her performance, "suggests that gender is a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real" (see p.99 above). This suggestion occurs because, "his/her performance destabilises the very distinction between the natural and the artificial, depth and surface, inner and outer through which discourse about genders almost always operates" (Butler, 1990: viii).

It can be argued that a similar process arises from the Soap Queen's performance. I have already suggested through the discussion of homovestism that the external marker of excessive glamour displayed on the Soap Queen's body is a

"discursive means" of signalling her femininity (Butler, 1990: 136). However, I also argued that the excessiveness of her appearance also signals the constructed nature of this type of femininity. Because of her resemblance to the Drag Queen, the Soap Queen further acts as a reminder that this feminine "essence or identity" that her outer appearance, "purport[s] to express" is a "fabrication", since it is "manufactured and sustained" only through the external markers (ibid.). Thus, there is a suggestion that the body, "has no ontological status from the various acts which constitute its reality" (ibid.). In other words, the Drag Queen's costume and, by association, the Soap Queen's costume, "signifies the absent or phantom body. Paradoxically, the body here is no body, and nobody, the clothes without the Emperor" (Garber, 1992: 374). Because Butler understands the body as having no ontological status, she also argues that,

> if the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity (ibid.).

Thus, Butler argues that gender has no independent existence but is merely an illusion created by external displays of masculinity or femininity and within her paradigm, therefore, both the Drag Queen and the Soap Queen exemplify performative femininity.

However, whilst I broadly accept Butler's arguments, there are two elements which need modification within a Third Wave Feminist Analysis. Firstly, whereas Butler suggests that, "the subversion of embodied norms through the agency of performing differently, deliberately transgressing expectations - as for example in drag.... - is... intentional", I contend that this is not necessarily the case (Price and Shildrick, 1999: 414). As I argued earlier, the process of taking up a gender position may be either conscious or unwitting, rational or irrational (see p.96 above). Thus,

whilst one Soap Queen or Drag Queen might be making a conscious statement on the performative nature of gender, others will not necessarily be doing so. For example, a Soap Queen might dress as she does on screen since she believes that her clothing reinforces some aspect of characterisation, whilst the Drag Queen may have adopted his/her costume simply as a way of earning a living.[16] Secondly, whilst Butler argues that "a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies", I suggest that gender may also become embodied, although this makes it no less a construct; as Butler herself suggests, the body is constituted by a range of operations or processes (see p.187 above). As I argued earlier, gender (as well as, for example, class/race/sexuality/age) is not only practised by the body but, also, becomes embodied, both mentally and physically. Discourses of gender may become embodied in obvious and tangible physical ways or in less evident, but no less significant, ways, such as enduring mental and physical predilections. However, this is not to suggest that the embodiment of femininity can be seen to be an essentialist notion. As I argued earlier, essentialism is premised on a belief in unchanging essences and an essentialist conception understands femininity as a fixed quality, inherent within women and also unique to them (see p.87 above). In contrast, I am suggesting that femininity is a social construct, a set of discourses which can alter female *and* male bodies in both permanent and temporary ways.

In conclusion, the similarity between the Soap Queen and the Drag Queen underlines the inadequacy of essentialist conceptualisations of femininity; if different femininities can be enacted, by either women or men, this possibility undercuts the argument for a, "pure or original femininity, a female essence" (Fuss, 1989: 2). Thus, whilst a consideration of the Soap Queen in isolation counters essentialist definitions of femininity which site it as inherent within women, considering the Soap Queen alongside the Drag Queen also troubles essentialist tendencies to position femininity as unique to women (see p.87 above). As this last observation suggests, in this discussion of the Soap Queen's invocation of homovestism and transvestism, I have focused on the ways in which she simultaneously reinforces and subverts a type of glamorous

femininity. In the next section I turn my attention to the Soap Queen's invocation of masculinity which, I will argue, occurs because her appearance is similar to that of the female bodybuilder.

The Female Bodybuilder

I have suggested that the Soap Queen's appearance recalls that of the female bodybuilder because the "high glamour, overdone and overplayed" of the latter resembles that of the former (Coles, 1999: 447). Just as the Soap Queen is often associated with 'bottle blonde' hair dye and a great deal of make-up, often in bold colours, such as bright blue eyeshadow and fuchsia pink lipstick, the female bodybuilder is generally characterised by, "[b]right, heavy make up and abundant (preferably bouffant) hair... almost invariably bleached blonde" (Coles, 1999: 447).[17] Moreover, both have an overstated body shape. However, whilst the Soap Queen's body is corseted into an exaggerated, even parodic, female curviness, the female bodybuilder's body has been exercised into a highly muscled form and, during its display in competition, it is "pumped and flexed" into "a threatening sight" (Coles, 1999: 446). As Coles observes, whilst the female bodybuilder's glamour is associated with femininity, "muscles have been traditionally understood as symbolic of male power and... muscle is seen to be a biological given in men. Natural and real only to him, the representation of muscle is reducible only to him" (Coles, 1999: 450). Thus, biological sex (maleness) and gender (masculinity) become conflated. Consequently,

> [w]ithin this discourse of naturalised sex and gender, not only muscles and 'femininity' but muscles and women are exclusive categories. The female bodybuilder... [n]early naked on the contest stage... offers up her natural body dressed up in someone else's sex signs, not taken on, not added on, but put on (ibid.)

Because the female bodybuilder's body can be interpreted as 'dressed up' in this way, her muscles can be read as constituting "a kind of drag" (ibid.). This reading allows her subversiveness to be measured for,

> Many of the ideas we receive about the categories of male/female, masculine/feminine, set up the male/masculine as the real in our culture... If men and masculinity are seen as natural and authentic categories, then the idea of 'performing' masculinity would seem to be a contradiction in terms (ibid.).

However, as I have already suggested (male) female impersonators, through their adoption of femininity, can reveal, to some critics, "women/femininity as an artifice or construction" (ibid.). Thus, logically, when a woman impersonates men/masculinity, as the female bodybuilder does, men/masculinity can be similarly exposed as artificial, as constructions and the idea that these are somehow natural collapses.

In summary, the female bodybuilder's "overt display of muscle", strongly associated, as this is, with masculinity, destabilises constructions of masculinity (Coles, 1999: 446). By association, the same claim can be made for the Soap Queen: through her echoing of the female bodybuilder's appearance she, too, disrupts, "the supposedly fixed binaries of masculinity/femininity, male/female" and reveals them "as false, artificial" (Coles, 1999: 452). However, whilst I have argued that the Soap Queen's invocation of the female bodybuilder, similarly to her invocation of the Drag Queen, destabilises constructions of gender, in the next section I will argue that her invocation of the final extra-textual referent that I explore, the lipstick lesbian, destabilises binary constructions of sexuality.

The Lipstick Lesbian

Just as I have argued that the Soap Queen's appearance recalls that of the Drag Queen and the female bodybuilder, so, too, I now suggest that this also echoes that of the lipstick lesbian, since, as Bell *et al.* (1994) explain in "All Hyped Up And No Place To

Go", the lipstick lesbian is defined by, not only her sexuality, but also her costume which is a parody of heterosexual femininity. This costume incorporates, "a subtle mixing of heterosexual signifiers within a feminine disguise" and usually includes make-up, high heels and "feminine dress", such as a short skirt, resulting in an appearance of "hyperfemininity" (Bell *et al.*, 1994: 42).[18] Whilst the lipstick lesbian occupies, "the same everyday life spaces" as heterosexual men and women, and whilst she, "may pass as heterosexual, deriving the privileges of heterosexuality", yet Bell *et al.* wonder whether her, "presence may signify a different production of space" (Bell *et al.*, 1994: 33). This production might occur, they suggest, because the, "trappings of femininity are claimed to allow lesbians to infiltrate and destabilise apparently 'heterosexual' environments" (Bell *et al.*, 1994: 38). They argue this as within their paradigm, space is conceptualised as either heterosexual or homosexual and, "public (straight) space remains the original: the real space which gay space/ queer space copies or subverts" (Bell *et al.*, 1994: 32).

However, as Bell *et al.* suggest this destabilisation is dependent on the realisation of others than the lipstick lesbian that her enactment of femininity is parodic. In other words, "surely the lipstick lesbian only undermines the 'straight' landscape if heterosexuals are aware that she may be there" (Bell *et al.*, 1994: 42). This is significant since, in many instances, heterosexuals will *not* be aware that this hyperfeminine woman is a lesbian because the dominance of heterosexual hegemony, "means that many heterosexuals are ignorant of the changing homosexual landscape and have the arrogance not to think twice about the identities of 'straight-acting' individuals" (ibid.). Thus, Bell *et al.* suggest that any intended transgression on the part of the lipstick lesbian is meaningless if the (heterosexual) viewer does not perceive or understand this transgression. In other words, "the unquestioned nature of straight space" cannot necessarily be either undermined or disrupted by a lipstick lesbian who has simply copied that space (Bell *et al.*, 1994: 33). Thus, whilst I suggest that the Soap Queen's invocation of the lipstick lesbian is potentially subversive of the gay/straight opposition, this potential can only be realised if the reader has the requisite background knowledge,

that is, an awareness that hyperfemininity need not necessarily be an indication of heterosexuality.

However, whilst this particular suggestion of the potentially disruptive power of the Soap Queen is dependent on an informed reader, yet for such readers there is the possibility of opening up a debate about new terms which might facilitate ways of thinking beyond the boundaries. For, as Halberstam suggests, there is a need for, "new sexual vocabularies that acknowledge sexualities and genders as styles... functions and potentialities"; as, "highly elaborate and ritualistic significations" (Halberstam, 1999: 125 -126). The range of, "queer identities... guys with pussies, dykes with dicks, queer butches, aggressive femmes" and so on, indicate that, "gay/lesbian/straight simply cannot account for the range of sexual experience available" (Halberstam, 1999: 126). By way of example, she discusses the lesbian, "female to male transsexual or F2M... [to] argue that within a more general fragmentation of the concept of sexual identity, the specificity of the transsexual disappears" (Halberstam, 1999: 126). A similar point is made by Kate Bornstein, a transsexual lesbian playwright, who, "demands that her audience read her not as a man or woman, or lesbian or heterosexual, but as some combination of presumably incompatible terms" (Halberstam, 1999: 131). Natasha Walter implicitly supports Bornstein's demands when she writes about Del LaGrace Volcano, formerly Della Grace.[19] Walter describes Del as, "shifting... from feminine woman to butch woman to feminine man" and observes, "the funny thing is the longer we speak to one another the harder it is for me to see Del as a man. I feel that there is a womanliness about Del that will never go away, despite the deep voice and beard" (Walter, 1999: 7 and 4). Although in positioning Del's 'womanliness' as enduring, Walter may be guilty of essentialism, yet other elements of her language use undercut binary constructions of sex and gender: Del is a 'feminine man' who remains 'womanly', despite his 'manly' body. In essence, as Halberstam suggests both, "the body dressed up in its gender or surgically constructed in the image of its gender... threaten the binarism of homo/heterosexuality by performing and fictionalizing gender" (Halberstam, 1999: 131/2). In summary, the need for less restricted ways of thinking about not only gender

but, also, sexuality is clear. Whilst the Soap Queen *per se* can be read as destabilising dichotomous constructions of gender, it is only by considering her alongside the lipstick lesbian, an extra-textual referent, that it is also possible to interpret her as destabilising dichotomous constructions of sexuality.

Conclusion

I argued earlier, with reference to Smith, that any intent behind the process of presenting a display of femininity by marking it on the body needs to be obscured, since, "if the interpretive circles of the discourse of femininity are to interpret feminine appearance as a document of a woman's inner reality" then "[a]ppearances must express character or personality rather than testify to the art of the maker" (Smith, 1990: 200). The excessiveness of the Soap Queen's glamour means that her artfulness is not discretely obscured, rather it draws attention to itself. Consequently, her construction of femininity cannot be read as an expression of an inherent femininity. However, I have also argued that this is not the extent of the Soap Queen's subversive potential. By drawing on a background knowledge of the culture in which the Soap Queen is both produced and read, it was also possible to observe that there are at least three extra-textual referents to be found in the Soap Queen's image: the Drag Queen; the female bodybuilder; and the lipstick lesbian. These all, in different ways, expand the possibilities of subversive interpretation. The invocation of the Drag Queen can be understood as reinforcing the anti-essentialist reading of the Soap Queen since, by highlighting the performative nature of gender the Drag Queen indicates not only that gender is artificial but, also, that femininity can be enacted by any individuals, irrespective of their biological sex. The resemblance to the female bodybuilder destabilises masculinity in a similar way, as the female bodybuilder's assumes the masculine 'costume' of muscles, while the resemblance to the lipstick lesbian can, for a knowing reader, destablise binary constructions of sexuality. Within this Third Wave Feminist Analysis it was important, therefore, to focus on the Soap Queen's appearance because this enabled a more complex and more subversive reading than was possible by

taking a more traditional, feminist literary critical approach, focussing on generic and narrative conventions alone.

Footnotes

[1] This flexibility, of course, also allows this thesis to move away from a consideration of language as the most significant meaning carrying system, which was the implicit premise on which the analyses in the last two chapters were based.

[2] For a discussion of some of the difficulties see Geraghty, 1991.

[3] "Melodrama" in this context may be defined as a form, "with romantic and sensational plot elements, often unsubtly acted" (*Hutchinson Softback Encyclopedia*, 1991: 541).

[4] Also see Annette Kuhn, 1984 and Charlotte Brunsdon, 1997.

[5] *Eastenders* began in 1985 and is set in a predominantly working-class area of East London.

[6] *Brookside* is a more recent Soap: it began in 1982 and is set in a mainly lower-middle class cul-de-sac on a modern housing estate in Liverpool. It may be that this lesbian commentator's observation about *Brookside* character Beth Jordache is heterosexist, as it seems to rely on an assumption that a dyke's appearance will necessarily be butch.

[7] Unlike the other three soaps mentioned here, *Emmerdale* is set in a rural community. It began in 1972, when it was called *Emmerdale Farm*, and is produced by Yorkshire TV.

[8] Subsequently, a young Asian female character, Nita Desai, has been brought into the series. However, whilst the representation of her is positive in many ways (she is ambitious and intelligent, for example) yet it also relies on stereotyping since her family

owns *The Street's* corner shop.

[9] In *Coronation Street*, for example, there was, recently, one older, female character who was a wheelchair user, Maud. However, currently, there are no female characters with physical disabilities in the series.

[10] Geraghty has argued that this construction is contradicted somewhat by the large numbers of women characters who are living on their own or without a male partner. For example, at the time of writing, in *Coronation Street* the single women include Rita, Natalie and Emily. However, her argument is undercut somewhat by the numbers of these single women who are actively looking for a heterosexual relationship that will lead to co-habitation or marriage.

[11] Of the five Soap Queens I have mentioned only Peggy and Elsie had any birth children who lived with them. As a young woman Bet had a son whom she gave up for adoption but during her short lived marriage to Alec Gilroy, and subsequently, she takes on the role of unofficial step-mother role to Alec's granddaughter, Vicky. Angie Watts' only child, Sharon, was adopted. Finally, Rita fostered a number of children during her marriage to Len Fairclough and then, during a subsequent relationship with Alan Bradley, became an unofficial step-mother to his daughter, Jenny. Currently, Rita takes an informal, maternal role to her younger friend Sally and plays a grandmotherly role to Sally's two young daughters. Furthermore, one of her foster children, another character called Sharon, recently returned to help her in running her newsagents' shop.

[12] Again, this is not to suggest that all readers will invoke these extra-textual features. Nor do I suggest that those readers who do invoke them necessarily do so in the same ways. As I have stressed throughout this thesis, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis is always partial and what I offer here is only one way of reading the Soap Queen.

[13] This similarity is heightened because Drag Queens, aware of this likeness, also

emulate Soap Queens. The columnist John Lyttle comments, "You see Drag Queens doing dialogue from Coronation Street in their acts... I sometimes think I hear the characters in Coronation Street talking like... Drag Queens, usually the women" (*Celluloid Icons: Soap Queens*, 1996). This marked similarity was reflected in a comment made by another commentators in the same programme who said of *Coronation Street*, "... we can see the jokes, *we see the Drag Queens*" (ibid., emphasis added). Thus, at times, there is at least some slippage, and possibly a conflation, between the Soap Queen and the Drag Queen.

[14] In the 1960s, La Rue, "was Britain's highest-paid entertainer... He could single-handedly fill a West End Theatre for months. He was the first drag act ever to appear in a Royal Variety show in front of the Queen" (Gardner, 2000: 12). Now in his seventies, he continues to perform, although without attaining the same level of success that he achieved earlier in his career.

[15] Garber defines the Drag Queen who declines to try and pass (for example, by allowing, "the discontinuity of hairy chest or moustache to clash with a revealingly cut dress") as a "radical drag queen" (Garber, 1992: 49).

[16] It is also possible that the Soap Queen might not even have any control over her on-screen image, since costume decisions might be taken by the producer without any consultation with cast members.

[17] Coles notes the extent to which this image is adopted by female bodybuilders by observing that "Out of the nine top winners at the 1988 Ms Olympia contest seven were blonde" (Coles, 1999: 447). Moreover, she suggests that this type of appearance has become normalised and given insitutional support when she comments that, "[m]anuals for competitors are full of suggestions for bleaching, perming, tinting and complete makeovers" (ibid.).

[18] What has here been termed the lipstick lesbian style seems to be a parody of a very narrow definition of heterosexual femininity.

[19] Del is a biological woman who 'lives as a man' and has changed her body in a number of ways, for example, testosterone treatments are responsible for her/his deepened voice, muscle development and beard growth.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

This thesis has attempted to define and put into practice a Third Wave Feminist Analysis, a complex approach which is rooted in first and second wave feminism and which acknowledges the important role these two movements have played in social progress. Third Wave Feminist Analysis also has political aims, since it emphasises the ways in which discrimination against women is manifested in texts and contributes to feminist praxis to the extent that it exposes, resists and counters this discrimination. Thus, whilst Third Wave Feminist Analysis does not claim to be a fully constituted political movement as such, it does claim for itself the potential to be a contributory factor in cultural transformation.

This approach is also rooted in feminist literary criticism, although it does not adopt all elements of these practices unquestioningly, arguing, instead, that much of the earlier work needs to be re-evaluated. This reassessment is necessary because the contemporary context in which *A Thousand Acres, The Rector's Wife* and the Soap Queen were produced and initially read, the 1990s, was significantly more complex than that in which much of the earlier feminist literary criticism was formulated. The more complex context has, partly, been created by feminism, since whilst feminism has not eradicated all overt sexism, yet, there is now a general awareness that, in some situations, overt sexism is unacceptable. One consequence of this awareness has been that, although overt statements of sexism have sometimes been stifled, yet, unfortunately, newer forms of sexism have arisen to take their place. Moreover, anachronistic discourses continue to circulate and these may appear in texts which inter-weave them with feminist discourses. Thus, whilst often oppressive, anachronistic discourses can also appear in liberatory disguise. Both of these more subtle forms of sexism (the newer form and the older form which disguises its sexism) are often more difficult to analyse than earlier, more overt forms. Consequently, a range of analytical tools in addition to or instead of those used by earlier feminists is now required. Moreover, a certain amount of cultural knowledge of the context in which texts are read and interpreted is also needed.

As part of this concern with context, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis shows an awareness that other social practices collude with sexist statements. Therefore, it considers the cumulative effect of utterances which might seem innocuous or innocent when considered individually. Moreover, it recognises that it is not enough to consider only a text's sexism; rather, other oppressive practices such as racism, classism and homophobia must be addressed. One way that Third Wave Feminist Analysis seeks to avoid implicating itself in such oppressive practices is by manifesting an awareness that multiple readings of texts are possible. This is not only because texts are capable of generating a range of meanings but, also, because the reader plays an important role in interpreting these meanings and, therefore, different readers may make different readings of texts.

In essence, Third Wave Feminist Analysis contributes to the ongoing development of feminist theory by taking the most useful elements of the earlier work and adding in new dimensions. Thus, Third Wave Feminist Analysis retains from Anglo-American feminist literary criticism a desire to challenge the notion of the canon by exploring non-canonical texts, particularly by focusing on women writers. Like French feminist literary criticism, Third Wave Feminist Analysis focuses on language and how it constructs femininity. Moreover, it, too, works to deconstruct binary polarities and, in destabilising these, aims to unsettle the power relations between them, since it understands power not only as dispersed throughout social relations but, also, as capable of both producing and restricting possible forms of behaviour.

From Marxist Feminist Literary Criticism, Third Wave Feminist Analysis retains an awareness that texts are not discrete entities, since the society in which texts are produced exerts pressures on them and is itself influenced by the text. Moreover, it, argues that subordination has social origins and works towards a more egalitarian society. Additionally, Third Wave Feminist Analysis understands that texts are not self-sufficient and are constituted by what is absent from them, as well as by what is present in them. However, in line with Materialist Feminism, Third Wave Feminist Analysis

moves from Marxism's class bias and emphasis on economic determinism, to a focus on patriarchal systems of power, albeit with a continuing awareness of class and status differences. This combination of elements from different literary critical traditions has assisted this thesis in attaining a focus on language, discourse and representation, whilst also developing a political perspective which looks to material oppression. In essence, this hybrid approach results in a materially grounded form of discourse analysis which suggests not only that discourses originate in the material world but, also, that they affect that world, particularly in the ways in which they both open up and close down possible ways for women and men to be and to behave.

Finally, drawing on feminist work from other disciplines besides literary criticism assists Third Wave Feminist Analysis in its attempts to offer a complex and comprehensive interpretation of texts. For example, when this thesis explored the ways in which discourses open and close possible ways of being and behaving, it drew on poststructuralist and Marxist-feminist literary criticism for the concept of the reader who reads texts 'against the grain' and its complementary idea of the resisting reader. This combination ensured that the textual analyses offered illustrated how their women authors (or actor, in the case of the Soap Queen) can sometimes be interpreted as resisting women's oppression and sometimes read as complying with it, whether this be done wittingly or unwittingly. These contradictory readings may, individually or together, influence the reader's subjectivity and actions. However, it is also possible that the reader remains relatively uninfluenced by them.

In addition to using concepts from cultural studies, this thesis also adopted aspects of Queer Theory. These uncovered a number of transgressive readings of the Soap Queen which were not possible, for example, with a straightforward 'literary analysis' which focuses on generic conventions. However, although Third Wave Feminist Analysis understands texts as polysemic, it does not argue that the range of interpretations any text is capable of generating are infinite, nor that texts are open-ended. Consequently, this approach never loses sight of the text and as part of this

focus, it also explores a number of ways in which meaning is constrained by textual features, particularly truth status, transitivity, address to the reader and conformity to generic convention. In summary, in seeking to combine a poststructuralist perspective with a more material sense of the differences that distinguish women from one another, this thesis has taken a broad approach which focuses on the text, whilst also showing an awareness of extra-textual factors.

In summary, a Third Wave Feminist Analysis is not a theory as such; it is a set of strategies from which the analyst may pick those procedures which seem most appropriate for the texts she is exploring. However, although it is not a theory, it is underpinned by a theoretical approach; feminist discourse theory. Consequently, Third Wave Feminist Analysis conceptualises femininity as a set of discourses and understands discourses as encompassing every written text or spoken utterance, as well as the unwritten and unspoken rules and structures according to which texts and utterances are produced. Thus, discourses are not only disseminated in written and spoken language; they can be articulated in other forms, too. In effect, whatever signifies or has meaning is part of discourse.

In whichever form discourses appear, however, they share a common feature: their productive potential. This resides in the fact that they are not conceptualised as reflecting or representing something that exists prior to them, rather, they are responsible for producing something else, such as a statement, an idea or an effect. However, although discourses are potentially productive, they are also restrained in this process because, as I argued in the previous paragraph, discourses are informed by rules and structures and these constrain this process of production. Finally, although a Third Wave Feminist Analysis acknowledges that discourses are socially, institutionally and historically specific, it also realises that this specificity is not absolutely precise because discourses can be activated in circumstances where their use is anachronistic.

In essence, although discourses are neither everlasting, omnipotent, nor omnipresent, yet they are influential, since they can shape what we may all experience, know and desire and, through that, they may impact upon our behaviour, too. Although this influence is complex, it is likely that more people will be influenced by dominant discourses than by counter-discourses, since the former are more likely to have achieved naturalisation and, therefore, a degree of systematicity within a range of dominant discourses may be evident. Moreover, the power relations which result from such discourses can be characterised by a clear logic and decipherable aims and objectives. However, discourse theory is not a conspiracy theory and, therefore, Third Wave Feminist Analysis does not suggest that tactics which gain power for individuals or groups of individuals were necessarily invented by them. Rather, Third Wave Feminist Analysis understands power as being exercised by the *process* through which any discourse constitutes its subjects. However, this approach also acknowledges the possibility that power relations have been achieved through a conscious operation or direction, although this acknowledgment is modified by the awareness that the individuals responsible cannot control the power relationship's overall shape nor its impact.

In line with its emphasis on material impact, Third Wave Feminist Analysis argues that one significant way in which discourses manifest their power is by the effect they have on the body. Third Wave Feminist Analysis challenges the givenness, the fixity of the 'natural body' by arguing that there is an interplay between text and physicality which results in a body in process; a body which is never fixed or solid, but always multiple and fluid. Thus, the body is constituted by discourses which may become embodied in clearly visible and measurable physical ways but also may become embodied psychically, as enduring dispositions of the mind. Discourses can influence individuals in these ways either with or without their compliance or cognisance. However, the fluidity of subjectivity and the heterogeneity of discourses mean that it is hard to measure the precise extent of the influence discourses have on individuals' subjectivities. However, this influence is somewhat clearer when discourses are

embodied physically rather than psychically, since, whilst it is still difficult to point to exactly which discourses have been implicated, yet discursive impacts on the body are often both visible and measurable. In addition to discourses changing the body, they may be marked on the *outside* of that body. However, whilst appearance is marked *on* the outer body and behaviour is manifested *by* the outer body, appearance and behaviour are not distinct from embodiment, since conduct and appearance can lead to embodiment in the form of dispositions of the mind. In other words, the different performances that individuals make have implications for their subjective constructions; performing can lead to becoming.

Whether discourses of femininity are embodied, physically or psychically, or whether they are marked upon the body, the deployment of femininity is often a tactical move. Whilst the exploitation of femininity as a cultural resource gains social or material advantages, this exploitation may bring undesirable, adverse consequences, too. Moreover, even when femininity is successfully capitalised on, its value is often limited and, in many instances, lower than the value of masculinity. In the realm of the labour market this differential originates, at least to some extent, in the public/private dichotomy which identifies the private sphere with women and imbues it with stereotypical, feminine qualities and identifies the public sphere with men and imbues that with stereotypical, masculine qualities. Despite a number of challenges to this binary polarity and despite the fact that it is outdated, it continues to circulate, as was shown in this thesis's case studies.

The exploration of *A Thousand Acres* uncovered the ways in which most of the characters are assigned gender stereotyped roles within the public/private divide and, moreover, their assumption of these roles is naturalised. Furthermore, since these roles draw on long lasting discourses of femininity, I argued that this novel can be interpreted as implying an inevitability to the continuing association of femininity with the domestic realm. Additionally, the only female character who is allocated an *a*typical role in the public realm, Caroline, is represented as inept and unprofessional.

However, this normalisation of the feminine-domestic ideal is also troubled: the two supposed opposites public/private are conflated; the attempt to comply with the feminine-domestic ideal is associated with mental health problems; and the 'private' realm of the home is represented as a site of abuse.

Just as *A Thousand Acres* simultaneously bolsters and undercuts the association of femininity with the private realm, so, too, does *The Rector's Wife*. The main way in which this Aga-Saga reinforces this connection is by allocating its characters stereotypical gender roles in the workplace and in the home and, moreover, often naturalising these sexist assignments, presenting them as inevitable and irresistible. Moreover, the text offers statements which actively articulate anachronistic, gendered discourses of the public/private spheres. However, Trollope's novel is more complex than that. Whilst it does associate femininity with a nurturing maternal role, it also distances it from the feminine domestic-ideal as summarised by the maxim "cleanliness is next to godliness". Moreover, it indicates the cost that certain stereotypical gender roles exact from women, as well as offering alternative paradigms to these roles. Additionally, the utterance of anachronistic, gendered discourses is assigned to one particular character and the text itself resists colluding with his avowed sexism, partly through its construction of this character as having poor judgment. Furthermore, it blurs the boundaries between the public/private domains: both female and male characters work from home and waged work is compared to unwaged, domestic work. Moreover, the performance of paid work is revealed as dependent on the completion of unpaid, voluntary work, which is also shown to provide a vital bolster to public institutions. In turn, these institutions are shown to materially impact on the family, although this representation is undercut somewhat by a contradictory suggestion that the family unit is self-controlling. Additionally, 'private' family matters are discussed publicly, and one particular personal relationship is used to validate an intrusion into another's working-life, although this interference is not unchallenged by the text.

In summary, as a result of conducting two Third Wave Feminist Analyses, my conclusions about *The Rector's Wife* and *A Thousand Acres* are similar: both texts are simultaneously sexist and anti-sexist and the complexity of the inter-weaving of these two contradictory processes could only be revealed by the use of a complex, multi-faceted approach. However, I suggested that ultimately my particular Third Wave Feminist Analysis of *The Rector's Wife* uncovered it as the more subversive text of the two. Possibly this is because *A Thousand Acres* is so constrained by the generic conventions and expectations of its form, that its scope for subversion is also restricted. However, the Aga-Saga has less generic history to limit its possibilities and it is possible that this lack of constraint, in combination with the form's gendering, creates a space in which patriarchy may be more comprehensively critiqued.

The exploration of these two novels illustrated that one of the advantages of Third Wave Feminist Analysis is its usefulness in exploring both 'high' and popular cultural forms. The subsequent discussion of the Soap Queen further suggested that Third Wave Feminist Analysis, although rooted in a feminist literary critical tradition, is versatile enough to be used to examine other types of texts, too. Whilst the literary critical background provided tools with which to explore the generic, narrative conventions of the TV Soap, Third Wave Feminist Analysis proved to be flexible enough to accommodate approaches from other disciplines. This flexibility allowed a focus on the visual signifier of the Soap Queen's appearance. I argued that this is characterised by an exaggerated and overtly-constructed femininity. By manifesting a glamorous form of femininity, the Soap Queen can be read as reinforcing it. However, the excessiveness of this glamour means that the artfulness behind it is not discretely obscured, rather it draws attention to itself and, consequently, it is revealed as a construction of femininity, rather than an expression of a 'natural', inherent femininity. Thus, this invocation of the concept of homovestism reinforces and subverts discourses of a particular kind of femininity, as did *A Thousand Acres* and *The Rector's Wife*, albeit in different ways.

In my final case study, I also argued that the Soap Queen destabilises constructions of both masculinity and femininity, as well as binary constructions of homosexuality and heterosexuality because of her resonances with the Drag Queen, the female bodybuilder and the lipstick lesbian. These all, in different ways, expand the possibilities of subversive interpretation. The invocation of the Drag Queen reinforces the anti-essentialist reading of the Soap Queen, by highlighting the performative nature of gender and indicating that femininity can be enacted by any individuals, irrespective of their biological sex. The resemblance of the Soap Queen to the female bodybuilder destabilises masculinity in a similar way, due to the female bodybuilder's assumption of the masculine 'costume' of muscles. Finally, the resemblance to the lipstick lesbian can, for a knowing reader, destabilise binary constructions of sexuality. If a lesbian 'passes' as heterosexual she undermines the certainty of the meaning of visual signifiers.

In conclusion, I suggest that these three case studies of textual constructions of femininity all imply that discourses of femininity are fluid and varied. Women may draw on these as they make, un-make or remake their own gendered subjectivities. However, my Third Wave Feminist Analyses suggest that this process of constructing one's own femininity is not without difficulty. Whilst the adoption and deployment of femininity may be productive, the process may be problematic. How manifestations of femininity are interpreted is outside an individual woman's control, since it depends upon the interpretive repertoires that those assessing her appearance and behaviour use. However, it is not only that deploying femininity can lead to unpredicted, undesirable consequences but, also, that discourses of femininity are so intrinsically inter-woven with discourses of domesticity, that the attempt to use femininity tactically may restrict women's access into the public realms. Thus, whilst I have argued that femininity may be used tactically it seems that only an experienced and wily tactician might be able to deploy it in ways which she intends.

There are a number of implications of this Third Wave Feminist Analysis. Firstly, it is a new, more complex tool for feminist scholars to use in making textual

analysis, whether this be of written or visual texts. Whilst the texts explored here are authored by and about white, able-bodied, ostensibly heterosexual women, the approach is not intended to be useful exclusively in relation to such texts. The openness of Third Wave Feminist Analysis, both to a broad range of texts and to a diversity of theoretical approaches, should ensure its applicability to texts which feature protagonists with different identities from those explored here or by authors with other identities, too. This approach, then, can be used to explore both overt and covert sexism and the operations of femininity in a variety of texts and can also explain why these types of examination matter, since it is premised on the belief that discourses can have a material impact on people. A Third Wave Feminist Analysis may be seen as contributing to counter-discourses of femininity and, thus, may lead to changes in the construction of dominant discourses of gender, wherein masculinity and femininity become widely understood as equally valuable and not exclusively associated with either biological sex. Thus, whilst Third Wave Feminist Analysis is a tool for critically exploring the discourses which constitute sexism and femininity, it also holds within it the prospect that femininity and masculinity can be differently, and more productively, enacted in the future.

Bibliography

Abel, E. (ed.) *Writing and Sexual Difference*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1982.

Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary Of Literary Terms*, Holt-Saunder International Editions, Japan, 4th edition, 1984 (f. pub. 1941).

Achebe, Chinua, "Colonialist Criticism" in Walder, Dennis (ed.), *Literature In The Modern World: Critical essays and documents*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990 (f. pub. 1974).

Alice, Lynne, "Backlash" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Allen, Robert and Schwarz, Catherine (eds.), *The Chambers Dictionary*, Chambers Harrup Publishers, Edinburgh, 1998.

Anderson, B.S. and Zinsser, J.P., *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from pre-history to the present*, Volume 1, Penguin, London, 1990.

Ang, Ien, *Living Room Wars: Rethinking media audiences for a postmodern world*, Routledge, London, 1996.

Ang, Ien and Hermes, Joke, "Gender And/In Media Consumption" in Ang, Ien, *Living Room Wars: Rethinking media audiences for a post-modern world*, Routledge, London, 1996 (f. pub. 1991).

Atwood, Margaret, *Bluebeard's Egg*, Virago, London, 1983.

Atwood, Margaret, *Surfacing*, Virago, London, 1979 (f. pub. 1972).

Austen, Jane, *Pride And Prejudice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990 (f. pub. 1813).

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais And His World*, trans. H. Iswolsky, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984 (f. pub. 1965).

Bakhtin, Mikhail, "Toward A Methodology For The Study Of The Novel", in Walder, Dennis (ed.), *The Realist Novel*, Routledge, London, 1995.

Battersby, Christine, *Gender And Genius: Towards a feminist aesthetics*, Women's Press, London, 1989.

Baym, Nina, "The Madwoman And Her Languages: Why I don't do feminist literary theory" in Warhol, Robyn R. and Price Herndl, Diane (eds.), *Feminisms: An anthology of literary theory and criticism*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1991 (f. pub. 1984).

Beckerlegge, Gwilym and Moore, James, "Religion and Science in Context", *An Introduction to the Humanities (A103) Block 4*, The Open University, Milton Keynes, 1998.

Beddoe, Deirdre, *Back To Home And Duty: Women between the wars, 1918-1939*, Pandora, London, 1989.

Bell, David, *et al.*, "All Hyped Up And No Place To Go", in *Gender, Place And Culture: A journal of feminist geography*, Volume 1, No. 1, 1994, pp.31-4.

Benstock, Shari, *Textualising The Feminine: On the limits of genre*, University of Oklahoma Press, Oklahoma, 1991.

Bergvall, Victoria L., Bing, Janet M. and Freed, Alice F., *Rethinking Language And Gender Research: Theory and practice*, Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow, 1996.

Bing, Janet M. and Bergvall, Victoria L. "The Question Of Questions: Beyond binary thinking", in Bergvall, Victoria L., Bing, Janet M. and Freed, Alice F., *Rethinking Language And Gender Research: Theory and practice*, Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow, 1996.

Birch, Anna, "The Female Clown As The New feminist Masquerade: Or whose party is it anyway?", *Diegesis: Journal of the Association for Research in Popular Fictions*, No. 1, Winter 1997, pp.39-45.

Bonner, Frances, "Towards A Better Way Of Being: Feminist science fiction" in Bonner, Frances, *et al.* (eds.), *Imagining Women: Cultural representations and gender*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992(a).

Bonner, Frances, "Negotiating Meanings From Popular Television and Film" in Bonner, Frances, *et al.* (eds.), *Imagining Women: Cultural representations and gender*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992(b).

Bonner, Frances, *et al.* (eds.), *Imagining Women: Cultural representations and gender*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992.

Bordo, Susan, "Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the crystillization of culture" in Crowley, Helen and Himmelweit, Susan (eds.), *Knowing Women: Feminism and knowledge*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1988).

Boseley, Sarah and O'Kane, Maggie, "Dena Fleming is the latest policewoman to complain in court about sexism in the force. Many have tried to speak out and been silenced. So what are her chances? Special Investigation", *The Guardian*, 9.10.1996.

Bradby, Barbara, "Freedom, Feeling and Dancing: Madonna's songs traverse girls' talk" in Mills, Sara (ed.), *Gendering The Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1994.

Brontë, Charlotte, *Jane Eyre*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966 (f. pub. 1847).

Brooks, Ann, *Postfeminisms: Femininism, cultural theory and cultural forms*, Routledge, London, 1997.

Brownmiller, Susan, *Femininity*, Hamilton, London, 1984.

Brunsdon, Charlotte, "Texts And Audience", in Seiter, Ellen *et al.* (eds.), *Remote Control: Television audiences and cultural power*, Routledge, London, 1989.

Brunsdon, Charlotte, D'Acci, Julie and Spigel, Lynn (eds.), *Feminist Television Criticism: A reader*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997 (f. publ. 1988).

Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, Routledge, London, 1990.

Butler, Judith, *Bodies That Matter. On The Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, Routledge, London, 1993.

Cameron, Deborah, *Verbal Hygiene*, Routledge, London, 1995.

Cameron, Deborah, "Feminist Linguistic Theories" in Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998.

Carter, Angela, *The Bloody Chamber*, Virago, London, 1977.

Celluloid Icons: Soap Queens, Channel 4, 8.9.1996.

Chatman, Seymour, "Story And Narrative" in Walder, Dennis (ed.), *Literature in the Modern World: Critical essays and documents*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990.

Christian, Barbara, "The Race For Theory" in *Cultural Critique* 6 (Spring), 1987, pp.51-63.

Christie, Chris, "Theories Of Textual Determination And Audience Agency: An empirical contribution to the debate" in Mills, Sara (ed.), *Gendering The Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1994.

Cixous, Hélène, "The Newly Born Woman" in Marks, Elaine and de Courtivron Isabelle (eds.), *New French Feminisms*, Shocken, New York, 1981, translated by Liddle, Ann (f. pub. 1975).

Clarke, Edward, *Sex In Education: Or, a fair chance for girls*, J.R. Osgood, Boston, 1873.

Code, Lorraine, "Patriarchy" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000(a).

Code, Lorraine, "Sexism" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000(b).

Code, Lorraine, "Standpoint Theory" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000(c).

Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000(c).

Coles, Fen, "Feminine Charms" in Price, Janet and Shildrick, Margaret (eds.), *Feminist Theory and The Body: A Reader*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.

Cooper, Jilly, *Imogen*, London, Book Club Associates, 1979 (f. pub. 1978).

Coyle, Angela, "Sex And Skill In The Organisation Of The Clothing Industry" in McDowell, Linda, and Pringle, Rosemary, (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1982).

Creet, Julia, "Queer Theory" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Crowley, Helen and Himmelweit, Susan, "Biology, Society And The Female Body" in Crowley, Helen and Himmelweit, Susan (eds.), *Knowing Women: Feminism and knowledge*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992.

Crowley, Helen and Himmelweit, Susan (eds.), *Knowing Women: Feminism and knowledge*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992.

Curran, James, Morley, David and Walkerdine, Valerie (eds.), *Cultural Studies And Communications*, Arnold, London, 1996.

Dawson, Jill, *How Do I Look?*, Virago Press, London, 1990.

de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex,* 1949 (f. pub. in translation Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1953).

Drabble, Margaret (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Guild Publishing, London, 1985.

Eagleton, Terry, "Marxist Criticism" in Walder, Dennis (ed.), *Literature In The Modern World: Critical essays and documents*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990.

Ehrlich, Susan, "Discourse Analysis" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000(a).

Ehrlich, Susan, "Speech Act Theory" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000(b).

Exley, Helen (ed.), *The Best Of Women's Quotations*, Exley Publications, Watford, 1993.

Fairclough, Norman, *Language And Power*, Longman, London, 1989.

Faludi, Susan, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1992.

Farrell, Warren, *Why Men Are The Way They Are*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1986.

Ferrell, Robyn, "Jouissance" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Firestone, Shulamith, *The Dialectic Of Sex: The case for feminist revolution,* Women's Press, London, 1971.

Flaubert, Gustave, *Madame Bovary*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1988 (f. pub. 1857).

Foucault, Michel, "The Order Of Discourse", in Young, Robert (ed.), *Untying The Text: A post-structuralist reader*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981 (f. pub. 1970).

Foucault, Michel, *History Of Sexuality: An introduction*, Volume 1, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1978 (f. pub. 1972).

Foucault, Michel, *Discipline And Punish: The birth of the prison*, Vintage House/ Randon, New York, 1979.

Fox Keller, Evelyn, "How Gender Matters; Or, why it's so hard for us to count past two" in Kirkup, Gill, and Smith Keller, Laurie (eds.), *Inventing Women: Science, technology and gender*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1986).

Frazer, Elizabeth, "Feminist Political Theory" in Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998.

Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique*, Norton, New York, 1963.

Fuss, Diana, *Essentially Speaking - Feminism, Nature and Difference*, Routledge, London, 1989.

Garber, Marjorie, *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and cultural anxiety*, Penguin, London, 1992.

Gardner, Lyn, *The Guardian*, "I don't think God said, 'You've got to be in a frock all your life,' but I do feel I've got his support: Danny La Rue talks to Lyn Gardner", pp. 12-13, 20.12.2000.

Geraghty, Christine, *Women And Soap Opera - A study of prime time soaps*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991.

Gilbert, Sandra and Gubar, *The Madwoman In The Attic: A study of women and the literary imagination in the nineteenth century*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1979.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, "The Yellow Wallpaper", Virago, London, 1973 (f. pub. 1892).

Gittins, Diane, "What Is The Family? Is It Universal?" in McDowell, Linda, and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992.

Gledhill, Christine, *Home Is Where The Heart Is*, British Film Institute, London, 1987.

Golby, J.M. (ed.), *Culture and Society in Britain: 1850-1890; A source book of contemporary writings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986.

Goodman, Lizbeth (ed.) *Literature And Gender*, Routledge, London, 1996.

Green, Joyce, "Public/Private" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Greer, Germaine, *The Female Eunuch*, Paladin, St. Albans, 1971.

Gunew, Sneja (ed.), *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and construct*, Routledge, London, 1990.

Gutting, Gary, "Poststructuralism" in *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (no editor named), The Softback Preview, (no place of publication listed), 2000, f. pub. Routledge, London, 2000.

Habib, M. A. R., "Terry Eagleton" in Murray, Chris (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999.

Halberstam, Judith, "F2M: The making of female masculinity" in Price, Janet and Shildrick, Margaret (eds.), *Feminist Theory and The Body: A reader*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.

Hall, Stuart, "Encoding And Decoding The TV Message", CCCS pamphlet, University of Birmingham, 1973.

Halliday, M.A.K., *Functional Grammar*, Edward Arnold, London, 1985.

Hanks, Patrick, *Collins English Dictionary*, Collins, Glasgow, 1983 (f. pub. 1979).

Hastie, Nickie, "It All Comes Out In The Wash: Lesbians in soaps", in *Trouble and Strife: The radical feminist magazine*, No. 29/30, Winter 1994/5, pp.31-6 .

Hennessy, Rosemary, *Materialist Feminism And The Politics of Discourse*, Routledge, London, 1993.

Hodges, Jo, *The Girl With Brains In Her Feet*, Virago Press, London, 1998.

Holdsworth, Angela, *Out Of The Doll's House: The story of women in the twentieth century*, BBC Books, London, 1988.

Homer, Sean, "Louis Althusser" in Murray, Chris (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999.

Humm, Maggie, *The Dictionary Of Feminist Theory*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1989.

Humm, Maggie, "Feminist Literary Theory" in Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.) *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998.

Hutchinson Softback Encyclopedia, Helicon Publishing, Oxford, 1991.

Ifekwunigwe, Jayne O., *Scattered Belongings: Cultural paradoxes of "race", nation and gender*, Routledge, London, 1999.

Irigaray, Luce, *Speculum De L'autre Femme*, Editions Minuit, Paris, 1974, translated by Gill, Gillian C., *Speculum Of The Other Woman*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1995.

Jackson, Stevi, "Feminist Social Theory" in Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998 (a).

Jackson, Stevi, "Theorising Gender And Sexuality" in Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998 (b).

Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998.

Jackson, Tina, "The Secret Life Of Bianca", in *The Big Issue*, December 20 1997 to January 4 1998, pp.22-26.

Jaggar, Alison M., "Human Biology In Feminist Theory: Sexual equality reconsidered" in Crowley, Helen and Himmelweit, Susan (eds.), *Knowing Women: Feminism and knowledge*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1983).

Jaggar, Alison M. and Rothenberg, Paula S., *Feminist Frameworks: Alternative theoretical accounts of the relations between women and men*, McGraw-Hill, London, 1984.

Jeffreys, Sheila, *Anticlimax: A Feminist Perspective on the Sexual Revolution*, The Women's Press, London, 1990.

Jennings, Ros, "Opting Out: The case of *Out* and Beth Jordache". Paper given at Sexing the Nation, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, July 1998.

Kaplan, Gisela T. and Rogers, Lesley J. "The Definitions Of Male and Female: Biological reductionism and the sanctions of normality" in Gunew, Sneja (ed.), *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and construct*, Routledge, London, 1990.

Kay, Jackie, *The Adoption Papers*, Bloodaxe Books, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, 1992.

Kelly, Tessa, "Fairy Tales and Feminism" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Kennedy, Roseanne, "Feminist Literary Theory" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Kerslake, Evelyn and Liladhar, Janine, "Jolly Good Reading For Girls: Discourses of library work and femininty in career novels", *The Women's History Review*, Volume 8, No. 3, pp.489-504, 1999.

Kerslake, Evelyn and Liladhar, Janine, "Jilly Cooper Versus The Government: Romantic discourses of femininity and women's library employment", forthcoming.

Khan, Almas, *Chapati And Chips*, Springboard, Castleford, 1993.

Kirkup, Gill, and Smith Keller, Laurie (eds.), *Inventing Women: Science, technology and gender*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992.

Kitzinger, Celia, "Fundamentally Female", in *New Internationalist,* August 1990, pp.24-25.

Kramarae, Cheris and Treichler, Paula A. (eds.), *A Feminist Dictionary*, Pandora, London, 1992 (f. pub. 1985)

Kristeva, Julia, *About Chinese Women,* translated by H. Ranous, Oyars, 1977.

Kuhn, Annette, "Women's Genres: Melodrama, soap opera and theory" in *Home Is Where The Heart Is*, Gledhill, Christine, British Film Institute, London, 1987. (f. pub. 1984).

Lakoff, Robin, *Language And Woman's Place*, Harper and Row, New York, 1975.

Lamphere, L., Ragone, H. and Zavella, P. (eds.), *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*, Routledge, London, 1997.

Landry, Donna and MacLean, Gerard, *Materialist Feminisms*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1993..

Leavis, Frank Raymond, *The Great Tradition*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1948.

Lee, Spike, *She's Gotta Have It*, 40 Acres And A Mule Filmworks, 1986.

Lewis, Jane, *Women In Britain Since 1945: Women, family, work and the state in the post-war years*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992.

Liladhar, Janine, "Jenny Eclair, 'The Rotting Old Whore of Comedy': A Feminist Discussion of the Politics of Stand-Up Comedy", English Studies: Working papers on the web, http://www.shu.ac.uk/wpw/wpw.htm, set up 17 July 2,000.

Liladhar, Janine, "Racial Categories, Appearance And Othering" in *Feminism And Psychology,* Volume 9, No. 2, 1999(a), pp.239-242.

Liladhar, Janine, "Spot The Mother: Myths of appearance and racial origins, with particular reference to people who are 'mixed race'" in *Thamyris: Myths and mythmaking*, in print, 1999(b).

Liladhar, Janine, "Feminist Literary Criticism" in Murray, Chris (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999(c).

Liladhar, Janine and Kerslake, Evelyn, "No More Library Classes For Catherine: Marital status, career progression and library employment in 1950s England", in *Women's Studies International Forum*, Volume 22, No. 2, 1999(a), pp.215-224.

Liladhar, Janine and Kerslake, Evelyn, "Kissing In The Stacks: Discourses of librarianship in romantic fiction". Paper given at Gendering Library History, John Moore's University, Liverpool, May 1999(b).

Lister, Ruth, *Citizenship: Feminist perspectives*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1997.

Llewelyn Owens, Joan, *A Library Life For Deborah*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1962.

Lorde, Audre, *Sister Outside*, Crossing Press, Trumansburg, NY, 1984.

Lovell, Terry, *Consuming Fiction*, Verso, 1987.

Macdonnell, Diane, *Theories of Discourse: An introduction*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1986.

Macherey, Pierre, "The Text Says What It does Not Say", in Walder, Dennis (ed.), *Literature In The Modern World: Critical essays and documents*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990.

Maguire, Aveen, "Power: Now you see it, now you don't. A woman's guide to how power works" in McDowell, Linda and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions,* Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1985).

Mandell, Nancy and Momirov, Julianne, "Women and Work" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

March, Artemis, "Female Invisibility In Androcentric Sociological Theory", *Insurgent Sociologist*, Volume 11, No. 2, 1982, pp.99-107.

Marks, Elaine and de Courtivron Isabelle (eds.), *New French Feminisms*, Shocken, New York, 1981, translated by Liddle, Ann (f. pub. 1975).

Maynard, Mary, "Women's Studies" in Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998.

McClintock, Anne, *Imperial Leather: Race, gender and sexuality in the imperial context*, Routledge, London, 1995.

McDowell, Linda, "Gender Division In A Post-Fordist Era: New contradictions or the same old story?" in McDowell, Linda, and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1991).

McDowell, Linda, and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992.

McNay, Lois, *Foucault And Feminism: Power, gender and the self*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992.

McPherson, Kathryn, "First Wave/Second Wave Feminism" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

McRobbie, Angela, "*More!*: New sexualities in girls' and women's magazines" in Curran, James, Morley, David and Walkerdine, Valerie (eds.), *Cultural Studies And Communications*, Arnold, London, 1996.

Meskell, Lynn, "Feminism in Archaeology" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Millett, Kate, *Sexual Politics*, Doubleday, New York, 1970.

Mills, Jane, *Womanwords*, Virago Press, London, 1991 (f. pub. 1989).

Mills, Sara *et al.*, *Feminist Readings/Feminists Reading,* Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1989.

Mills, Sara, *Discourses Of Difference: Women's travel writing and colonialism*, Routledge, London, 1991.

Mills, Sara, "Discourse Competence: Or how to theorise strong women speakers", *Hypatia,* Volume 7, No. 2, Spring 1992(a), pp.4-11.

Mills, Sara, Negotiating Discourses Of Femininity, *Journal of Gender Studies*, Volume 1, No. 3, pp.271-285, 1992(b).

Mills, Sara, "Reading As/Like A Feminist" in Mills, Sara (ed.), *Gendering The Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1994.

Mills, Sara (ed.), *Gendering The Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1994.

Mills, Sara, *Feminist Stylistics*, Routledge, London, 1995(a).

Mills, Sara, "Discontinuity And Postcolonial Discourse", in *Ariel: A review of international English literature*, Volume 26, No. 3, July 1995(b), pp.73-88.

Mills, Sara (ed.), *Language And Gender: Interdisciplinary perspectives,* Longman, Harlow, 1995(c).

Mills, Sara, *Discourse*, Routledge, London, 1997.

Mills, Sara, "Introduction", in *Language And Literature: Journal of the poetics and linguistics association*, Volume 7, No. 3, October 1998(a), pp.195-198.

Mills, Sara, "Post-Feminist Text Analysis", in *Language And Literature: Journal of the poetics and linguistics association*, Volume 7, No. 3, October 1998(b), pp.235-253.

Mills, Sara, "Gender, Politeness And Impoliteness". Paper given at a meeting of the Liguistic Politeness Research Group at Nottingham Trent University, November 1999(a).

Mills, Sara, "Discourse" in Murray, Chris (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999(b).

Mills, Sara and Pearce, Lynne "Introduction" in Mills, Sara and Pearce, Lynne, *Feminist Readings/Feminists Reading*, Prentice Hall / Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1996, second edition; first edition published 1989.

Mills, Sara and Pearce, Lynne, *Feminist Readings/Feminists Reading*, Prentice Hall / Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1996, second edition; first edition published 1989.

Moi, Toril, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Methuen, London, 1985.

Montgomery, Martin, *et al.*, *Ways Of Reading: Advanced reading skills for students of English literature*, Routledge, London, 1992.

Moore, James, "Here's History of Science" in Beckerlegge, Gwilym and Moore, James, "Religion and Science in Context", *An Introduction to the Humanities (A103) Block 4*, The Open University, Milton Keynes, 1998.

Morris, Pam, "Reading *Pride and Prejudice*" in Walder, Dennis (ed.), *The Realist Novel*, Routledge / Open University, London, 1995(a).

Morris, Pam, "Women And The Novel" in Walder, Dennis (ed.), *The Realist Novel*, Routledge / Open University, London, 1995(b).

Murray, Chris (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999.

Murray, Chris, Introduction in Murray, Chris (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999.

Namjoshi, Suniti, "Three Feminist Fables" in Carter, Angela (ed.), *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women*, Virago, London, 1986 (f. pub. 1981).

Narayan, Kirin, "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" in Lamphere, L., Ragone, H. and Zavella, P. (eds.), *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*, Routledge, London, 1997.

Nicholson, Linda J., "Feminist Theory: The private and the public", in McDowell, Linda and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions,* Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1984).

Oakley, Ann, "What Is A Housewife?" in McDowell, Linda and Pringle, Rosemary (eds), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions,* Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1974).

Oakley, Ann and Mitchell, Juliet, *Who's Afraid of Feminism? Seeing Through the Backlash*, New Press, New York, 1997.

Owen, Michelle K., "Gender" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Owens, W.R. (ed.), *Seventeenth Century England: A changing culture*, Wardlock Education, Hong Kong, 1980.

Pateman, Carole, "The Patriarchal Welfare State" in McDowell, Linda, and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1989).

Patterson, David, "Mikhail Bakhtin" in Murray, Chris (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999.

Peake, Lillian, *The Library Tree*, Mills and Boon, London, 1980 (f. pub. 1972).

Pearce, Lynne, *Woman/Image/Text: Readings in Pre-Raphaelite art and literature*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1991.

Pearce, Lynne, *Reading Dialogics*, London, Edward Arnold, 1994(a).

Pearce, Lynne, "Pre-Raphaelite Painting And The Female Spectator", 1994(b) in Mills, Sara (ed.), *Gendering The Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1994.

Pearce, Lynne and Mills, Sara, "Marxist-feminism" in Mills, Sara and Pearce, Lynne, *Feminist Readings/Feminists Reading*, Prentice Hall / Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1996, second edition; first edition published 1989.

Pearce, Lynne and Stacey, Jackie, "The Heart Of The Matter: Feminists Revisit Romance" in Pearce, Lynne and Stacey, Jackie (eds.), *Romance Revisited*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1995.

Pearce, Lynne and Stacey, Jackie (eds.), *Romance Revisited*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1995.

Philips, Deborah, "Keep The Home Fires Burning: The myth of the independent woman in the Aga-Saga" in *Women: A cultural review*, Volume 7, No. 1, 1996, pp.48-54.

Phillips, Anne, "Classing The Women And Gendering The Class" in McDowell, Linda, and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1987).

Prentice, Susan L. "Chilly Climate" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Price, Janet and Shildrick, Margaret, Introduction to "Performing the Body" in Price, Janet and Shildrick, Margaret (eds.), *Feminist Theory and The Body: A Reader*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.

Price, Janet and Shildrick, Margaret (eds.), *Feminist Theory and The Body: A Reader*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.

Price Herndl, Diane, untitled introduction to the section on the body in Warhol, Robyn R. and Price Herndl, Diane (eds.), *Feminisms: An anthology of literary theory and criticism*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1991.

Pringle, Rosemary, "What Is A Secretary?" in McDowell, Linda and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. publ. 1988).

Probyn, Elspeth, "New Traditionalism And Post-Feminism" in Brunsdon, Charlotte, D'Acci, Julie and Spigel, Lynn (eds.), *Feminist Television Criticism: A reader*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997 (f. publ. 1988).

Radway, Janice, *Reading The Romance: Women, patriarchy and popular literature*, Verso, London, 1987 (f. pub. 1984).

Rein, Sandra, "Marxist Feminist Literature / Literary Theory" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968 (f. pub. 1966).

Rich, Adrienne, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as experience and institution*, Virago Press, London, 1977 (f. pub. 1976).

Rich, Adrienne, *On Lies, Secrets And Silence,* W.W. Norton, New York, 1979.

Rich, Adrienne, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", *Signs*, 5.4 (Summer), 631-60.

Riessman, Catherine Kahler, "Women And Medicalization: A new perspective" in Kirkup, Gill, and Smith Keller, Laurie (eds.), *Inventing Women: Science, technology and gender*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1983).

Ritchie, Sheila, "2,000 To 1: A sex oddity" in *Assistant Librarian*, Volume 72, No. 3, 1979, pp.38-41.

Room, Adrian, *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, Cassell, London, 1999.

Rowe, Kathleen, "Studying *Roseanne*" in Skeggs, Beverley, *Feminist Cultural Theory: Process and production*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1995.

Scott, Joan, "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the uses of post-structuralist theory for feminism" in McDowell, Linda and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions,* Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1988).

Segal, Lynne, *Is The Future Female?*, Virago Press, London, 1987.

Seiter, Ellen *et al.* (eds.), *Remote Control: Television audiences and cultural power*, Routledge, London, 1989.

Sharpe, Sue, *Just Like A Girl,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1994 (f. pub. 1976).

Shakespeare, William, *King Lear*, ed. Kenneth Muir, Methuen, London, 1952 (f. pub. 1605).

Shildrick, Margaret, "The Body" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Shildrick, Margaret with Price, Janet, "Openings On The Body: A critical introduction" in Price, Janet and Shildrick, Margaret (eds.), *Feminist Theory and The Body: A reader*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.

Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature Of Their Own: British novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1977.

Showalter, Elaine, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness", in Abel, E. (ed.) *Writing and Sexual Difference*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1982.

Showalter, Elaine, "The Feminist Critical Revolution", in Bonner, Frances, *et al.* (eds.), *Imagining Women: Cultural representations and gender*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. publ. 1985) .

Showalter, Elaine (ed.), *Speaking Of Gender*, Routledge, London, 1989.

Simmonds, Felly Nkweto, "*She's Gotta Have It*: The representation of black female sexuality in film" in Bonner, Frances, *et al.* (eds.), *Imagining Women: Cultural representations and gender*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1988).

Skeggs, Beverley, *Feminist Cultural Theory: Process and production*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1995.

Skeggs, Beverley, *Formations Of Class And Gender: Becoming respectable,* Sage Publications, London, 1997.

Smiley, Jane, *A Thousand Acres*, Flamingo, London, 1992.

Smith, Dorothy, *Texts, Facts And Femininity - Exploring the Relations of Ruling*, Routledge, London, 1990.

Spain, Daphne, *Gendered Spaces*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1992.

Spencer, Jane, *The Rise Of The Woman Novelist: From Aphra Benn to Jane Austen*, Blackwell, 1986.

Spivak, Gayatri, "Three Women's Texts And A Critique Of Imperialism", in *Critical Inquiry*, Volume 12, Autumn 1985, pp.243-62.

Stanton, Domna C., "Language And Revolution: The Franco-American disconnection" in Jardine, Alice and Eisenstein, Hester (eds.), *The Future Of Difference*, G.K.Hall, Boston, 1980.

Starr, Chelsea, "Third-Wave Feminism" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Steady, Filomena Chioma, "African Feminism" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Stuewe, Paul, "Ferdinand de Saussure" in Murray, Chris (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999.

Taylor, Elizabeth, *At Mrs. Lippincote's*, London, 1988 (f. pub. 1945).

Thair, Tim and Risdon, Andrew, "Women In The Labour Market. Results from the Spring 1998 Labour Force Survey", *Labour Market Trends*, Volume 107, No. 3, 1999, pp.103-128.

Thiele, Beverly, "Vanishing Acts In Social And Political Thought: Tricks of the trade" in McDowell, Linda, and Pringle, Rosemary (eds.), *Defining Women: Social institutions and gender divisions*, Polity Press / Blackwell Publishers / Open University, Cambridge, 1992 (f. pub. 1987).

Thomas, Keith, "Witchcraft and Society" in Owens, W.R. (ed.), *Seventeenth Century England: A changing culture*, Wardlock Education, Hong Kong, 1980 (f. pub. 1971).

Thornham, Sue, "Feminist Media And Film Theory" in Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998.

Trollope, Joanna, *The Rector's Wife*, Bloomsbury, London, 1991.

Tuttle, Lisa, *Encyclopedia Of Femininsm*, Longman, Harlow, 1986.

Vice, Sue, "Psychonalytical Feminist Theory" in Jackson, Stevi and Jones, Jackie (eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1998.

Walby, Sylvia, *Patriarchy at Work*, Polity, Oxford, 1986.

Walby, Sylvia, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990.

Walder, Dennis (ed.), *Literature In The Modern World: Critical essays and documents*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990.

Walder, Dennis (ed.), *The Realist Novel*, Routledge, London, 1995.

Walker, Alice, "In Search Of Our Mothers' Gardens" in Ruddick, S. and Daniels, P. (eds.), *Working It Out*, Pantheon, New York, 1977.

Walter, Natasha, "Maketh The Man" in *The Sunday Review*, *The Independent on Sunday*, pp.4-8, 16th May 1999.

Warhol, Robyn R. and Price Herndl, Diane (eds.), *Feminisms: An anthology of literary theory and criticism*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1991.

Weedon, Chris, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987.

Weedon, Chris, "Poststructuralism/Postmodernism" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Whelehan, Imelda, "Feminism And Trash: Destablising 'the reader'" in Mills, Sara (ed.), *Gendering The Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1994.

Whelehan, Imelda, *Overloaded: Popular Culture and the Future of Feminism*, The Women's Press, London, 2000.

White, Antonia, *Frost In May*, Virago Press, London, 1978 (f. pub. 1933).

Wills, Deborah, "French Feminism" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.

Wittig, Monique, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1992.

Wolf, Naomi, *The Beauty Myth: How images of beauty are used against women*, Vintage, London, 1991 (f. pub. 1990).

Wood, Joe, "The Yellow Negro", in *Transition An International Review: The white issue*, Volume 7, No. 1, Issue 73, 1998, pp.40-66 .

Woolf, Virginia, *A Room Of One's Own*, Hogarth Press, London, 1978 (f. pub. 1928).

Young, Robert (ed.), *Untying The Text: A post-structuralist reader*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981.

Zoonen, Liesbet van, *Feminist Media Studies*, Sage, London, 1994.

Zwicker, Heather, "Nationalism and Gender" in Code, Lorraine (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Routledge, London, 2000.