MUSIC VIDEO AND GENDERED PLEASURES
IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN

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Thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Faculty of Education, Deakin University (Geelong)

November 1996
FORM B

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
CANDIDATE'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled Music Video and Gendered Pleasures in the Lives of Young Women and Men submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis in whole or in part has not been submitted for an award including a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have helped me both conduct this research and write this dissertation. I have been supported in a variety of ways - intellectually, emotionally, practically and financially - and I am extremely grateful for this.

Firstly I wish to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Jane Kenway, who has continually challenged and stimulated me intellectually. I have been very fortunate to have a supervisor whose judgment I trusted completely, and who allowed me to develop my thoughts independently.

I wish to thank the students and teacher who participated in my study, for their cooperation and friendship. The level of trust and assistance which they gave me was remarkable, and my time spent at Progress Secondary College will always be remembered fondly.

Pursuing postgraduate study (Honours and my PhD) has been very rewarding for me, but also very challenging. I would like to thank Professor Stephen Kemmis for his encouragement and support over many years. My friend and fellow PhD student, Liz Murphy, has also been an enormous support over the last two years, especially in the proof-reading of my thesis. The members of my reading group - Jenny Angwin, Jo-Anne Reid, Lyn Harrison and Helen Modra - have provided invaluable support. Associate Professor Marie Brennan also assisted me early on in my PhD with a conference presentation.

I also wish to thank my friends and family who have provided me with support over many years. My partner, Cliff Paul, has been extremely patient and supportive of my studies, and I am looking forward to our life without my thesis! My parents, Marie and Adrian Hurley, have provided me with continual support, and Mardi and Dirk Paul have also been very supportive of my studies. Anne and Rory Fabbri, Clare Hurley, Lisa Hurley, Jansy Torpy and Sue Dalton have all been wonderful friends to me. I also wish to thank Alan Baker for keeping my car running so well, without which I could not have conducted my research or travelled the long distances I have over the last few years.

I wish to thank all of the general staff of the Faculty of Education at Deakin University (Geelong) who have assisted me with computer access and printing, especially Angela Bloomer. This support has been incredibly generous and I would have found it very difficult to complete this dissertation without this help. I also wish to acknowledge the support of the Education Faculty in providing me with a scholarship for three years.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the cultural and social significance of music video in the lives of a group of young women and men. In so doing the thesis pays particular attention to issues of gender and pleasure.

This research examines the interaction of a group of young people with music video in relation to four areas of research. Firstly, the importance of music video in terms of social interaction and the pleasure this entails is explored. Secondly the thesis looks at the ways in which gender is seen by the young people in this study to be established by music video performers. Thirdly, how gender becomes inscribed on the body is explored, and fourthly I examine the process of sexualization of the body.

Theoretically this thesis draws upon feminist theory, poststructuralist theory, music video scholarship and educational theories. This eclectic approach has been necessary as this research speaks simultaneously to several distinct areas of scholarship: education, cultural studies and feminism.

My research with a young audience of music video took place within a secondary school. Over two semesters I conducted research with two separate classes of Media Studies students who were aged fifteen and sixteen. A total of 49 students were interviewed, however I chose mainly to work with a small group of eleven students - five girls and six boys. The school where I conducted this research is located in a working class suburb of a provincial and industrial Australian city. The young people's social positioning in terms of class and ethnicity has been considered in some depth in relation to the construction of the gendered subject.

Methodologically the thesis is skewed towards the audience, and also towards dealing with what is normally unspoken in the research process. For example, much academic research does not include the author of the research as an integral part of that research. In this thesis I include myself in a number of ways: historically, personally and as a feminist. This thesis places a high priority on ethics and the effects of research on those who participate in the research process.

The thesis uses a number of research methods: structured interviews, informal conversations, memory-work and written responses to music videos. Generally the research methods used in this thesis have been developed reflexively; that is, they have developed directly in
relation to the participants' reactions, responses, suggestions, interests and comments.

The research seeks to demonstrate the place of music video in the lives of the young people who participated in the study. I look at how the young people in this study connect music video to other cultural forms and social interactions. In this way the intertextuality of music video is demonstrated. The research looks at how young viewers 'read' the gender of music video performers, and how this affects their own gendering. The social and cultural meanings which are attached to certain parts of the body are also examined. Theorizing the body in terms of its social meanings is a significant part of this thesis.

The research argues that young people often experience music video as pleasurable, and that music video can provide young people with access to powerful speaking positions. This is demonstrated through transcripts of our conversations and interviews, and also through the young people's written comments. However, these powerful speaking positions invariably invoke dominant discourses (homophobia and racism, for example). Thus the disruptive potential of music video is called into question. These dominant discourses are gendered in nature. Pleasure in the text (music video) and cultural inscriptions of gender on the body then, are realized differently for the girls and for the boys in this study. My research into music video, gender and young people has implications for research methodology generally, and for music video scholarship specifically. Music video scholarship to date has rarely focussed upon the audience of this cultural form. My research has certain implications for the ways in which research is currently conducted with young people in relation to popular culture generally, and music video specifically, and gendered subjectivity.
INTRODUCTION

Music video is part of the discursive field through which young people construct their gendered subjectivity, yet just how this occurs has not been adequately explored. In this dissertation I begin to explore why young people position themselves within certain discourses (in relation to music video) and why they reject others. This focus recognises a tension between young people as active subjects and young people as passive consumers. Rather than positioning young people as one or the other, I document their active readings of music video in order to examine why music video viewing brings pleasure to young people.

In examining how young people become gendered, and the role which music video plays in this process, I have turned to theory and to evidence from a study I conducted with a young audience. This study took place in 1993, from February to November, within a school setting with several small groups of Media Studies students, who were aged 15 and 16. Four main foci were explored with the young people in relation to music video: social interaction and the production of pleasure; gender; theorizing the body; and sexualization and power. Through detailed analysis of this research I demonstrate a number of ways in which young people become gendered, specifically in relation to music video.

In this dissertation I draw my theoretical tools from feminist and poststructuralist theory, educational theory, and cultural studies. In relation to gender, music video and young people, I take an interdisciplinary and eclectic approach. The common thread in the theory I employ throughout this thesis is feminism, cultural studies and poststructuralist theory. This thesis is intended to make a contribution to the existing academic literature on youth and music video, methodology, gender and feminism.

My thesis is divided into two parts. Part One deals with theory, context and method. That is, it presents an overview of recent writing on gender, sexuality and power, music video, method and methodology. In Part One I ask questions of, and point to silences and omissions in this literature. In Part Two I discuss the research that I conducted with a young audience of music video. I explore and make sense of this information in light of the literature discussed in Part One. In this way I aim to move along certain ideas and debates in relation to young people, music video and gender.
Conducting this research in a poststructuralist and ethical feminist manner has resulted in the adoption of specific research methods, and a specific structure in writing this dissertation. That is, instead of making claims to objectivity and detachment, (as in some, more traditional, academic writing), I include myself as an 'I' throughout. The rationale for doing this is outlined in chapter three. My thesis does not intend to make any grand statements about 'the' adolescent audience of music video. In fact, a central tenet of this dissertation is the folly of attempting to do just that.

Below I outline the broad questions that I seek to answer. More specific questions within these broad questions unfold as my thesis does. In relation to gender, music video and young people, I ask how, and indeed if, music video is influential in the construction of young people's gendered subjectivities. I also investigate how gender, class and ethnicity affect young people's readings of music video. Another issue I explore relates to the relationship between young people, music video and their struggle for knowledge and power. I also explore how it is that ideas about gender become embodied. In relation to methodology, I ask questions which relate to the ethical dilemmas that are involved in the surveillance of a young audience. I question why it is that educators and academics want to analyse young people's pleasures, and I discuss the implications of research methods for research outcomes. Overall, my thesis intends to demonstrate the place of music video in young people's lives by looking at how young viewers 'read' gender in music video. I now outline the order of the thesis. Part One contains three chapters, and Part Two contains four chapters.

In chapter one I discuss literature relating to gender, sexualization and power. This discussion foregrounds a number of ideas and questions that this dissertation seeks to engage with. I begin by asking what is gender? What does this term actually mean? How is it commonly used? How do I define gender in this dissertation? By drawing on the notion of 'gender as performative' (Butler, 1990), I begin to answer these questions. I also briefly talk about how I have experienced gender 'as a girl'. This leads into a discussion of gender and power within school culture and the place of 'sex' education and sexuality in schools. I then proceed to outline the process of female sexualization and its relation to power. In part two of this dissertation I use and develop these ideas further when I discuss the relationship of a young audience with music video.
Chapter two is devoted to a discussion of a variety of elements of music video. I locate music video in its historical context and examine the gendered address of music video. I include a description of my own history 'as a fan'. The theory discussed in chapter one relating to gender, female sexualization and power provides some of the logic for my discussion of sexual iconography in music video. I also draw on critiques of masculinity in popular culture to inform my discussion of masculinity in music video. By looking critically at music video scholarship, I question what constitutes legitimate music video scholarship.

The central purpose of chapter three is to outline the methods which I employed to conduct my research, and to outline when and where it was conducted. In this chapter I outline the ideas of a number of influential researchers and describe the school where my research was carried out. Within this I make visible and describe what Alison Jones (1991: 10) refers to as the "invisible". That is, I endeavour to make the dynamics of research evident, and in so doing, scrutinize the research process. As in chapters one and two, I include a brief account of my own subjective positioning, which in this chapter falls under the title of 'as a feminist'. This chapter is not only concerned with which research methods I used, it is also concerned with the influences that have determined my approach to this research. How I dealt with the failures and successes of this research process, and my interactions with the students and teacher begin to take shape in this chapter, and are discussed in greater detail in Part Two of this dissertation. The active reading of music videos is emphasised throughout Part Two, as is the intertextuality of popular culture.

Part Two begins with chapter four which focuses on social interaction and the production of pleasure. By looking at the historical formations of pleasure as a concept, I foreground a number of explanations for the marginalized place of pleasure in music video research. My analysis of a young audience's readings of music video addresses their struggles for knowledge and power. I draw on young people's ideas in order to explore the role of music video in their social relations, and investigate the pleasures that this involves. Using interviews, conversations, observations and student writing, I explore aspects of young people's pleasures in, and social interaction with, music video. Some themes include sexuality in music video, the intertextuality of popular cultural texts, the pathologization of pleasure, knowledge and power, the importance of narrative in music videos and the gendered address of
music video. In this chapter Madonna is identified by the young people as a significant popular music performer, a trend which continues throughout Part Two. Because I found Madonna to be a frequently named popstar, I have turned to other scholarly writing on Madonna in order to evaluate the young people's comments and my own assertions.

In chapter five I look at gender; that is, masculinities and femininities. I explore some quite distinct and unstable versions of femininity and masculinity that the young people discussed. In exploring the question of how young people become masculine and feminine, I turn to a poststructuralist reading of gender to suggest that it is through discursive interactions that people actively contribute to, produce and sustain certain discourses about femininity and masculinity. The school is identified as a key site where gender performances occur. I explore the concept of gender through feminist and poststructuralist theory, and by drawing upon the interviews, discussions and writing of the young people in this study. The importance of heterosexist logic in reading music videos is explored in this chapter.

Chapter six focuses on theorizing the body. In seeking out the students' thoughts on their own bodies and bodies generally in music video, a number of other issues arise. As well as exploring the intersection of gender with the body, I examine how class and ethnicity relate to the body in music video. These foci lead to some challenging issues relating to identity and 'reality'. This includes an examination of feminist and poststructuralist theory relating to the body. By examining the different standards that exist for male and female bodies in music video and popular culture broadly, I consider how this affects the ways in which gender becomes embodied for girls and for boys.

In chapter seven I extend upon and further develop the theory I outlined in chapters one and two relating to gender, sexualization and sexual iconography in music video. I discuss how sexual iconography in music video is read by the students I worked with, and how they 'harness' this information in their quest for knowledge and power. Madonna again presents as a significant example in this respect. In this chapter I continue to demonstrate the ways in which the young people in my study make meaning from music video texts, in both formal and informal settings. This includes a discussion of a party which I had for the young people in my home. This story stands as both a methodological reflection, and as a way of demonstrating the way that the students took control that evening and sought to make me their subject of research.
In the conclusion I summarise my central arguments about young people's readings of music video in relation to pleasure, gender, the body and sexualization and power. I also reflect on the value of my research and make some recommendations for further investigation. This final section summarises my contribution to the study of youth and education, music video, methodology, gender and feminism.

As stated at the outset of this introduction, how young people read music video is an under-researched area. Before this can be discussed however, some fundamental ideas about gender need to be elaborated upon, which is where chapter one of my thesis begins.
PART ONE

RESEARCHING GENDER AND MUSIC VIDEO:
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CHAPTER ONE

GENDER AND POWER

In this first chapter I cover a range of literature relating to gender, sexualization and power. This discussion foregrounds a number of ideas and questions that this dissertation seeks to engage with. I start by asking what is gender? What does this term actually mean? How is it commonly used? What are the political ramifications of this term? How do I define gender in this dissertation? I also briefly talk about how I have experienced gender 'as a girl'. This leads into a discussion of gender and power within school culture and the place of 'sex' education and sexuality in schools. I then proceed to outline the process of sexualization and its relation to power. In part two of this dissertation I again call on these ideas when I discuss the relationship of a young audience with music video.

THE FALL OF 'MAN' AND THE QUESTION OF GENDER

The 19th and 20th centuries have seen the emergence of a 'crisis' in Western philosophical thought. What had been accepted as 'truth' about the human subject has been thrown into disarray. 'Anti-Cartesianism' has disrupted notions of the stable human subject, challenging "the Cartesian body-and-soul dichotomy", and changing, "the very definition of the function of philosophy" (Braidotti, 1991: 1). Feminists have contested the generic term, 'Man', making it no longer a taken-for-granted term. The 'rationality of Man' has widely collapsed as a concept. This shift in thought has led to new perceptions of what constitutes women and the 'feminine' (Braidotti, 1991: 1), and has also thrown 'masculinity' into question. If the category of 'women' and 'men' become unstable however, then what happens to feminism? Judith Butler (1990: ix) argues that,

[c]ontemporary feminist debates over the meanings of gender lead time and again to a certain sense of trouble, as if the indeterminacy of gender might eventually culminate in the failure of feminism.

And that is one recent story about 'gender'.

Another story is that the women's movements of the 20th century spawned a general dissatisfaction with the limitations of (male) Western philosophical thought. The work of Simone de Beauvoir\(^1\) changed the way women everywhere perceived themselves. Such work was the catalyst for the 'French feminists' - Luce Irigaray (1981), Monique Wittig (1989) and Julia Kristeva (1980), among others. These writers have in turn been the subject of scrutiny by other, current feminist scholars - Judith Butler (1990, 1993), Linda Nicholson (1990), Nancy Fraser (1990) and Rosi Braidotti (1991), for example. More questions have arisen: How does feminist theory change our preconceptions about masculinity? And what does this new emphasis on masculinity mean for feminism?

Newspapers and magazines abound with stories about masculinity. One story details the 'crisis in masculinity' - 'poor men' do not know how to behave any more since the advent of the Women's Liberation Movement. This tale leads to another: the emasculation of men through feminism has made some men realise that a patriarchal society oppresses men. Another story details the meteoric rise of the male model/actor as sex symbol. This story says that 'women are getting their own back' by doing to men what men have done to women. This story ignores the role of consumerism in the making of male sex symbols. All of these stories gloss over intricate details and contexts of what is going on in relations between women and men, femininity and masculinity. Such relations are explored in this thesis through the medium of music video with a small group of young women and men, within a school setting.

Caroline Ramazanoglu (1992) points out that there is a problem in arguing that 'patriarchal masculinity' oppresses men when a wealth of feminist empirical research suggests the opposite.\(^2\) Analysis of the eroticisation of the male body in film, television and print media by cultural studies scholars has concluded that male 'pin-ups' do not 'work' for women (Dyer, 1992); that the display of male flesh has more to do with homophobia and homoeroticism than with female desire (Simpson, 1994); and that the display of male bodies is, in fact, carefully orchestrated to reiterate men's position as the possessors of the phallus (Dyer, 1992 and

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\(^1\) *The Second Sex*, first published in 1949, is the work most often associated with second wave feminism (Humn, 1992).

\(^2\) Tim Edwards (1994: 52) makes a valid point when he states that gay men occupy a quite unique position. They are men and yet also relate to men as their primary emotional and sexual subjects. Consequently, they are equally likely to act as sexist men or to suffer from the acts of other sexist men.
Simpson 1994). Such arguments clearly disrupt popular notions that men are oppressed by feminism, and that the eroticisation of the male body is the equivalent of the long tradition of the erotic display of the female body. These themes and ideas are called upon throughout the remainder of this dissertation, especially in Part Two.

Theories of gender cover a vast array of opinions and beliefs. Because notions of what constitutes gender are held to have political ramifications - as suggested by Butler - scholars are very cautious about how they talk about gender. In this dissertation I have my own story of what gender is; of how sexuality and sexualization are constituted through gender. My story of gender (discussed below) has taken shape through the literature I have read on gender, and how I understand my history as a girl/woman/feminist. I now briefly discuss some of the key ideas which have enabled me to ask the questions that I do in this dissertation.

One of the first, and most unsettling, ideas that I encountered in my reading on gender was the idea that gender does not exist. Femininities and masculinities are merely fictions, linguistic and grammatical categories. Western feminism quite liked the idea that gender was a construction - this freed women from the limitations of femininity. Feminism broadly has had little tolerance and understanding however of the view that 'women' and 'men' are also fictions. Amongst poststructuralist feminists such notions have been explored, and indeed championed, however they remain largely untenable to radical, liberal and Marxist feminists. Ironically, feminist poststructuralist scholars have challenged the term 'women' for the same reason that radical, liberal and Marxist feminists have clung to the term. Women of colour, non-European, working class and some lesbian women have said that 'women' as constructed by white, privileged Western women, excludes them. They have no voice within Western feminism, therefore, it has no relevance to them. Western feminists have argued that unless they retain the term women as the single, unifying factor of their oppression, they risk obliteration. Butler (1990: 2) calls on the work of Michel Foucault to illustrate why feminists' uncritical use of the term 'women' remains at their own peril:

Foucault points out that juridical systems of power produce the subjects they subsequently come to represent...And the feminist subject turns out to be discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation.
In other words, 'women' and men', as linguistic constructs and concepts, have been produced within the binary, Cartesian model. In this context, how can 'women' be anything other than the construct of a system which has excluded and pathologized those who fit the binary definition of 'women'? Without critical examination of the category 'women', women will be doomed to operate within a system that is anti-women. My story of gender also includes 'men' and 'masculinities'. How can one half of a binary system be explored without the other? Though this complicates this study, it also sharpens the understandings of gender that emerge.

In seeking to explore the constructed, fictitious nature of gender, I have also been in danger of producing genders as 'real' - of 'talking them into existence' (to use a phrase of Bronwyn Davies, 1993: xviii). In formulating my story of gender, I have found that the only way in which I can talk of gender is through Butler's (1990) notion of gender as performative.

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. (Butler, 1990: 33)

That is, it is only through the 'acting out' of what we perceive to be gender, that gender exists at all. Gender becomes real through our continual performances of it.

AS A GIRL

In many ways I have been a typical girl. As a child I happily took on all the trappings of femininity - dresses, bows, ribbons, patent leather shoes, notions of heterosexual romance and the colour pink. I was little and cute and never objected to having my hair set in curls every Saturday night. This was the easy part of being a girl for me.

For me, my downfall 'as a girl' was located in my attitude. I was constantly causing trouble for others - my older sister and brothers, I talked back to my father and had far too much to say when I was out with the family in public. This un-girly behaviour earned me many a 'hiding' from my father - he could not (and still cannot) understand it. Interestingly, my mother rarely objected to what were perceived as my feisty ways.
As I grew up I became a 'second mum' to my two younger sisters (five and seven years my junior). I took them to my friends' houses, I bathed them, put them to bed and generally took an enormous interest in their welfare. I also learned to cook at young age, and by the end of primary school it was no problem for me to cook a meal for my family of ten. I "would make a great wife some day", my father would say. Despite my excellent mothering and fine cuisine (exercising my power where I could?), I never was thought of as a submissive type of girl in my family.

In looking at my own femininity, I have recognised that there are at least two equally important sides to being a good girl. One is to look like a girl, and the other is to act like a girl.

Questioning the binary oppositions of man/woman and masculine/feminine inevitably means a reappraisal of the 'naturalness' of heterosexuality. In the section below I use the school as an example of a site where heterosexuality is considered to be so 'normal' that it is beyond question. I have chosen 'the school' for several reasons. Firstly, it acts as a concrete medium through which to explore abstract concepts; secondly, my study took place largely in a school; and thirdly, Foucault named the school as an institution through which discourse on adolescent sexuality emerged (1978: 28). This dissertation is intended to 'speak' to people in education, cultural studies, feminism and gender studies. The school is therefore, an ideal site through which to consider gender, education, popular culture and feminism. By exploring the gendering that operates within the school context I aim to critique heterosexuality.

**SEXUALITY AND SCHOOLING: IT'S STRAIGHT BIOLOGY**

This dissertation focuses on a small group of young people within one particular school, without taking an overall view of the culture of that school. My intention in this section is to provide an overview of the culture of schools generally in Western society as a way of exploring gender and sexuality. This is intended to provide a wider context for the findings of my later chapters, and also to contribute to my analysis of gender. Obviously individual schools will vary a great deal. Factors influencing school cultures are determined by the teachers, parents, students, economic factors, geographic and social locations. Despite these individual differences, it is well recognised that there are features common to school cultures in Western society (Epstein, 1994; Epstein and Johnson, 1994; Mac an Ghaill, 1994a, 1994b; Connell, 1987; Foucault, 1978).
In briefly exploring the culture of schools, I focus on sexuality and gender, both inside and outside the formal curriculum. The emphasis here is on secondary school education, however I also bring in some examples from the primary school.

Bob Connell (1987: 120) argues that in Australia, the school serves as a paradigm of gender relations and of gender regimes:

Among both students and staff there are practices that construct various kinds of femininity and masculinity: sport, dancing, choice of subject, class-room discipline, administration and others. Especially clearly among the students, some gender patterns are hegemonic - an aggressively heterosexual masculinity most commonly - and others are subordinated. There is a distinct, though not absolute, sexual division of labour among the staff, and sex differences in tastes and leisure activities among the students. There is an ideology, often more than one, about sexual behaviour and sexual character. There are sometimes conflicts going on over sexism in the curriculum or over promotion among the staff, over prestige and leadership among the kids. The pattern formed by all this varies from school to school, though within limits that reflect the balances of sexual politics in Australian society generally. No school, for instance, permits open homosexual relationships.

The type of behaviour and actions Connell refers to above are very much 'taken for granted' within schools. Gender relations are "systematically important" to various institutions, including workplaces, and the family (Connell, 1987: 120). "The state of play in gender relations in a given institution is its 'gender regime' " (Connell, 1987: 120). Connell argues that genders operate in relation to each other.

It is an irony about school cultures that sexuality is generally for teachers in the classroom an unmentionable topic, whilst for students sexuality is one of the most discussed and self regulated issues in their school lives. In terms of curriculum, sex is dealt with biologically, and, for girls, from the perspective of avoiding danger (Epstein and Johnson, 1994: 213). Peter Redman points to the subtle distinctions between 'sex' education and 'sexuality' education. Whilst conducting a preliminary discussion with a head teacher in a London school about future research, Redman became aware of such subtleties. Whilst 'sex' related to reproduction, " [s]exuality'...meant 'sexual orientation', or, more precisely, lesbian and gay sexual orientation, and research on 'sexuality education' presumably meant talking to pupils about being gay or lesbian" (Redman, 1994: 131). This head teacher was nervous about Redman studying 'sexuality education', but was happy for him to study 'sex
education'. Why was it so important to this head teacher that Redman look at 'sex', and not 'sexuality', education? Butler (1990: 33-4) suggests that it is through the multiplicity of meanings attached to 'sex' (and 'gender') that contestation of their meanings is able to take place. To imply that students' sexuality or gender could be "illusions of identity" (Butler, 1990: 34) threatens the entire culture of a typical school, as described by Connell above for example.

This above realisation of Redman's occurred in the wake of Section 28 of the British Local Government Act (1988) that prohibited the "intentional promotion of homosexuality by Local Authorities" (cited in Epstein, 1994: 2). Whilst this Act has made it more difficult for teachers in Britain to address sexuality in schools, it has also served as a catalyst for lesbians and gays to become more political (Epstein, 1994). Although Australia does not have an equivalent to the British Section 28, the general approach of schools is that heterosexuality is the unquestioned and desired norm, as the excerpt above from Connell shows.

'Heterosexism' is the term that Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson have applied to the silent "presumption of heterosexuality" which, they argue, is actively promoted within schools (1994: 197). Because heterosexuality is considered to be 'normal', homosexuality is construed as "perverse, remarkable or dangerous" (Epstein and Johnson, 1994: 198).

When I first began teaching Women's Studies in a university, I found myself being asked two questions by friends, family and casual acquaintances: "Do any men do Women's Studies?" and "Have any of your students made sexual advances towards you?" (And this is the polite version of the question!) The first (and most often asked) question implied that a university subject is legitimate only when men study it, and the second question conflated feminism with lesbianism. Epstein and Johnson (1994: 204) posit that "many women, particularly young women, evade the label feminist even when they hold feminist opinions" because of the fear of being branded a lesbian. When I was interviewed for the Women's Studies job, I was asked how I would feel if students and colleagues assumed I was a lesbian. I replied that I was not worried about this. When I realised however, that neither my students nor myself were being taken seriously, I became very annoyed. A number of scholars have pointed out that abusive terms like 'poof' and 'queer' are levelled at any young male who does not conform (see for example, Walker, 1988; Epstein and Johnson, 1994; Mac an Ghaill, 1994b). My experience as a Women's Studies teacher suggests that 'lesbian' is also used against women who
study or teach something which critiques the 'naturalness' of our society, and in the process destabilises the 'taken for granted'.

The general heterosexual culture of most schools has had an enormous influence on the way 'sex education' is taught in schools. Sex education in schools centres on biology, anatomy, contraception and the danger to girls of boys' uncontrollable sexual urges (Epstein and Johnson, 1994). Epstein and Johnson (1994: 213) point out that "discourses of marriage and romantic love are presented as desirable, inevitable and natural", and this is especially prevalent in the primary school. Teacher talk about sex is generally devoid of emotion, and the giggles and misbehaviour that often greet teacher sex talk represent, "the emphatic release of emotion - which is precisely what is ruled out of order by the serious lesson and the general school context" (Epstein and Johnson, 1994: 218-219). Racism also contributes to assumptions about students' sexuality and gender. Mairtin Mac an Ghaill asserts that,

the major problem in the schooling of black gay students is not their sexuality but the phenomena of homophobia, heterosexism and racism which pervasively circumscribe their social world. (1994b: 157)

Epstein and Johnson (1994) point out that discursive formations of sexuality in schools always take place within relations of power - teacher/student, adult/child, white/black, middle class/working class and so on. Mac an Ghaill (1994a: 1-2) tells a quirky story about the ability of students to destabilise the school's heterosexual culture and its relations of power. Mac an Ghaill was presented with a bunch of flowers by one of his male students in the school grounds (the student had passed his exams). This act resulted in the student being involved in a fight with other students. When the headteacher demanded an explanation from Mac an Ghaill, he explained that he had nothing to do with the fight. The headteacher was however, unconcerned about the fight; he wanted to know why Mac an Ghaill had accepted the flowers! The headteacher was further confused by the fact that the flower-giving boy was a Muslim. This student's act of giving his male teacher flowers transgressed heterosexual school culture, and also threw into confusion the (white) headteacher's assumptions about the sexist nature of Muslim males.

Whilst adolescence is perceived as a time of raging hormones and zealous pursuit of the 'opposite' sex, childhood is a time of 'innocence':
Ignorance/innocence in relation to sexuality or lack of interest in it has long been one of the primary defining features of childhood, in particular of female childhood. (Davies, 1993: 121)

Bronwyn Davies argues that in childhood, all children - male and female - strive to have agency. "But agency, and in particular sexual agency, is made problematic for girls in a number of ways" (Davies, 1993: 123). In research she conducted in a primary school, Davies found that a girl who wrote a story with a female hero, was labelled a 'slut' by a male classmate (1993: 114). Such behaviour is part of the heterosexist culture of schools.

Heterosexuality is continually constructed in the children's talk as they separate and heighten the difference between themselves as male and female. So pervasive is this construction that even the most simple initiative on a girl's part, such as asking a boy for a pencil, can be overlaid with compromising (hetero)sexual meanings. (Davies, 1993: 123)

Such cultures inevitably lead to girls developing other strategies. It is no coincidence that Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan (1992) found that in early adolescence girls begin to use the phrase, "I don't know", with great frequency. Ignorance and innocence - sexual or otherwise - is utilised by girls to avoid accusations of sexual 'guilt'. This is a theme I discuss in more detail in chapter seven.

In this dissertation it is my intention to investigate femininities and masculinities separately and in relation to each other. This is a feature of Part Two of this dissertation, particularly chapter five. In this section I have pointed to the connection between heterosexist school culture and gender and sexuality. In the section below I examine the process of sexualization and how this relates to power and the individual.

SEXUALIZATION AND POWER

Sexuality is an 'umbrella' term. Its meanings are diverse and temporal. Sexuality can refer to visual representations of gender, self regulation and a complex performance by the individual of knowing and not knowing. The lack of clarity in the term 'sexuality' and its propensity for ambiguity is arguably connected to the silences which surround it. In Part Two, the many transcripts of my conversations with the students reveal my equally vague stance when it came to naming the un-nameable. The sexual however, was a topic constantly on their lips. Thus, sexuality and sexualization are connected to sexual acts, but they are only part of the
story. The emphasis in this dissertation is on the process of sexualization: that is, on how individuals come to understand the sexual significance of certain parts of the body. Frigga Haug (1987: 139) argues that,

[The sexualization of 'innocent' parts of the body takes place primarily through the generation of meanings around them, the bundling of signs into a referential system.

In Foucauldian terms, sexuality is constructed by individuals electing to position themselves within certain available discourses. Biddy Martin summarizes Foucault’s stance:

the question of the truth of one's sex, of one's self is not a self-evident question, and the answers that literature, medicine, psychiatry, and religion provide are, in fact, a matter of rendering our bodies and psyches subject to control. Having created sex and gender as problems of a particular kind, the experts must necessarily intervene in our lives to provide solutions and to bind us within a particular identity, a subjectivity. (Martin, 1988: 14)

Throughout this dissertation I investigate the role of music video in the discursive formation of adolescent gendered subjectivity. This construction of gendered subjectivity occurs within power relations. Foucault argues that wherever there is power, there is resistance. In terms of music video, this means that alternative discourses of sexuality do exist. However, as Pam Gilbert and Sandra Taylor argue, "oppositional ideologies are always presented within a range of dominant ideologies with which they conflict" (1991: 67). Their study of the Australian television soap opera, Home and Away, revealed that whilst on occasion there may have been a female character who departed from a traditional female role, this was a rare occurrence. The other characters, and the advertisements, reinforced dominant images of femininity, domesticity, and masculinity. But how does one 'harness' power, and what form does power take? Foucault (1978: 93) points out that,

power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.

The act of young people reading music video is an example of a "complex strategical situation" through which young people seek knowledge about sexuality and gender (amongst other things). In relation to "sex and the discourses of truth", Foucault asks,
[In a specific type of discourse on sex, in a specific form of extortion of truth, appearing historically and in specific places...what were the most immediate, the most local power relations at work? How did they make possible these kinds of discourses, and conversely, how were these discourses used to support power relations? (1978: 97)

These questions can be directly applied to young people’s readings of music video *vis-à-vis* gender and sexualization, power relations and discourse.

Defining sexuality is an elusive task, however by drawing on the literature referred to throughout this chapter, my working usage and understanding regards sexuality as being dependent upon gendered subjectivity in order for individuals to make decisions regarding the presentation of the body, as well as behaviours, thoughts and actions in social, love, and sexual relationships with others and with oneself. In this sense, Haug’s term ‘sexualization’ is actually more closely aligned to the concept of gendered subjectivity than it is to sexuality.

Caroline Ramazanoglu points to Foucault’s argument that “power can not be possessed by men”\(^3\), and that power “has no particular source and, since it is constituted in discourses, power is everywhere” (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 20). One of the questions I ask in this dissertation is how did the students I conducted my research with try to occupy powerful positions through language? Does gender play a part in their success at manipulating power in their favour? During my research I found Madonna to be a particularly interesting paradigm in the gender/power debate. I discuss this in Part Two of this dissertation.

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\(^3\) Foucault is criticised by feminists for his androcentric view, culminating in his usage of the word ‘men’ when describing ‘subjects’. This androcentric view is, I think, indicative of his own historical location within certain discourses, but also due to his genealogical method. As Lois McNay points out, his studies of the Classical era led him to conclude that the ‘ethics’ of morality of that period only applied to men. Foucault states:

This ethics was not addressed to women; it was not their duties, or obligations, that were recalled, justified or spelled out. It was an ethics for men: an ethics thought, written, and taught by men and addressed to men...A male ethics, consequently, in which women figured only as objects. (Foucault, 1985: 22, cited in McNay, 1992: 62)

This view is often used by feminists to dismiss Foucault’s work, however it could also be seen as recognition by Foucault of women’s oppression historically.
In the section below my focus is on female sexualization; I discuss the work of Frigga Haug and Kornelia Hauser (1987). Haug and Hauser belonged to a collective of women who developed a method of research they termed 'memory-work', in order to conduct research that reflected their concerns, beliefs and questions as feminists and socialists, and as the inheritors of certain middle-class German values. Their method is the result of inquiry into psychology, Marxism, Foucauldian theory, feminism and self-analysis. Haug is convinced of one thing: that "sexuality...is a]...crucial area of unhappiness (and of silence) for us as women, an area in which our speechlessness prevents us asking questions" (1987: 29-30). Haug et al decided that they would subject popular notions of female sexuality - including feminist ones - to "critical scrutiny" (1987: 30). Haug states that women treat their bodies as "external", and she has focused on women’s relationships with their bodies in an historical sense:

We concluded that our relationship to our bodies is the product of a careful self-ordering into a feminine position inimical to our happiness as women. We set out, then, to focus on ourselves in an attempt to investigate the historical process of our constitution as women. We were concerned not only with the question of how we have become women in the social sense, but also with the way in which the female body is made as a socio-biological unity. (1987: 30)

In this dissertation I investigate whether or not music video is one of those socializing/sexualizing agents that make the female and the male body 'socio-biological unities'.

Haug argues that women's subjugation to sexualization is hinged upon desire and on self regulation. Wendy Chapkis highlights the malleable nature of female beauty in the following comment made by an insider in the modelling agency business:

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4 Haug’s and Hauser’s work appears in a book edited by Haug and titled Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory. There are eleven different sections/chapters in this book, each of which is accredited to the authorship of different Collective members. In this section I have drawn on two chapters only: ‘Memory-work’, authored by Haug, and ‘Sexuality and Power’, authored by Hauser. When work is cited directly from either of these two chapters I have referenced either to Haug or Hauser. However when I am referring to the book generally, it is referred to as Haug et al, signifying the importance they place on the collective process.
We can send a girl we think of as the little girl next door type to a photographer who will dress her up, bob her hair and create someone completely different. Like they say, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder..." or the photographer...or the stylist...or the make-up person. Those people can completely change a person's look. ('Fran', cited in Chapkis, 1986: 97)

However photographers and make-up artists have also been transforming the images of men. Mark Simpson (1994: 98) argues that it was in the latter half of the twentieth century that the male body became commodified:

It was the 1950s that put the naked young male stud in front of the camera for the first time. It was the 1950s that invented another way to sell close-ups of young men: rock and roll. It was the 1950s that invented the mass consumerism that turned 'feminizing' men into big business. And it was the 1950s that invented that ultimately desirable product (and consumer): the 'teenager'.

In later chapters, where I present the evidence from my study, I draw on Simpson's ideas on masculinity, as well as Haug's on femininity.

Hauser's chapter in Female Sexualization ('Constructions of the Domain: Sexuality and Power') assesses the possibilities and limitations for women, (and human sexuality generally), in the work of Foucault. According to Hauser, recent books on the liberation of female sexuality "demand a society in which there is no longer any necessity for sexuality to be repressed" (1987: 185). In response to this, Hauser poses the question of, "[what] is the relationship between sexuality and domination, and by what means can that which is repressed - sexuality - become liberated?" (1987: 186).

Hauser recalls the "petty bourgeois norms" of her, (and the other women of the group's), childhood, where nudity was frowned upon, and all matters of a sexual nature were cloaked in secrecy. This type of reaction by authority figures to the issue of their own and their children's sexuality is commonly referred to as 'repression' (1987: 186). This term takes for granted that sexual desire is normal. Theories of repression however, have not considered that the, "pathways to liberation which they outline do not differ for men and women" (1987: 187).

Hauser reviews the ideas of Foucault (through the work of Laclau), and 'discourse analysis', through which,
he [Foucault] asks both how it comes about that a particular set of statements clusters together to form what is then understood as 'sexuality', and also precisely what statements are of relevance. The object of his investigation is the discourse, which is 'neither a super-structure, nor a specific social field but the form of the constitution of the social'. (Laclau [1982] cited in Hauser, 1987: 191)

Foucault rejects the idea of repression, because its focus is on discipline and the law, and because of this hierarchical 'top down' version of repression, power relations are disguised (Hauser, 1987: 193). Hauser concludes that "we now learn that power does not fear sexuality, but rather - in the most extreme formulation of this argument - that power takes effect through sexuality" (1987: 193). Hauser cites childhood masturbation as an example of power taking effect through sexuality. Pointing out that authority figures police this 'crime', Hauser states that,

parents, educators and pedagogues are now exorted to take responsibility for the prevention, or the detection of crime. At all these points, it is power that takes effect, extending its reach, inspecting, expanding and replenishing its field of operation. (1987: 194)

Foucault's term, 'the deployment of sexuality', is considered by Hauser to be most useful because "it refers to the ordering of sexuality that delineates the framework within which individual behaviour occurs" (1987: 195). The key relationships within this framework, where the regulation of sexuality occurs, are the husband-wife relationship, and the parent-child relationship. "Within this ordering, something is moving, 'running around': it is discourse" (Hauser, 1987: 196). The discourse on sexuality demands heterosexuality and monogamy (1987: 197).

But Hauser sees problems with Foucault's theory, in that he does not connect the discourse with the individuals who actively participate in it. Power is everywhere and all-embracing, but how does this come to be? How can resistance occur in this scenario? Hauser observes that "[e]ven if we do not behave as 'monogamous heterosexuals', but as 'promiscuous homosexuals', we exist, in other words, merely as deviations" (1987: 197). Hauser questions how it is that we participate in the "construction of those structures", and in doing so moves "beyond the Foucaultian problematic" (1987: 198).
The interest of Hauser, (and the other women in the memory-work group),

centres on the way in which individuals individualize themselves (as effects of norms), by using the power of normalization to measure disparities, determine levels, fix specificities and name differences...all individuals orientate themselves around the same standards to produce themselves as individuals...The problem of individualization is thus closely linked to the possibility of knowledge ('knowledge is power'). (1987: 201)

Haug et al's exploration of female sexuality seeks to resolve the 'how' of lived feminine practice by detailing how individual women participate in the discursive formations of sexuality, and as a consequence, become sexualized. Butler's (1990) thesis that sex follows gender and that gender is performative sits nicely with Haug's work. Also, Haug's emphasis on innocence and guilt finds resonance in the work of Brown and Gilligan (1992) and Davies (1993) referred to above. Knowledge and power are key concepts here, and the discussion below presents an example of individuals learning about language, knowledge and power.

Valerie Walkerdine uses an exchange between a nursery school teacher and a pair of three and four year old boys to explain how power is 'grabbed' (my term) by individuals through language. One of these boys had just called a girl "a stupid cunt" because she would not let him take away one of her blocks, and the other boy has just tried to ruin another child's construction. The teacher reprimands both of the boys, and they proceed to engage in a back-and-forth banter focusing on the teacher's clothing, 'knickers' and genitals. The boys use the word 'shit' freely. The original transcript is quite long, so I have drawn out some key phrases. Some of these phrases were repeated several times:

Get out of it Miss Baxter paxter...show your knickers...show your bum off...Take all your clothes off, your bra off...Take your bum off, take your wee-wee off, take your clothes, your mouth off.
(Walkerdine, 1990: 4)
Walkerdine explains this exchange in terms of the boys quest for power over the teacher:

Although they are not physically grown men they can take the positions of men through language, and in so doing gain power which has material effects...In their discourse she [the teacher] is constituted as 'woman as sex object', and as that object she is rendered the powerless object of their oppression...An individual can become powerful or powerless depending on the terms in which her/his subjectivity is constituted. (1990: 5)

This is precisely the issue I take up in Part Two of this dissertation where I outline the students' readings of music video.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have pointed to a shift in Western philosophical thought that has disrupted the meanings of the terms, 'women' and 'men'. This shift has problematized heterosexuality, and I have pointed to the school as a bastion of heterosexist culture. I have drawn on the work of Frigga Haug et al (1987) to provide some detail in the ways in which women construct themselves as 'socio-biological' unities. This focus begs the question, "what about the male body?". I have briefly referred out to the work of Mac an Ghaill (1994a, 1994b), Connell (1987, 1995), Dyer (1992) and Simpson (1994) in order to acknowledge the problematic nature of masculinity. In the following chapter I pursue the issue of masculinity in more detail.

Chapter two begins with the historical context of music video and looks at the academic study of music video. This background on music video as popular cultural text is intended to facilitate my analysis of gender and sexuality in music video. I explore recent scholarship on images of women and men, and femininity and masculinity in popular culture in order to make sense of the depictions of the body in music video.
CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERVIEW OF MUSIC VIDEO ANALYSIS, 1981 - 1995

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of a variety of elements of music video. I locate music video in a historical context and examine the gendered address of music video. The theory discussed in chapter one relating to gender, female sexualization and power provides some of the logic for my discussion of sexual iconography in music video. I also draw on critiques of masculinity and the male body in popular culture that have emerged from the field of cultural studies. I begin with an overview of the motivations of some of those who are studying music video.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

[T]his collection differs in one central respect from nearly all the work published on music television so far: its concerns originate in the contributors' understanding of the place of music video in the popular music industry, and the social relations of production and consumption that centre on that cultural apparatus. (Goodwin and Grossberg, 1993: ix)

So begins the introduction to Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader, edited by Simon Frith, Andrew Goodwin and Lawrence Grossberg (1993). The Frith et al volume sums up a number of tensions that have been present in popular music scholarship since the advent of the MTV (Music Television) network in the USA in 1981. A general flurry of interest in music video and an explosion in academic literature about music video has occurred outside of the usual place for popular music analysis:

Thus far, the study of music television has been dominated by research which originates beyond the parameters of popular music studies...work in this field has emerged from the disciplines of film studies, mass communications or literary theory, and from theoretical concerns with postmodernism and psychoanalytic theory. (Goodwin and Grossberg, 1993: ix)

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1 The notion that music videos 'address' audiences differently according to individuals' gendering is explored in greater detail in chapter four.
Ironically, seven of the ten contributors to *The Music Video Reader* come from such disciplines. (The book's 'Notes on Contributors' lists the following locations of its contributors: 'Cultural Studies', 'Telecommunications', 'English', 'Communication Arts', 'Speech Communications and Criticism and Interpretive Theory', 'Art History' and 'Film Studies'.) Only one contributor, Robert Walser, is both a musician and an academic in a university music department: "A particular strength of Walser's paper is his grasp of the music itself (he is a guitarist, as well as a scholar)", write Goodwin and Grossberg (1993: x).

Whilst being a musician and having a knowledge of popular music and the industry is certainly useful in studying music video, it is not mandatory. Whilst it may seem common sense that the 'music' should receive a privileged position in music video scholarship, researching and writing about the audience and gender, for example, are equally valid. Privileging those from music backgrounds also marginalizes the work of many teachers and academics who have engaged in music video analysis with young people.

I do not wish to denigrate the work of Frith, Goodwin or Grossberg. Indeed, I have found their writing (collectively and separately) to be most helpful in my own study of music video. What I want to do is make problematic the notion that there is one correct way, or a limited number of ways, in which to write about music video, which Frith et al (1993) seem to suggest by placing their emphasis on the *music* itself. This in effect sets boundaries about how music video should be studied.

I also want to assert that fandom and feminism are not mutually exclusive in studying music video. I wish to take issue with the notion that it is only 'critics' of music video who find music video 'sexist'\(^2\). (I have been a fan of popular music and music video far longer than I have been engaged in academic analysis of music video.) I wish to question the binary logic in music video scholarship that places scholars in 'either/or' positions - either a fan or a feminist. Finally, I want to raise the status of research which asks questions of actual teenage audiences of music video, *without* however, suggesting that this is the 'best' form of music video scholarship. One of the most neglected areas of music video analysis has

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\(^2\) The term 'sexist' is grossly inadequate to describe the intricacies of gender and sexuality in music video. I use it in this chapter merely to refer to a body of literature broadly understood as 'sexism in music video'. Further on in this dissertation I take issue with the limits of 'sexism' as a concept.
been ethnographic-like research with young audiences, as McRobbie has pointed out:

we find a reduction of a whole field of social activities, including the participation of fans, audiences and young musicians in the production of musical culture, to that of musical texts. This has admittedly been encouraged by the visualization of pop music through the growth of commercial pop videos, but it does not excuse the narrowing of focus in the study of MTV, for example, to that of the status of texts of postmodernity, or not, as Andrew Goodwin [1991] argues in reply to E. Ann Kaplan [1987]...
(McRobbie, 1994: 182)

This is not to suggest that ethnographic-like research is the 'best' form of music video scholarship; rather, it simply points out that as well as the foci on the music itself, the industry, postmodernism, consumption and production, there is another site for music video analysis - the teenage audience. How we do research on music video depends on our backgrounds, both in and out of academia. Music video scholarship can tolerate, and in fact needs, enquiry from academics of diverse interests. This is why - unlike Goodwin (1991) and McRobbie (1994) - I find much in the work of Kaplan to admire. Whilst there are some problems in her approach (see below), Kaplan's research into music video is still very useful for feminist research on music video.

In the section below I begin with my own positioning as a long-term watcher of popular music on television. After a brief history of music video and an outline of the Australian experience and status of music video, I look at music video research broadly chronologically since the MTV network began in the US in 1981. Firstly, I look at the research which was typical of the mid-1980s 'boom' in music video analysis. This was mostly textual, rarely ethnographic, and generally quite atheoretical. Secondly I look at more sophisticated analysis that has brought other theories - postmodernism, psychoanalytic theory - into the study of music video. And thirdly, I examine some more recent contributions to music video analysis. My discussion of music video focuses on whether or not it is a powerful form of pedagogy. In Part Two of this dissertation I turn to the work of Ien Ang (1985) and others who have researched the 'audience'. This perspective gives special credence to the ways in which audiences 'read' popular cultural texts.
AS A FAN

Long before I encountered formal, theoretical analysis of music video, I was watching pop and rock music on television. *Countdown*\(^3\) is my earliest vivid memory of televised popular music, but I also have vague recollections of an earlier period, when such bands as 'The Seekers' and 'Peter, Paul and Mary' were on television. What programs they appeared on, I don't remember, but I do remember seeing them on television in pre-Countdown days.

*Countdown* began in 1974, when I was eight years old, and in Grade Three at primary school. *Countdown* was an enormous talking point throughout my schooling, and continued to be for at least a couple of years after I had completed my schooling (1983). But before I was a regular and deliberate viewer of televised pop music, I was a dedicated radio listener. In Grade One - it was 1972, and I was six years old - I can remember singing songs with friends at school that I had heard at home on a 'trannie' (transistor radio), that I had appropriated from my mother. I kept this beloved plastic, aqua coloured trannie by my bedside for many years, and it would often be the first sounds I heard each day. Sunday mornings were especially enjoyable because the local radio station presented a 'Top 40' countdown.\(^4\) The difference I found between my radio listening and the newly discovered *Countdown* was how much the visual imagery enhanced my enjoyment of the music. Actually seeing bands alerted me to many things - fashion, dancing, fan behaviour, bodies as sex symbols and the pure excitement and energy generated by performance. I still find that a music video can sway my liking or disliking of a song, regardless of my opinion formed of a song (via the radio) prior to seeing it.\(^5\)

Once I was over 18 years of age (and sometimes when I was not), I began seeing bands regularly in pubs and clubs. This was an enormously educational exercise, both from a technical point of view in terms of live

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\(^3\) *Countdown* was a pop music program specifically aimed at the teenage Australian audience. It was produced and aired by the Government-run and funded, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), from 1974 till 1987. Whilst its format varied over the years, *Countdown* was consistently a one hour long show, which concluded with the 'Top Ten' (selling) songs in Australia for the preceding week. For further information on *Countdown*, see Peter Wilmot (1993) *Glad All Over: The Countdown Years 1974 - 1987*.

\(^4\) Actually, as I got older, this was one of the reasons why I preferred going to Mass on Saturday nights, instead of Sunday mornings. Recognising my preference for pop music over Christian worship brings a certain logic to John Lennon's suggestion that the Beatles were in fact more popular than Jesus Christ.

\(^5\) Further on in this chapter I discuss music video as an advertisement and commodity.
sound and the musical instruments and technology required, and also because it dispelled any fantasy I had about the superior talent of bands. I realised that many owed their success to skilled engineers, session musicians and singers, and technicians in television and recording studios. I became much more critical of 'pop stars', and also, for the first time, I recognised the music industry as 'work'.

While I was an undergraduate student a combination of living in television-free households and studying and working interfered with my viewing of popular music on television. For several years I really did not watch much music on television. When I did start to watch television regularly again, I was overwhelmed by the images of women I kept seeing in music videos. Had they got worse, or had my feminist awareness just been raised? Whatever, it turned me off, and for a short period I could not watch music videos. This didn't last long. I realised how much I loved music video, and at that stage (1989/1990) television was overflowing with music video programs. I wanted to be able to enjoy watching music videos, yet I felt alienated by the ceaseless 'erotic spectacle' (Hayward, 1991) of female models and the emphasis on female artists' compliance with body fashions. In 1991, whilst I was working and travelling in Europe, I met an academic who not only was actively researching popular music, but who also taught Women's Studies. This was a revelation for me. I realised for the first time that I could combine my passion for music video with my academic research. Although at that stage I was quite unsure what my PhD thesis would focus on, I knew that gender, music video and young people could work as an area of research.

For the last few years, Rage has been my favourite music video program on television. I like Rage because it combines 'alternative' and avant garde contemporary rock music with more commercial fare, in an advertisement free zone. Rage also includes at least one hour of Australian music videos, which I am very interested in 'keeping up' with. I also watch the Saturday and Sunday morning music video programs, not because I particularly enjoy them, but because the students in my study indicated that their preference was for commercial Top 40 music videos. I

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6 See chapter three for a discussion of my history as a feminist.
7 See my discussion below, 'The Australian Context'.
8 This may seem an ironic statement given the fact that music videos are considered to be advertisements for a product. What I mean is that there are no other advertisements during the screening of Rage, and that this contrasts with commercial music video programs in Australia which are interrupted every five to six minutes by advertisements. It is the 'seamless flow' of Rage that I enjoy.
dislike the advertisements that so frequently punctuate this Top 40 and 'classic hit' formula, however I wanted to ensure that the students' favourite music became a part of my consciousness and my subjectivity. Whilst it would be puerile to suggest that I could (or would want to) acquire the same subject positioning as these young people, I considered it essential to take this music seriously, and involve myself in it. Having watched the MTV cable channel in Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK) in 1990/91, it impressed me that this was one long advertisement. This contrasts considerably with Rage, which is devoid of the 'segments' that constitute MTV. Rage is simply punctuated with its theme music and graphics each half hour (this often also signifies a change in the genre of music).

This brief historical account of the origins of my current music video habits is intended to make my positioning and location as a dedicated watcher of music video known. I am not claiming my interest in pop music as somehow exceptional or outstanding. On the contrary, I reflect Western mainstream society because of this involvement in the 'popular'. Neither am I claiming my viewing as 'data'. I am, however, acknowledging that my viewing history and practices inform my analysis of music video, a factor which positions me empathetically vis-à-vis young people and music video. My viewing has been constructed in television's 'gaze': I have learnt how to read music video, as a genre, informally and formally. That is, the programs themselves have 'taught' me their conventions, the meanings of which have been additionally determined by my social world. Secondly, as a student and academic, I have read many theorists (of Cultural Studies, feminism) in order to learn other ways of watching music video.

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9 Below I describe the MTV format.
THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

In Australia, televised popular music has a relatively long history. As Sally Stockbridge (1992: 68) points out, the phenomenon of music video, continues a longstanding relationship between rock and TV that began in the 1950s and continued in part because Australia was so isolated from the global centres of popular music production (the US and the UK), and also because of the vast distances within the country - a factor that militated against 'live' performances and brought TV, in particular the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation], into its own as the only viable alternative.

When I conducted my research there was no 24 hour music video cable channel in Australia as there are in North America and Europe. Despite this, MTV had still managed to change the face of pop music programs in Australia. Music videos have, of course, been around a lot longer than since 1981. The difference however, since the advent of MTV, is the amount and constant accessibility of music videos. MTV is truly a global phenomenon, having established itself in Europe, Britain, Ireland, and in Asia. In this section, I look at how the analysis of music video has changed over the last 10 to 13 years, identifying certain characteristic foci. This section focuses mainly on the US and Australian research for two reasons. Firstly, the bulk of writing about music video has emerged from the US (Stockbridge, 1994: 240), and as my study is an Australian one, I have also considered Australian music video scholarship. Throughout this dissertation however, I have also drawn on academic writing on music video that originates in Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada and elsewhere - as my references to the work of McRobbie (1994) and Frith et al (1993) so far indicate.

In the 1970s and 1980s, when Countdown reigned supreme as the most popular music show for teenagers in Australia, performers had 'film clips' to promote their latest songs; MTV changed this terminology to 'music video'. With the demise of Countdown in 1987, programs with names such as Video Hits took over as the dominant pop music programs for young people, and it was around this time that music video programs really started to become very prominent on Australian television. These programs tended to copy the MTV format with back-to-back videos, very

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10 For a more detailed history of pop music programs in Australia, see: Sally Stockbridge, 'Rock music on Australian TV', in Hayward, P. (ed 1992), From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, Australia.
few live appearances, or interviews of artists in the studio (often none at all), and there was certainly no necessity to have a host or presenter.

By the 1990s however, this initial zeal of commercial and Government television networks alike, to produce many lengthy programs had waned. When Channel Nine axed its Friday and Saturday late night program, MTV\textsuperscript{11}, in 1993, the longevity of music video programs' popularity was questioned. This suggested decline in the popularity of music video programs was somewhat remedied in the same year when SBS, (a Government funded multi-cultural and multi-lingual television station), launched a new 'World Music' music video program, \textit{Nomad}. In 1994, Channel Ten began a new one hour Sunday evening pop music program, \textit{Take 40}, which, complete with its host, studio audience, 'live' performances and music videos, was rather reminiscent of \textit{Countdown}. Both \textit{Nomad} and \textit{Take 40} had rather short life-spans, with neither continuing to be screened by August 1994, due to poor ratings.\textsuperscript{12} In 1994 the ABC also launched a new half-hour youth culture program, \textit{Loud}, (Tuesday to Thursday each week) which specifically focused on pop music. \textit{Loud} has also now been replaced by a new series of the ABC produced program, \textit{Vidiot}, (a popular culture quiz show for children and teenagers). In 1995 Channel Seven dropped its weekend morning music video programs. In 1996, the ABC launched a new, three hour, Saturday morning music video program, \textit{Recovery} - a live program with a band and studio audience. \textit{Recovery}'s focus is towards the alternative end of the popular music spectrum. Thus Channel Ten and the ABC provide the bulk of free-to-air music video viewing in Australia. At the time of conducting my research in 1993, even though the 24 hour cable option was not available in Australia, many hours of music video were available to the young people in my study.

As with music video elsewhere, Australian music videos tend to reflect US and European trends. The promotion of the white, 'first world', European male as universal, (as well as a plethora of complex social and economic factors), has resulted in the under-representation of Aboriginal people in Australian music videos. When the Aboriginal band, \textit{Yothu Yindi}, reached 'No.1' in Australia with its song, 'Treaty', it was the first

\textsuperscript{11} Despite having Australian hosts, this was very much a product of the US original, using American MTV promotions and logos, and screening selected footage (eg, 'segments' such as game shows) from the US cable channel.

\textsuperscript{12} Ian 'Molly' Meldrum, former host of \textit{Countdown} and general commentator on pop music, has repeatedly argued that music video programs only work when they present an uninterrupted flow of music, clips, interviews and other popular music related items.
Aboriginal band to do so (Mitchell, 1992: 11). Before Yothu Yindi achieved commercial success, Aboriginal artists were almost non-existent on music video programs, and it is still rare to see Aboriginal performers on music video programs in Australia. The success of Yothu Yindi outside of Australia jolted the Australian music industry, and perhaps the public, into legitimising Aboriginal pop music. It was however the "European-style dance music remix [of 'Treaty'] by a Melbourne-based sound system, revealingly called 'Filthy Lucre'" that gained most popularity (Mitchell, 1992: 11). As Mitchell notes, both the lyrics and the video of this dance remix omitted the political, and distinctly Aboriginal, references of the Yothu Yindi original version (1992: 12-14). 'Up-and-coming' bands such as Renegade Funk Train, also challenge the 'whiteness' of Australian music video generally. Performing a combination of rap and hip-hop, Renegade Funk Train use their non-Anglo-Celtic background to make political comment about Australians like themselves who are considered to be 'other'. Yothu Yindi and Renegade Funk Train represent 'exceptions to the rule' however, and music video in Australia looks very much like it does in the US and Europe.

Despite the "longstanding relationship between rock and TV" in Australia (Stockbridge, 1992: 68), research into the relationship of young people to televised popular music has been rather sparse. For example, From Pop to Funk to Postmodernism: Popular music and Australian culture from the 1960s to the 1990s, (1992) does not have a single chapter based on research with young people. Edited by Philip Hayward (1992), the contributors to this volume draw on their vast knowledge of the Australian music industry, their personal engagement with popular music, textual analyses of musical texts, and the reflections of pop stars and commentators of the time. In contrast, my research has placed an actual audience of music video at its centre, and in so doing, has endeavoured to analyse this data in light of my own readings, together with those of academics and researchers internationally. My point here is that whilst televised popular music in Australia has been researched and written about in considerable detail, the involvement of young people with music video programs in Australia has been largely overlooked. That is, music video's pedagogical element (which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter) has been generally ignored. Studies of music video in Australia tend to reflect the researchers' interests in the music industry, and to a lesser extent, an interest in the postmodern. There has not been the moral panic in Australia in terms of research about the 'bad' influence of music.
video on young people\textsuperscript{13} and hence research reflects this. Before I elaborate on the cogency of selecting music videos as a research focus in Australia, an examination of the results of some of the US research is necessary.

**MTV USA: What Does It Look Like?**

The MTV network was launched by Robert Pittman in the United States in 1981, as a 24-hour cable channel (Rabinovitz, 1989: 101). Although MTV was immensely popular with viewers and raised flagging record sales in the US (Shuker, 1989: 1), when MTV had not made a profit by 1984, its parent company, Warner Amex, offered one-third of the network stock to the public (Rabinovitz, 1989: 101). The network then set about streamlining its format and seeking a monopoly on all music videos. This resulted in MTV being less diverse, and prioritizing the videos of already successful artists. Rabinovitz (and others, Frith et al [1993] for example) argue that it is precisely such "economic pressures" which have determined MTV's textual form (Rabinovitz, 1989: 101).

By 1986 MTV's profits began to increase, however it was sold to Viacom which resulted in another major overhaul in the channel's format in 1987. This included sacking its five VJs (video jockeys), which Rabinovitz claims was in complete contradiction with Margaret Morse's\textsuperscript{14} (postmodern) analysis of MTV which listed, "viewer identification and familiar direct address as a means of unifying the station's heterogeneous elements" (Rabinovitz, 1989: 102). In other words, "MTV's complete VJ turnover disrupted its own stabilized flow" (Rabinovitz, 1989: 102). It is incorrect to term MTV 'postmodern' according to Rabinovitz because it has been economics, not postmodernism, which has determined MTV's form (1989: 102-3). Rabinovitz points to the work of Kaplan (1987b) and John Fiske (1987) as incorrect assessments of the postmodern nature of music video.

From 1987 onwards there was a major change in the MTV network. Heavy metal music became more prevalent as the network endeavoured to regain its "original target-specified audience of white male teenagers (twelve to seventeen years old)" (Rabinovitz, 1989: 102). The 'seamless'

\textsuperscript{13} Largely, I suspect, because a 24 hour music video channel has only recently been established, and thus the perception that young people have available to them copious amounts of music video has not gained currency.

format gave way to segments, weekly 'hip clips', regular comedy spots and quiz shows (Rabinovitz, 1989: 102). The MTV 'Unplugged' segments have had immense popularity, with Nirvana's 'Unplugged' session especially gaining legendary status.\footnote{In 1995 and 1996 Rage often began with an MTV Unplugged session (usually one hour in length).}

This dissertation is not the place to engage in a lengthy debate on postmodernism and MTV, however it is important to note that I think that music video theorists who have dismissed Kaplan's (1987b) work (and others') on postmodernism do so at their own peril. Although economic factors may have determined much of the format of MTV, this does not mean MTV is not a postmodern phenomena. Care also needs to be exercised in what is understood by the term 'postmodern'. Does the prioritizing of profit over aesthetics and variety discount MTV's postmodern nature? This is what Rabinovitz and Goodwin (1991) both seem to be saying. Whilst individual scholars may interpret postmodernism in music video differently, the nature of 'anti-postmodernist' music video scholarship suggests that better communication (and less paranoia?) needs to be engaged in. Kaplan's work on music video is both original and relevant to music video scholarship. For example, her five categories for analysing music videos are most useful, and her feminist perspective has brought an entirely different view to popular music scholarship (see Kaplan 1987a, 1987b, 1986). Kaplan's work does privilege the text, however she is well aware of the pitfalls of quantifying music videos as a form of analysis, and she is critical of the emphasis in the US on producing 'objective' research which has led to the dominance of quantitative research methods in media studies (1987a: 212).

Within popular music scholarship I have detected a general antagonism towards study which focuses beyond the music itself. The relatively recent phenomenon of music video has propelled a type of 'mad scramble' amongst academics intent on establishing themselves as experts and authorities on music video. This has resulted in attempts to proclaim what does and does not constitute legitimate music video scholarship. In narrowing the focus the danger is that innovative work - like Kaplan's for example - does not gain the attention it deserves.
WHAT IS THIS DOING TO 'OUR KIDS'?

In the US, music videos have been a focus of concern regarding their influence on young people, particularly those attending schools. A considerable amount has been researched and written about the nature of music video, motivated largely by the perceived effects it has on young people. Interestingly, far fewer studies have actually asked young people themselves how they read music videos. Instead, studies often consist of well educated adults 'coding' and 'classifying' particular aspects of the lyrics and visuals.16

Overwhelmingly, the main comments about music videos have been in the form of criticisms: that music videos are violent, sexist and racist, and that they 'rob' young people of their imagination. The US research on MTV has also often been concerned with producing statistics. A great many aspects of music videos have been quantified, and then checked for 'reliability'; that is, the uniformity of the 'coders' classifications is taken as a measure of the validity of their assessments. As Kaplan (1987a: 212) argues, the emphasis on producing 'objective' research in the US has led to the dominance of the "quantitative method" in media studies. This also applies to music video scholarship in the US. Despite such methodological problems, (which I discuss further in chapter three), many of the studies do contain useful information about music videos, which I will now discuss.

In two studies, the depiction of women in music videos were classified at four levels: from 'condescending' ("less than a person, a two-dimensional image...the 'dumb blond', the sex object and the whimpering victim"); to 'keep her place' ("may be presented outside domestic or decorative situations...but she always is submissive to men"); to 'contradictory' ("a dual role where a woman plays a traditional subservient role while also displaying a certain degree of independence"); to 'fully equal' ("[t]reated as a person...with no mention of her private life") (Vincent et al, 1989: 752; and Vincent, 1989: 156-157). Such a deduction is fraught with problems. The fact that "inter-coder reliability...was found to be 95.8%" in one particular study (Vincent et al, 1989: 752), does not automatically tell one of the accuracy of the coders' coding. What it does convey however, is that three or four people hold

16See for example: H. Stith Bennett and Jeff Ferrell (1987) 'Music Videos and Epistemic Socialization', Youth & Society, Vol.18 No. 4, pp. 344-362;
very similar ideas about what is sexist, and what is violent. A strong example of this is Vincent et al's classification of Madonna as "typically...Level 1"; that is, as occupying a portrayal which is "condescending" to women (Vincent et al, 1989: 160). The 'scientific' presentation of data (for example, "X2 = 15.64, 3 d.f., p< .001") cannot conceal that the coder's classification merely represents the subjective position of the coder (Vincent et al, 1989: 157). Recent feminist writings on Madonna dispute that she is, "less than a person, a two-dimensional image...the 'dumb blond', the sex object and the whimpering victim" (Vincent et al, 1989: 156).\(^{17}\) That a complex character like Madonna could be reduced to Vincent et al's 'Level 1' is clear evidence of the pitfalls of 'scientifically' analysing music video. Kaplan (1987a: 220) points out that liberal feminist analyses of television programs most often focus on "the kinds and frequency of female roles". This 'scientific' approach to studying music videos is methodologically flawed, and I discuss this further in chapter three.

Many studies of music video in the US have concluded that they are sexist. Women in music videos most often fall into the categories of submissive virgins, or domineering sex goddesses (Sherman and Dominick, 1986: 80). Of particular interest to scholars has been the increased rate of violence and aggression in 'sexy' videos. Sherman and Dominick report that 56 percent of the 166 concept videos they analysed contained violent episodes (1986: 86). For the purpose of analysis, music videos have been classified as either 'concept' or 'performance' videos. Performance videos are those which have over 50 percent of the video time devoted to studio or concert performance. Concept videos are those which have more than 50 percent of the video time devoted to "a story, dramatization, or narrative and not to performance" (Sherman and Dominick, 1986: 82). Of those videos that contained violence, 81 percent also contained sexual imagery (Sherman and Dominick, 1986: 88). Upon reading such a statistic, I question whether or not this is how young viewers would read such music videos. What methodological approach

or practice could be adopted to find out? This is an issue I discuss in chapter three.

A common criticism of music video has been that it contains far too much 'sex', and is therefore unsuitable for young people. I have placed the word sex in commas because it is erroneous to believe that 'sex' is a part of music videos. Firstly, 'sex' is usually only ever suggested in music videos (I have seen exceptions on late night, 'Adults only' video programs such as Rage), and secondly, 'sex' is most often implied by the featuring of women in voyeuristic and fetishistic ways. That is, so-called 'sex' in music video is both heterosexual and constructed from a male viewpoint. Pat Aufderheide suggests that in pornography the emphasis is on the "doing"; and in music video it is on the "implied":

While pornographic films feature sexual encounter, in music videos contact is a comparative rarity. The bolder the stereotyping, the more likely it is to turn out that these images are evanescent. (1986: 11)

Women's bodies, clothing and so on are used as sexual icons or signifiers of specific sexual and social meanings. The viewer is assumed (generally) to be male, and it is to male fantasies of domination and control that the images appeal. Some critics - Lisa Lewis (1990, 1993), for example - argue that 'female-address' is present in music video, and I discuss this below.

Walker reports that the "concern about the high levels of violence in music videos may be exaggerated", arguing that his study shows "a clear trend for MTV viewing to be negatively related to exposure to other types of violent content in television, motion pictures and books" (1987: 761). This consumption of mild (rather than high) violence includes romance novels and daytime soaps (1987: 760). In one study a girl commented that she watched MTV "when I don't feel like watching a soap opera" (Sun and Lull, 1986: 123). "In general, those...who were above average in MTV viewing, tended to be below average in the viewing of other types of violent content" (Walker, 1987: 762). And the younger the children, the stronger the pattern was in this study. Walker explains:

These MTV users may well be attracted to MTV, not for its violent content, but for the romantic/sexual themes that also abound. Significantly, both daytime soaps and romance novels demand a large leisure time commitment: daytime soaps because of their habitual daily nature and romance novels because of time required for extensive book reading. (Walker, 1987: 762)
A viewing routine like this would leave very little time for any other type of television viewing. Would a viewer necessarily, however, watch music videos for the violence or the romance and sex? Could they not be attracted to both these attributes as well as a dozen others?

Sun and Lull\textsuperscript{18} found that girls watch more MTV than boys on weekends - two and a half hours for girls, as opposed to two hours for boys (1986: 117). Boys claimed they had more "good friends", therefore spending less time watching television on weekends (Sun and Lull, 1986: 117). The issue of music video as a social or anti-social habit is one which requires investigation, particularly in assessing whether girls are more likely than boys to watch music videos. Many students claim to watch music videos and MTV to find out about current trends in the pop music scene. For example, one 15 year old boy in the Sun and Lull study claimed that "all my friends watch it and talk about it", and that he would be "lost" without it (1986: 122). On the whole however, very little attention has been given to the differences in girls' and boys' viewing habits and preferences. This is an aspect I look at in Part Two of this dissertation.

When Sun and Lull questioned adolescents as to why they viewed MTV, discovering the meaning of songs was high on their list. They found the young people to be very positive about the visual element of MTV, viewing it not as 'robbing' their imagination, but acting as "visual aids" or "pictorial translations" of what the artists/musicians are trying to say (Sun and Lull, 1986:121). The students believed that there was a 'true' meaning in the songs, and that the artists were able to put this across in the videos. Some students in Sun and Lull's study were a little more sceptical, pointing out that music videos contained the interpretations of the "producers and directors in the television industry, not the musicians" (1986: 121). This is another issue I take up in Part Two. This particular study indicates that MTV is largely a leisure time activity, motivated by musical and visual appreciation. MTV viewing is influenced by "strong feelings about musicians, songs, genres, and lifestyle features associated with musical elements of culture and sub-culture" (Sun and Lull, 1986: 124). According to Sun and Lull's research then, music videos actually contribute to young people's understandings of pop songs, rather than inhibiting their creativity.

\textsuperscript{18} Sun and Lull's (1986) study differs from many other US studies on music video as it was conducted with a teenage audience, in a school setting.
In contrast, Greenfield et al (1987), found that watching the video of a song inhibited the imagination compared to the sound track only being heard. The results of these two studies appear to contradict each other: Sun and Lull (1986) say that visuals contribute to the meaning of the song, whereas Greenfield et al (1987) argue that the aural version of the song extracts more imaginative comments from young people than does the video version. This perhaps points to the folly of attempting to make blanket statements about young people, with little consideration given to the fact that one group cannot be seen as representative of all young people. It also raises a methodological point - that the phrasing, context and delivery of the researchers' questions influences the type of responses given. Different answers, (and hence findings), are gained because different questions are asked. Therefore, in this example where one study contradicts the findings of another, the solution is not to look at which study is 'right' or 'true', but to question the focus of the researchers' questions.

Sun and Lull (1986) also questioned students about their motivations for watching MTV. They discovered the following reasons: information/social learning (62%), passing time (15%), escape/mood (11%), and social interaction (8%) (Sun and Lull, 1986: 119). Sun and Lull actually believe, however, that this social interaction aspect has been underestimated. 'Why they watch' is a point I have picked up in my discussions with young people in chapter four.

Sun and Lull found that some MTV viewing habits were racially or culturally based (1986: 118). Five ethnic groups were identified in their study, and each ethnic group had its own peculiarities in viewing patterns. MTV has been criticised consistently for its under-representation of blacks, and the Black Entertainment Television (BET) cable channel offers "Video Soul" as an alternative to the 'white' MTV (Brown and Campbell, 1986: 1-2). Brown and Campbell's study concludes that:

Blacks were much more likely than whites to be shown in optimistic scenarios as helpful and caring individuals, but almost exclusively in videos on a black channel; women and blacks remain minorities on MTV. (Brown and Campbell, 1986: 1)

Conclusions such as those of Brown and Campbell particularly apply to certain genres of popular music. Cheryl James of the all-female rap group, Salt-n-Pepa, laments that:
We got to the point where we were only being played on pop radio. We did a concert - not that I have anything against white people - but there was nothing but white people in our audience. And that hurt me because I'm black, and I want my people there, too. (James in Dunn, 1994: 18)

Henry Giroux (1994), commenting on the riots in 1992 in Los Angeles, argues that right-wing, white groups' new politics of 'containment' or segregation of racial groups,

reveals how liberal and conservative discourses become complicitous with the underlying conditions that created the uprising by refusing to link race and class, by refusing to recognize that racism in the United States is deeply embedded in a politics of social, economic, and class divisions. (1994: 72)

Mainstream music video - particularly MTV - is often one of those "liberal and conservative discourses".

The sexism and sexual violence in many rap music videos is very alarming from my feminist perspective. Such alarm is not shared by all commentators on popular music however, and Tony Mitchell argues that,

[identifying and condemning the racist and sexist aspects of rap, however, is to interpret literally what are cleverly rehearsed reversals of the racism which has traditionally been addressed towards black Americans into rhetorical shock elements... (1992: 3)

He quotes Paul Gilroy (1991: 7) who claims that, "one man's misogyny turns out to be another man's parodic play" (Mitchell, 1992: 3). Where does this male "play" leave women however, and is Mitchell arguing that women should be silent about the images they see in music videos? What gives Mitchell, as a white Australian academic, permission to speak on this issue? (Mitchell, coincidentally, in this same article, when referring to Australian rappers, Sound Unlimited19, describes them as, "two rappers of Chilean extraction, Rosano "El Assassin" Martinez and his sister, Tina Martinez" [Mitchell, 1992: 4; italics mine]. Clearly Mitchell sees nothing amiss in defining a woman via her relationship to a man.) Catherine A. MacKinnon (1989: 154) argues that:

19 Now known as Renegade Funk Train.
Men are scared to make it possible for some men to tell other men what they can and cannot have sexual access to because men have power. If you don't let them have theirs, they might not let you have yours. This is why the indefinability of pornography, all the 'one man's this is another man's that,' is so central to pornography's definition.

MacKinnon's footnote for this last sentence states:


Whilst I find MacKinnon's statement that "men have power" problematic, her general point is valid. In terms of Mitchell quoting Gilroy (1991) to give his position the legitimacy of being 'recent research', it merely rehashes an old argument, the existence of which Mackinnon has traced as far back as 1929.

I find some of the imagery of women in some music videos to be offensive to my feminist sensibilities. Other images I find exciting and empowering in the breaking of stereotypes that many performers today (male and female) are engaging in (for example, The Red Hot Chilli Peppers, k.d. lang and The Breeders. This is relevant to this dissertation in that it adds further to the reader's understanding of my subjective positioning. The intention of this thesis is not to prove that music video generally is sexist (as the studies discussed above indicate, this has been done). Rather, my intention is to investigate the role of music video in the active formation of the gendered subjectivity of one young audience.
THE IRRESISTIBLE COMMODITY

Music videos have broken through TV's most hallowed boundaries. As commercials in themselves, they have erased the very distinction between the commercial and the program. (Aufderheide, 1986: 1)

Although music videos are an art form, an aesthetic and creative form of expression, as suggested earlier, the primary reason that music videos exist is to make money - for the recording companies, the television networks, and often for the artists themselves. Clearly though, the desire to make money that motivates large recording companies is not all that drives the performers and producers of music videos. Musicians, singers, dancers, directors, choreographers, and the entire gamut of those involved in the production of music videos, are also motivated by their desire for artistic expression and fame. Whilst consumerism is an intrinsic part of being an audience, in this dissertation my focus is on the social meanings of music video that were made by the young people in my study.

One of the reasons for the success of MTV amongst young people is "because buyable popular culture is central to their lives" (Aufderheide, 1986: 3). The desire on the part of young people to have an identity and a sense of belonging guarantees the success of a popular cultural form, which sets trends in fads and fashions, and can even promote identification with particular subcultures (Aufderheide, 1986: 2). But how do music videos manage to do all of these things? According to Aufderheide (1986: 6) the key is subtlety, mood setting, the pursuit of pleasure, and the 'dreamlike quality' of music video.

The designer of MTV, Bob Pittman, (who has described young Americans as "television babies"), stated that his job was "to amplify the mood and include MTV in the mood" (Aufderheide, 1986: 8). In other words, young people are more attracted to "appeals of the heart than the head"; thus an emotional pitch is more effective than a logical one (Aufderheide, 1986: 8). Music video's seductive appeal is its 'soft', rather than 'hard' (sell), approach. The product - the Compact Disc (CD) or cassette tape - is an experience, a youth-friendly 'environment', a certain mood, but never overtly a product being sold. Grossberg argues that popular culture is about the investments people make in it and the world, and its effects on people's emotions - what he terms 'affect'. Grossberg agrees with Pittman's assessment that MTV is a "mood enhancer":

You ask kids what they do with music they will say, well, it depends on my mood...Consumers of popular culture are extraordinarily good in knowing how to fine tune the map of affect and where they're located in it. (Grossberg, in interview with Wilson-Brown and McCarthy, 1995: 412-413)

Kaplan (1987a) argues that satisfaction is a promise MTV never delivers. She argues that MTV is designed to,

keep us forever watching, forever hoping to fulfil our desire in the next one that comes along...We are trapped in the constant hope that the next video will somehow ultimately satisfy us, and so we go on and on watching and hoping, lured by the seductive and constant promise of immediate plenitude. But all we are actually doing is consuming endlessly. (1987a: 235)

Kaplan (1987a) is correct in that music video watching is consumption, however I disagree that this is all that it is, and I disagree that fulfilment is deferred. As a fan of music video, I find watching very fulfilling. I do not watch in the hope of enjoying myself, rather, I continue to watch because I enjoy watching it - even videos I find objectionable can be enjoyed through criticism and analysis. From my own perspective as a fan, music videos do not promise a potentially good experience if the product is bought; rather, the good experience can occur as the viewer watches. The dreamlike, fantasy quality of music video encourages an atmosphere of timelessness and escapism, often being completely unrelated to the song itself (Aufderheide, 1986: 7). This, according to Aufderheide, makes music video a "ready made alternative to social life" (1986: 8). This perhaps verifies the findings of Sun and Lull - which they themselves contest - that social interaction is the least significant reason for young people viewing MTV (Sun and Lull, 1986: 119). In Part Two of this dissertation I explore some reasons why the young people in my study watch music videos.

RECENT FOCI IN MUSIC VIDEO ANALYSIS

My discussion so far about the nature of music video would seem to leave no question that music video actively essentializes the experiences of white, young, middle-class, first world males, and in the process marginalizes all who are 'other' to this. In the last decade however, such claims have been disputed in relation to the portrayal of women in music videos. Lisa Lewis (1993) has re-examined the role of women in the music industry, and has rejected a widely held feminist view that women are
usually little more than sex objects for a male audience. Lewis's work is valuable because it acknowledges female participation and agency, however it is also problematic. (I use the term 'sexism' in this section, discussing more complex readings of gender in music video further on in this chapter.) Lewis acknowledges that:

Music video does bring together two cultural forms that have notorious histories as promulgators of female objectification - rock music and televisual imagery. (1993: 129)

She also claims however, that charges of sexism in music video:

too frequently treats MTV as a monolithic textual system, and sexism as a static and ahistoric mode of representation written into media textuality. (1993: 129)

Lewis further argues that:

focussing exclusively on the sexist representations present in many male-addressed videos overshadows the emergence on MTV of an aggregate of videos produced to songs sung by female musicians, and their enormous popularity among female fans. (1993: 129)

Lewis's discussion of the videos of Cyndi Lauper, Tina Turner, Madonna and Pat Benatar, successfully articulates the 'textual strategies' of female address in music video (1993: 137). However, I would argue that it is the 'asymmetrical power relations'\(^{20}\) between women and men in both the music industry and in society generally, rather than the focus of critics, which has really 'overshadowed' the progress of women in the music industry, particularly music video. It is prudent to bear in mind that Lauper et al's music videos existed in a period (1983 and 1984) when women in music videos did most often fall into the categories of 'submissive virgins', and 'domineering sex goddesses' (Sherman and Dominick, 1986: 80). Lewis herself acknowledges that by 1983, MTV's "system of discourse had largely solidified around the representation of male adolescent experiences and desires" (1993: 134).

\(^{20}\) This concept is drawn from the work of Leslie Roman and Linda Christian-Smith, where they argue that gender should always be defined and located "within a set of asymmetric or unequal power relations between men and women as well as among women at a given historic juncture." (1988: 6)
Recognising the emergence of female address in music videos does not have to be viewed as somehow in 'competition' with work that focuses on the more common male address in music video. As noted earlier, Kaplan has identified some flaws in the methods employed by feminists to analyse television, which I think applies also to music video analysis. The findings of such research should not be ignored however. Kaplan's comments on soap opera research by feminists applies equally well to music video:

most of the quantitative, content analyses of soaps do not constitute feminist research\textsuperscript{21}, although their results may be useful for feminist scholars. (1987a: 213)

The emphasis which is currently being placed on demonstrating the diversity of roles and images of women in music videos is not being applied to the various ethnic and cultural groups who music video has also projected as 'other'. For example, critics are not saying we should re-examine our hasty analysis of music videos which found that music videos are racist. Why are feminist critiques of music video, such as Kaplan's, being placed under such scrutiny?

One cannot cite female fandom as 'proof' or 'evidence' that music videos are not sexist. Because millions of female teenagers love Madonna, does not mean her material is not sexist. Female participation does not necessarily signify empowerment or non-exploitation. Equally, the presence of women cannot signify equality of women and men in music videos. We merely need to turn to various cultural practices that women have historically performed - genital mutilation, Chinese footbinding, eye-brow plucking, the wearing of high heels and dieting - to see the involvement of women in their own oppression. Just as feminists have argued that women's participation in certain cultural practices cannot be simplistically viewed as their consent to such practices, so too, music video critics should look beyond the obvious, and not simply regard the presence of some women as 'positive'.

Whilst Lewis's examples of Madonna, Cyndi Lauper, Pat Benatar, and The Bangles should not be dismissed, what percentage of time did they actually occupy on MTV? Kaplan states that

\textsuperscript{21} I discuss feminist research in chapter three.
It is significant that all these types of videos [female address/feminist] occur infrequently within the twenty-four hour continuous MTV flow, and it is the situation of individual texts within that flow that has implications for gender issues. (1987a: 238)

Langman points out that although there are a number of high profile and successful female Australian artists, it does not follow,

that men and women have achieved any greater degree of equality in the music business in the 1990s than before. As is often the case in feminist analyses, we need to look at the gaps and the silences... We need to ask where the female engineers, technicians and executives are. The absence of Aboriginal women everywhere is a glaring example of exclusion. (Langman, 1993: 93)

Much evidence indicates that the gendered representations common in music videos are often sexist and misogynistic. This does not mean however, that one can discount the role of women in music video and the music industry generally. It is not simply an 'either/or' situation.

SEXUAL ICONOGRAPHY IN MUSIC VIDEO

Not all music videos contain what I describe below as sexual iconography, but as I have demonstrated above, blatant commodification of bodies - most often female bodies - is a standard feature of music video generally. Sut Jhally (1992: 51) argues that this type of representation of women in music videos has broad repercussions for all female music video performers. In this thesis I argue that such images have repercussions for young audiences of music video. This is not to say that music video is a 'bad' or 'good' influence, rather, it is acknowledging it as a significant site of gendered discourses.

Some of the images that abound in music videos that I refer to here as sexual iconography include: long, thin, hairless female legs; female breasts and cleavages, mouths and buttocks; and bare, hairless, male chests. Women in music videos are often shown suggestively caressing parts of their bodies in the same manner that gameshow models fondle appliances and cars. Women are shown pouting, rarely smiling and generally looking unhappy. Many women have long, flowing hair, and wear an often bizarre conglomeration of leather, vinyl, chains, lingerie, high heels, stockings, mini-skirts/dresses and bikinis. Music video performers both set trends and adhere to them. Sexual iconography could also be viewed as
a visual representation of what Gilbert and Taylor (1991) call 'gender ideologies'. As I noted earlier, there has been a call to move beyond the type of content analysis which labels music videos as 'sexist'. This has coincided with a rise in the presence of the male body in music video.

It used to be unusual to see men's bodies objectified in the way that women's bodies are in music video, but the incidence of bare-chested male dancers/artists has increased markedly over the last few years. Madonna's video for her song, 'Vogue', is one prominent example. A central erotic feature of this black and white video is a black male dancer. The camera consistently gazes down upon him, and his downcast eyes do not look up to acknowledge the camera. His shirt billows open to show off his well-toned torso. However is 'Vogue' intended for the female gaze? Cindy Patton (1993) argues that the subcultural practice of 'voguing' - striking poses within dance - actually originated amongst black and Hispanic queens. Thus it may be the case that the male dancer as erotic spectacle may have its origins in gay culture, rather than arising from any female desire.

Rarely have men been depicted in the passive, exploitative way that women have in videos such as the now classic, 'Simply Irresistible', by Robert Palmer. Men in video clips usually have active roles that reflect both a mythologised rock 'n' roll lifestyle, as well as more everyday male pursuits like going to work, playing sport and their role in the family, and as such, the featuring of men in music video is qualitatively different to that of women in music video. In the Palmer video, although the identically dressed, expressionless women appear to play guitars, they are not musicians, they are fashion models. The guitars are phallic props only, to enhance the sexual appeal of the women to the male gaze.

Recently there have been prominent examples in music video of women who have actively made men the object of their sexual gaze. In Salt 'N' Pepa's videos, 'Shoop' and 'Whatta Man', men's bodies are a key focus. These videos express heterosexual female sexual desire. In 'Shoop', legions of young, black women dance in formation, singing "you make me wanna shoop". The setting of 'Whatta Man' is a familiar one - the 'girls' are on the beach 'warming' the towels while the 'guys' are in the distance engaging in beach activities. Uncharacteristically though, the three members of Salt 'N' Pepa actively size up the men. The lyrics of this song contrast with the emphasis on male physicality in the video. This "good" man sexually satisfies his partner and spends "quality" time with his children; he is, "never disrespectful 'cause his mama taught him that"
(Salt 'N' Pepa, 1993). This 'good' man is good because a woman - his mama - has taught him how to be good. But how do videos visually depict a 'good' man? Via his physicality? Does 'good' translate to young, good looking and extreme muscularity?

At least two factors distinguish these Salt 'N' Pepa videos from those where men make women the objects of their sexual gaze. Firstly, the women in Salt 'N' Pepa wear sexualized clothing of the ilk outlined above, whereas Robert Palmer, for example, does not. Secondly, the difference between the men and women who appear as sexual objects in the Salt 'N' Pepa videos and 'Simply Irresistible' is that the males are active whereas the females are passive. In other words, the 'Simply Irresistible' women exist in an asymmetrical power dynamic, whereas it is not so clear cut whether the men in Salt 'N' Pepa's videos do. The lyrics in 'Whatta Man' very clearly articulate that this man is 'good' because of his behaviour. This contrasts with women who are 'irresistible' for their physical attractiveness.

Laura Mulvey's 1975 article, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', has served as a model for film theory in relation to "the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form" (Mulvey, 1992: 22). Drawing on the psychoanalytic work of Lacan, Mulvey outlines how films address an ideal male spectator whose status as possessor of the phallus relies on the presence (symbolic or otherwise) of a woman. The structure of 'gazes' and 'looks' in films are taken as symptomatic of a patriarchal society in which women exist as the 'other'. Mulvey's article has had an enormous impact on film theory generally. As film analysis has widened to include the study of masculinity and the male spectator, scholars have turned to Mulvey's work to provide guidelines. I discuss one such scholar's work below, in order to assist my task of analysing masculinity in music video with the young people of my study.

In an article first published in 1982, Richard Dyer isolates three 'instabilities' present in the sexual spectacle of the male 'pin-up'. One instability, Dyer (1992: 267) argues, is that the male pin-up "does violence to the codes of who looks and who is looked at (and how)". The male pin-up reverses the tradition of men looking at women in two ways. Firstly, the spectacle of the male pin-up gives women permission to look, and secondly, the male pin-up looks back in a different way to the female pin-up. The male pin-up usually looks upwards (suggesting 'higher' intellectual/spiritual thoughts), away, or 'through' the camera (the penetrative or castrating look). Dyer questions why the penetrative or
castrating look would threaten women, and comes to a conclusion which constitutes his second instability: that although the male pin-up appears to address women, it really functions as "the actual working out of male sexuality" (1992: 269). Dyer suggests that this latter function may be one of the reasons why the male pin-up does not 'work' for women (1992: 269). Dyer's third instability in the male pin-up is his contention that, "the penis isn't a patch on the phallus. The penis can never live up to the mystique implied by the phallus" (1992: 274). Dyer concludes that because such images of men are so unstable, achieving masculinity is a strain: "it is precisely straining that is held to be the great good, what makes a man a man" (1992: 276).

Mark Simpson (1994: 132) has isolated a problem that exists in gay male pornography: "how to represent a 'world of penises' that is virile - i.e. attractive - despite the absence of women". Simpson's argument follows Mulvey's logic - that women exist in film to ensure the masculinity of men. Analyses of men in film, and of men in rock and roll, (such as Dyer's and Simpson's), follow on nicely from Mulvey's pioneering work. In Part Two of this dissertation, I draw on such theory when I make sense of the readings of music video by a young audience. Within music video scholarship there is a relatively small amount of literature on the male body, and this generally focuses on the ambivalent sexuality and gender-bending of the David Bowies and Boy Georges. I have drawn on film theory, my own analysis and those views of the young people in my study to broaden and increase the literature on the male body in music video.

This discussion of sexual iconography in music video is intended to argue that the term 'sexist' is not broad enough to cover the depictions of men and women in music video. Clothing and semi-nakedness on their own do not constitute a pop music performer's status as a 'sex object' devoid of personhood. 'Sexism in music video' however is a term which persists in music video scholarship, and as such it is necessary for me to use it at times.

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22 A phenomenon which, for the young people in my study, (born in 1977 and 1978), had little meaning.
MUSIC VIDEO AS PEDAGOGY

So far in this chapter I have looked at music video historically, at the types of music video research conducted in Australia and internationally, and at sexual iconography. I now wish to relate this back to issues of school culture and power touched on in chapter one.

In this study I do not use the term 'pedagogy' in its usual manner. I have developed my own understanding of music video as pedagogy by drawing on two strands of theory. One strand is situated in educational discourse and relates to developing a better understanding of the dynamic relationship between pedagogue and pupil, and the other is located within cultural studies, and the rejection of the 'populism versus pessimism' debate. What both these areas of study reject is the 'empty vessel' approach; that is, that students or audiences are completely vulnerable to the ideology of teachers or popular culture. For example, McRobbie (1991: 138) argues that there has been,

a movement away from the centrality of the text in all its ideological glory, and a recognition of the fact that texts do not simply assert their meanings on 'unsuspecting' readers and viewers.

Feminist educators have expressed similar views. Kenway and Modra (1992) have found potential in the work of Lusted (1986), as his notion of pedagogy:

recognizes that knowledge is produced, negotiated, transformed and realized in the interaction between the teacher, the learner, and the knowledge itself. Such an understanding is a useful starting point for a discussion of feminist pedagogy, as it encompasses many dimensions of the teaching/learning process about which feminists have expressed concern. (Kenway and Modra, 1992: 140)

My study of music video as a form of pedagogy, has been conceptualised, researched and written from a feminist perspective, which has led me to question critical and radical educators approaches to popular cultural texts. Henry Giroux and Roger Simon are staunch advocates of the legitimacy of including popular culture in the school curriculum,

23 Until recently, theories about how popular culture 'works' on 'the masses' had been divided between these two positions. Such definitions of popular culture have been irrevocably altered since the notion of a postmodern society and subject gained popularity within cultural studies.
however even they write about student popular cultural knowledge as somehow alien to school knowledge:

the study of popular culture offers the possibility of understanding how a politics of pleasure serves to address students in a way that shapes and sometimes secures the often contradictory relations they have to both schooling and the politics of everyday life...we need to grasp the totality of elements that organize such subjectivities. (1989: 52)

This view of schooling and 'everyday life' as somehow remote from each other, is puzzling to me in several ways. The gendered relations that exist between females and males in 'everyday life', also exist in schools. The subtle and not-so-subtle 'gender lessons' that take place within the family, and that are viewed on television every day, similarly occur within the classroom, staffroom, and in the playground. In this sense, rather than school knowledge being somehow alien to everyday life, they in fact reinforce and compliment each other. Everyday life and schooling teach students to adopt a gendered identity appropriate to their 'biological' sex, class and ethnicity. Foucault has traced the origins of the school, arguing that it is a site of regulation of children's sexuality:

one only has to glance over the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organization: the question of sex was a constant preoccupation. (1987: 27)

Walkerdine (1990: 63) sums up Foucault's work on the school, stating, "it is necessary to understand the school as a place in which certain truths have constantly to be proved. It is therefore a site of production in its own right."

Giroux and Simon (1989: 51-52) regard the neglected status of popular culture in school curriculums as indicative of radical teachers tendency to be both politically correct and pedagogically wrong":

while radical educators have argued for the importance of student experience as a central component for developing a critical pedagogy, they have generally failed to consider how such experience is shaped by the terrain of popular culture. Similarly, they have been reluctant to raise the question of why popular culture has not been a serious object of study either in the school curriculum or in the curriculum reforms put forth by critically minded liberal educators. (Giroux and Simon, 1989: 51)
More recently, there have been attempts by media, education and English teachers to correct this situation. This has been difficult however, as Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994: 2) note, because the consumption of popular culture "is seen to require no intellectual or cultural competencies, and thus to develop none". An attitude persists within education that popular culture is studied at the expense of 'high' culture; that students can only study popular music or classical music, soap opera or quality dramatisations of literary classics: "To enjoy and to study the one, it would seem, is automatically to exclude the other" Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994: 1). Ignoring student involvement in popular culture not only devalues students however, it also ignores how they construct themselves as subjects.

Giroux and Simon's idea of a 'politics of pleasure' has particular relevance to my research. They state that "students make both emotional and semantic investments as part of their attempts to regulate and give meaning to their lives" (1989: 52). I would agree with them that "the production of meaning and the production of pleasure are mutually constitutive" of students' understandings of their present and future lives (Giroux and Simon, 1989: 53). One problem with this argument however, is that it overlooks class and cultural differences. Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994: 12) have reservations about middle class academics studying working class popular culture, as it can "implicitly reinforce academic cultural superiority", and create "an illusory identification with the subjects of our research - a kind of nostalgia, perhaps, for a youth that was not quite as misspent as we might have liked."

Gilbert and Taylor argue that the intersection of cultural texts with the construction and legitimation of images of femininity and masculinity, make cultural texts so relevant to students that they should form part of the curriculum (1991: 1). Although Gilbert and Taylor's focus is on girls, their work is relevant to the study of boys and masculinity. They discuss how the dominant discourses of schools are able to deal with the role of cultural texts in teenage girls' lives. Gilbert and Taylor recognise that the classroom is not a neutral space, that school knowledge systems produce and reproduce particular images of femininity and masculinity (1991: 2). Gilbert and Taylor consider schooling to be a site for the reproduction of gender relations, as well as for intervention and change. They focus on schooling as a site for interrupting the internalization of ideologies of femininity:
Our concern is to understand the processes involved in the construction of femininity in order to develop classroom practices by which they might be challenged...[as well as] the role played by cultural texts in the construction of femininity, and [how] such texts relate to the lived experiences of teenage girls. (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 5)

Following Foucault (1978), Epstein and Johnson (1994, as discussed in chapter one), and Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994), it seems that popular culture is marginalised within the curriculum because it threatens to destabilise power relations. Although in recent times there has been a certain fascination on the part of the Left with consumerism24, just how meaningful this has been remains questionable, (as Buckingham and Sefton-Green [1994] have pointed out). Grossberg states that the reason that the Left has not succeeded in aligning itself with the highly political affective discourse of Rap music is that,

the Left in America has never been comfortable with popular culture. Along with that, it's never been comfortable with consumerism, it's never been comfortable with pleasure, it's never been comfortable with affect. (Grossberg in interview with Wilson-Brown and McCarthy, 1995: 415)

In this study I have been careful not to moralise the likes and dislikes of the young people I worked with, particularly through discussions of my own subjective positioning.

This discussion of what is formally understood as 'pedagogy' is intended to contextualise my usage of the term in this dissertation. Researching and theorising about music video as a form of popular pedagogy is essential in understanding how girls and boys construct their gendered identity. Music video can be understood as a form of pedagogy, however the dynamic relationship between reader and text remains uppermost in my understanding. These shifts in the interplay between teacher and student, and text and reader, have certain implications for research methodology, which I discuss in the following chapter.

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24 See McRobbie (1994).
CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that, in Australia, the role of music video in young people’s lives is a seriously neglected area. I have also pointed out that just as it is foolish to compare a music buff’s reading of certain music videos with those of a feminist teacher’s, so too is it remiss to argue that we study the text or the audience, or conclude that popular culture is good or bad. Music video can be researched in a multitude of ways and it is a pointless exercise to expect every study to include all aspects of music video. I have also argued that research findings are very much dependent on the methods employed. In the following chapter I make my methods and methodology clear in order that my later findings be understood for what they are and are not. By examining a variety of feminist and qualitative research methods, and a critique of the methods I actually used, the process by which I have put my theory into practice will begin to emerge.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND PRACTICE

The real, human aspects of doing research and the relationships inherent in it, the complexity and circuitousness of the process, and its joys and awfulness, are usually rendered invisible. (Jones, 1991a: 10)

One of the aims of this dissertation is to make visible what Alison Jones refers to as the "invisible". I have begun to do this already via my brief discussions of myself 'as a girl' in chapter one, and 'as a fan' in chapter two. I continue this theme below when I outline my experiences 'as a feminist'.

This chapter is not only concerned with the methods that I chose to conduct my research and when and where it was conducted, it is equally concerned with the influences that have determined my approach to this research, and with how my 'best intentions' have materialised into the practical task of gathering data. How I dealt with the failures and successes of this research process, and my interactions with the students and teacher begin to take shape here, and continue in Part Two. The story so far is as follows.

In chapter one I outlined recent shifts in what is understood by the terms 'Woman' and 'Man', by drawing on the notion of 'gender as performative' (Butler, 1990). In my second chapter I broadly outlined the study of music video in Australia and the United States (US), since MTV began in 1981. By focussing on the pedagogical potential of music video, I argued that a study of music video and gendered subjectivity is a long overdue project in Australia. By including a brief historical account of my own fandom, I sought to establish the notion that the researcher is not a detached, 'objective' outsider. McRobbie (1991: 75) argues that our own experiences are invaluable to the research process:

Our own subjectivity can often add to the force of research, just as our precise political position will inflect our argument this way or that, as will our private fascinations, our personal obsessions, and our odd erotic moments. Why should we not be able to admit how we absorb ideas and apply them, from the films we see in our leisure to the 'other' books we read, who we talk to in the pub and what we talk about with our friends, students, lovers or flat-mates?
In this chapter I elaborate on the epistemological choices which led me to write myself into the text, and how my interest in music video, young people and gendered subjectivity materialised into research on music video in a school setting.

What determines one's approach to research? How do one's 'best intentions' translate to the practical task of gathering data? By asking these two broad questions, three more specific issues and questions have emerged. Firstly, why have I chosen to identify myself as a feminist researcher? What is feminist research, and what is its relationship with theory, for example, poststructuralist theory? The second issue relates to the question of my own subjectivity: how do my life experiences and social positioning/s influence the ways in which my research was planned, conducted, understood and transformed into a doctoral dissertation? How has keeping a diary of my research contributed to methodological debates about the nature of participant-observation? The final of these three additional questions relates to my research methods: What did I actually do? Where did my research occur? How did my research 'get done'? Scholars often talk about "rigour, scholarliness, precision and lucidity", yet little explanation is ever given of the actual research process (McRobbie, 1991: 74). Before I turn to the issue of feminist research in more detail, I will clarify my usage of the terms method and methodology.

As indicated at the outset of this chapter, I am concerned here not just to relay how I went about my research - my research methods - but also with the epistemological issues which have shaped my methods; that is, my methodology, or theory behind my methods. Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1990) distinguish between method and methodology, and in a review of feminist research, argue that:

They [theories] encompass a widely and sometimes wildly different definition of basic terms, with critics by and large confusing methodology with method. (Wise, 1990: 38)

The work of Haug et al (1987) is a case in point in relation to the argument advanced by Stanley and Wise.¹ As stated in chapter one, Haug and a collective of women developed a method of research they termed memory-work, in order to conduct research that reflected their concerns, beliefs and questions as feminists and socialists, and as the inheritors of certain middle-class German values. This is the theory behind their

¹ Later on in this chapter I discuss Haug's memory-work in some detail.
method; that is, their methodology. In this chapter I am also concerned about the methodology that has determined my methods, as much as the actual methods themselves. A diversity in theoretical influences has led to a rather eclectic use of theory in this dissertation. What generally draws this wide range of theoretical threads together is their connection to feminism. In the following section I explore some of the broad philosophical issues that guide feminist research. To begin with, I turn to my own identification with feminism.

AS A FEMINIST

I consider my research to be feminist for two reasons: because I identify myself as a feminist, and because it is feminist theory which has guided and informed this research. Being a feminist for me means that I see the world around me through a consciousness which resonates with the issues articulated in feminist writings and theory. My interest in young people and music video stems from my own engagement, when I was growing up, with televised pop music and my own investments in femininity, which I continue to outline below. Through the discourses of feminism I have become aware of the intense gendering that occurs in young people, and I am particularly interested in the role of music video in this process.

It was the feminist literature of Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Britain and North America that initially changed the way I view the world. The first books I read - at the age of 19 - were Gyn/Ecology (1979) by Mary Daly, and Woman Hating (1974) by Andrea Dworkin; next came Dale Spender's (1980) Man-made Language. A couple of years later, I became aware of feminist writing on reproductive technologies, being greatly affected by the work of Robyn Rowland (1987a; 1987b) and Renate Klein et al (1984). This reading changed my thinking dramatically, as well as the way I viewed those around me. For the first time I became critical of what Janice Raymond (1986) terms, 'heteroreality'. This reading inspired me to join my university's student women's collective. Having attended a girls' secondary school, and having studied in an education faculty whose undergraduate population was predominantly female, I did not find the all female environment of a women's group either unusual or intimidating. I was involved in this collective for several years, and held the position of Women's Officer in the student union for one year.
My experience of this women's collective was not however, all sisterly bonding and good times. There were wonderful, empowering moments, however there was also a lot of tension. Tension over lesbianism versus 'she fucks blokes'; she wears lipstick versus 'a la naturale'; she adheres to fashion versus she dresses 'like a man'. I remember inviting a young woman (who came to see me in my capacity as Women's Officer) to one of our meetings. Carrie (who worked as a receptionist at the university) enthusiastically came along, wearing her normal work attire - short skirt, pretty blouse, high heels and make-up. As a lesbian with a burgeoning interest in feminism, Carrie really wanted to belong to the group. However, other 'hard core' members of the group made her feel so 'ideologically unsound' that she never came to another meeting. Alison Jones argues that liberal and radical feminist theory did not enable feminists to accept women like Carrie:

We, the radical feminists of the early eighties, usually did not see many of the complexities and contradictions - which are now the focus of a brave, dangerous new postmodern feminism. (Jones, 1991b: 86)

Instead, a moralism ensued which dictated what 'real' feminists should look like, behave like and who they should keep company with. My initial zeal for feminism did turn to a certain despair after my stint as Women's Officer. The attitudes of the collective, to Carrie for example, and the use of the term 'woman' to gain privileges for white, middle-class young women, actually worked against what I thought feminism should be about - embracing the needs of all women. However instead of questioning radical feminism, I just felt that I was an anomaly - that I was a bad feminist because I dressed 'like a girl', had boyfriends, went to see all-male bands regularly, liked music videos, had long, blonde hair (the most ideologically unsound colour), and had many non-feminist friends. It was not the questioning of 'normal' behaviour that bothered me about radical feminism - this was terrific - it was the guilt that one could 'be made' to feel. Sometimes I felt like I had to lead a double life, that my Women's Collective friends had to stay separate from my 'other' friends. It took me quite a few years to begin to resolve this dilemma, and poststructuralist feminist theory assisted me greatly in giving myself permission to be complex and contradictory, yet still identify with feminism.

2 'Politically incorrect' had not yet come into common usage.
The writing of black (bell hooks [1990, 1984], Alice Walker [1984], Barbara Smith [1980]), educated working class (Valerie Walkerdine [1990], Walkerdine and Helen Lucey [1989]), and (so-called) Third World women (Haleh Afshar [1985], Nawal El Sadaawi [1983]), has helped me to feel more comfortable with myself as a feminist, and also to modify the way I see the work of Daly, Dworkin and Spender. Whilst such theory still maintains much credence for me, I now recognise how their positioning as white women, educated in the European tradition, has enormously influenced their theorising.\(^3\) As Bob Connell (1995: 202) has noted:

'Western' feminism is now engaged in a complex and tense negotiation with 'third-world' feminism about the legacy of colonialism and racism.

Poststructuralist feminist writers (Chris Weedon [1987], Walkerdine [1990], Bronwyn Davies [1993]) have also contributed to the way I now view such work. Thus my original blanket view that 'all women are oppressed', has been modified to: 'women experience different levels and types of oppression due to many factors, ranging from their ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age and social class, to their education, disability and country of residence'. I now recognise that comparatively privileged women - because of their nationality, sexuality, able-bodiedness, race, age and social class - actively contribute to the oppression of Third World, working class, older, disabled and black women.\(^4\) I also reject a dualistic logic which uncritically views relationships between women and men as always that of victim and oppressor. Such a view ignores the dynamics of power, and overlooks the complexities and contradictions in relationships between women and men. As an educated, able-bodied, young, white Australian woman of European origins, in a heterosexual relationship, I recognise that my experiences of oppression are qualitatively different from women from dissimilar backgrounds. Consequently, I need to continually remind myself, as a researcher, that gender always intersects with issues of class, sexuality, ethnicity and culture. Feminist research must be attuned to all of these issues. As a feminist researcher and writer, my aim is to

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\(^3\) Audre Lorde, for example, takes issue with Mary Daly for her accounts of genital mutilation and general exclusion of Black women from *Gyn/Ecology*. See 'An Open Letter to Mary Daly' (1980) in Maggie Humm (ed 1992).

\(^4\) See, for example, Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans (eds 1992) for an account of the interactions between Aboriginal, Melanesian, Asian and southern European women with white, Anglo-Celtic women in Australia.
investigate how the heterosexist gender order means different things to young people according to their gender, class and ethnicity.

This short overview of the cerebral, social and political activities which I have engaged in as a feminist is intended to serve at least two functions. Primarily, its inclusion is intended to challenge the notion of myself as a detached, 'objective' researcher. Reflecting on my engagement with feminism on a practical level also contextualizes my use of feminist theory in the remainder of this chapter.

**Feminist Research Methodologies**

Feminist research means different things to different people. Feminists engaged in research hold a variety of views as to what makes research 'feminist'. Oft asked questions include: is there a genuinely feminist research method? Who is best placed to carry out feminist research? Can only women understand women? What happens when the woman conducting the research is a member of the racial and/or social class that has oppressed the people she is researching? Can women who, in everyday life, exist more like enemies than sisters, work together? In whose interest is such research being conducted? Walkerdine and Lucey point out that,

> [s]ince the late 1960s, Left intellectuals, mainly men, and more recently feminist academics...have penetrated the factory gates to discover for themselves the horror of the assembly line. Such accounts then get written up, but not for the workers, who, of course, like our families, live this as an everyday reality. No, the accounts are written for the intellectuals, who are taught about the routine brutality but who can scurry thankfully from work which they will not have to spend the rest of their lives doing. (1989: 13)

Many feminist (and non-feminist) researchers have commented on the exploitative nature of research. Generally it is accepted that feminist research aims to change oppressive aspects of women's lives, whilst also treating the research participants with respect. In chapter two, I referred to some comments of Buckingham and Sefton-Green's (1994), who make similar points to Walkerdine and Lucey (1989), about middle class academics and working class students. Is it ever possible to completely avoid accusations of voyeurism and self-aggrandizement? In some situations perhaps; however in my situation, as a fledging academic, it would be foolish to argue that at least some of my motives are not self-
serving. Recognition of this aspect of my research has certainly caused me to be circumspect about the many reasons why I conducted this research.

An Eclectic Approach

In embarking on a research project that is concerned with gendered subjectivity, young people and music video as a form of pedagogy, the spheres of relevant theory are many. I was presented with an unenviable quandary: where do I locate myself theoretically? Which body of theory am I speaking in and to? These are the questions I have wrestled with for the last four years, and I continue to answer them here, having begun this process in chapters one and two.

The broad aim of this research has been to explore and understand gendered subjectivity in young people, in terms of popular cultural forms, specifically music video. In chapter one I outlined my understanding and working usage of the terms sexuality, gendered subjectivity and sexualization. I discussed the relation between these terms and the subtle differences between these terms. It is not, however, these *terms* themselves which are under critique in this thesis. Rather, my concern is: what is gendered subjectivity, how is it constructed and how is it lived? This focus has led me to seek answers in cultural studies, in poststructuralist debates, in the study of popular music\(^5\), in feminist theory, in educational and pedagogical debates, and in psychology.\(^6\) As explained in chapter one, my research takes an interdisciplinary approach. Poststructuralist theory is one constant in the many disciplines I have called upon in my research, thus a general discussion of poststructuralist theory is included below. This approach has produced an eclectic use of theory, and therefore I am not claiming this to be a theoretically coherent study. Rather, it is a study which draws from a diverse array of literature, and in so doing exposes certain tensions within and between certain academic areas/disciplines, inevitably leaning towards some theories rather than others.

\(^5\) This has been discussed in chapter two, so I do not go into details on this point here. Current debates in music video research surface again in the discussions of my data in Part Two of this dissertation.

\(^6\) Whilst these are distinct areas of scholarship, there is also considerable overlap between them, thus the situation arises where scholars are located concurrently in more than one area. For example, David Buckingham teaches and researches in a tertiary Education Institute, however his research on children and television also places him in cultural studies.
The interests of the scholars I have drawn on are a reflection of the backgrounds from which they write, for example: sociology, psychology, Women's Studies, cultural studies and education - sometimes theoretically and ideologically quite dissimilar from each other, and often quite alien to my interests in gendered subjectivity. I have rarely found an article or book whose author's interests paralleled my own. Similarly I met very few academics and PhD students with interests in education, music video and gender. Intellectually I found this intensely lonely: many music video buffs lacked an interest in gender; many feminists found music video too depressing a medium because of its portrayal of women; within education people generally thought my topic was 'interesting', but had no personal interest or background in my chosen topic; and the dismissal of work like E. Ann Kaplan's at popular music conferences, at times left me very little room for dialogue. By looking at this topic, I have had to move between a variety of disciplines/areas, reconciling the views of one area with another, whilst concurrently trying to work out my own theoretical position. I now turn to my central theme: the construction of gendered subjectivity in young people.

My awareness of the relations between women and men in western society has generally been the result of feminist literature. I have found however, that plausible explanations of why this is so have emanated primarily from the work of feminist post-structuralists. Finding theories which address the 'whys and hows' of gendering is enormously exciting for a feminist, however, it also presents some dilemmas. Firstly, post-structuralist theory has its origins in the work of male scholars such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida.7 Secondly, post-structuralist theory is notoriously difficult to read. One of the political features of much feminist writing is that it generally seeks to be readily accessible to non-experts. How can feminists concerned with practical, 'grassroots' concerns of girls and women utilise such 'high' theory? Does the necessity to engage with such theory remove one from the lived experiences and needs of women articulated via the Women's Movement? The solution to these two dilemmas for me has been to read the work of those feminist post-structuralists who also take issue with such matters. Instead of endeavouring to become an expert on post-structuralism, I have concentrated on its usefulness in terms of explaining the construction of gendered subjectivity. Admittedly the danger here is

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that my engagement with post-structuralism may be seen as superficial. Such a possibility must be continually weighed up against the former dilemma: losing sight of my feminist agenda. Conducting this research and writing this dissertation has involved a constant juggling of the two. In the discussion below I look at what post-structuralist theory can offer feminism, and also at the limitations of post-structuralist thought for feminism.

Just as, according to Shulamit Reinharz, "[f]eminism is a perspective, not a research method" (1992: 240), so too is poststructuralism a way of seeing the world, rather than a research method. As a set of ideas, post-structuralism has had certain implications for my methods. By exploring some of the key concepts of post-structuralism, I look at what some of these implications are. The following description offered by Kenway et al introduces some key terms and concepts:

Post-structuralism is a term applied to a very loosely connected set of ideas about meaning, the way in which meaning is struggled over and produced, the way it circulates amongst us, the impact it has on human subjects, and finally, the connections between meaning and power. (Kenway et al, 1994: 189)

The meaning that is made of a music video cannot be anticipated purely by knowing the content of the video. The viewer's gender, age, cultural background, sexuality and class are all variables that contribute to the way a music video is read. Who the viewer watches the music video with also influences the meaning that is made of it. Meaning then, is not contained 'in' the text (such as a music video); rather, it "shifts as different linguistic, institutional, cultural and social factors come together in various ways" (Kenway et al, 1994: 189). How the viewer then utilises this knowledge also depends on a number of variables. Access to power can be one effect of acquiring knowledge about popular culture. Research methods in a study such as this need to be able to take into account the dynamic relationship between a student (the reader) and a music video (the text), and post-structuralist theory has assisted this.

Feminist post-structuralist theory which draws on the writings of Foucault has been of most interest to me. Foucault's insights into sexuality, the body and the regulation thereof, offer feminism new ways of explaining relations between women and men, as well as among women and among men. Foucault's work has greatly influenced post-structuralist ideas generally, with many of his terms and concepts having been
subsumed under the general banner of 'post-structuralism'. As this
dissertation is primarily a feminist study, and not a critique of Foucault, I
have generally chosen to limit my discussions of Foucault to feminist
readings of his work. (Though in chapter one I drew on Foucault directly
in relation to the school and subjectivity.) I begin with some reasons why
Foucault is of particular interest to feminists.

Caroline Ramazanoglu argues that Foucault both offers positives
and negatives for feminism. She believes feminists should consider
Foucault's theories for three reasons: firstly, his analysis of power relations
offers new possibilities for feminist theorising; secondly, feminism's
theories of female subordination and patriarchy are challenged by
Foucault; and thirdly, feminism challenges some of Foucault's basic
concepts (1993: 2-3).

Foucault argues that power is constituted through discourses.
Discourses are practices that systematically constitute meaning, but in a
surreptitious manner (Kenway et al, 1994: 189). As Ramazanoglu argues,
according to Foucault:

There is no all-powerful subject which manipulates discourse;
rather 'discoursing subjects' (that is, people who produce and
deploy discourses) form part of the 'discursive field'...He is not
interested in what discourses mean, but in what makes them
possible. (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 20)

Studying history through the analysis of discourses is what Foucault
referred to as his 'genealogical method' (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 18). In
Foucault's view, discourse not only enables power, it "also undermines
and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it"
(Foucault 1984: 100, cited in Ramazanoglu, 1993: 19). In Foucault's
estimation, wherever there is power, there is resistance. The possibilities
for feminist theory and practice of such a view have been seized upon by
many feminists, including Bronwyn Davies (1993: 12):

Poststructuralism opens up the possibility of agency to the
subject through the very act of making visible the discursive
threads through which their experience of themselves as specific
beings is woven. It also defines discourse and structure as
something which can be acted upon and changed.

Davies has also utilised poststructuralist theory in her research
methodology. Drawing on her own research in schools, she argues that
making gender discourses visible to students as a part of their classwork,
can potentially change the ways in which they gender themselves. The ultimate outcome of this is change in the way women and men relate in society. But feminists are divided over whether Foucault offers hope or despair. Jean Grimshaw (1993: 59) argues that although Foucault regarded himself as a pessimist,

this 'pessimism' is better seen not as a belief that no change is possible, but as a caution against the potential dangers and deceptions involved in certain kinds of Utopian optimism.

Grimshaw outlines how Foucault's work has highlighted the nature of emancipation theories to be blind to their own power and domination, and this includes feminism (1993: 56).

Ramazanoglu points out that Foucault is concerned with how power is exercised:

I don't believe that this question of "who exercises power?" can be resolved unless that other question "How does it happen?" is resolved at the same time. (Foucault, 1988: 103, cited in Ramazanoglu, 1993: 9)

Hence Foucault's focus on techniques of power which demonstrate that, "the exercise of power cannot be reduced to a single causal factor" (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 9). This does not however, allow us to "discover the hidden and institutionalised power relations which differentiate the lives" of different women (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 9). Foucauldian theory can free feminism from "rigid conceptions" of patriarchy, racism and heterosexism; with this however, comes the end of the category 'woman', and also class, racism and gender - as these categories were absent from Foucault's thought (Ramazanoglu: 9-10).

If analysis is abstracted from a feminist grounding in women's different experiences, there is always the danger of slipping back into an undifferentiated sense of 'women'. (Ramazanoglu: 10)

Ramazanoglu argues that because feminism is concerned with women's everyday lives and the similarities that exist between different women, it runs the risk of being labelled 'biologically essentialist' (1993: 7). For Foucault, sex and bodies are social constructions - this highlights the problem of essentialism for feminism. Anti-essentialism is especially pronounced in the writing of black feminists. As Lois McNay points out, Foucault's notion of "practices of the self resonates with the calls, from
black and other feminists, for a demotion of the assumed primacy of sexual difference" (1992: 64-65). Foucault’s analysis of power may offer feminists a way of conceptualising difference, however “the nature and extent of women's power over one another is still disputed and contested” (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 9). An important challenge for feminist theory is that of addressing issues which are peculiar to women without essentializing women’s experiences. Many feminists who use post-structuralist theory regard it as one of the tools that can be used to take up this challenge.

Possibilities for Change?

Because Foucault’s work dismisses claims of ‘truth’, where does this leave ‘women's experience’, which is a fundamental part of feminist theory? Ramazanoglu states that Foucault is not interested in what discourses mean, but in what makes them possible (1993: 20). Feminists however, are concerned about what discourse means. Susan Bordo (1988, 1993) illustrates very clearly the role contemporary discourses about female bodies play in the lives of girls and young women in terms of eating disorders. (In Part Two of this dissertation I discuss further Bordo’s work in relation to girls’ comments about eating, dieting and body image.) Feminist poststructuralism pays heed to the,

many debates within the Left over the past ten or fifteen years which have argued that one of the problems of post-structuralist accounts is that they only tell us about power, not how that power is lived – a gap between regulative strategies and people’s experience. (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989: 35)

Ramazanoglu (1993: 7-8) argues that,

[a] more logical position for feminists is that, since subjectivity and objectivity cannot ever be separated in the way that the dominant scientific models of western social theory proposed, we always have to interpret and conceptualise accounts of women’s disparate experiences.

This utilises some of Foucault’s tools without compromising a feminist agenda. Weedon is wary not to regard poststructuralist theory as capable of answering every question feminists have to ask. Rather, it should be used as a "framework for understanding the mechanisms of power in our society and the possibilities of change" (Weedon, 1987: 10).
Another caution regarding poststructuralism is that, as a politics in itself, it could have its own "regulatory effect", and feminists may be in danger of using it as "a fashionable theoretical accessory" (McLeod, 1994: 108). Grimshaw (1993) uses Foucault's analogy of the 'tool box' to emphasise the way feminists may wish to draw on his work. This may include using these 'tools' in a manner "not envisaged by their creator" (Grimshaw, 1993: 52). One of Foucault's tools I have drawn on is his notion of genealogy. My 'As a Girl', 'As a Fan' and 'As a Feminist' sections in chapters one, two and three provide an outline of the history of my own gendered subjectivity. Though I do not intend to make any grand claims about the depth of this 'genealogy', I do feel that it contributes to the completeness of this dissertation. It also connects my chapters together by providing a common narrative thread between some quite diverse chunks of theory.

This discussion of feminist post-structuralist and feminist Foucauldian theory has been brief and partial. It is not intended to deal with post-structuralism per se. Rather, its purpose has been to introduce certain post structuralist ideas in relation to my research methodology, and to acknowledge the eclectic approach to theory this dissertation takes. These particular post structuralist concepts include Foucault's method of 'genealogy' and his notion of the 'tool box'. My intention has been to draw on feminist poststructuralist thought without losing sight of my particular feminist agenda. In the following section I discuss the work of Haug et al (1987), whose methodology has influenced my own. The gap in Foucault's theory between what discourses mean and in what makes them possible (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 20), is referred to as the 'Foucauldian problematic', (as explained in chapter one, through my discussion of the work of Kornelia Hauser). Haug et al's (1987) reservations resonate with my discussion above on feminist Foucauldian theory. Following my discussion of Haug's work, I outline my decision to 'write myself into' the text of this dissertation; I then move onto the final section of this chapter: the 'where, when and how' of my fieldwork.

Memory-work

In 1987, the first English edition of Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory was published. Edited by Haug, this volume implicitly took up the sort of challenge alluded to by feminist post-structuralists in the section above:
Our object in this book is women’s capacity - or incapacity - for action and for happiness. It involves a study of the structures, the relations within which women live and the ways in which they gain a grip on them. (Haug\textsuperscript{8}, 1987: 33)

Usually defined as ‘female socialization’, Haug points out that this term, "coyly circumvents the active participation of individuals in their formation as social beings" (1987: 33). Haug et al are opposed to tolerating conditions which produce suffering, and want to change the ways in which individuals participate in social relations. "The question we want to raise is thus an empirical one; it is the 'how' of lived feminine practice" (1987: 33). This echoes the sentiments of many feminists who have found Foucault's 'toolbox' lacking in this respect. Haug et al do not, however, identify themselves as feminist post-structuralists; rather, they have drawn on some of Foucault's ideas (his genealogical method, for example) and critiqued others, in order to learn more about female sexuality.

As a collective, Haug and the other women investigated female sexualization using a method they termed 'memory-work'. Coming from a variety of backgrounds - university students, school teachers, university lecturers and researchers, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, and a doctor - the group could be viewed as homogeneous in their middle class background, their philosophical positioning as feminists, and in the majority of them belonging to the Hamburg Socialist Women's Association (Sozialistischer Frauenbund, or SFB). This project "involved individual groups of women working for almost two years on stories of their everyday lives," on the topic of female sexuality (Haug, 1987: 70). This involved writing stories about their bodies, in the third person, discussing them collectively and then re-writing them. The collective nature of the research enabled Haug to see that their 'individual' experiences were actually not so unique, but were, in fact, generalisable experiences (1987: 45). As stated in chapter one, Haug contends that women treat their bodies as 'external'. In this dissertation, it is my intention to investigate whether or not music video is one of those 'sexualizing agents' that contribute to the construction of the female body as a 'socio-biological unity'. In chapter one I also pointed out how Haug et al found that the process of becoming an individual is closely linked to "the possibility of knowledge" and,

\textsuperscript{8} As pointed out in chapter one, the book and project as a whole is referred to as "Haug et al", whereas individually authored chapters in the book are referred to by the individual author's name.
subsequently, *power* (1987: 201). The subject of knowledge is pertinent to my research on music video, and in Part Two I look for answers in relation to what sort of knowledge young people hope to glean from music videos. Haug argues that women's subjugation to the process of sexualization is hinged upon desire and pleasure, and on self regulation. Sexuality and power are two concepts central to Haug et al's work, their investigation into which has assisted me methodologically and in terms of analysing my data.

Hauser outlines how theories of sexuality that lay claim to 'liberation' in fact are directly responsible for the opposite:

> Having assumed initially that our task was to 'liberate' sexuality itself, we are now led to believe that we may have to liberate ourselves from sexuality. (Hauser, 1987: 195)

Following Foucault, Hauser has identified the Church, the academic sciences, the agencies of the State, and the judiciary as 'agents' of the production of sexuality. Hauser then states that:

> If every one of these institutions stands on the side of power and domination, then we are faced with the startling conclusion that what we had conceived of as a 'revolutionary force', and endeavoured to live out, to proclaim without inhibition, is in fact a construct of the dominant ideology. Sexuality is on the side of domination; its net is drawn together ever more tightly, the more voluble and 'candid' we become. Any struggles for liberation of this kind will simply intensify our subjugation.

Foucault is wary of all claims to sexual liberation that various theories of sexual repression extol, however Hauser, whilst in agreement with Foucault, retains the term 'liberation' (in much the same way that Foucault applies new meaning to the word 'power' despite the common usage of power as negative). Thus when Haug (1987: 35) argues that, "liberation is dependent upon liberation of the self. Our intervention is itself an act of liberation", she is talking about the type of transformation and change that Foucault refers to as resistance. Other feminists have also used memory-work as a *method* of research, however engagement with Haug et al's methodology has been largely overlooked. In the section below I briefly discuss two such examples.

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9 This is operating on the assumption that power is always connected to domination. In Foucault's meaning of power, it is not intrinsically a negative force, rather this is its excessive or abused manifestation. See Ramazanoglu (1993).
Other memory-workers

June Crawford, Susan Kippax, Jenny Onyx, Una Gault and Pam Benton are a group of Australian academic women who have written a book about their experience of memory-work. They were greatly influenced by Haug who was a visiting scholar to Macquarie University after they established a study group in 1985. Crawford, Gault and Kippax were present at most of Haug’s seminars, and they were very excited that this work was,

interdisciplinary and integrated...transcend[ing] traditional boundaries and distinctions, for example, those between psychology and sociology, Marxism and feminism, teaching and research, theory and practice, subject and object. (Crawford et al, 1992: 3)

Haug’s methodology had particular appeal to Crawford et al because of Haug’s regard for experience as a resource; acknowledging it "as the basis of theory and research" (1992: 3-4).

When Bronwyn Davies began her research into the ways in which children constitute themselves “in terms of the male-female dualism”, she also became interested in Haug’s work (1993: x). Davies uses the term ‘collective biography’ rather than ‘memory-work’. Davies ran workshops,

where we recounted our first awareness of being male or female. The purpose of such story-telling was not to reveal our private idiosyncratic selves, but to explore the very cultural/discursive threads revealed in our stories out of which we had become the gendered beings that we each were... It is thus a fascinating way to collect data but also a very effective means of working with the fabric of one’s own life and to find and perhaps unpick and restitch the invisible cultural/discursive threads. (1993: x-xi)

Both the Crawford collective and Davies take on Haug’s memory-work in different ways. However, both Crawford et al and Davies overlook much of Haug et al’s theory. The former focuses on the actual method of memory-work, and the latter on the idea of memory as a significant factor in subjectivity. Davies’ own memories are fascinating and she analyses them in light of poststructuralist theory, however she offers no critique of Haug. My engagement with memory-work has been
relatively long\textsuperscript{10}, and it took some time for me to realise that its central feature is its theory; the reasons why Haug et al first began to write their memories. Without the surrounding theory, memory-work is not adequately grounded. 'Picking up' the method of memory-work without really engaging with the theory that 'produced' it is to overlook why it evolved as it did. Consequently, Crawford et al and Davies offer no real analysis of memory-work as a technique. Whilst I have no wish to denigrate memory-work, I do want to view it critically, looking at both its positives and negatives. Reinharz's statement (1992: 240) that "[f]eminist research involves an ongoing criticism of non-feminist scholars" is inadequate. Feminist research should also be self critical.

This discussion of the work of Haug et al and other memory-workers is intended to outline some of the basic concepts involved in memory-work. In Part Two of this dissertation I draw on Haug's methodology in relation to my own use of memory-work as a method, and offer some critical commentary. In the section below I outline my decision to include my own subjectivity as a part of what contributes to my overall feminist methodology.

**Writing Myself into the Text**

Why is it so important to me that I include my own history, memories and perspectives in this dissertation? What does it mean? How does it influence what I have observed and written? Is it simply a case of 'vanity ethnography'?\textsuperscript{11}, as one sceptical academic at my institution suggested? My memories, stories and methodological reflections have taken shape through reading the personal reflections of many (mostly feminist and poststructuralist) scholars, including Haug (1987), McRobbie (1991), Jones (1991, 1992), Davies (1993), Sue Middleton (1993) and Walkerdine (1990). 'Writing myself in' has close links with Haug et al's memory-work project, and as stated earlier, it makes use of the Foucauldian tool of 'genealogy' for feminist ends.

According to Alison Jones,

\begin{quote}
[t]he personal voice has been all but silenced in mainstream academic writing in education. The tradition of objectivity in the social sciences - and elsewhere - has insisted that the 'I' who
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{10} I was first introduced to the concept of memory-work in 1990. I began to seriously engage with Haug et al's work in 1992, when I began my PhD.

\textsuperscript{11} See Lather, 1991.
writes the text is not welcome; for the 'I' represents subjectivity and bias, the enemies of truth. (1992: 18)

When Jones wrote her doctoral thesis in the mid-1980s, she largely wrote as an "invisible, neutral, observing presence", recognising that this was what was expected of a scholar (1992: 19). She already realised however, that she was inexplicably woven into her research. When Jones rewrote her thesis as a book, she not only inserted herself into the text as an 'I', she also presented her account as "one partial story" amongst the other stories (1992: 20-21).

I write in a way which is a protest against the usual style of 'academic' discourse about education and schooling. Some of the texts speak of empowerment and liberation. But how can they be liberating? How can they engage - and educate - those very people the education system fails to benefit? Not only are the texts often dry, distanced monologues bereft of the warm breathing human being who wrote them, but their language is often obscure and difficult - most people can't read them! In a sense, they become simply commodities in the academic marketplace, to be read only by like-minded colleagues, 'valuable' perhaps for the students forced to wade through their pages and reproduce their arguments in return for grades. (Jones, 1991a: 9)

Sue Middleton, as a feminist teacher and academic, has argued persuasively for the inclusion of oneself in one's writing. Though she is referring primarily to teaching, the following assertion relates well to the research process and to writing:

A feminist pedagogy requires us as teachers to make visible to and explore with our students the aspects of our own life histories that impact on our teaching. We must analyze relationships between our individual biographies, historical events, and the broader power relations that have shaped and constrained our possibilities and perspectives as educators. (Middleton, 1993: 17)

By describing her current home life and work, and her memories and recollections of school and university days, Middleton informs the reader of the multiplicity of environmental factors that influence(d) her as a teacher, a feminist, a researcher, an academic, a mother and a wife. For example, Middleton works as a government censor for the Indecent Publications Tribunal in New Zealand:
The contradictions in this work tear me apart intellectually and emotionally. As a liberal and a rational intellectual, I am opposed to censorship. As a woman and a feminist, I feel sick when I read pornographic writing and see pornographic photographs. I do this job as a civic duty. I do it to stay in touch with the gross sexism of a violent patriarchy. At first, I tried to keep it separate from my family and my working life. But like a poisonous gas, it oozed into my nightmares and into my fears for my daughter's safety...Sexual violence - bracketed out and invisible in most sociological educational writing - has become an ever-present theme in my research and teaching. (1993: 8)

Middleton cannot separate her work as an academic from her work as a censor, thus it is necessary that the reader knows this. This example shows how it is one's feminism which initially drives such an involvement, and such an experience inevitably affects all aspects of one's life.

Davies explains the inclusion and analysis of some of her life stories in her academic writing in this way:

Poststructuralist theory calls into question the authority of the author and breaks down the division between the one who knows (and tells) and the ones who are written about. It seemed obvious therefore, once I had thought of it, to include some of my own stories here, as a way of getting inside the experience of being gendered as a primary school child. (Davies, 1993: p.xi)

Liz Stanley puts it another way:

written accounts of feminist research should locate the feminist researcher firmly within the activities of her research as an essential feature of what is 'feminist' about it. (1990: 12)

Earlier on in this chapter I touched on the issue of the asymmetrical power relations inherent in the research process. Many researchers (for example, Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989; Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994) have written about the exploitative nature of research. Within feminist research, much importance has been placed on the ability of the researcher to identify with the researched. Karen Crinall's emphasis on the ethics of conducting feminist research provides yet another good reason for researchers to resist the temptation to see themselves as objective outsiders. In conducting her research with homeless young women, Crinall (1993: 49) argues that it would have been unethical to have distanced herself emotionally from the girls in her study over issues that she and they both felt strongly about (she was working as a youth
worker). Crinall points out that it is only by identifying with one's research participants that their feelings about the research can be deduced. She also notes that "a primary matter of concern for feminist researchers is how research methods may or may not become oppressive for the group being researched" (Crinall, 1993: 51). The idea of feminist participatory research is that, "the distinction between the researcher(s) and those on whom the research is done disappears" (Reinharz, 1992: 181). This is also the idea behind memory-work: that the researcher and subject become one. In chapter seven I return to these ethical concerns in relation to the power differentials inherent in the research process, and discuss how I dealt with problems that arose in carrying out my research with young people.

What I have found helpful about feminist authors who write themselves into their texts is that it is often the 'entry point' that provided my 'way in' to the text as a whole. I remember the first time I read Schoolgirl Fictions (1990) by Walkerdine. I found her examination of popular cultural texts very interesting and the theorising challenging, yet it was the accounts of Walkerdine's personal experiences that really clinched my interest in her work. One instance which struck particular resonance with me was her experience of being offered the "patronage" of male academics when she entered postgraduate higher education (see Walkerdine, 1990: 82-3). Not having a degree, but a primary teaching qualification, Walkerdine felt second class and attributed the offer of patronage by male academics to their championing of the working class girl who had "made it":

I would want to accept and yet feel disgust at being set up as the object of this romantic vision - like the sexual fantasy of the slave, the orphan, the waif and stray who becomes the protégée of the prince, the nobleman in the protection of the court. Rags to riches. They wanted to be the protector and I wanted to bask in their protection. (1990: 82-3)

The inclusion of Walkerdine in her text in this manner meant that I was 'granted permission' to feel similar feelings, and that such feelings are legitimate. Walkerdine's writing not only provided me with a meaningful and relevant entry point into her work, it enabled me to change the way I perceived myself and those around me, as well as

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12 In Part Two of this dissertation I discuss the importance of narrative/storylines in relation to the girls in my study.
enabling me to change similar scenarios in my life. In this way, including oneself in one's text can have powerful and radical possibilities.

One reservation I do have about personal reflections such as Walkerdine's (and that of the other scholars outlined above) is the level of vulnerability that this subjects the writer to. Most academic writing endeavours to steadily build up a solid argument as it proceeds, constructing an image of the writer as strong, possessed of certainty and conviction. Walkerdine shows her vulnerability and her fears. Whilst this is both a feminist and poststructuralist project in the sense that it challenges the myth of the rational, unified subject, what does it say about feminist writers? Do we have to make ourselves vulnerable? Sabotage ourselves by constructing a picture of uncertainty? Are men who write about poststructuralism making themselves vulnerable in the same way? Do we (women) just need reassurance that we are okay? Is it simply a lack of confidence and the need for reassurance that drives feminist writers to include their personal thoughts, feelings and experiences? This is possibly one danger of writing oneself into the text. My reasons for including my experiences as part of this dissertation are: to dispel the myth of the objective, distant author; to acknowledge my own active participation in the dominant discourses of gender, sexuality, race, age, class, religion, and the effects this has had on my research and writing; and that by endeavouring to declare my own subject position I create 'a way in' for the reader. In short, these three different perspectives justify the inclusion of myself in the text - for feminist reasons, for post-structuralist reasons, and for reasons of examining the process of gendering. I do not believe in writing myself into the text as a way of 'confessing' or 'apologising', and I am wary of being perceived as my own 'Number One' fan. Having outlined these epistemological issues, I now turn to discussing the methods I used.

**The Research: Setting, Methods, The Students and Me**

"This is indeed a mystery," I remarked. "What do you imagine that it means?"

"I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts."

(Conan Doyle, 1980: 13)

The above quotation is an extract from one of Arthur Conan Doyle's (1980) many Sherlock Holmes stories. I was reading this particular story during a
recent holiday period in order to escape from this dissertation. However, as I wrote in my diary that day: "such is the constant lurking, nagging of a thesis, that I only got three pages into 'A Scandal in Bohemia', when I was struck by the pertinence of this Watson and Holmes exchange". This brief exchange seemed to sum up a question (usually put forward by supportive, well meaning souls) which particularly annoyed me during the researching and writing of this dissertation: "What have you found out/concluded?" As Holmes says, "[i]t is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts". I would venture to add to this that it is also a 'capital mistake' to try to apply theories to one's data too hastily. It took a long time before I was able to apply any theory whatsoever to my data, and I think this was the case for two main reasons. Firstly, my research methods were often shaped by the individuals participating at any one time, (which does not readily facilitate comparison between individuals/groups as is the case with quantitative, uniform sampling), and secondly, it simply takes time to make sense of what is going on in the research process.

Conducting and making sense of this research has been a continual learning process. What actually took place was really quite different from what I had imagined or planned. The only way I could begin to find out about the students' thoughts on music video and gender was to enter into relationships with them - as friend, as teacher, as peer, as outsider, in fact, in a whole range of ways, except as detached, university researcher. Most importantly, I had to give, I could not just take.

In the following discussion of my fieldwork, I begin by describing the 'when, where and how long' aspect of this research. This includes a brief description of the school, students and Media Studies teacher with whom I worked, with the intention of contextualizing the data included in subsequent chapters. I then proceed to outline the research methods I used.

Progress Secondary College

I have chosen the pseudonym of 'Progress Secondary College' for the school where I conducted my research as I think it describes both the origins and the aspirations of the school. The term 'progress' implies forward movement, with the result being preferable to the previous

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13 The names of the students, teacher and school have been anonymized.
condition; it recognises the pursuit of success, of something to strive towards. This is not to suggest that all of Progress Secondary College's students succeed in formal education, as this is clearly not the case. What it does suggest is that the school has fostered (and projected to the community) an atmosphere in which 'ordinary' students are seen to be able to achieve success in the education system. The school principal's 'Message' in the annual school magazine points to the school's successful liaisons with local industry, and the increased retention rates, as indicative of Progress Secondary College's achievements:

In 1987 the group of students in Year 12\textsuperscript{14} represented 41\% of the group which began in Year 7 in 1982... By contrast, in 1993, the ninety three students who started in Year 12 came from a group of 116 Year 7 Students in 1988. That represents a retention rate of 80\% and reflects a remarkable change in only six years. (Principal's Message, *Progress Secondary College Magazine*, 1993: 1)

Whilst the Principal acknowledges the economic climate that has influenced students' decision to complete their secondary education, he states that:

> It is nevertheless pleasing that in our geographical area and, given our demographic mix of students, that this school has been able to come up to the State\textsuperscript{15} average. (Principal's Message, *Progress Secondary College Magazine*, 1993: 1)

That the school compares favourably to the rest of the State is important - it signifies respectability, success and progress.

Set in a working class suburb of a provincial and industrial Australian city, Progress Secondary College is a large school of approximately 1,000 students. At first glance Progress Secondary College may appear to be a 'working class' school, however it is too simplistic and quite incorrect to assume that all of its students come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, and that they all share the same outlook and experiences. Leslie Roman argues that one of the main problems of "cultural studies of youth" is "class essentialism" (1988: 143). The assumption by many theorists that "subjectivity is unitary and homogeneous, having been formed strictly out of a priori class interests" is

\textsuperscript{14} In Australia, secondary schools begin at Year 7, (students are aged 12 or 13) and finish at Year 12 (students are aged 17 or 18).

\textsuperscript{15} Progress Secondary College is in the Australian state of Victoria, of which Melbourne is the capital city.
misleading (Roman, 1990: 143). Though it may be convenient for the researcher to take this approach, Roman (1988: 143) argues that it,

cannot do justice to the complexity of contradictory interests - by gender, race, class, age, and sexual orientation - that underlie social subjects' intentions.

It is also incorrect to assume that students from different backgrounds will not share similarities with each other. In other words, there is a need to focus on commonalities and differences.

There is a diverse range of ethnicities represented at Progress Secondary College, however the majority of students come from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. For example, of the 163 students in Year 10 in 1993, over 70% came from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. In the two classes I worked with (a total of 49 students), only one student was not born in Australia, and she was a Japanese exchange student. Those students who were not of Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, were mostly of German, Dutch, Greek and Italian backgrounds. Although there is this diversity of backgrounds, the predominant culture is that which is regarded as 'Australian'; that is, Anglo-Celtic.

The school is favourably geographically located, being reasonably close to the city centre, and also situated on a highway leading to more affluent suburbs and popular coastal towns. A large minority of students come to Progress Secondary College from these outer suburbs and nearby small towns. For most of these students, Progress Secondary College is their closest government school; for others it has been chosen in preference to other, closer, government schools. Unlike some other large, working class schools in the city, Progress does not have a reputation as a 'rough' school with discipline problems; on the contrary it has a reputation as a 'good' school, with few serious discipline problems. As the school's Principal points out, its retention rate indicates that the school is seen "to provide meaningful learning experiences for a diverse range of students" (Progress Secondary College Magazine, 1993: 1).

A large proportion of the city's State housing is located in the same suburb as Progress Secondary College. Originally built as short-term housing for the post-war influx of European and British immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s, this housing now caters for those on low incomes. This includes wage earners, the unemployed and sole parent families in receipt of Government welfare payments.
The school has a Student Welfare Co-ordinator who conducts classes on a range of issues, including, for example, drug and alcohol dependency and conflict resolution. In 1993, the school employed two youth workers on a part-time basis to cater to the individual needs of students experiencing personal difficulties. In a yearly report (*Progress Secondary College Magazine*, 1993: 12), the Student Welfare Co-ordinator stated, "I have been impressed with the senior students of the school. The year 12s have been good role models for me to point to for the juniors to follow". A brief discussion with one of the Youth Workers however, indicated that Progress did have its problems. She and her fellow worker were at that time following up student accusations of sexual harassment within the school. So, the school has its problems as well as its proclaimed positive attributes.

Research Relationships: Students and Teacher

As stated earlier, during my fieldwork I found that it was only when I began to enter into relationships - as friend and teacher - with the students that I began to hear and observe really interesting data. In my first few weeks of interviews, I remember telling my supervisor how I felt there was a 'brickwall' that prevented me eliciting answers to the questions I was asking. This was incredibly frustrating; to see looks of comprehension on the faces of students yet to hear them respond with "nothing", or "don't know". For several weeks I was very worried about this, wondering what I could do to get over this hurdle. As I got to know these students, to laugh with them and swap stories with them, the 'brickwall' gradually came down, until one day there were no more "don't knows" and the 'brickwall' was gone. This was a gradual process, and I cannot pinpoint exactly when this occurred. This factor has added another dimension to my methodological decision to write myself into the text of this dissertation. As methodological reflections, these self reflexive accounts are intended to contribute to discussion and debate on, for example, what it means to be a participant-observer with young people, and to use oneself as a source of data.

I first made contact with Progress Secondary College's Media Studies co-ordinator, Sigourney Glass\(^ \text{16} \), in November, 1992. There were only a handful of schools in the region which offered Media Studies from Year 7

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\(^{16}\) This pseudonym was a joint effort - she chose 'Sigourney', and I chose 'Glass'.

through to Year 12. Because of my focus on music video, I wanted to do my research at a school which specialised in Media Studies. Of the Media Studies teachers I contacted at these schools, only Sigourney Glass seemed receptive to the idea of a PhD student conducting research in her classroom. Generally I had a very good relationship with Sigourney. Being roughly the same age and sharing a mutual interest in popular culture served our working relationship well. What began as a polite, cautious interaction rapidly became a friendship, which has continued despite the cessation of my fieldwork at the end of 1993. Sigourney was very accommodating of my many requests and I feel very fortunate that I had such a comfortable environment in which to conduct my fieldwork.

Initially I was quite nervous about what would be possible with a class of Year 10 students. The general consensus amongst teachers I knew was that this was an age (15 and 16) at which there is generally quite a lot of misbehaviour. This was not really a problem, however. Sigourney was a resourceful teacher. She treated the students with respect, and interacted with them in an informal manner. Misbehaviour - when it occurred - was greeted with quick one-liners. Once the teacher and students 'let the brickwall go', I was quite overwhelmed by the generosity and willingness to help of both Sigourney and the students. They made my time at Progress Secondary College a most enjoyable experience. Deciding on my methods and making sense of my data however, was a far more difficult and angst ridden project.

Finding Out: Design and Chance

To begin with I was quite unsure what form my fieldwork would take. I knew that I wanted to use mostly qualitative research methods, and that I wanted to try some memory-work with the students. Although I had identified four areas of focus - social interaction and the production of pleasure, gender, theorizing the body, and sexualization and power - I had not yet decided how to explore each of these. What transpired could be viewed as a combination of both design and chance.

Some researchers assume that only women can be the subjects of feminist research, whereas others believe it is perfectly legitimate to study

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17 This fact seems to be a good indicator of the lack of seriousness accorded the study of the media and popular culture in mainstream schooling, as discussed in chapter two, especially through the work of Giroux and Simon (1989) and Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994).
18 Whilst I had a very good relationship with Sigourney, I was aware that other teachers had warned her not to trust me, and that at times she felt she was under surveillance by me.
boys and men in order to achieve change within gender relations in society. Middleton and Jones acknowledge that whilst most feminist research is conducted by women, they argue that,

if we are to understand female experiences, it is also necessary to understand male perspectives - especially men's attitudes and behaviours towards women. Much recent feminist educational research has focused on 'gender relations' - the differences, interactions and power dynamics between the genders. (1992: viii)

Bill Rout, in a collection of essays edited by Middleton and Jones, has explored the issue of male power by conducting research in schools with boys. Rout's research included looking at boys' attitudes towards girls generally and sexually, the different forms that their sexual harassment took, and the graffiti in the boys' toilets. One of Rout's conclusions was that boys "learned to accept as 'normal' the sexual harassment of girls and women" (1992: 179). Rout's findings about the boys in the study and about himself - "I have... become more aware of my teaching style and my commitment to stopping my own use of male power...as a male, I am much stronger and happier with my own male identity" (1992: 180) - do assist in understanding, and potentially changing, gender relations. The concern of this dissertation is not to argue whether men can do feminist research, rather, it is to argue that the decision to include boys in my study was consistent with my feminist agenda. As Weedon argues,

[w]e need to understand why women tolerate social relations which subordinate their interests to those of men and the mechanisms whereby women and men adopt particular discursive positions as representative of their interests.
(Weedon, 1987: 12)

I considered it necessary to include boys in my study, and also to seek out theories which can better explain women's tolerance of particular social relations.

The Media Studies teacher and I decided that I would work with a Year 1019 class, as I wanted students who were mature enough to articulate their thoughts in some detail, yet who were not totally consumed by schoolwork (as students tend to be in Years 11 and 12). At Year 10 level, Progress Secondary College students can take Media Studies for one

19 Students are generally aged 15 or 16 in Year 10.
semester, and it is an elective subject (it is compulsory at Years 7, 8 and 9). It was anticipated that I would spend First Semester of 1993, (January to June), with one class, gathering my data. This involved two 40-minute classes, twice per week - a total of two hours and forty minutes per week. To tie in with my research, Sigourney decided to make music video a focus for the entire semester - an indication of her recognition of the validity of studying popular cultural texts. The first few weeks were spent technically analysing commercial music videos. For example, Sigourney introduced the term 'genre' to the students, and had them classify a series of music videos according to their genre. This included the introduction of various types of camera shots, in preparation for making their own music video. They also examined the types of people, situations and locations depicted in music videos. Such activities suitably foregrounded my discussions of music video and gender with the students.

I spent the first weeks of First Semester observing these classes - sometimes doing a bit of impromptu team-teaching with Sigourney - and getting to know the students. I then decided to talk to the students in small groups. The classroom had a small radio studio in one corner, and I was given permission to conduct my interviews in there. Once I had talked to all of the 25 students (in the first semester class) briefly in small groups, I decided to work intensively with a smaller group of students. This was due to my intention to conduct intensive, qualitative research, building up on-going relationships with students. Soon after commencing my fieldwork I realised that I would need to continue my research into Second Semester. This was largely due to the small number of boys in the First Semester class: of the 25 students, there were only three boys (all of whom were included in my study), and as masculinity was to be a significant focus, I decided to continue with another class in Second Semester. Throughout July and August I continued my twice weekly visits to Progress Secondary College, and then made less regular visits to the school until late November of 1993. I found I did not need to spend as long gathering my data in Second Semester for two main reasons. Firstly, I did not conduct the whole class observation for several weeks as I did with the first class. I knew what themes and issues I wanted to explore, and simply got straight into them. Secondly, with the second class, I did not encounter the 'brickwall' that I did with the first. I don't know whether the second lot of students had heard from the first lot that I was 'okay', or whether I simply now knew how to go about conducting this sort of research.
The second class had a more even spread of girls and boys: 13 boys and 11 girls. In total, I worked with 49 students. All of these students were interviewed in relation to their involvement with popular culture. This determined some of the foci and themes I then pursued with the students in small groups. We concentrated on the four areas I had outlined: social interaction and the production of pleasure, gender, theorizing the body, and sexualization and power. The main methods of research were initially memory-work, but this gave way to structured interviews, and informal discussions for reasons I outline in Part Two.

I worked intensively with 11 of the 49 students (five girls and six boys): Catherine, Jackie, Sarah, Andrea, Melissa, Michael, Tim, Troy, Wayne, Jacob and Sam. I also formed an 'after-school' group with these five girls, whom I met on a regular basis. Except for Michael, Tim and Troy, I chose these students because of their interests in music video, popular music and popular culture generally. In addition to these 11 students, there were another eight students who I initially also wanted to include, however for a variety of reasons they did not participate as fully or regularly as the others, if at all.20

My transcripts of our conversations and interviews are fairly straightforward.21 As this is not a linguistic study, I do not indicate every pause or "um". Where I include their writing, I have kept it as close to the original as possible, not for linguistic reasons, but because it helped me to feel maintain a feeling of 'closeness' to the students. For example, when the students have written comments in capital letters or underlined words to emphasise their point, I have left them this way. I have corrected spelling (eg, "ruff" became "rough"), and I have added in apostrophes where appropriate. When the students have written titles such as

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20 Three girls left school, one girl had a disability which meant considerable time out from school, other students didn't show a particular interest, or were absent on days when they were scheduled to be interviewed - the usual gamut of practical difficulties one encounters in doing field research. Some of these students' comments - those of Alex, Andrew, Christie, Emma and Sasha - have been included in Part Two.

21 Key to Transcripts:

(*) Unsure what was said
(?) Unsure who was speaking
(w) Students' written comments
Jenny How I refer to myself in transcripts
After school girls Andrea, Melissa, Sarah, Jackie and Catherine
*Baywatch*, I have italicised them in keeping with the style of the thesis overall. Generally I have not changed their grammar or punctuation.

In chapter two, I pointed out that many studies of music video in the US have been overly concerned with producing statistics and textual analyses. This is not something I have aimed for in this study. Apart from revealing more about the coders than the videos themselves, such methods also fail to reveal anything about the ways that young people read music videos. When music videos are evaluated in this way, *the videos, not to mention the 'coders', become more important than the young people themselves*. Such coding may well be a necessary starting point, but it can only be just that. Some of the studies speak from the position that because videos are sexist, racist, or both, it is a foregone conclusion that they have a negative effect on young viewers. Perhaps this is so, but such pedagogical outcomes can only be explored through the thoughts, opinions and ideas of the young people themselves; that is, in relation to what adolescents have to say about music video. For young people to benefit from researchers' work, it seems necessary to me to ask young people themselves what they think about music videos; and not simply the videos I would choose, but also those they choose to watch themselves.

One of the difficulties of this study was that I found it was almost impossible to delineate between music video and other forms of popular culture: other television programs, magazines, films, actors, celebrities and the related consumer products. Analysis of music videos was conducted, however not in the detail and quantity I had imagined. Rather, what happened was that music video was used as a 'leaping off' tool, to explore similarities evidenced in other popular cultural forms. As the researcher, at first I was frustrated, trying to devise numerous strategies to keep the students 'on task', to stop them straying. An observation of Brown and Gilligan stopped me: "[h]olding firmly to the same questions for each girl, for example, prevented us from following the girls to the places they wished to go" (1992: 11). This statement made me realise that I needed to be flexible in order to hear what these students wanted to tell me. McRobbie (1991: 140) has criticised Janice Radway's work on women reading romance fiction because her study "is over-attentive to the autonomous act of reading and too inattentive to the other crowded activities which surround it". As much as possible, I have tried to ensure that my focus and methods have evolved in direct relation to the participants.
Brown and Gilligan (1992: 9) state that their original "wish to do good psychological research led us into assumptions about control and objectivity and concerns about validity and replicability which left us with a sense of discomfort and unease". Brown and Gilligan revised their initial psychological methods in favour of what they have called a "voice sensitive" method. Instead of sticking to "widely accepted methods" and making their work "comparable to that of others" (psychologists), they rejected standard psychological testing of the girls in the study (1992: 11). By not asking each and every girl the same questions, they followed, "girls to the places they wished to go" (1992: 11). Whilst this was riskier and far more difficult a study to conduct, it was infinitely more conducive to overcoming the reproduction of the attitudes and practices inherent in, "accepted [psychological] methods" (1992: 11). Such a philosophy has already guided my research methods.

**CONCLUSION**

I began this chapter with a quotation from Alison Jones (1991a), about the "joys" and "awfulness" of conducting research in terms of the personal relationships involved. Another 'joy' and 'awfulness' I have experienced about the research process is the positioning of myself 'in' theory. By drawing on literature from a diverse array of academic disciplines - cultural studies, feminist poststructuralism, feminist theory, and psychology - I have sought to inform and structure my research on gendered subjectivity. This study was prompted by my assertion that music video is a popular cultural form in which gender is highly visible and important to the genre. Given that teenagers constitute the 'target audience' (see chapter two) of music video, I wish to investigate how young people - who are actively trying to determine and project their gendered identity in their social world - engage with music video. How this can be done ethically is also of concern to me throughout this dissertation.

In Part Two of this dissertation I relate the stories of this research in terms of the theory discussed in chapters one, two and three. The four chapters of Part Two are ordered around the four themes undertaken in this research: social interaction and the production of pleasure; gender; theorizing body; and sexualization and power.
PART TWO

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CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND THE PRODUCTION OF PLEASURE

You get more enjoyment out of the music video if you just watch it for the music. (Michael)

Pleasure and pain; pleasure and order; pleasure and work. Why must definitions of pleasure...always have their opposites? (Mercer, 1983: 95)

In Part One of this dissertation I constructed a context within which Part Two - my field research - could be understood. In chapter one I explored the concepts of gender, sexualization and power. Chapter two focussed on music video historically, music video scholarship, sexual iconography in music video and the concept of music video as pedagogy. By examining my motivations for conducting my research in chapter three, I was able to explain why I chose to be guided by the methodologies that I have. These epistemological questions foregrounded my discussion of when, where and how I talked to and asked questions of a young audience of music video. In Part Two, I tell some of the stories that I now know about what motivates young people to watch music videos, and some of the consequences this has for their lives.

In chapter two I quoted Grossberg's assertion that 'the Left' has always been uncomfortable with pleasure (see Wilson-Brown and McCarthy, 1995). Critical, radical and Left theorists have tended to draw their ideas of what constitutes pleasure from the Frankfurt School notion of pleasure as commodification (Jameson, 1983). This view has, in a Western context at least, denigrated pleasure as false consciousness, and merely the by-product of capitalist consumption. Foucault (1984) has demonstrated that Christianity has also belittled the very notion of pleasure - especially sensual and sexual pleasure. What has taken place has been,

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1 The use of the word 'story' to describe what many in academia would refer to as 'data' follows the approach of Alison Jones (1991a, 1992), where the views of the author/researcher (teacher/knower) are just one more story amongst many. See chapter two above.
a moral devaluation through the injunction given in the preaching by the Christian clergy against the pursuit of sensual pleasure as a goal of sexual practice; a theoretical devaluation shown by the extreme difficulty of finding a place for pleasure in the conception of sexuality... (Foucault, 1984: 42)

Foucault argues that this contrasts with the ancient Greek notion of the inseparable nature of sex, pleasure and desire: "the desire that leads to the act, the act that is linked to pleasure, and the pleasure that occasions desire" (1984: 43). Over the last 2,000 years then, pleasure has been much maligned, with the pursuit of pleasure being associated with immorality and guilt.

Dissatisfaction with this view of pleasure and sexuality has led to theories that seek to vindicate (especially sexual) pleasure - as in the work of Herbert Marcuse (1972) for example (see Mercer, 1983; Haug et al 1987). The idea that sexual desire is 'natural' and that Christianity has repressed our 'true' sexuality has gained popularity in the twentieth century (see Haug et al, 1987: 186). Poststructuralist and postmodernist theorists however, (for example, Foucault and Jameson), have exploded this 'repression' line of argument. Colin Mercer sums up Foucault's ideas in this way:

the familiar 'repressive hypothesis' with regard to the nineteenth-century treatment of sexuality is fundamentally misplaced: the Victorians did not suppress or repress it, but made it a major issue in producing definitions of it, regulating it, disciplining it, producing it as an object of discourse. (Mercer, 1983: 89)

In the same way that sexuality has been regulated, so too has pleasure been defined and regulated (Mercer, 1983: 89). Mercer (1989: 88) argues that whereas leisure has attracted the attentions of sociologists, pleasure has not. The industrial, social, economic and political upheavals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe saw an intense and overt regulation of pleasure by institutions (Mercer, 1983). Industry, the church, government and social reformers, "were not concerned with any simple repression of recognised pleasures, but with defining, regulating and locating them in their appropriate sites" (Mercer, 1983: 89). This regulation included "blood sports, football and fairs" (Mercer, 1983: 88). Although pleasure came to be relegated to the realm of the domestic and the 'private', the pursuit of pleasure in public spaces (pubs and music halls, for example) leads Mercer to state that, "it would be mistaken to
assume that pleasure became the underside, or the 'other', of political, moral, economic and legislative order" (1983: 89). Rather, pleasure pervades the public and the private spheres, even though it is seen to belong to the realm of the private and of the individual.

Like Mercer (1983: 84), I am most interested in investigating why people enjoy popular pleasures (such as music video in relation to young people), rather than making judgements about what they should be viewing. This is also the point that Grossberg (see Wilson-Brown and McCarthy, 1995) makes about the Left - that popular forms have been reduced to a single ideology, and have been assessed as 'good' or 'bad' by Leftist theorists. Certain feminist readings of popular culture have also done the same\(^2\), which raises a key difficulty in doing feminist analysis of popular culture. How does one bring a feminist perspective to popular culture without reducing popular texts down to a single meaning? Mercer points out that this was what Barthes's (1977) work enabled scholars to do: "to get beyond...the idea of the text as reducible to a message" (Mercer, 1983: 86). In my research the answer has been to work directly with a young audience, rather than purely with the text. This brings me to another danger: the pathologizing of pleasure.

**THE PATHOLOGIZATION OF OTHERS' PLEASURES**

In chapter two I referred to an observation of Walkerdine and Lucey's (1989: 13) about the middle class intellectuals who study the horror of the working class factory. Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) are critical of, and sceptical about, the motivations of academics in their efforts to know 'the working class'. What should I (and researchers generally) make of young people's pleasures? Is there a risk of 'pathologizing' young people's pleasures? In whose interest does such research occur, and what do I hope to achieve from my research? In investigating pleasure in a sociological sense, I found there were also certain ethical considerations to attend to.

In looking closely at the pleasures of a young audience watching music video, there are at least three pitfalls that need to be avoided: a tendency to pathologize young people's pleasures; a tendency to view young people's comments and behaviours as 'resistance'; and the ill-preparedness of the researcher for the relationships that develop, as well as

\(^2\) For a discussion of textual feminist analyses of popular texts see Kaplan (1987a).
the depth and variety of feelings (of researchers and participants) that emerge.

McRobbie (1991: 77) tells a story about a researcher she knew who was restrained by her feelings:

One woman in Birmingham who was doing a short study of how girls read magazines found herself quite unable to ask the girls in question what their parents did for a living and what kind of house they lived in. Being female undoubtedly sensitises us to the discomforts and small humiliations which doing research can provoke.

When I first read this, I felt an enormous sense of "me too". So many times during my fieldwork I anticipated and felt the "small humiliations" that McRobbie (1991) refers to. It is not only gender, however, but also class and culture which can sensitise us to research participants' feelings. Often when I was reading other scholars' tales of ethnographic and participant observation research I found myself dumb-struck at the kind of questions they would often ask young people. I also thought that I could never ask the students in my study such intrusive questions for my own sake. Sometimes I wished I could, because it seems to produce some 'great' data. McRobbie's observation that, "[s]ociology does not prepare us for the humility of powerless women, for their often totally deferential attitude to the researcher" (1991: 77), greatly impressed me. I was similarly touched by the trust, friendship and generosity of the students and teacher of Progress Secondary College.

In a discussion of the progressive pedagogy that abounded when she became a primary school teacher in 1968, Walkerdine points out how those children who did not respond favourably to such educational 'freedom' were pathologized as deviant. Walkerdine states:

I was swayed by the romantic promise of progressivism in education, and I linked poverty and inner-city decay with the terrible regimentation and the 'old-fashioned' repressive and silencing methods...I loved my inner-city children with a fierce passion. For under my nurturance their illiteracy would be converted into inner-city poetry. (1990: 18)

What this non-disciplinarian young teacher did not anticipate was the way that some children, unfamiliar with such bourgeois behaviour, would respond:
Because of their own authoritarian families, they react in a paranoid fashion to this nurturance - they are aggressive, they do not speak. They feel they are being watched, not nurtured...the poor and oppressed are transformed into the pathological and inadequate. (Walkerdine, 1990: 23)

The pathologization of working class pleasures was encountered again by Walkerdine when she conducted research in the homes of working class families, ostensibly to study their six year old girls. When confronted with a family's avid viewing of Rocky II, she argues that her observation, "like all scientific activity, constitutes a voyeurism in its will to truth, which invests the observer with 'the knowledge' " (1990: 173). Walkerdine (1990) is worried about the effect that such intellectualization of pleasure has for a 'deviant' non-bourgeois family. She argues that the voyeurism of social scientists can fulfil a 'regulative function'. Referring to Janice Radway's (1984) research with women about their reading of romance fiction, Walkerdine criticises Radway's hope that, "readers might move 'beyond' such romantic notions...the transcendence of ideology through the intellectualization of pleasure(s)". Walkerdine argues that such an approach is "part of a broader regulatory project of intellectualization" (1990: 200). This is like the notion of false consciousness: that if the oppressed could 'see the light', they would realise that their current beliefs are misguided, and they would endeavour to change their ways. What worries Walkerdine is that,

these women, children, whoever, are being asked to deal with their previous enjoyment of such things - a pleasure shared with family, friends, and their general social and cultural environment. It seems that they are being left little room for any response other than feeling stupid, or despising those who are still enjoying these 'perverse' pleasures. (1990: 200-201)

When not viewing working class behaviour as pathological, educators have seen it as 'resistance'. Roman (1988: 143) argues that there is a tendency for "radical sociologists of education on both sides of the Atlantic" to overuse the concept of 'resistance'. This has the effect of romanticizing working class practices in the hope that they are in fact examples of "emancipatory social transformation" (Roman, 1988: 143). As Mac an Ghaill (1994a: 172) points out, such a view assumes "that teachers and students are unitary subjects occupying predictable power positions".
I do not pretend that my research is not a part of the surveillance and intellectualization that Walkerdine criticises. I have continually reminded myself that it is the "bourgeois 'will to truth' that is perverse in its desire for knowledge, certainty and mastery" (Walkerdine, 1990: 201). I have foregone asking certain questions of the students in my study because I did not feel that I should subject them to the sort of humiliation and discomfort alluded to by McRobbie (1991). In chapter seven I relay another story from my research, in the form of a methodological reflection, about the sometimes awkward and contradictory position of the researcher. I also have tried not to view student reactions and comments about music videos as 'resistance' and 'transformation', whilst simultaneously recognising students as active social agents.

So why do I want to study a young audience of music video? Theorising gender (femininities and masculinities) is, to me, part of a broader feminist project. Much of the literature reviewed in chapter two points to the 'sexist' and male address of music videos. I wanted to find out if this is how girls and boys read music videos themselves. It has not been my aim to spoil or pathologize their pleasure, or to regulate their behaviour, although I acknowledge that this may have unwittingly happened, as the comment of Michael's at the outset of this chapter implies. For some students, there is no doubt that analysing music videos spoilt their pleasure. Even though they may have enjoyed the social interaction of the analysis, what music video subsequently meant outside of our sessions was changed. As Sarah indicated in our final conversation when I thanked her for her participation and asked her what, if anything, she had gained from our discussions:

Sarah: "Oh, you know, it just makes you think."
Jenny: "You don't watch it in the same way any more?"
Sarah: "Like how much do you enjoy them any more?"

It was Laura Mulvey (1975) who stated that it was the erosion of pleasure that scholarly examination entailed which was the very reason for such study (Mercer, 1983: 96). In this dissertation it is not my intention to destroy young people's pleasures in music video and other popular cultural texts. I have followed Walkerdine's advice that researchers, "should start to look at fantasy-spaces as places for hope and for escape from oppression as well" (1990: 200). Instead of "rationalizing" such bodily experienced pleasures as viewing music videos, the challenge is to recognise the fantasy space that such popular cultural forms provide, and
to explore this - not as deviant behaviour, but as positive and intelligent engagements with everyday life.

THE ATTRACTION OF MUSIC VIDEO

In this dissertation my interest in pleasure relates to the pleasure of the popular; more specifically, the anticipatory pleasure that constitutes the desire to involve oneself in popular culture. Foucault's description of the 'ontology' of the (sex) act/pleasure/desire (1984: 43) is most helpful in thinking about why the young people in my study so willingly engage with music video and the popular generally. Young people watch music videos for many reasons: for the music, the dancing, the erotic display of bodies, the fashions, to criticise it, to sing along, to 'keep up' with the latest pop music, because their older siblings control the television, because there is 'nothing else on', for company, because it has particular resonance with their own experiences, and so on. In conducting my research, I found that such motivations and explanations could be grouped into two broad areas: social interaction and pleasure. Young people watch music videos for these reasons: because it gives them pleasure/confirmation; they wish to interact socially with others who watch music videos; and/or they use it as a resource in the production of their own cultural forms. Young people are not simply passive consumers of music video. As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, young people actively engage with music video, both as consumers and producers. In this chapter I explore what draws the attention of young people to the popular cultural form of music video. I do this by drawing on my interviews, conversations, observations and the written comments of the students who participated in my study.

Pleasure in music video is not always straightforward, as the following explanation of one student's preference for a particular song demonstrates:

My favourite song is the Cats in the Cradle because it reminds me of my parents who both work night shift and I feel that they never have any time for me. I also really like the band and the way they sing their songs. I feel that the Cats in the Cradle song has got a lot of feelings, and people's families are just like that song.
(Cristie: w)

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3 This song by US band, *Ugly Kid Joe*, is a cover-version of the 1970s hit *Ugly Kid Joe's* version went to 'Number One' in Australia during 1993.
Christie's connection with this song is based on a painful and on-going experience of feeling neglected by her parents. In this instance, music video can be a bitter-sweet experience. Her pleasure comes from feeling empathy with the song (what Grossberg [1995] terms 'affect'; Williams [1976] a 'structure of feeling'; and Ang [1985] 'emotional realism'), and the affirmation that she receives about her feelings by watching the song. Christie's reflection demonstrates that she has made an active reading of the text. In the song, the focus is on a father/son relationship, which may seem not to address girls. Christie however, relates this both to herself and to her mother and father. A textual analysis of 'The Cat's in the Cradle' could only speculate about a teenage girl's reading of this video.

My interviews with all of the 49 Year Ten Media Studies students at Progress Secondary College found that the majority (45) watched music videos every weekend. Four of the 49 students interviewed (one girl and three boys) said that they did not watch any music video programs. The amount of time spent watching music videos on weekends varied from one to ten hours, with most students watching two hours per weekend. My small group work with these students found however, that boys' consumption of music video is qualitatively (and sometimes quantitatively) different to girls' consumption. With one exception ⁴, I chose to work with certain students intensively for the following reasons: their interest in music video, their interest in gender, and/or their friendship groups. Because I wanted the students to be comfortable and to enjoy my research with them, I let them choose the interview/discussion groups. This resulted in the following groups: Sam, Jacob and Wayne; Sarah, Jackie, Catherine, Melissa and Andrea; and Michael, Tim and Troy. (I also spoke to all of these students on a one-to-one basis.) I found my discussions and interviews with this last group to be the most difficult, whereas the other two groups seemed to flow without much 'prodding' from me. Consequently, I have considerably more data from the first two groups, which is the reason that these eight students receive the most attention throughout this dissertation. Below I discuss some fairly typical social interaction between Jackie, Catherine, Andrea, Sarah and Melissa, audio taped as they watched some music videos.

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⁴ Michael, Tim and Troy were the only three boys in the First Semester class, and were not friends in the way that the other groups were. They elected to work together however, in preference to working with any of the girls.
Music Video: Gateway to the Subject?

The after school girls⁵ are watching a series of edited music videos that I had compiled myself for a conference presentation.⁶ The videos were chosen specifically for their gendered and sexualized nature.

'Rump Shaker' by Wreckx N Effect⁷

Jackie: "Her tits were showing - did you see that?"
[Andrea laughs; others comment, but inaudible.]
Catherine: "Now we know where Bay Watch got that from."
(?:) "What?"
Jackie: "Seen that new one? My God, they're popping out everywhere! My Dad was glued to the tv."

'Hip Hop Hooray' by Naughty By Nature. In this video an African-American woman takes off her undergarment as she sits on a bed and watches the (male) members of 'Naughty by Nature' on television. She wiggles the undergarment from under her skirt, then slides it down over her legs, and over her feet. The next scene shows her rinsing this undergarment out in a bathroom sink.

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⁵ Jackie was the most avid watcher of music video in this group. Every weekend she would video tape Rage to watch throughout the following week, as well as watch the Saturday and Sunday morning commercial music video programmes. The other girls did not watch Rage, but would watch a number of hours of the commercial music video programmes on weekends. Catherine watched the least, sometimes only watching one hour per weekend due to other activities.

⁶ In July 1993 I presented a paper at the IASPM (International Association for the Study of Popular Music) Australasian Conference in Sydney. I prepared a videotape of approximately five minutes length of edited, then current 'Top 40' music videos, which I used to accompany my discussion of sexual iconography - a topic I explore further in chapter seven.

⁷ A description and analysis of this video appears in chapter seven.
'No Ordinary Love' by Sade.
Sarah: "All her songs sound the same."
Jenny: "[Is she] sewing a wedding dress?"
Catherine: "I reckon that looks like something Barbie would wear!"
Andrea: "Mmmmm."
Jackie: "Have you seen the new Barbie work-out video-tape? I have."
[Laughter.]
Andrea: "You've heard of everything, Jackie."
Jackie: "I can't help it. I'm just...observant."

'Everybody in the house of love' by East 17
Catherine: "You get all the magazines, don't ya?"
Jackie: "Yeah, I do. Like Mum's just bought me a new one last night...Hot Metal...Err, I hate 'The Honeymoon is Over'. "

'Blackstick' by The Cruel Sea, from their CD, the 'Honeymoon is Over'.

'Are you gonna go my way?' by Lenny Kravitz
All: "Yay!"
[Difficult to distinguish voices.]
Sarah: [To me] "They've [Andrea and Jackie] eaten half a bag [of cheezels or pop-corn]."
Andrea: "We get addicted."
[Andrea and Jackie are fooling around with the food.]
Catherine: "Not in the drink!"
Melissa: "Ooh! Yous are pigs!"

The range of comments made by the girls in this conversation could be considered to be indicative of a postmodern society. McRobbie argues that a key feature of postmodernism is the way that images, relate to and across each other. Postmodernism deflects attention away from the singular scrutinizing gaze of the semiologist, and asks that this be replaced by a multiplicity of fragmented, and frequently interrupted, 'looks'. (1994: 13)
As stated in Part One, this dissertation is not an examination of postmodernism or poststructuralism. However I now briefly discuss music video as a postmodern text as it relates to my research. The above student transcript is fragmented, refers out to other texts and social worlds and the frequent interruptions (screen changes) are accepted as 'normal' by these students. 'Media saturation' is considered a key feature of postmodern society:

High levels of media literacy mean that media texts now routinely incorporate into their own appeal that of other texts - this is the core postmodernist concept of 'intertextuality'. (Cunningham, 1993: 325)

McRobbie's (1994) and Cunningham's (1993) work points out the postmodern nature of everyday life and how cultural analysis should be reflective of this. This is one of the reasons why I have not restricted my focus solely to music video. Music video has been the catalyst of most of the conversations presented in this dissertation, however the students never restricted their responses solely to the music videos. The transcript above is a good example of this.

To begin with, Jackie immediately notices how much cleavage a woman in the music video is showing. Catherine connects this to another popular cultural text Baywatch which Jackie connects to her father. The next exchange between Andrea, Catherine and Sarah is noteworthy for its silences. None of them are willing to speak that which is generally unspoken - the sexual. (Only on two occasions did the students of Progress Secondary College make overt references to specific sexual acts. Jackie spoke about Madonna masturbating [see chapter four], and Wayne repeated the comment of a Nirvana band member relating to homosexuality [see chapter six].) Andrea and Sarah position themselves as 'knowers' by recognising that the woman's act of removing her underpants is implicitly sexual. Catherine, however, does not make the connection and unwittingly positions herself as an 'unknower'. Interestingly, Catherine initiates the next interaction, by likening Sade's outfit to a Barbie costume. This is a derogatory comment. Jackie seizes the connection to demonstrate her considerable knowledge of popular culture. Jackie's obsession with popular culture is a source of amusement and a source of 'kudos' for her. The triumphant "Yay!" that greets the Lenny Kravitz song speaks loudly about the group pleasure of communally viewing a favourite music video. They were all so eager to expound their views that I could not transcribe this bit of the tape - it was too confused!
Sarah then informs me that Andrea and Jackie have nearly eaten all of the snacks, which I do not comment on (a political decision on my part not to monitor girls' eating). Andrea and Jackie then proceed to throw some snacks into the container of juice. Melissa and Catherine take responsibility for telling them, "not in the drink", and berate them for making "pigs" of themselves.

Sexual iconography, the unspoken, the pleasure of social interaction, and the obsession with food are themes that I and they have identified as significant in relation to music video and popular culture generally. They are themes that cut across many popular cultural texts, and this fragmentation and intertextuality is generally considered to be indicative of postmodern society, as McRobbie (1994) and Cunningham (1993) argue. Music video scholars who dispute that music video is a postmodern phenomena purely via textual analysis, should perhaps look at music video in the context of its intended and actual audience.

The Importance of 'Knowing'

Knowledge - or meaning - relating to femininity, masculinity, attractiveness, coolness, toughness, sex appeal, the latest music, and even an historical sense of the tradition of rock and pop music can all be learnt via music video. As stated in chapter two, when Sun and Lull (1986) questioned adolescents as to why they viewed MTV, discovering the meaning of songs was high on their list. In my research, I found the importance placed on meaning in music video, and on popular cultural forms themselves, to be quite a gendered issue.8 The following comments are typical of what girls said when asked about what they 'needed to know' to fit in with friends in and outside of school:

Music, magazines, clothes, guys, movies, tv, parties. (Jackie: w)

Clothes, music, people (boyfriend, friends etc). (Sarah: w)

Latest bands in charts, Cutest guys, Latest fashions, Who's doing what. (Sasha: w)

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8 I have not wanted to oversimplify, or create false distinctions between girls and boys. There are a range of femininities and masculinities, and many differences amongst girls and amongst boys. However, there were some comments peculiar to girls, and some that were peculiar to boys. This does not mean that 'all' boys or 'all' girls have made these comments. What it does signify is that enough girls or enough boys made the same types of comments as each other to warrant examination.
Catherine, a very conscientious student, often spoke about music video with mixed feelings:

I don’t think it [music video] is that important, but it is good to know what songs are going. Because I usually don’t get much time to watch video clips I sometimes don’t know what my friends are talking about and I feel a bit left out. But I know the songs because I listen to the radio all the time. (Catherine: W)

Catherine compensates for her limited viewing of music videos on Saturday and Sunday mornings with avid radio listening, because she enjoys the music, but also so as she can participate in conversations with her friends at school. This brings Catherine pleasure. This desire to participate in conversations with friends at school drives students to acquire the necessary knowledge. For girls, romance in the form of ‘liking’ specific male popular music performers, actors and models is desirable knowledge. Boys do not express the same interest in knowing who the ‘cutest’ girls are. Rather, music, parties and sport constitute their essential knowledge:

At school you’ve got to know if any parties are on the weekend. Outside school you need to know the right music to listen to. (Wayne: W)

Parties on Saturday nights (you have to go or miss out on conversation). Outside of school you need to know what’s going on with Bands in or around [the city], overseas etc. (Jacob: W)

For at school you need to know what happened on the weekend or holidays eg. Parties. Outside the school I usually talk about surfing, other sports, parties. (Sam: W)

At least at the level of being asked by me what is essential knowledge to fit in with friends, quite different responses were elicited from girls and boys.

Not knowing the ‘in’ language puts one at a distinct disadvantage, and can cause considerable embarrassment, as I discovered when I initiated a conversation with Jacob, Sam and Wayne⁹ about gender and ‘popstars’. The following discussion could be viewed as an example of exactly the sort of embarrassing situation that young people try desperately

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⁹ Jacob said that he watched “all” the available music video programmes - Rage and the commercial weekend shows. Wayne would videotape Rage if there was going to be a band on he liked, otherwise he watched one to two hours per weekend of commercial music video. Sam watched one hour of commercial music video per week.
to avoid. I had just unwittingly used the term 'popstars' to refer to members of a favourite heavy metal band.

Jacob: "Did you say, masculine popstars?"
Jenny: "I think that um, people like, men like in Pantera are pretty masculine."
Jacob: "Yeah, but they're not 'popstars'."
Wayne: "They're not popstars."
Jenny: "Oh, well, sorry. [They laugh.] When I said 'popstars' I mean like, 'pop' as in 'popular'. So, they are pretty like big..."
Jacob: "Oh they're popular, but..."
Jenny: "They would have a fairly...what would you call..."
Jacob: "If I went out there [the classroom] and I said to those teenyboppers [laughs], 'who's Pantera ?', they'd go, 'huh?'
Jenny: "What's a term you find acceptable then, to describe [them], just musicians, or...?"
Jacob: "Um..."
Wayne: "A band!"
[Others laugh, and agree.]
All: "Yeah, a band!"
Jacob: "Yeah a real band!"
[I attempt to continue, but Jacob stops me.]
Jacob: "Don't worry, we know what you mean."

Liking Pantera and heavy metal music generally was central to Sam's, Wayne's and Jacob's identities. In the transcript above, Jacob seeks to strengthen his own position by weakening the credibility of 'teenyboppers'. Although, as Jacob says, he 'knew what I meant', these boys are adamant that 'popstars' is a totally uncool term and its use positioned me as uncool. Jacob does not want to talk any further on this point, and is willing to overlook my major faux pas. In working with school students and popular music, Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994: 65) found that students imposed a binary logic to the credibility of music - pop or rock, independent or mainstream, commercial or serious. When Jacob, Wayne and Sam made the distinction between themselves and teenyboppers, it was also an important statement about their masculinity.
The heavy metal music that they identify with is synonymous with a rough, tough and wild masculinity.

Storylines

Who we take ourselves to be at any one point in time depends on the available storylines—we have to make sense out of the ebb and flow of being-in-the-world along with the legitimacy and status accorded to those storylines by the others with whom we make up our lives at any one point in time. (Davies, 1993: 41)

Meanings or 'storylines' in music videos were very important to many girls, however this was not something mentioned by boys at all. (This does not mean however, that they did not strive to make meaning from music videos - they just did not articulate it in this way.) Following a narrative and establishing an understanding of what the music video was about, was central to girls’ enjoyment of music video. Were the girls trying to intellectualize what they had seen in music videos in order to escape the physicality of music videos? Having read Walkerdine’s argument (1990: 201) that "bourgeois intellectuals...rationalize the pleasures of the body, to transform them into pleasures of the mind", I wondered if adolescent girls perhaps do a similar thing to music videos. In order to explicate their own femaleness from the objectification necessary for many women to exist in music videos, do they seek to intellectualize it? In Walkerdine’s account, "[t]his body/mind dualism valorizes mental labour as genius or creativity and denigrates the servicing and manual work which make them possible - the labour of the masses and their terrifying physicality" (1990: 201). Music videos, however, are not generally considered to be legitimate classroom texts in the way that novels are, and therefore, meaning is not quite as straightforward. Below is an example of the five after-school girls interacting while watching a music video, and endeavouring to understand it. Jackie had brought in one of her many videotapes that she compiles herself by watching various music video programs, and video taping them.
Jackie: "Oh, it's got Madonna here."

Melissa: "Oh, can we watch this? Yeah I like...this is the best one, rewind it, rewind it to the start!"

Jackie: "This is the bloody start!"

Catherine: "I love this."

Melissa: "She was pretty here, look."

Sarah: "Yeah, I reckon she looks better with black hair."

Jenny: "I love this song."

Andrea: "So do I, I love it."

Jackie: "I've got 'Rain' on video too."

[Everyone starts singing along to 'Like a Prayer'.]

Jackie: "She's nearly popping out of this dress by the end of the song!" [Others laugh.]

Jackie: "She is! I love 'Hanky Panky' and 'Like a Virgin', and..."

Melissa: "I love 'Hanky Panky'."

[Laughter.]

Andrea: "I don't like that one."

Melissa: "I knew I shouldn't have told ya's." [Because they laughed.]

Sarah: "Obviously you have suppressed sexual urges."

(??): "Bit of cleavage there!"

Catherine: "Oh, that's another thing I thought I'd just mention. Guys, guys like girls if they're skinny, they've gotta have big boobs."

Andrea: "Wasn't there a big uproar about this [song] or something?"

Jenny: "Yeah, there was."

Andrea: "Yeah because she's wearing a cross on her."

Jenny: "Yeah, Coke or Pepsi used it as a song in their ad., but they had to take it off because of too much..."

Jackie: "...uproar."

Madonna was always a source of interest amongst these girls. As soon as Melissa sees Madonna on Jackie's video, she becomes excited and wants to watch it. Melissa and Sarah both like Madonna with black hair (her

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10 Her song, 'Like a Prayer'.

11 From Madonna's CD, *Erotica*. 
natural colour), when she was "pretty". 'Like A Prayer' is also one of my favourite Madonna songs, and I was just as 'into' watching it as the girls. The girls draw attention to Madonna's breasts: "She's nearly popping out of this dress by the end of the song!" and "Bit of cleavage there!". The girls' comments are indicative both of the current fashion for large, exposed breasts (as in Baywatch), and of Madonna's use of her breasts to assert herself as a powerful woman. (Personified, I think, in her outlandishly over-sized, pointy, conical brassieres that she often wears for her concert performances.) Catherine's assertion that skinny girls have, "gotta have big boobs" to be 'liked' by men, indicates the regulatory effect that body fashions can have.

When Melissa espouses her love of the song 'Hanky Panky', she is laughed at and teased by Sarah. Jackie however, is not. This demonstrates that the same comments can be made by different students and meet with different reactions from peers. Melissa is what is commonly referred to as a 'nice girl', whereas Jackie is considered to be quite 'streetwise' and knowledgeable about sexual matters. Sarah's comment that Melissa must have, "suppressed sexual urges", seems to be a way of policing Melissa when she steps out of her 'nice girl' persona. To Sarah, there is, "extreme difficulty [in] finding a place for pleasure in the conception of sexuality" (Foucault, 1984: 42), of a 'nice girl' like Melissa.

When looked at retrospectively, popular music can act as a series of 'sign-posts' in one's own story of fandom. Jacob tells of his history as a heavy metal fan that began with a 'teenybopper' artist like Michael Jackson, and matured into his current love of 'real' music.

Jacob: "The first time I started liking, like, getting into music would be about when I was three and I liked [*]..."
[Wayne laughs.]

Jacob: "...and then like Michael Jackson when I was about five or six, and then when I sort of moved up in about Grade Four, it was like, Bon Jovi and Poison, then Grade Six..."

Wayne: [Enthusiastically] "Motley Crue!"
Jacob: "...yeah, and Aerosmith, then you hit Year Seven and it's Metallica! And then I reckon, from Metallica it would've been Guns 'n' Roses...and then...about Year Nine, oh, like, I used to skate[board] back then so I would've listened to all alternative bands, like The Dead Kennedys, and all them...."

Popular music is inseparable from certain forms of popular culture. For example, those (boys) who ride skateboards, immediately identify with a certain type of 'alternative' music. Wayne demonstrates this with the following comment:

Wayne: "All the surfers and that now, they all listen to heavy metal...like they used to be real grunges, and listen to a lot of alternative stuff, but now they're all heavy metal heads."

The fact that activity (surfing, for example) is seen to determine one's musical affiliations and tastes in noteworthy. Dick Hebdige (1979) has addressed such issues in his now classic text, Subculture: the Meaning of Style. McRobbie (1991: 26) pursues aspects of style that Hebdige has overlooked, and asks: "Does subcultural elevation of style threaten the official masculinity of straight society which regards fussiness as cissy?" In chapter five I turn to the work of Mark Simpson (1994) to address the meaning of style within heavy metal culture, looking for clues in relation to the interest in heavy metal of Sam, Wayne and Jacob.

The comments below were written in response to my question: "What is it about music videos that you enjoy? Is it simply a matter of liking or disliking particular videos, or can you have a mixture of feelings about any one music video? Think of a few examples."

I like the way that they [music videos] tell you something (a storyline). You can have a mixture of feelings about a video, like Meatloaf's anything for LOVE. I like the filmclip and the storyline too but I don't like the way the song just repeats itself over and over. (Sarah: w)

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12 The term 'storyline' was not a word I 'gave' them; the girls used it without prompting from me. Having studied Media Studies since Year 7, they were familiar with concepts such as storyline and narrative.

13 Sarah is referring to Meatloaf's 'Number One' hit of 1993.
I usually like or hate music videos or hate them but sometimes like a music video that has a boring song but a good message. One song which is really good with a good message is Runaway Train by Soul Asylum. (Sasha: w)

I like music videos because of the beat and I can sing with them and some have real meaning or some show a story. I like those better than the rap videos with a lot of dancing in them e.g. I will do anything for Love - Meatloaf has a good storyline but makes you think about what its really like. (Melissa: w)

I like music videos that are really spectacular and different and that have a storyline to it. I also like ones where I know the song and can sing along to it. You can have a mixture of feelings about one music video. For example, I like the song 'sweat' by Inner Circle but get a bit bored in the video clip because it is just the same thing; A guy with all these girls swaying back and forth in the water. (Andrea: w)

I like videos that are basically good to watch. eg, dancing, fancy outfits with an up beat tempo. I like Meatloaf's song "I'll do anything for love", but I still can't understand the video clip! (Catherine: w)

The girls' appetites for narrative, theatre, 'fancy' outfits, and for reality, signals a desire for escapism and for fantasy. Girls and women's pleasure in the narrative form is a theme which runs through the remainder of this dissertation.

The after school girls displayed a keen interest in the narrative of music videos. They looked for meaning and sought to understand this visual medium, discussing and connecting images. The following extract relates to the music video 'Beautiful Girl' by INXS. In chapter five I describe this and another music video, 'The Right Kind of Love' by Jeremy Jordan, in some detail. I draw on some of these comments now, in relation to the two videos, in order to illustrate their interest in narrative:
Jackie: "Mm, mm, plus when she gets on the scales, [someone agrees here] and going around like, she gets on them every day, so she moves a step forward."  

Catherine: "You know that part where...the guys from INXS, they had their faces, and then they had a picture of like a girl, just the top of her. You know what I thought that was? I thought that...like they'd have one member of the band, then they'd show one of the girls, and like they're sort of just showing the way they saw girls, and like they had all different kinds of girls, a black person and everything."

Catherine signals the inclusion of a "black person" as welcome and indicative of social realism. She takes pleasure in talking through what she is watching. Lack of a narrative can signal boredom:

Andrea: "This is just the normal, just like the average film clip...it's got dancing, girls and guys."

(?): "They're like, all similar now, the songs."

[Others agree.]

Jackie: "I mean, the song doesn't hold great meanings to it either, not like INXS."

Andrea: "Err! It looks like he's [Jeremy Jordan] only after one thing."

[Others laugh and agree.]

Andrea: "He really carries on, I reckon."

Catherine: "What I don't understand about these film clips is they, I mean, a lot of them nowadays, just have..."

Jackie: [Interrupting] "No meaning to it."

Catherine: "Yeah, singing and dancing, its mainly some guy singing some soppy ballad or something, and they've got no meaning, nothing, they've got no storyline, but you always find yourself sitting down and watching them! That's what I don't understand."

[Untranscribable, as they all contribute eagerly.]

14 In this video a woman is shown standing on bathroom scales. When the camera moves back, the viewer sees that the scales are part of a 'spiral' of scales, and the woman is shown to move 'forward'; into the centre of the spiral, as she loses weight.

15 'The Right Kind of Love' by Jeremy Jordan.
Jackie: "The 'Beautiful Girl' one is more down to earth I reckon, it's telling you the facts."

Andrea: "I like how they show the Barbie doll faces."

Andrea, Jackie and Catherine demonstrate the way that they relate to music videos. Whilst the music itself is very important to them (especially to Jackie), they expect a music video to add to their understanding of the song's meaning. When a video is "mainly some guy singing some soppy ballad", they find it boring, yet as Catherine indicates, "you always find yourself sitting down and watching them". The anticipation of pleasure sustains the desire to continue watching music videos, even when disappointments do occur.

A Gendered Address?

When music videos 'talk' to girls, they respond as girls. This is what Lisa Lewis (1993) refers to as 'female address', a term I introduced in chapter two. Taking up a heteroexual and traditional, female subject position assists girls in formulating their own stories about themselves. Davies, when writing about her childhood experiences, says:

I discover that I is not the private and personal possession I had learned to see it as, that the choices that 'I' have made speak as much of my context and time and cultural location as they do of any separate identifiable individual, I appear to be losing myself, losing the particular nature of my own existence. (1993: 176)

And this is the dilemma faced by many young people - how to be an individual, whilst simultaneously being identifiable as a certain sort of girl or boy.

Sport appeared to be more important to boys than girls. The boys who played sport and were sports fans, mentioned this a lot to me, whereas I was quite surprised to find out in June (half-way through my research), that three of the members of the after school girls' group played netball, and that one was a keen motorcycle rider. Sarah stated several times that she did not socialize with any girls on weekends, pointing out that all of her friends were boys. She was positioning herself as superior in some way to the girls who mixed mostly with girls. Such sports, though important to the girls, were more of a social activity than a source of identity, as they were with Alex, Tim, Jacob, and Andrew:
It [music video] doesn't really mean anything to me or my friends. We don't talk about music videos. I don't get to see many music videos as I am out or playing sport most of the weekend. This is the case with most of my friends as well. (Alex: w)

For these boys, television, and particularly music video, was not regarded as a masculine pastime. Most boys in my study did watch music videos, however some positioned their viewing not as 'fans', but rather as critics:

We watch it (Saturday mornings, eg.) There's always a conversation about them, with all my friends outside of school. It's mainly stabbing them, saying how much we hate them. (Jacob: w)

I like the Top 40 because I like to pick on the style of music. It doesn't mean anything to me because I hate most of the songs. (Wayne: w)

So even though they say they "hate" the Top 40 music videos, they still feel compelled to watch them, as this exchange between Jacob and Wayne indicates:

Jacob: "For some reason I still watch it though."
Wayne: "I know."
Jacob: "There's nothin' else on, and you just watch it."

These comments echo Catherine's observation that, "you always find yourself sitting down and watching them". There is also another reason why some boys watch:

I enjoy woman and violence in clips. (Wayne: w)

I probably like the women in them. Some music videos you like and some you dislike. (Sam: w)

I like the music mostly. I also like the women on them. (Andrew: w)

Jhally argues that:

The women of the dreamworld like being looked at. They are shown being photographed and inviting the male gaze. They revel in it. (Jhally, 1992: 51)
Does male sexualization require that boys construct a gendered subjectivity that positions them as voyeurs? Is it unmasculine for boys to like music videos for reasons such as those named by some girls - storylines, romance, to sing along or mime to? The boys only name those elements of music videos which they understand to be masculine; ie, the women, the music, the instruments. Boys can then feel that their interest in music video is not a threat to their masculinity, but in fact affirms their gender identification. Sport - particularly of a competitive nature - is a legitimate outlet where obvious connections to the sexual and to violence are monitored, controlled and promoted in such a way that to make connections to sexual pleasures could be construed as perverse. For example, to suggest to Alex, Tim and Andrew that they enjoy one of the few settings (basketball) where it is legitimate for them to touch the body of another male would draw a swift and contemptible response. Walkerdine argues that:

There exists among the bourgeoisie a terror of the pleasures of the flesh, of the body, of the animal passions seen to be burning darkly in sexuality and also in violent uprisings. No surprise then, that the regulation of children's consumption of the modern media focuses so obsessively on sex and violence. (1990: 201)

Jacob, Michael, Sam and Wayne link their pleasure in watching the musicians in music video to their own playing of musical instruments:

Bands you like, you just want to watch to see them on TV. See what they do. Other clips I look at how the bass player acts, what he does, what sort of bass he uses, its cool to see their expensive basses [bass guitars] and wish I could have one. (Jacob: w)

Michael: "When I listen to a song, when I watch this on tv, I listen to the music, and try and learn other things. Because I normally listen to a song and go and play it on the guitar."

Michael plays drums in the school band and belongs to a 'garage' band, as do Jacob and Wayne. Sam is learning the drums, and aspires to join a band. A number of the girls - Andrea, Melissa, Catherine and Sarah - play musical instruments and/or belong to the school choir. They do not however, transport these skills into their viewing of music videos. Although these girls may fantasise about themselves as music video
performers, it is in a different way to the boys. They do not fancy themselves as flautists or singers in the bands they see on television. In much the same way that these girls use music videos as a fantasy space from which they learn how to dress, how to dance, how to be feminine/ sexy and attractive to men, boys use music video to rehearse their masculinity; it is just as much of a fantasy space for boys as it is for girls. Boys' focus on the musical instruments and women legitimizes their 'looking' at music videos which are feminized because girls watch them, and because they contain the eroticized male body. In other words, both girls and boys use music videos as opportunities to 'perform' and to re-construct traditional feminine and masculine gendering. The difference between the outcomes of such fantasizing is that boys think, "that could be me/I could do that", whereas girls think, "how can I look like that?" or, "I wish I looked like that". Frith and McRobbie (1978/9: 8) point out that,

A girl is supposed to be an individual listener, she is not encouraged to develop the skills and knowledge to become a performer...Women, whatever their musical tastes, have little opportunity and get little encouragement to be performers themselves. This is another aspect of rock's sexual ideology of collective male activity and individual female passivity.

Although there are exceptions to this generalisation, my research suggests that it is still prudent to bear this in mind.

CONCLUSION

In exploring some aspects of the pleasure and social interaction that young people experience in watching and discussing music videos, this study goes beyond previous investigations of young people's pleasures in music video. I have questioned why I and others want to theorise young people's investments in gender relations and in popular culture, which has seldom been addressed in music video research. Unlike Sun and Lull (1986), I found no significant differences between girls and boys in actual time spent watching music video. Reasons for watching however, and attitudes towards music video differed considerably between and amongst girls and boys. My evidence so far suggests a greater willingness in girls to position themselves as fans or consumers, whereas such a position is anathema to some boys, who position themselves as musicians or serious
music buffs. My interviews with the Year 10 Media Studies students at Progress Secondary College found a tendency in a few boys to name their involvement in sport as ruling out their watching of music videos, which concurs with Sun and Lull’s (1986) study. Music videos were viewed with contempt by these boys. However, overall this research supports the broad cultural studies view that music video is an important part of young people’s culture.

In my small group work with eleven students I found boys to watch just as much music video as girls, if not more, as in the case of Wayne and Jacob. All of these students actively related music video to their social world and experiences. Girls were very keen to articulate what was feminine or sexy in music videos (skinny, big breasts). This knowledge was understood in relation to their own bodies. Knowing or not knowing about sexual matters positioned girls as good girls or bad girls. Within this discourse there seemed little compatibility between being a ‘nice’ girl and expressing sexual pleasure. Storylines were very important to girls, and music videos without a narrative were generally taken to have “no meaning”. This aspect was not mentioned by boys. Rather, their emphasis was the music, the musical instruments and the women (as objects to be looked at); aspects which differentiated their viewing as masculine, compared to the girls’ feminine readings. Musical genre was very much identified with certain subcultures and lifestyles, by both girls and boys.

All of the members of the small group of students expressed complex readings of music videos: they articulated likes, dislikes and ambivalences. This moves on significantly from the idea that fans are not simultaneously critics. For girls this involved a desire for both fantasy and reality in music videos. Implicit in the boys’ readings of music videos was an understanding of the undesirability of femininity. Whilst girls were very keen to understand what was feminine, there was also a general recognition of the higher social status of masculinity. Although all of the students named reasons why they watch, none of them were able to clearly articulate what Catherine, Jacob and Wayne pointed to as the irrational allure of music video. This gives us further insight into the issues of ‘affect’ (Grossberg, 1995), ‘structure of feeling’ (Williams, 1976) and ‘emotional realism’ (Ang, 1985), helping to move along our understanding of the (Foucauldian) link between knowledge and power.

How young people view their music video consumption is complex, and is tied to the construction of an acceptable gendered identity.
In my next chapter I explore whether or not there are limited gender choices for young people in music video.
CHAPTER FIVE

GENDER

Jacob: "Boys should be boys, and girls should be girls. Why do they want to dress up..."
Wayne: "...as each other?"

Gender exists precisely to the extent that biology does not determine the social. (Connell, 1995: 71)

How do we become masculine and feminine? A poststructuralist reading of gender suggests that it is through discursive interactions that people actively contribute to, produce and sustain certain discourses about femininity and masculinity. As I pointed out in chapter three, "[t]here is no all-powerful subject which manipulates discourse" (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 20). Connell, drawing on the work of the Czech philosopher Karel Kosik (1976), explains this same process through the term 'ontoformativity'. What this "evocative if awkward term" seeks to describe is the complex, dynamic process through which people experience and understand themselves: "[i]t makes the reality we live in" (Connell, 1995: 65). Connell however, differs from some "postmodern theorists" who believe "that discourse is all we can talk about in social analysis" (1995: 71). Rather, in specific reference to masculinity, Connell (1995: 71) argues that:

To grapple with the full range of issues about masculinity we need ways of talking about relationships of other kinds too: about gendered places in production and consumption, places in institutions and in natural environments, places in social and military struggles.

Ramazanoglu's idea of what constitutes 'discourse' then, is broader than Connell's perception. My eclectic use of theory throughout this dissertation means that I do not see this disjuncture as a problem. Rather, I take it as an opportunity to question my own understanding of discourse, and to use poststructuralist theory to make sense of views that challenge each other. For example, Ramazanoglu argues that whilst power is constituted in discourses, it is likely to be those who work in institutions who actually exercise this power (1993: 19). This is the discursive field: the "relationships", "gendered places", "institutions" and "military struggles" that Connell speaks of above.
Connell (1995: 239) identifies education as a key site for gender change:

The importance of education for masculinity politics follows from the onto-formativity of gender practices, the fact that our enactments of masculinity and femininity bring a social reality into being.

Precisely how the young people I worked with at Progress Secondary College bring about their reality as feminine and masculine is discussed throughout this chapter. Having identified some of the pleasures and social aspects of music video in the previous chapter, in what follows, I will explore the concept of gender through theory and by drawing upon the interviews, discussions and writing of the students I worked with at Progress Secondary College. I begin by examining the concept of gendered subjectivity. I then turn to the role of fantasy in girls' popular cultural texts. By then turning to evidence from my research, I ask questions about the significance of a fantasy figure such as Madonna. Having done this I then turn to difference in relation to gender and music video which raises many issues especially relating to masculinity and the boys in my study. Having looked at masculinity and femininity somewhat separately, I then return to the relational nature of gender.

**Gendered Subjectivity**

The study of gendered subjectivity has followed second wave feminist concerns about girls and women growing up and reproducing stifling forms of femininity. In chapters one and three I discussed different feminisms and some of their preoccupations. There are different theories about how, or indeed if, girls learn to be women. For example, liberal feminism has stressed the importance of changing girls, while radical feminism prefers to celebrate uniquely female traits. Poststructuralist feminism shifts such foci and challenges the assumptions and foundations of second wave feminism. Stable notions about who women are and what women want have been crumbling rapidly for the last decade, as I indicated in chapter one. The term 'gendered subjectivity' stands as a metaphor for this shift in feminist thought. More recently, the study of gendered subjectivity has emanated from those interested in masculinity.

Studies of masculinity arose in direct relation to the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The liberation of women from
patriarchy suggested to counter-culture men that they too could throw off
the shackles of patriarchy and become liberated.¹ This impetus led such
men down two different paths: those who became pro-feminist men; and
those who no longer saw themselves as oppressors but as helpless
victims.² It is the research and writing of the former group that my
dissertation draws upon. I have turned to the work of Connell (1987,

My usage of the term 'gendered subjectivity' is informed by a
number of sources. Gilbert and Taylor (1991: 24) draw on John Fiske's
(1987) notion that the subject is constructed in "a network of social
relations". Gilbert and Taylor argue that gender ideologies are vital in the
construction of subjectivity. Gender ideologies legitimate the idea that
there are appropriate feminine and masculine thoughts and behaviours
which correspond to one's biological maleness or femaleness,³ as
demonstrated in Jacob's and Wayne's comments at the beginning of this
chapter. Connell (1995: 69) points out that:

If we spoke only of differences between men as a bloc and women as
a bloc, we would not need the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' at
all. We could just speak of 'men's' and 'women's', or 'male' and
'female'. The terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' point beyond
categorical sex difference to the ways men differ among themselves,
and women differ among themselves, in matters of gender.

Feminist poststructuralism disrupts humanist assumptions that
language is a stable order that enables us to "think, speak and give
meaning to the world around us" (Weedon, 1987: 32). Weedon defines
subjectivity as "precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being
reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (1987: 33). (Or
'perform' it, in Butler's [1990] terms.) This shifting, temporary nature of
subjectivity, leads readily to explorations of gender on a fantasy level.
Walkerdine (1990: 135) argues that,

¹ See for example, Jeff Hearn and David Morgan (eds 1990) Men, Masculinities & Social
Theory, Unwin Hyman, London.
² The work of American advocate of men's liberation, Warren Farrell, is a prominent
example. His 1993 publication The Myth of Male Power: Why Men are the Disposable Sex,
received widespread media coverage in Australia in 1994 during a promotional tour. His
ideas about men as victims were enthusiastically endorsed by Australian social
commentator and sexologist, Bettina Arndt.
³ This point is illustrated nicely by some of the students in their reactions to some Boy
George videos we watched. Some of their comments are included below.
we have to move away from a simple empiricism to a position in which we understand fact, fiction and fantasy as interrelated. It is to post-structuralism that I turn for an account which will allow us to examine how it comes about that gender difference is produced in fictional ways which have power in that they are part of the truth-effects of the regulation of children in classrooms.

Davies was prompted to explore the constructed nature of gender after witnessing a case of mistaken gender identity. It was during,

a picnic with some friends where a rough tough little kid that I had not met before was mistaken by me and several others as a boy. When someone addressed her as Penny I was quite startled. One of the children asked her mother, with tears in her eyes, 'Mummy, why are they calling that boy Penny?' (Davies, 1993: xvi)

I heard a similar story recently. My partner was showing me some of his family's home movies. At one point I commented on one child with shoulder-length, red hair, furiously pedalling a tricycle. Cliff said, "Yeah, it was funny when David came to visit that time...he kept telling us that he wasn't a girl, he was a boy with long hair". This same perception as Davies, that hair length, or behaviour, is an indication of one's biological maleness or femaleness, is a recurring theme for the Progress Secondary College students, although, *appearances are not always what they seem.* Whilst it is possible to talk about 'gendering' as something which occurs to both boys and girls as they grow up, the ways in which boys and girls become gendered, are qualitatively different, if not in conflict with each other.

**Fantasy**

How can it be that femininity is a fiction and yet lived as though it were real, felt deeply, as though it were a universal truth of the psyche? (Walkerdine, 1990: xiii)

Walkerdine (1990) considers fantasy to be an intrinsic part of the audience's engagement with popular cultural texts. Walkerdine draws on Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to make sense of the preparation of girls for feminine sexuality. The shift in desire from the Mother to the Father is central to her arguments and preoccupations about girls' sexuality. Walkerdine focuses attention on desire - "how we come to want what we want" (1990: 87) - and the role of signifiers:
books, films, advertisements and so forth, operate in terms of systems of signification. Thus the text has to be actively read in order to engage with the way in which images and other signs, verbal and non-verbal, are constructed. (Walkerdine, 1990: 89)

According to Walkerdine, the signifiers of feminine sexuality in the girls' comics she analysed are: romance and heterosexuality; the 'prince' (boyfriend) as saviour; victimisation and selflessness; family relations; and the ultimate signifier of a "happy-ever-after" (1990: 90) ending - the propulsion into the ideal bourgeois family. Walkerdine sees the heroine's placement into the ideal family as her reward for selflessness and suffering. It is "the oedipal resolution played out"; the "abandonment of the mother in favour of the oedipal love of the father" (1990: 88).

Girls do not passively adopt gendered roles, but struggle to assert their power where they can. Desire, fantasy and "a voice which does not belong to the father, nor to the schools of thought", are integral concepts that Walkerdine uses to explain girls' and women's ready participation in gendered behaviour (1990: xiii). Walkerdine argues that the "psyche [is]...formed in and through the social" (1990: xiii). Thus, subjectivity, masculinity and femininity are inextricably intertwined.

Jhally (1992) has likened MTV to a 'dreamworld', where "women are presented as a number of disconnected objectified body parts". This dreamworld "is a very competitive world for women who fight each other for men" (1992: 51). This competition amongst women in vying for male attention was evident during one of my interviews with Jackie. Jackie made the following comment about the girlfriend of Axl Rose, the lead singer of Guns 'N' Roses: "She's pretty, and I want to kill her".

Christian-Smith (1988) analysed romance novels and the construction of femininity. Talking about the behaviour of the girls in these novels, and the extent to which they can/cannot exercise power, Christian-Smith (1988 : 92) says,

Girls may cajole and persuade. When they try to formally control their romances, their boyfriends leave. Since romance is ultimately about power, by having so many romances dissolve in the wake of girls' bids for power, these novels make a strong statement about the irreconcilability of feminine power and satisfying relationships with males.

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4 Of the 18 Buntly and Tracy stories analysed, 11 stories featured girls who either did not have, or did not live with, their parents (Walkerdine, 1990: 93).
McRobbie (1991: 201) has identified three popular cultural texts that deviate from the common theme of female suffering/punishment/powerlessness in the "transition towards adult feminine sexuality": "the girls' novel, Ballet Shoes, the film and TV series, Fame" and the 1983 film Flashdance. McRobbie (1991: 201) argues that these three texts have been so popular "precisely because they depart strongly from the kind of narrative submissiveness" that Walkerdine and others have documented. Without wanting to succumb to one of the 'pitfalls' of doing research that I outlined in chapter four, (viewing young people's actions as resistance), McRobbie's recognition of alternative discourses for girls is important. The texts she examined,

create an entirely different scenario first by effecting an escape from the site of potential trauma or cruelty (i.e. the home) into a more neutral sphere such as the school, and then by plunging headlong into an activity, ballet or gymnastics or whatever. (1991: 209)

Such activities are pursued passionately, and "[t]he shoes in Ballet Shoes are a symbol of effectiveness and escape and of pre-pubescent female desire" (McRobbie, 1991: 209). Awareness of this 'pre-pubescent female desire' is as important as Brown and Gilligan's (1992) recognition of a period when girls do not say, 'I don't know', habitually.\(^5\)

By considering masculinity as well as femininity, and by engaging in feminist poststructuralist notions that reject rigid formulations of gender, it is possible to see further than the 'girl as victim' paradigm in popular culture. Comments made by some of the students at Progress Secondary College seem to support this as I will now show.

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\(^5\) Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan, in their longitudinal study of approximately 100 girls aged seven to eighteen, found that as girls approached their transition into womanhood, the phrase "I don't know" increased in frequency in their speech. (See Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 4-5.)
Madonna: *Positively Sexy?*

Instead of simply rejecting the essentialism which equates woman with body, Braidotti argues that (like Madonna) we must revisit the sites of assumed essentialism and work through them. We should explore the boundaries by going back to them. (McRobbie, 1994: 68)

Madonna was a very popular figure for the students in my study in that she quickly came to mind in relation to my questions/comments on gender. Jackie described Madonna as masculine:

Even though she's female she's very outspoken, strong willed, fit and [has a] very toned body. (w)

Jackie points out that although Kylie Minogue has also donned the "pointy bra's" and "done a raunchy tour because today's artists are using sex to sell", Kylie is not masculine. Kylie and Madonna may look similar in terms of sexual iconography, but to Jackie, because "Kylie Minogue is not as outspoken" as Madonna, she fits the category of 'feminine pop star'. Sarah also named Madonna as masculine "because she is strong and stands up for herself". The active reading of signifiers is important here. Jackie reads the signifiers present in Kylie's and Madonna's texts comparatively and in relation to her own subjectivity. Madonna and Kylie may both wear sexualized outfits (pointy bustieres, lingerie and revealing outfits), yet the presence of additional signifiers\(^6\) and 'attitude' contribute to Jackie's and Sarah's reading of Madonna as masculine. One girl, Emma, who left school several weeks after I began my fieldwork, said: "Madonna's a legend. Kylie is a 'try-hard'. She just copies Madonna".

All of the after school girls thought Madonna was masculine at times, though not in the way that lesbian and 'butch' performers were. Melissa Ethridge, k.d Lang and Tracy Chapman were also named as masculine due to their *unfeminine* appearance - short hair, deep voices, wearing trousers and so on. Madonna's physical appearance however, was recognised as relying very much on typically feminine sexual iconography (bustieres, suspender belts, lingerie). The girls connected Madonna's masculinity with her "muscular body and powerful, strong dance movements" (Andrea), and her "attitude". As I explained in chapter one, the achievement of femininity relies just as much on *acting* like a girl as it

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\(^6\) Other popular cultural mediums through which Madonna's persona is projected include her 1992 book, *Sex*, television and magazine interviews, films and gossip columns.
does on looking like a girl, and this can be evidenced in the girls' comments above. (I have included some of the boys' comments about Madonna in chapter seven, where I focus on sexuality and power.)

In response to my question, "are there some people who are both feminine and masculine?", Madonna was named by Jackie and Sarah. Jackie points to the complexity of gender in music video:

Jackie: "You can be feminine and masculine at the same time, like Madonna, she can, you know, be very feminine at times and also very..."

[Sarah interrupts her.]

Sarah: "And then she gets out the whips and chains and..."

Jackie: [With enthusiasm] "Yeah!"

Andrea: [In disapproval] "Errr!"

In the conversation below, Jackie, Sarah, Catherine and Andrea discuss some of Madonna's unfeminine antics. They debate her status as a 'whore' and her suitability as a potential mother:

Jackie: "Madonna [is a whore]."

Jenny: "Yeah?"

Jackie: "Oh she punched up Marky Mark."7

Jenny: "Did she?"

Sarah: "Yeah, she did, she beat [him] up, and knocked him down the stairs and everything."

Catherine: [Screams with amusement.]

Andrea: "Why Jackie?"

Jackie: "Because he called her a whore."

Jenny: "Oooohh..."

Jackie: "And she is, so..."

[All talking at once, debating whether Madonna is a "whore".]

Catherine: "I love Madonna."

Sarah: [To Jackie] "You seen the body on that woman? She'd kick your butt. See the muscles on it?"

Andrea: "I know."

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7 A white, US model turned rap artist.
Jackie: "She's 35...I mean, imagine when she has kids, when she has kids those kids are going to be so embarrassed about being, like being with her."

Andrea: "I know."

Catherine: "When's she going to have any kids? She might not have any kids."

Jackie: "True, but she wants to adopt one."

Catherine: "Does she?"

Sarah: "But she'd have so much money, I would kill people for that amount of money."

Jackie: "I wouldn't...people would pick on ya. I mean it's bad enough you get picked on..."

[Jackie raises her voice as Sarah tries to interrupt.]

Jackie: "...but people get picked on if they have gay parents, I mean, what would it be like if someone's, um, you know..."

[ Interruptions from Sarah.]

Jackie: "...masturbating in a picture, I mean..."

Sarah: "You could buy friends. Here's a million dollars, be my friend."

[Laughter from the others.]

Jackie: "True, but I would be embarrassed."

In this transcript it appears that the girls are 'taking sides', deciding whether or not they are Madonna fans or Madonna critics, as Catherine's assertion, "I love Madonna" suggests. Being explicitly sexual, as in her book, is seen as making Madonna an unsuitable mother. Catherine points out that being female does not necessarily involve being a mother. Sarah makes the connection between money and power, and being able to 'buy' friends. Jackie however, insinuates that money cannot compensate for social acceptance, as her comment, "True, but I would be embarrassed" indicates. This is significant in that she recognises that despite the inordinate wealth of Madonna, her child could suffer due to her disregard for a social convention: the juxtaposition of Mother and Whore.

Sarah's rhetorical question relating to Madonna's body, "[s]ee the muscles on it?" (my emphasis), is noteworthy because the use of the pronoun 'it' renders Madonna's body a sexless object. Is Sarah operating

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8 This is a reference to Madonna's (1992) book, Sex.
on the level of the mind/body dualism, indicating that the 'she' (mind) Madonna is separate from the 'body' Madonna (which is an 'it')? Could Sarah's comment be construed as recognition of the fluidity of gender, or merely another instance of a girl recognising that women are "a series of objectified body parts" (Jhally, 1992: 51). To answer this question it is necessary to consider these examples from my data in relation to some theory known as 'Madonna scholarship'.

Madonna is not a character who inspires indifference. Fans of popular music seem to either love or hate her, and critics have tended to either vilify or vindicate her. In this dissertation do neither. I do not want to claim Madonna as the Patron Saint of Adolescent Girls, nor do I want to say what a terrible influence she is. I simply want to explore the way young people read and take pleasure in her texts - which is not a simple task by any means - in relation to theory and some of my own readings of Madonna.

McRobbie argues that Madonna is unsettling not only because she is so utterly about sex, but because she is also about a pleasure that operates, "quite autonomously from the regulative discourses within which it [sex] is more traditionally placed" (1994: 68). In other words, Madonna's body is not 'read' in the same way as say, 'supermodel' bodies like Elle Macpherson's are. Whereas it is clear that Macpherson's body primarily addresses the pleasure of the (male) spectator⁹, Madonna exudes a sense of self which is independent of the spectator. Her fulfilment does not rely on the spectator's gaze (though this may be pleasing to her).

The young people in my study also named k.d. lang and Melissa Ethridge as 'masculine', however this was directly related to their unfeminine appearance and their sexual status as lesbians. Madonna refuses to be labelled as lesbian or heterosexual, saying,

I have a lot of sexual fantasies about women and I enjoy being with women, but by and large I'm mostly fulfilled by being with a man. (Madonna in Micheli, 1992: 26)

I do not think that the naming of Madonna as masculine by the students in my study is related to her sexual preference, rather it is related to what McRobbie (1994: 68) articulates as her (sexual) autonomy "from the

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⁹ Alison Jones (1991: 93) has pointed out that although Macpherson appears at first glance to be a 'passive' and 'exploited' sex object, it is possible to make multiple readings of her images. I agree with this assertion, however it was Madonna, and not Elle, who the students in my study pointed to as being 'in control', 'strong' and in possession of 'attitude'.
regulative discourses" that sexuality usually operates within. Foucault argues that power takes effect through the realm of the sexual, and Madonna, (on record as saying "I want to rule the world" [Micheli, 1992: 25]) seems to understand this. Certainly many of Madonna's texts adhere to patriarchal norms, however she is invariably in control, and deviates from masculine hegemony at will. Her book, Sex, was about her fantasies\(^{10}\); not about a photographer getting Madonna to act out his perceptions of a collective male fantasy (as in the case of MacPherson and other 'supermodels'). The comments that the students made about Madonna (in this chapter and the dissertation as a whole) indicate that they perceive her to be very much in control of her own life.

In chapter two I used a statement of McRobbie's to indicate that I was dissatisfied with the tendency in music video scholarship to reduce the study of popular music to that of the musical text. McRobbie identifies a similar tendency in Madonna scholarship:

The new 'Madonna scholarship' (Schwichtenberg, 1993) exists almost entirely within the framework of media or film studies. In her earlier work Madonna performed very much for a young female audience, but this dimension tends to get buried when her music, her videos and her film and TV appearances are understood as 'texts of sexuality' in a language which draws on feminist film theory. (McRobbie, 1994: 181)

Textual analyses of Madonna are important and worthwhile, however as McRobbie argues, they are often incongruent with the views of young audiences.

In an essay that begins on an intriguing note with questions about Madonna's 'power', David Tetzlaff (1993) proceeds to discredit 'pro-Madonna' scholarship. Tetzlaff criticizes John Fiske's (1989) efforts to locate feminist content in Madonna's videos, 'Lucky Star' and 'Burning Up'. Even though Fiske draws on readings of Madonna made by young female fans, Tetzlaff (1993: 245) dismisses this evidence because,

[i]n the terms of traditional criticism, we would have to say that interpretations of Burning Up and Lucky Star as parodic critiques of voyeurism are simply not supported by the text.

\(^{10}\) Though obviously Madonna's fantasies have also been constructed through the social. This however is outside the bounds of this thesis.
Tetzlaff (1993) uses the banner of 'traditional criticism' in the way that scientists might take shelter in the rhetoric of 'objectivity' and 'rationality'. If 'traditional criticism' cannot support readings made by fans, perhaps such theory needs to be reconsidered? Tetzlaff is right to question the criteria by which Madonna is held up by some as a feminist icon, however arguing that readings made by fans are in fact misreadings, is perhaps to miss the very point of cultural studies.

In my view Tetzlaff is baffled as to Madonna's appeal to young women, and reverts to a 'false consciousness' conclusion. He states that on his first viewing of 'Lucky Star' in 1985, he wrote down, "the world's oldest profession" (1993: 244). Tetzlaff argues that it is not Madonna's music or voice that has made her so popular, nor is it her film career, her 'personality' or her 'sex appeal'; "the core of Madonna's appeal lies in her aura of power" (1993: 242). My research with a young audience concurs with this assertion of Tetzlaff's but it does not end there. The girls in my study also enjoyed Madonna's music and sex appeal. Tetzlaff argues that Madonna's 'power' can never rub off on her fans, rather they can only ever be powerless consumers.

Ultimately, Madonna's power is tied to her ability to have her image reproduced and distributed...Madonna can be idolized but not really emulated. Her power exists only in the hyperreality of the postmodern media spectacle, which is available to regular folks only as something to sit and watch, something to buy. (1993: 262)

Tetzlaff is critical of Madonna's "selfish" route to success, arguing that as an example, it "is hardly a plan for the liberation of the masses" (1993: 262). Since when were popular music stars responsible for, or capable of, the 'liberation of the masses'? Tetzlaff reaches an altogether unsatisfactory conclusion, I think, because he discounts the views of the audience, female desire and audience desire for the fantastic.

Diane DuBose Brunner (1995) comes from a rather different perspective to Tetzlaff. In the course of her tertiary teaching, one of her students analysed the sexual violence contained in heavy metal music videos, album covers and song lyrics (1995: 367). In a class discussion of this project, DuBose Brunner found that her other students were reluctant to criticise heavy metal from a feminist perspective. In writing about this incident DuBose Brunner makes a quantum leap from the women in heavy metal texts to Madonna, seeing her persona as a 'phallic substitute':
in every sense of the word Madonna seems to reinvent herself/her womanhood through her work/ her art - supporting the cause of sexually repressed women every where; yet she seems to accomplish this by intentionally portraying a kind of phallic substitution. bell hooks (1994) reminds us that if a "desiring woman still reflects man’s desires, the mirrors of the patriarchal imagination cannot have been shattered"... (DuBose Brunner, 1995: 371)

But do Madonna’s texts 'reflect man’s desires'? Can Madonna be equated with the portrayal of women in heavy metal texts? According to the young people in my study, Madonna’s texts reflect her own desires. As explained in chapter two, all sexual iconography in music video cannot be read in the same way. DuBose Brunner regards Madonna’s music and music videos as containing a 'double message':

Double in the sense that her interpretations of what helps may but hinder, and double in the sense that one may interpret such messages in a variety of ways. (1995: 372)

DuBose Brunner is doubtful about how ‘useful’ such a message is. But do popular music performers exist to give young people ‘messages’? DuBose Brunner seems to believe that they should. DuBose Brunner suggests that inter-disciplinary analysis of popular music "may lead the way to violating patriarchal images and thus to more just schooling in a more just society" (1995: 374).

Whilst I welcome DuBose Brunner’s (1995) recommendation of more student analysis of popular music, I find her hope of, "violating patriarchal images", and a, "more just society", symptomatic of the ‘resistance' pitfall outlined in chapter four. Although DuBose Brunner (1995) relies too heavily on theory and not enough on student readings of Madonna to reach her conclusions about Madonna, her work is nonetheless valuable. I return briefly to the 'Question of Madonna' at the end of this chapter, and again in chapter seven. In the section below, I turn to feminist analysis of popular cultural texts which has been audience focussed.
'Double' Relationships and 'Primers'?

Gilbert and Taylor (1991) have examined popular cultural texts that many girls enjoy - soap opera, romance fiction and magazines. Gilbert's and Taylor's central concern is the intersection of these texts with the construction and legitimation of images of femininity and masculinity, and they argue that cultural texts are so relevant to students that they should form part of the curriculum (1991:1). Gilbert's and Taylor's interest in exploring the relationship between reality and fantasy, and between pleasure and ideology led them to interview twenty Australian teenage girls. All of these students attended state schools and were from a mixture of working class and middle class backgrounds (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 56). Gilbert and Taylor introduce two interesting concepts about viewers' relationships with television. The first is Patricia Palmer's (1986) assertion that certain television programs take on particular significance in teenagers' lives to become "primers: texts for living" (1991: 56-58). They also draw on the work of Ian Ang (1985) who argues that viewers can have a 'double relationship' with the text. Ang (1985) explains in her analysis of the US soap, Dallas, how the lifestyles of characters may be nothing like those of the viewers, however their emotions mirror those of audiences. Fans may become emotionally involved but still retain a certain distance from the text, recognising that it is fiction. Whilst Gilbert and Taylor conclude that there is evidence of a 'double' relationship of the viewer with the text, they reject the idea that the soaps were acting as 'primers' for the girls (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 63). Palmer focuses on the emotional involvement and significance of soap opera in her study of teenage girls. Gilbert and Taylor dismiss the idea that the girls in their study used soap operas as primers because they, "did not seem to have favourite characters as role models and the relationship with the programs seemed complex and contradictory" (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 63). Negative criticisms of Madonna's texts (eg, Tetzlaff, 1993; BuBose Brunner, 1995) firstly assume that popular music producers should promote certain ideals, and secondly ignore how young people relate to such texts. I reject the notion that popular cultural artists 'should' produce texts which educators deem contain 'suitable' messages. Such critiques of Madonna texts assume such texts' positions as primers. What young people bring to the text however, and how they deal with the text is overlooked in the concept of primers. This is why the concept of viewers having a 'double' relationship with the
text is useful. My research indicates that students’ feelings towards texts are not only ‘double’ but complex, contradictory and in flux as the following discussion, initiated by Catherine, indicates:

Catherine: "But like, with um, when you were talking about, \textit{femininity} and \textit{masculinity}\textsuperscript{11}..."

Jenny: "Yeah."

Catherine: "...well, this is what I think, like the stereotype, so you think, you know, skinny girls are [beautiful], but if a guy’s skinny he’s not..."

Andrea: "Then that’s not masculine."

Jackie: "Yeah, but that’s..."

Catherine: "I know some guys that get picked on because they’re skinny."

Andrea: "When you think of masculine, you think of muscles."

Jackie: "Axl’s got muscly legs."\textsuperscript{12}

Sarah: "Oh, would you shut up about Axl!"

Jackie: "I’ve got this new poster of him..."

[General chorus of "Ohh" from others.]

Jackie: "...and all the muscles are rippling up the back of his legs."

Jenny: "Really? Do you know what one of the boys said today?"

All: "What?"

Jenny: "I’m working with the um, next class of Media Studies now..."

All: "Yeah."

Jenny: "...and he said um, ‘oh girls have double standards’. He goes, ‘We’re not allowed to say anything sexist about girls’..."

All: "Yeah."

Jackie: "That’s true."

Andrea: "Is it...Who was it? What’s his name?"

\textsuperscript{11} Catherine’s emphasis here perhaps indicates that she was using my words rather than her own. I felt she was self-conscious about using these terms. This may have been because she was unfamiliar with such words, or alternatively, that they are ‘teacher’ words. Perhaps she was cautious about positioning herself within teacher discourse, because her peer group was present, and because she wanted to say the ‘right’ thing in front of me.

\textsuperscript{12} Axl Rose from \textit{Guns ’N’ Roses}. 
[Laughter.]

Jenny: "Oh, I can’t [tell you]."

[Lots of protests from the girls.]

Jenny: "Ohhh...sorry. I’d better not tell you...you know, confidentiality and all that stuff..."

[General moaning and "err"ing from the girls.]

Sarah: "Sounds like something one of them’d come out with, but."

Catherine: "Fair enough though."

Jackie: "I always tell James about how cute Matthew’s butt is, because he gets really annoyed, and he starts talking about Erica from Baywatch.

All: "Nnnn!"

Jackie: "I reckon she’s got silicon breast implants."

Andrea: "Oh, I know, they’re so..."

Sarah: "They’re so..."

Catherine: "They’re so gross!"

Andrea: "Every time at the start you see..."

Sarah: "What about her hair?"

Andrea: "...how she stands there."

Sarah: "I hate her hair-do now."

[ Lots of "Yeah"s and, "yuck!"s]

[Pause.]

Catherine: "I sort of like her because she doesn’t pluck her eyebrows."13

Catherine is trying to draw out the illogical nature of body fashion. Whereas 'skinniness' is not valued in men, it is prized by girls and women. Her desire (in this instance) for consistency is evident when I tell them about the assertion made by the boy in the other class, that 'girls are sexist'. Catherine says, "[f]air enough".

Jackie’s reference to Baywatch resulted in a conversation about the beach, wherein Sarah displayed her impatience with girls who do not participate in 'rough and tumble' activities, like boogie boarding and motorbike riding. The other four girls were discussing their fear of sharks at the beach, and Sarah said excitedly, 'I've got a boogie board, and I'm out

13 Catherine's mentioning of plucking eyebrows leads onto a detailed description of having her eyebrows plucked by her mother. I discuss this in chapter seven in relation to sexualization and power.
there”. The others ignore this comment and discuss the awful sensation of walking over seaweed. Sarah becomes frustrated with them and exclaims, "But you’re all bloody wimps, aren't ya!" Her choice of word, 'wimp' could be viewed as odd as wimp is most often a word used to describe an unmanly man. If a girl is being a wimp, surely she is being a 'good' girl by virtue of not being a man?

Michelle Fine had conversations over dinner with four teenage girls in order to explore the concerns of adolescent girls generally. Fine (1992: 176) was surprised to discover that all of these girls wished to be 'one of the guys':

Adolescence for these four young women was about the adventures of males and the constraints on females, so their version of feminism unselfconsciously rejected femininity and embraced the benign version of masculinity that allowed them to be "one of the guys". They fantasized the safe place of adolescence to be among guys who overlook their (female) gender out of respect for their (unfeminine) independence, intelligence, and integrity. For them, femininity meant the taming of adolescent passions, outrage, and intelligence. Feminism was a flight from "other girls" as unworthy and untrustworthy. Their version of feminism was about equal access to being men.

Fine's thesis that teenage girls want to be 'one of the guys' seems to be relevant to Sarah when it comes to the sports she loves. Sarah however, lives her femininity is a complex and contradictory way. On one level she loves physical activity with an element of danger - typical 'boy' or masculine behaviour. Yet Sarah also takes considerable care in her presentation:

To get ready [for a disco] I tell my friends what I'm going to wear a week before then ask them 3 - 4 days before if it's alright. On the night I have a shower, get dressed, then ask my mum what she thinks. Put on make-up, shoes, socks and I'm off. (Sarah: w)

Sarah adheres to some aspects of 'being a girl', yet rejects others. She has long, thick, red, curly hair, is petite and pretty, yet she nurtures a tough, physically active and capable persona. Whilst Fine (1992) argues that boys 'overlook' the girls' gender because of their attitudes, I think in Sarah's case it is more likely that her femininity allows her participation. If Sarah was not so pretty and had a 'butch' hair-cut, her acceptance by her male friends might wane. In other words, if Sarah was as masculine as her male
friends in her *appearance*, she may have constituted a threat to their masculinity.

The 'getting ready' ritual was observed by many girls. In Haug's (1987) terms, this is the process whereby innocent parts of the body take on guilty connotations. Catherine wrote:

The first time I went to the Lyric [nightclub] was at the end of Year 9. I went with my gang of friends and got ready with Melissa. To me this was a big thing because it took a lot of nagging to get there. Melissa came to my place and we got ready together. I always plan what I'm going to wear the day before, even down to the shoes and jewellery. I always wear make-up and spend a lot of time on my hair. This was really exciting because I had never been there before and I didn't know what to expect. The main reason I go to discos is because I love dancing, that is the main reason why I go, but I do like the chance of meeting a guy. I also like to catch up with my cousin who usually goes to the Lyric. I love the music. I guess the main reason why I go to the Lyric now is because I know it's on and I don't want to miss out. (Catherine: w)

The things I like most about going out is that I have a good time and not worry what anybody thinks. Sure I like the dancing and everything but being with my friends and having a good time. I usually get ready with my best friend Catherine. We compare clothes and make-up and we usually borrow each other's jewellery. (Melissa: w)

Catherine's comment, "I know it's on and I don't want to miss out!", is indicative of the Foucauldian 'ontology' of desire outlined in chapter four. That is, the act (in this case, the disco) leads to pleasure, and the pleasure itself facilitates desire (Foucault, 1984: 43).

Part of being gendered into a feminine position involves a certain amount of hatred of women. For example, women hate their fat, there is rivalry with other women and disdain for feminine trivialities (as Fine [1992] found with the young women in her study). Sarah, for example, used her preference for male company as a type of moral superiority. Sarah was very uncomfortable with me asking her about her femininity. When I asked my first question in the transcript below, Sarah's face immediately conveyed her disgust that I had placed her and femininity in the same sentence! This is why I asked the second question: 'Do you think there are feminine girls?"
Jenny: "So, do you think you have much choice in being feminine? [No response.] Do you think there are feminine girls?"

Sarah: "Um, well I don't really think so. [Pause] Mmm, I don't know. I'm not very feminine, like I hate dresses and I hate pink, and I ride a motor-bike, and I hang out with guys and, then like, I don't think I'm very feminine because like I hang around guys mainly. Like I don't really hang around girls out of school, like I've only got one really, one I hang out with out of school, and all the rest are guys."

Jenny: "And do the guys see you as like, one of them, or do they sort of think of you still as a 'girl'?"

Sarah: "Oh, sometimes. Depends what we do and that. You know like, riding bikes and stuff, they don't care, you know. But, you know, if they're talking about girls..."

Jenny: "[Girls] that you know? Do they try and find out information?"

Sarah: "I'll give you an example right here. Um, you know, what's-her-face, Sue? What's-her-face, the one with the big, you know, them things...[she means breasts; she laughs loudly]...and ar, they talk about her's."

Jenny: "So when they talk about girls, like in a sexual or you know, romantic way, whatever, would they talk about you in the same way? Or wouldn't they see you as a 'girl' like that?"

Sarah: "Oh, I think that there's a number of them, like [she names several boys] I think they see me as such a good friend, like sometimes they think of me as more as a friend, it's easier."

There are definite tensions here. Sarah wants to be treated 'as a friend' by her male friends, and she certainly does not see herself as feminine. Sarah's comments here suggest that femininity is a negative trait. She also acknowledges her marginal position when her male friends discuss girls in a sexual manner.
Difference

I asked the students if race and class figured in their assessments of popular music performers' gender. On the issue of race, students were divided. Sasha, Catherine, Sam, Jackie and Sarah all felt that a performer's race was implicated in their gendering. For example:

Yeah, blacks have a different image they have to live up to than maybe whites. (Jackie: w)

All black people are built pretty big, it looks like they work out a lot. They always have got no tops on when they dance. (Sam: w)

Black females tend to wear a lot of skimpy clothing, not fancy stuff, but just plain stuff. (Catherine: w)

For a man, taking one’s top off was equated with femininity by Wayne:

Black and white Americans who take off their tops to show off their bodies are [feminine]. (w)

Wayne took a particularly dim view of what he regarded as the Americanization of Australian culture, which I discuss below. Jacob and Wayne did not like to even consider the general racial homogeneity of heavy metal bands:

Jacob: "You never see black people in heavy metal."
Wayne: "I remember Nick saying that there was a Japanese..."
Jacob: "...heavy metal band."
Wayne: "...heavy metal band. Yeah and that's a, I really, you just can't...you can't imagine it."
Jacob: "It's like blacks are always doing rap, it's just that there's no, they're always doing..."
Wayne: "Or they're always doing big choirs, sort of things."

The boys are rather stuck for words here. Discussing ethnicity in heavy metal is not a well-rehearsed discourse for them. As Simpson (1994: 190) argues, heavy metal denies difference: "the manic denial of difference in heavy metal is most vividly illustrated by the total absence of any black faces either on or off stage". When I pressed them on the issue of ethnicity and music video, and referred to the highly successful black Australian band, Yothu Yindi, it was evident that this had been discussed before:
Jenny: "Yothu Yindi is the first Aboriginal band ever to have a 'Number One' single, in Australia."

Jacob: "I don't know why, either."

[They both laugh.]

Jenny: "Didn't you like it?"14

Wayne: "I couldn't understand it."

Jacob: "You can't like it if you can't understand any of the words."

[They laugh.]

Wayne: "'Cause you never know, they could be just sayin' like, um, 'get stuffed, ya silly white buggers!' or something, nobody knows."

Sam: (*)

Jacob: "And it went to 'Number One', and I mean, that's just silly. I couldn't understand [it]."

Such racist attitudes were widely espoused in both classes generally. Individual students may have expressed dissenting views (for example, Melissa and Andrea) but only in private. I remember at the start of the year, when Yothu Yindi's single 'Treaty' was 'Number One' in the Australian Top 40 music charts, and Sigourney showed the music video to the class. I was surprised and shocked to hear the negative comments from the class. All of their audible comments were scathing, attacking the music itself, the Aboriginal language lyrics, the band members and the visual images.

Some students did however, argue that race was irrelevant. Jacob's comment below appears to be in direct contradiction to his comments above:

Race doesn't [matter] men are men. Black women are women. (Jacob: w)

I don't think that race or class has any bearing on masculinity or femininity. Most popstars have a certain look or image that they wish to portray. Whether it is feminine or masculine is up to them. For example, Michael Jackson who is black (or white!?) has pretty feminine features whereas a lot of other black rap artists are pretty masculine. It depends what the artist wants to be himself and what he feels comfortable with. (Andrea: w)

14 'Treaty' contained Aboriginal and English lyrics.
It doesn’t matter what race and class you are it is what is in your head that makes you masculine and feminine. (Melissa: w)

Andrea’s comment seems to rest on the humanist assumption of the rational, in control, coherent subject. Or does it? Could it also be read as suggestive of the malleable nature of gender, that it is not biologically determined, and therefore, it can be shifted at will? Melissa’s comment could be read in the same contradictory and complex way. Jacob, who expressed similarly contradictory views, thought that class did matter:

Class does [matter]. Peter Andre\textsuperscript{15} would come out of Bayview a real yuppie area. A heavy metal band would come out of Alphington the rough sort of area. (Jacob: w)

Catherine, Sasha, Jackie and Sarah also felt that class was evident in the way popular music performers presented themselves. Jacob’s comment seems to suggest that whilst he has never been on the receiving end of racism, he is painfully aware that ‘losers’\textsuperscript{16} like him from Alphington share none of the privileges of the people who come from Bayview. Jacob, Sam and Wayne are friends in and out of school. They all live near each other, in the suburb Alphington. Jacob and Wayne have formed a band which plays the sort of music they love: death metal, speed metal and power metal. Their band’s name, Damnatory, and ‘demo tape’\textsuperscript{17} title, ‘Rape of All World’, are typical of the prevalent themes in such music: a totalizing discourse that rests on a binary logic of good/evil, male/female, life/death, and so on. Such themes seem to be of an apocalyptic nature, as the title of their demo tape suggests. I think their comments above illustrate their everyday experiences. They are not racially oppressed, so they do not see racism as a problem. Rather, being racist is a means through which they can bolster their own poor self-esteem as ‘losers’ from Alphington. Being aware of their class position makes them conscious of class in music video. This highlights once again the pertinence of actively reading music video.

\textsuperscript{15} Peter Andre is an Australian pop singer who has had a number of Top 40 hits in the last five years in Australia. His videos feature him dancing in a style reminiscent of Michael Jackson. His muscular, tanned body is displayed to full effect in tight singlets or open shirts, and jeans. He has recently had considerable success in the UK.

\textsuperscript{16} A term that Jacob, Sam and Wayne used to describe typical Alphington residents.

\textsuperscript{17} A promotional audio tape made by performers in order to ‘get gigs’. ‘Demo’ is short for ‘demonstration’.
"Rough and Crude"? Masculinity

Jackie claimed that "guys have an image to live up to - rough and crude". According to Sarah, wearing make-up and dressing up "like a girl" constitute feminine behaviour, and as such she names Boy George as a feminine popular music performer. At the beginning of my research in the school, the class teacher, Sigourney, was keen to familiarise students with the concept of genre in relation to music video, and also with techniques used in music videos. Sigourney brought in some of her own videos which she had taped over the last 10 years. She showed the students several music videos of Boy George and Culture Club which caused quite a response from the class. I had to remind myself that in 1982-1984 (when Culture Club were at their height of popularity) these students were aged four to six years. Some comments I remember are: "Who is that?"; "Is that Boy George?"; "Is it a man or a woman?". Apart from Culture Club being really uncool '80s' music, the general feeling I got was that the students, as a class, expressed repulsion and intrigue at the sight of this feminine man. It seems that what constitutes masculinity in a woman (deep voice, pants and a shirt, and short hair, according to Sasha) are the signifiers of masculinity in a man: "short hair (but not all), deep voices" (Melissa). The assertion that short hair indicates masculinity for most, "but not all" recognises the aberrations that exist, especially in the music industry. Axl Rose has shoulder length hair, wears a bandanna, yet manages to project a hyper-masculinity. Simpson argues that for straight men, rock and roll is 'glamour' - the equivalent of drag for gay men:

The careful ambiguity of the masquerade of the metal star, the appropriation of masculine and feminine images, is represented most famously and most successfully in Axl Rose. (1994: 194)

Simpson points to Rose's naked torso, his tattoos, his sweat "and cycling shorts that leave little to the imagination", as his signifiers of femininity (1994: 194). When I initiated a conversation on 'gender-bending' with Wayne, Sam and Jacob, it resulted in the comments of Jacob and Wayne quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The remainder of this discussion is continued below:
Jacob: "Boy George is probably the biggest one, like the biggest girl."

Wayne: "Or the glam bands."

Jacob: "Poison."

Wayne: "Poison and all that."

Jenny: "It's really interesting that, because the kind of boys that like those bands, tend to be really like masculine."

Jacob: "Do you reckon?" [He laughs.]

Jenny: "Like heavy metal sort of boys."

[Dissenting murmurs.]

Jenny: "Well who likes them?"

(?): "Rock 'n' roll boys."

Jacob: "People that like that sort of stuff..."

Sam: "(*)...want to kick their head in."

[All talking at once.]

Jenny: "Well the kind of boys who like them, right, they don't dress like Poison, do they?"

[Someone answers: "No".]

Jenny: "They don't wear the same sort of clothes; they wear like maybe, jeans and runners..."

Wayne: "I wouldn't be caught dead wearing a Poison t-shirt, unless you went to LA or somewhere."

Jacob: "If you got caught with a Poison t-shirt on you'd get beaten up."

Jenny: "Yeah?"

Wayne: "Oh yeah."

Jenny: "Who'd beat you up?"

[Laughter.]

All: "Us...yeah, us..."

Jacob: [Sounds annoyed] "You just don't wear Poison t-shirts, anyway."

These comments by Jacob about the undesirability of the band Poison are quite ironic given his history of his own fandom. In chapter four, I quoted Jacob's descriptions of how his musical tastes had evolved, and he stated that, "in about grade four, it was like, Bon Jovi and Poison". These earlier comments were made at least two months before the ones above. This

18 Los Angeles, USA.
points to the complexity of students' opinions, and how they change over time and in different settings.

Wayne's comment that he, "wouldn't be caught dead wearing a Poison t-shirt, unless you went to LA or somewhere", is quite ironic. Wayne has recognised that it is not gayness per se that is the problem, it is where one chooses to display gayness that can cause problems. Alphington is obviously not an appropriate place to wear a Poison t-shirt, however according to Wayne, LA would be okay. This observation of Wayne's ties in with Mac an Ghaill's (1994b: 157) assertion, (quoted in chapter one), that it is not gayness which is a problem for black gay students, for example, but "homophobia, heterosexism and racism".

When I was asking these boys about the masculinity of glam heavy metal fans, I was trying to draw out the contrast between the fan's appearance and the band's appearance, however I was not terribly successful. Simpson (1994: 190) articulates this difference well:

the most fascinated heterosexual devotees of male glamour in the form of heavy metal masquerade are teenage boys, who make up the vast majority of heavy metal fans. Teenage boys are required to confront the feminine or else jeopardize their successful graduation into manhood.

Pantera - the boys' favourite metal band - is a 'down market' version of Guns 'N' Roses however. Pantera reject the feminine in the way that Axl Rose champions it. Instead of body hugging clothes, Pantera wear a rag-bag ensemble of loose fitting clothing. Their music videos lack the colour and spectacle of a Guns 'N' Roses' performance, and band members do not 'play up' to the camera in the titillating way that Axl does. Jacob, Wayne and Sam use heavy metal music and imagery to construct a discourse on masculinity through which they gain collective self esteem. They claimed they only liked 'authentic' heavy metal, from 'down-to-earth' guys who did not engage in body preening or parading. Pantera music videos do rely just as much as Guns 'N' Roses on the commodity of female flesh in the form of the 'video vixen' - female models who exist as 'scenery'. Thus, their masculinity is not just about looking unkempt and behaving wildly, it is also about being seen to have power over women.

The appearance of women in heavy metal is important because "woman is the test of his [the straight boy's] manhood that must be overcome by domination, by conquest"(Simpson, 1994: 191). Simpson (1994: 191) argues that this usually takes place in a 'fantasy-world' where
the 'straight boy' is "Conan the Barbarian winning his mate or He-Man freeing She-Woman with his mighty sword". Women can however, also be perceived as 'the 'groupie', the Whore of Babylon" (1994: 191). In chapter seven I discuss a Guns 'N' Roses t-shirt, worn by Jackie to one of their concerts, which portrays such a 'Whore'.

**Boys should be Boys...**

When Walker (1988) followed the activities of a number of Australian, inner-city male students from their senior school years to their early twenties, he found a general consensus that "you may be born male, but you become a man" (1988: 88). Walker focused on four groups of young men: the 'Aussie' footballers, the ambitious sons of Greek immigrants, the 'nice guys', and a small group suspected of being homosexual. The school culture did not provide any alternatives to the dominant view of what it took to be a man. For the suspected homosexuals, their,

> explicit rejection of heterosexual attraction...when combined with their rejection of sport...their refusal to grant value to overtly aggressive behaviour, and their unusual ways of dressing, speaking and moving, tended to be lumped together in the eyes of those for whom they were 'poofs'. (Walker, 1988: 88)

For most of the boys in my study the regular disavowal of homosexuality was a part of their everyday life.

Walker observed in his study that both in and out of school "a sex/gender system was evolving through the construction and maintenance of a power structure" (1988: 89).

> That the contest over gender was so uneven, that the ascendancy of one form of masculinity was overwhelming, is illustrated by the fact that within dominant nomenclature there was not even a term standing in clear disjunctive relation to the stigmatising 'poof'. (Walker, 1988: 90)

Walker argues that in the boys' cultures, what was considered abnormal masculine behaviour was "promptly assimilated to feminine behaviour" (1988: 90). Like Wayne, Jacob and Sam, Walker found that boys who were anxious to link themselves with the dominant masculinity frequently boasted about what they would 'do' to homosexuals and how disgusting they found homosexuality (1988: 91). Although Walker argues that the boys in his study have made choices about their gender, he does not wish
to suggest that "those choices are all equally powerful in their effects nor, obviously, that we can always create our own options" (Walker, 1988: 96). Walker also suggests that within this structure of choice, some boys' 'choices are privileged, often at the expense of others" (1988: 96). This concurs with Connell (1987, 1995) and Mac an Ghaill (1994a, 1994b).

Walker (1988: 98) uses the term 'group boundary maintenance' to explain how those boys who are the least confident about their gender, monitor other boys' gender. In Walker's study, the three suspected homosexuals contested such boundaries, withdrawing from the mainstream in the process:

To form a strong group identification, then, or to achieve solidarity with others sharing the same problems, might in some cases require temporary tactical withdrawal from contexts where they have insufficient room to develop their own dynamic...It was a reasonable strategy for developing their identities and creating social space in which to devise means to pursue their ends. (Walker, 1988: 98-99)

Jacob, Wayne and Sam also engaged in a 'tactical withdrawal' of sorts, although not to oppose the existing boundaries of masculine hegemony; rather they wanted to fall within the existent boundaries. They perceived that what they had to do to be masculine was 'talk up' heavy metal as a highly masculine pastime. They believed that their musical tastes were far superior to that of most teenagers at their school, who they regarded as 'teenyboppers'. This, combined with their acceptance of their low socio-economic position, led them to construct a kind of 'siege' mentality. Involving themselves as consumers and producers of heavy metal gave them an enormous sense of worth, assisting them in becoming masculine in a hegemonic way.

Walker (1988) found that although the dominant boys found male homosexuality disgusting, they viewed lesbianism differently. It did not appear to threaten their masculinity as they viewed lesbianism from a voyeuristic perspective. Lesbianism was not an alternative masculinity, whereas homosexuality threatened dominant masculinity as an alternative masculinity (Walker, 1988: 100-101).

Some boys in my study did not hide their enthusiasm for popular culture, though Wayne, Jacob and Sam believed their fandom to be completely different to that of 'teenyboppers', (as demonstrated in chapter four when I called Jacob and Wayne's favourite band 'popstars'). Jacob and
Wayne tell of their first rock concert, which I think could be interpreted as a 'rite of passage' tale:

Jacob: "When I first started liking them and that, I'd think, yeah, Metallica are real cool, and now, like, I've never stopped liking them. When you first start liking them, you think, oh yeah, I'd love to go to a Metallica concert."

Wayne: "It's just something you have to do."

Jacob: "I know...it's sort of like going to see your hero or something, like for little kids, like going to see Superman."

Wayne: "Mmm, mmm, yeah."

[Both laugh.]

Jenny: "What do your parents think?"

Jacob: "Mum, Mum, my Mum wouldn't let me go at first, but my Dad, my Dad said, 'yeah, sure you can go, are you gettin' seats though?' He didn't want me to stand up."

Wayne: "My Mum went and got me tickets for me...[I said] 'Mum, go and get two tickets please.' [We all laugh.]"

Jacob: "Mum sort of said, well, 'you're not goin',', then I said, 'no, you can't do this to me...'' [Wayne laughs approvingly.]"

Jacob: "...and then she goes, 'okay, well you pay for the ticket,' and ...the tickets were going on sale the next week, and I thought, 'oh, how am I going to get fifty bucks?'"

Wayne: "Yeah."

Jacob: "And then it's like, I ended up connin' Mum around and sayin', 'Mum, me birthday's soon, can you buy it for me birthday?'. So I got my ticket, and I still didn't tell Dad until I was about to go, and he goes, 'just do not get up the front'."

[Wayne laughs.]
So Jacob and Wayne both went to see Metallica *and survived*. The violent and dangerous 'slamming' and stage-diving that takes place at heavy metal concerts makes such events genuinely risky activities.\(^{19}\) To prove one's masculinity in a heavy metal sense by going to a concert is, as Wayne says, "just something you have to do". Jacob's comment that it is like going to "see your hero...superman", is especially telling given Simpson's (1994) discussion of the homoerotic element of heavy metal. An irony about their telling of this story is that Metallica, in music videos and in concert, perform the kind of 'glam' show that the boys are so scathing about. Simpson (1994: 195) asserts that teenage boys' sexuality,

is bound to be more fluid than it is supposed to be. Thus the need to confront the feminine becomes also the need to master 'the feminine' in himself: his homosexuality. But like the glamour of woman herself, the fear of homosexuality is in proportion to its allure.

Both boys seem to take pleasure in their mothers doing what they want them to. Wayne triumphantly states that he said "Mum, go and get two tickets please", and Jacob was similarly pleased to announce that he, "ended up connin' Mum around". Obviously all young people struggle for agency (Davies, 1993), however in this instance it is especially important, given Simpson's (1994) work on boys and the mastery of the feminine.

Girls also judge performers by their masculinity. When Jackie, Catherine and Sarah were discussing a new music video they had seen, they exchanged the following comments:

**Jackie:** "Oh, so boring, he cannot sing, he just, like talks really fast. But it's so stupid because he's got a good body. He's too pretty-boy though, I don't like pretty boys."

**Catherine:** "Neither do I."

**Jackie:** "I like hard rock, rockers."

**Sarah:** "Rough around the edges."

Of course what Jackie regards as a 'pretty boy' is not the same as what Catherine does, and the boys would have different opinions again. Also,

\(^{19}\) Leslie Roman (1988) has documented the danger of the slam dance, especially for girls, at punk gigs. This style of dancing and stage diving has crossed over to heavy metal concerts.
such opinions change over time and in different settings, as all of the conversations in the above section demonstrate.

**Looking elsewhere**

So far in this chapter I have looked at the lengths the young people in my study go to establish their gendered identities. Because of economic changes in our society, masculinity especially is difficult to achieve in some circumstances. Connell points out that in capitalist societies work is an integral part of boys’ concept of their masculinity, "[b]ut capitalist economies do not guarantee employment" (1995: 93). Jacob, Sam and Wayne had no delusions about their chances of being employed once they left school. They felt they were 'losers' because of the suburb they lived in. It was to the rock 'n' roll fantasy that Jacob and Wayne in particular turned to escape the realities of their world: unemployment, low socio-economic standing, and living in close proximity to drug dealers:

Wayne:  "Yeah, yeah, it's terrible. Like the court where I live, there might be, one, I know one, one drug-dealer living up the end, [laughs], but um, up our end of the court (*)."

Jenny:  "What sort of drugs do they deal?"

Sam:    "Just marijuana, um..."

Jacob:  "They probably deal speed and stuff as well."

Sam:    "You usually see the police always driving up and down the court..."

[Wayne laughs loudly.]

Sam:    "...parked out in front of the houses, they always do that. There was a shooting, a shooting a few years ago next door from me."

Jenny:  [In shock] "Was there?"

Sam:    "We're becoming like America soon, I reckon."

Just as Jacob made the connection between alternative music and skateboarding, he, Sam and Wayne connect drug dealing and guns with the musical genres of rap and hip-hop.
Wayne: "Most people now, like kids our age and a bit older are going onto their knives and stuff."

(?)   "Mmm...guns."

Jenny: "Guns?! Guns?"

All: "Yes! Guns!"

Wayne: "In town..."

Sam: "We went up to this place last Thursday, Thursday and Friday, and um, there was about, we thought there would only be one townie there, and there was about seven of them, and one had a gun, most of them had knives, so we ran off. And there was about twenty more inside, waiting to beat us up."

Jenny: "What do you mean by 'townie'?"

[All talking at once trying to explain to me.]

Wayne: "Oh they all..."

Jacob: "They all hang around town, that's all they do. Even if they're not homeless they just hang around in town..."

Jenny: "They're not necessarily homeless?"

Jacob: "They, they want to be homeless."

Sam: "They have real good homes and stuff..."

Jacob: "I know, half of 'em live in Hillside, in all the real yuppy areas."

Sam: "Yeah, but then they just want to be, all they want to do is go play pinnies20, and..."

Jenny: "And then when they've had their fun for a couple of years, they just go back to mummy and daddy?"

Sam: "Most of 'em do, yeah, and they get what they want. [Pause] Especially when they've got really good homes to go to."

The boys are critical of people their own age who choose to loiter in the city mall and are habitually violent. The townies are perceived as being from "real good homes", and the boys cannot understand why they would willingly leave such affluence. Obviously there are many reasons why young people become 'street kids', and it is not something which only happens to middle class teenagers by choice. Sam, Jacob and Wayne however, see townies as deliberately violent and ungrateful. They fear

20 Pin-ball machines.
them, and are jealous of their perceived middle class status. They try and
discredit them in any way they can:

Wayne:  "There was an article in the paper, before. They're all
smelly, and they stink."
Jacob:  "And they wear stupid clothes. [To me] You seen their
pants? They're this big." [Jacob stretches out his arms
to demonstrate the width of the legs.] They carry their
guns and that down there."
Wayne:  [Laughing] "They do!"
Jenny:  "Oh, God!"
Sam:    "There's rappers, and there's..."
Jacob:  "I know, and there's boge-heads...they're stupid."
        [Sam laughs.]
Sam:    "Oh they're idiots! The whole lot of them."
Jacob:  "They're spastics. And it takes about 10 of 'em, onto
one."
Sam:    "If there's one of them, they won't say anything to ya,
they just walk past, and they'll turn away. But if
there's about 10 of them, you go, 'oooh'."
Sam:    "(*)...screwdriver."
Jacob:  "You can't fight one like that."
Sam:    "Or they have a gun or a knife."

'Rappers' are criticised for their 'stupid' clothing and unmanly tactics in
fighting. They are not honourable because they shamelessly set upon
those who are defenceless against their superior weaponry and numbers. I
asked the boys if there were any fearsome female townies.

Jenny:  "And these people that you're talking about, are they
girls as well? Like would..."
All:    "Oh, oh, um, maybe, err..."
        [They are quite stunned by this question.]
Jacob:  "Oh yeah, it's all guys, but the girls that hang round
with them you know that they're all..."
Sam:    "Sluts."
Jenny:  "Would you be scared of a group of say, five girls? If
five townie girls came up and..."
All:    "Na, na, na."
Sam: "I'd be scared of all the other stuff, guns..."
Jacob: "It's all gang wars now."
[Others agree.]
Jenny: "So these gangs that you're talking about, you're talking about boys?"
[All agree.]
Sam: "Because all the (*)21 go with the Alphington boys...you don't have to worry."

When I asked the boys about female involvement in these 'gang wars', they were quite stunned. This 'loss for words' reminded me of their reaction when I asked them about ethnicity in heavy metal. Both of these instances presented opportunities for them to rehearse their 'stories' - or discourse - in relation to their performances of gender. That is, through my questions about gender and ethnicity, they had to think about how heavy metal fans like themselves would respond. In the section below I explore the way in which genders operate in relation to each other.

Relational Gender

No masculinity arises except in a system of gender relations...
'Masculinity', to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture. (Connell, 1995: 71)

Connell argues that masculinity can only exist when femininity exists, and that genders operate in relation to each other. The lived experiences however, of masculinity and femininity are qualitatively different, with vastly different experiences of gender for boys and girls, as the findings from my study presented in this chapter indicate. As explained in chapter one, the school, rather than being 'outside' of society, stands as a striking example of the gender relations common to Australian and Western society generally.

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21 I could not make out what Sam said here. What I understood he meant was that all the tough, potentially dangerous girls, hang out with boys from their neighbourhood. That is, girls can not be tough and dangerous on their own - it is only by virtue of who they hang around with (that is, boys) that they could be considered threatening. Sam is also suggesting that girls are under the influence of the boys, and therefore are not threatening.
There are many instances in this chapter that could be viewed as
typical of what Connell refers to as 'emphasized' femininity - the type of
femininity that several students identified as being projected by Kylie
Minogue and Baywatch 'babe' Pamela Anderson Lee, for example.
Connell asserts that emphasized femininity is very public, is actively
promoted by the mass media, yet depicts women in the 'natural' private
sphere of home and family:

Power, authority, aggression, technology are not thematized in
femininity at large as they are in masculinity. Equally important, no
pressure is set up to negate or subordinate other forms of femininity
in the way hegemonic masculinity must negate other masculinities.
It is likely therefore that actual femininities in our society are more
diverse than actual masculinities. (1987: 187)

In other words, 'tom boys' are okay, but 'sissies' or 'poofs' are not. For
example, Sarah's motorcycle riding and boogie-boarding is accepted,
whereas the unmasculine ways of the 'suspected homosexuals' in
Walker's (1988) study are not okay.

Fine's (1992) comments above about adolescent girls finding
femininity to be a 'curbing of their unfeminine ways', can have drastic
effects. Bordo (1988: 102) links fear and disdain of traditional female roles
and a deep fear of "The Female" (voracious hungers and sexual
insatiability) with anorexia - anorexic desire to not become a woman, and
in fact, to be boys. Characteristically, anorexia develops at the beginning of
puberty. "Many anorexics appear to experience anxiety over falling into
the lifestyle they associate with their mothers" (Bordo, 1988: 102). Could it
be that it is the fear of women held by men that drives girls to believe that
being a woman is unattractive? In view of Simpson's (1994) assertions
about the fear of the feminine in heavy metal, this seems quite feasible.

Music video is a particularly strong example of a setting where
women "perform" their femininity, especially to men. Such performances
of femininity contribute to excluding 'unconventional' women (such as
lesbians, spinsters and manual workers) from being considered 'feminine'
(Connell, 1987: 188). The persona of Madonna however, throws some of
Connell's theory into a little disarray. He argues that "[a]ll forms of
femininity in this society are constructed in the context of the overall
in this equation? Madonna exudes both masculine and feminine qualities
which disrupts the relational nature of gender which Connell (1987)
describes. This is one reason why Madonna disrupts commonsense notions of gender, and as such, demonstrates the deficiency of textual analysis as a methodology, and also why the reduction of Madonna texts to a single message can be misguided.

Jackie, who expressed both positive and negative feelings about Madonna, describes Madonna as a whore. But is she the 'Whore', (Simpson, 1994) who threatens to emasculate teenage boys? In Connell's (1987) terms, what relation is Madonna to the fear of the feminine? Answering this question is a focus of chapter seven where I outline some boys' views on Madonna.

CONCLUSION

This chapter further develops the Foucauldian notion that individuals locate themselves within available discourses (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 20), in order to 'talk themselves into existence' (Davies, 1993: xviii). Going beyond simply stating that young people use available discourses in order to define their masculinity and femininity, I have argued that at times they struggled to find a suitable discourse (ethnicity and heavy metal; girls in gangs), and at other times they tried to rework established discourses in order to accommodate their views (simultaneous femininity and masculinity in Madonna).

In detailing the importance of heavy metal for Sam's, Jacob's and Wayne's masculine identity, I demonstrated Connell's notion that the depressed economic conditions of their social world threaten boys' masculinity. The girls' discussions of Madonna contradict textual analyses of Madonna which read her as a negative icon for girls. Whilst they were divided over whether or not Madonna was a 'legend' or a 'whore', what was surprising was that for some girls, Madonna was both. In asserting that Madonna looks 'like a girl', but does not act 'like a girl', this research moves beyond simplistic readings of Madonna and in so doing enhances 'Madonna scholarship'.

By providing a context within which to read boys' racist and homophobic comments I was able to develop our understanding of the meaning of such readings of popular culture. In comparison with some earlier feminist studies, boys' desire to 'bash' feminine looking men was not used as evidence to 'prove' how 'bad' boys are. On the contrary, such comments have been read as evidence of boys actively trying to make
sense of their discursive positioning. Texts may be 'primers' (Palmer, 1986) to some extent, however the students generally expressed at least a 'double' relationship with the text, which supports the work of Ang (1985).

In my research I found limited support for Fine's (1992) conclusion that adolescent girls want to be 'one of the guys'. In the following chapter on young people theorizing the body, I explore this idea further in relation to both girls and boys.
CHAPTER SIX

THE BODY POPULAR AND ME: YOUNG PEOPLE THEORIZING THE BODY

Our bodies, no less than anything else that is human, are constituted by culture. (Bordo, 1988: 90)

Is it because Madonna constructs herself exactly along this axis of all body that she unnerves and disrupts the axis of power which prefers to remain hidden? (McRobbie, 1994: 68)

As explained in chapter three, I approached my research with four broad areas of inquiry in mind - social interaction and pleasure, gender, the body, and sexualization and power. These four themes have formed the nexus of each chapter in Part Two of this dissertation, although there is considerable 'overlap' between each of these chapters. In seeking out the students' thoughts on the body (their own and popular bodies), a number of other issues arose. As well as wishing to explore the intersection of gender with the body, I also want to examine how class and ethnicity relate to theorizing the body in music video. This focus has led to some challenging issues relating to identity and (so-called) reality.

Having looked at the social and pleasure aspect of music video, and at some student readings of gender in music video, in this chapter I turn to student comments relating to the body in music video and other popular cultural texts generally, as well as their own bodies. I also turn to theories of the body and examine the different standards that exist for male and female bodies in music video and popular culture broadly.

BODIES OF DIFFERENCE

Bordo (1988: 101) argues that in the film industry, males with imperfect bodies can play romantic/lead roles, but that "no female can achieve the status of romantic or sexual ideal without the appropriate body ". Bordo names actors Nick Nolte and William Hurt as players of such romantic/lead roles; to these I would add Bill Murray, James Belushi, Tom Hanks, Sean Connery, Dudley Moore and Australian actors, Paul Hogan and Jack Thompson. These men do not meet the harsh standards that women are subjected to, such as being too old, too overweight, or too ugly. Men can be 'pin-ups', but it is not mandatory that a male actor in a
lead/romantic role is simultaneously a 'pin-up'. To Bordo's observation I would add that 'imperfect' male bodies can play romantic/lead roles so long as they are white male bodies. As is the case in music video, black men in films often play secondary roles and ones which relate to their physicality.

Dyer (1992) argues that ethnicity and class figure significantly in the depiction of the male pin-up. Black men are associated with 'the jungle' through the use of natural settings, and through 'black power' symbolism (1992: 271). Rather than a recognition of serious politics, Dyer regards 'black power' symbolism as suggesting the savage nature of 'the black man'. The male pin-up also marks out class lines by distinguishing between work and leisure:

The celebration of the body in sport is also a celebration of the relative affluence of western society, where people have time to dedicate themselves to the development of the body for its own sake. (Dyer, 1992: 271)

"Muscularity is the sign of power - natural, achieved, phallic" (Dyer, 1992: 273). When assessing the differences between male and female popular music performers and actors, it is important to bear in mind the significance of race and class in what counts as masculinity and femininity.

In this chapter I want to argue that the same 'gendered body' ethos that Bordo has identified in the film industry also pervades the popular music industry. Elton John, Rod Stewart, Meatloaf, The Rolling Stones, Phil Collins, and even the remaining Beatles, have, in recent years, enjoyed enormous success. It is difficult to find however, a single example of a woman of similar age and/or appearance who has achieved such success. Tina Turner, at first glance, is an obvious example, however Turner is still beautiful, does not look her age, and has a remarkable figure by current Western body fashion standards. Frith and McRobbie (1978/9: 8) assert that women in rock have rarely been able to participate in the 'rebellious' and 'hard edged' manner of male rock stars. If women have "become hard aggressive performers it was necessary for them...to become 'one of the boys' " (Frith and McRobbie 1978/9: 9). In recent years I have noticed a significant rise in the number of women in bands in non-traditional roles - that is, not as singers or back-up singers, but as guitarists, drummers and instrument players generally (Courtney Love, Australian Jenny Morris, the Deal sisters of The Breeders and Cass of Skunk Anansie, for example. Such performers do not appear to have become 'one of the
boys' as physically they 'look' feminine, and sexual emphasis has been placed on their bodies. For example, women can play guitar, but they must have long, thin legs or wear revealing singlet-tops/bra-tops. (Of course, there are exceptions to this, for example Kim Gordon and Lee Ranaldo of Sonic Youth.) In the same way that Sarah can 'hang out with guys' because she is pretty, many female musicians can mix it with the boys so long as they remember that they are 'girls'. In the popular teenage film, Wayne's World, there is an 'excellent' example of this. Wayne's (Mike Myers) love interest in the film, Cassandra (Tia Carrere), is a hard rocking heavy metal singer and guitarist who roars and shrieks her songs whilst simultaneously demonstrating the sort of stage gymnastics and agility that would make Axl Rose jealous. Wayne's comment however, when he first sees Cassandra (sporting white stockings, suspenders and stilettos) is, "she's a babe!". Cassandra is very thin, has long, black, glamorous hair and wears extremely tight fitting and revealing outfits. Her Asian appearance also adds to her exotic and erotic status. Is she a babe because she is so feminine, or is she a babe because she is wild and masculine? Whilst there is the potential for ambiguity in Wayne's pronouncement, his exclamation of "shwing!" (coupled with a quick flick forward of his pelvis) after he pronounces Cassandra to be a babe suggests otherwise. This comment negates her agency as a rock star, and reduces her status to that of sexual spectacle.

In 1992, a complaint was made to the Australian Women's Contemporary Music Inc. (AWCM) about the video for Australian band Euphoria's hit single 'Love You Right':

What was seen as particularly objectionable was that blonde model Holly Garnet was featured lip-syncing the lead vocal track in the video while the actual singer, the supposedly 'less attractive' Karen Minshull, was only featured in cut-away shots. (Langman, 1993: 93)

Whilst it is not unusual in music videos to see an array of models 'enhancing' the visual aspect of the clip, it is unusual that an actual band member will be replaced with a miming model. Langman (1993: 93) notes that the vocal track of Technotronic's 1989 hit 'Pump up the Jam' was recorded by a paid session performer and the visual track was mimed by a model. Euphoria represents a more extreme example of this practice however, as "the original singer was both a member of the band and appeared in the video" (Langman, 1993: 93). Although some female performers (Tracy Chapman, Aretha Franklin, Alison Moyet, Tracy Thorn
of *Everything But The Girl*, and Joan Armatrading, for example) challenge this notion of female beauty, their video clips are selectively shot so as to reduce the impact of their bodies (head and shoulders emphasis; dark coloured clothing) or they are only featured spasmodically throughout the video. It is worth noting that the black women artists mentioned above, despite their body size and/or lack of white, Western beauty, have succeeded in an industry which attaches as much importance to female beauty as to musical ability. This highlights the failure of popular music producers to account for the mass appeal of black female artists who do not conform to Western body/beauty fashions - hence the substitution of the artist for the model in 'Pump up the Jam'.

Bordo argues that what was once only expected of high fashion models is now expected of all women, and it is little wonder that, as she notes, women commonly talk of 'hating' their thighs and stomachs (1988: 101). Video clips such as *Euphoria's* and *Technotronic's* address a female audience in a way that they do not address a male audience. Whereas both girls and boys may assess the physical attractiveness/sexiness of the central female performer, it is only the female viewer who measures her own body against the image. Girls critique themselves by these standards; boys critique their girlfriends, sisters and mothers. Bordo commonly found that women "express concern and anger over frequent teasing by their boyfriends", and cites names such as "Fatso" and "Big Butt" being levelled at slim women:

> This sort of relationship - within which the woman's weight has become a focal issue - is not at all atypical, as I've discovered from student journals and papers. (1988: 101)

The body was by far the most difficult topic to discuss with the boys in this study. In first semester, I was not prepared for the silences that greeted me when I asked Michael, Tim and Troy about their own bodies. (This is not surprising given the mandatory nature of female beauty and thinness in music videos and the leeway granted to male performers in terms of their body fashions.) I tried many times to get these boys to talk to me about their bodies, but I felt I got nowhere. This lack of success in getting these boys to discuss their bodies convinced me to change my approach in the second semester of my research. I discuss one particularly difficult interview further on in this chapter, and outline how I changed my methods in second semester.
The constant measuring and comparing that takes place between viewers and the images on the screen is central to their lives and has enormous impact on their pleasures and experiences of embodiment, as I now demonstrate.

"A Skinny Bitch"

As I pointed out in chapter three, academic research often 'hides' the author's subjectivity (Jones, 1991a, 1992; Davies, 1993; Haug, 1987; McRobbie, 1991; Middleton, 1993; Stanley, 1990). As McRobbie (1991: 75) says, why shouldn't we be able to talk about the everyday experiences that contribute to the people we are? In the extract below, I explore how I felt when I was called "a skinny bitch", and how I tried to make sense of this comment. I have decided to include this before the students' comments as I want to establish that I am no more immune to the seductiveness of music video's body fashions than are the students. This extract is taken from the diary I kept during my research:

A comment made by Sigourney during our last conversation has prompted this diary entry. I rang her last Monday or Tuesday night, just to say hi, and catch up. We chatted away for over an hour, and at one point, Siggy said how she had lost some weight. Siggy is quite plump. I told her how I had put on some weight during the last six months, which worried me, and I was trying to 'get it off'. Then she made a comment which immediately insulted me: "You've always been a skinny bitch though!"

When I thought about it later, I realised this was one of those 'backhanded' compliments. I wear size twelve clothing and am a couple of inches taller than Siggy - to her this is 'skinny'. When I compare myself to the fashion ideal, or when I used to be size 8-10, I don't feel 'skinny'. I like my body, but when I face the 'reality' of fashion, I can feel angry and disgusted at myself for not staying really skinny. But returning to Siggy's comment, I am a 'bitch' because she perceives me as not being fat, not being overweight - being fashionable, being the desirable size. Acknowledging this, is a compliment; calling me a bitch, is an insult. I am a bitch (according to Siggy), because I meet Western society's ideal body size. What does this say about women - even good friends - being in competition with each other, and being jealous of each other? I feel guilty, but also good. Siggy thinks I'm skinny - but Siggy is fat, so I dismiss this. Now if someone who I thought had a great figure said I was skinny, now that would mean something!
(Diary entry, December 1994)
A major fashion magazine 'body image' survey of women in 1984 found that,

more than three-quarters reported feeling too fat while according to height/weight tables only one quarter could be so described. Part of this negative body distortion can be attributed to comparisons each woman makes between her body and the currently fashionable underweight media model. (Chapkis, 1986: 13)

Boys and men, on the other hand, are not supposed to take such interest in their appearance. They are caught in a juggling act where they wish to exude masculinity, yet preening and parading their bodies is unmasculine. As Dyer (1992: 276) contends, it is the 'straining' to be masculine that is really the measure of what 'makes a man a man'. I now turn to some student comments relating to the body and identity.

'BEAUTIFUL' AND 'RIGHT'?

In chapter four, when asked what people in music videos look like in terms of gender, race, able-bodiness and class, some similar and opposing views emerged. Although the students readily named male exceptions, most students generally agreed that music video singers, musicians and performers conformed to strict standards in terms of their bodies. Females had to be "pretty", "sexy" or "skinny", and males were often "muscly":

Females [wear] skimpy clothing to look sexy. Males [wear] muscle tops, no tops to look manly. (Catherine: w)

Females are often presented as objects while males are usually the studly² ones. (Andrea: w)

The students found it difficult not to talk in absolute terms. In terms of class, they felt that most performers were either middle class or 'high class'. The image though, is not always the 'truth', as Wayne and others observe some performers try to look working class:

Most of the people are rich even though they portray people of the streets. (Sam: w)

¹ Catherine was the only student who commented that most people in video clips are young.
² 'Studly', as in 'stud', means a muscular, sexy man.
In chapter two, I outlined the deliberate strategy of the MTV network to target a white, middle class, male audience. The 'look' of music video is racially heterogeneous. There are significant numbers of black performers in music videos, however they are generally confined to certain genres of music - rap, hip-hop and soul. These were not genres that the students in my study showed much interest in. Heavy metal was the preferred style of Jackie, Sam, Jacob and Wayne; Sarah, Andrea, Melissa and Catherine were into pop; and Michael, Tim and Troy were into 'serious' pop - the Lemonheads, Red Hot Chilli Peppers and the grunge of Nirvana. The students generally saw definite boundaries between racial groups, with Andrea stating that performers are,

Mostly white people OR black people (particularly in rap). You don't see many Asian people. (Andrea: w)

Mainly white people are represented, but in a lot of American rap, and dance videos there are a lot of black people. Usually black singers have black dancers and white singers, white or black dancers. (Catherine: w)

A lot of rap is black Americans whereas the slower songs are more suited to the white people. (Melissa: w)

These perceptions of race in music video show the importance of recognising the active reading of music video. Their perceptions are shaped by their own ethnicity.

Andrea and Melissa both considered people in music video clips to be 'perfect':

Everyone in the video clip is usually portrayed as perfect with a perfect body and good looks. (Andrea: w)

People in music videos are nearly always perfect. (Melissa: w)

To her assessment that most people in video clips had to be "good looking", Jackie added that,

People may get plastic/cosmetic surgery to look the way the fans want them. (Jackie: w)

Michael Jackson was generally regarded with contempt by all of these students. I never heard any of them profess to like him, and many times I
heard them 'hang it'\(^3\) on him for looking 'like a girl', and for 'being white'. Trying to be what you are not 'naturally' was viewed negatively by the students.

My expectations of students' discussions of their own bodies took rather a different direction to what I had anticipated. Their strong views on issues of Australian identity led me to ask them whether or not music videos accurately reflected their families, social world and Australia generally. Most students felt that music video clips did not represent their social world at all. Melissa, Andrea and Wayne felt that video clips regularly portrayed a fanciful world of little relevance to them:

In the real world though everything is not [perfect]. There is a lot of poverty and hurt and they don't depict these at all. (Melissa: w)

Some video clips are really false and stupid. Like Dannii Minogue dancing around the beach with her boyfriend, singing in a multi-coloured bikini. How many people in real life or in our society would do that? Though some film clips have meaning, many don't and look cheap and tacky with little thought put into them. (Andrea: w)

They don't reflect on me and my family but my school and social world is affected by all the townies who listen to rap. (Wayne: w)

Wayne blames music videos for the proliferation of 'townies' - those homeless young people who 'hang out' in the city mall. As I explained in chapter five, 'townies' adopt the dress of, and identify with, black American rap music, politics and lifestyle, and generally are disliked and feared by Jacob, Wayne and Sam. Although Jacob personally disapproves of the content of music video programs, he states that:

Saturday and Sunday shows are representative of the social world. The people they're aimed at do exist. They're all yuppie teenie bopper 90210 style kids that mainly have money to look like the rich style you see on TV. (Jacob: w)

This comment has an air of despair about it. Jacob is not even interested in saying music videos are not 'real'. Rather, he sees them as all too real. Body image, for Jacob then, is very much connected to the style of clothing that a person can afford to wear.

\(^3\) To 'hang it' on someone means to 'hang shit' on them; it is a derogatory comment.
Several students criticised the lack of Australian content on music video programs which is ironic given the general dislike of Yothu Yindi:

They don't really depict the Australian society because not all of Australia is the same. (Sasha: w)

I don't think they represent Australian society. I think it is more American society. (Sarah: w)

Most people in music videos are American rappers (mostly black). Most of these are black males who are able bodied and dance around showing off their bodies. They try to be scum type looking. Australia is becoming too American. (Wayne: w)

Others felt quite strongly about this, with Sam's and Jacob's comments verging on the evangelical:

Australia like lives off America, Australians must be ashamed to play their own music on video shows. In Australia they always show American BLACK RAP MUSIC. (Sam: w)

Australians are weak, they're too scared to try something different. They cover up their future. Their future is our music - HEAVY METAL type stuff. They cover up with stupid DARYL BRAITHWAITE\textsuperscript{4} stuff. When America stop doing this (covering up) Australia will stop, we should START NOW!! (Jacob: w)

The solution?

KICK ALL TEENIE BOPPERS OUT, PROMOTE OUR STYLE OF MUSIC AND CHANGE THE WORLD. (Jacob: w)

Stop American rap and dance music in Australia and let Australian bands have a go. (Wayne: w)

I would probably get rid of most, maybe all the BLACK RAP MUSIC. I would have more Australian bands playing on Saturday and Sunday morning music video shows. More heavy metal as they don't really play that. (Sam: w)

On their own, Wayne's and Sam's comments could be viewed as essentially racist. In the context of their own feelings of powerlessness outlined in chapter five however, they become rather, additional pleas and

\textsuperscript{4} Australian performer, Daryl Braithwaite, was in a very popular band, Sherbet, in the 1970s. In the late 1980s and 1990s, he has re-emerged as the forty-something, gentle-but-harsh singer of adult pop.
attempts to become masculine. Others were not so much worried about the Australian content, as they were about the unrealistic nature of music videos, which they thought could possibly have negative effects:

I think that music videos influence people too much into being something they are not, ie, they show skinny girls in great clothes with great guys so people try and be like this. (Sasha: w)

Most video clips like this\(^5\) make me angry because they do not represent how people in society really are. Maybe this is why people watch them though. Because they seem glamorous and have good looking people in them. (Andrea: w)

How would people react if a poor old homeless person got up and started to sing? It would be a laughing stock. (Melissa: w)

Catherine however, views music video programs differently:

I think music videos represent everyone in a way. In some video clips I can relate myself and family to them and in others my friends and what it is like in the community. I think you can learn a lot from Australian video clips for Australian society because it shows different aspects, cultures of Australia. Eg, *Yothu Yindi* - Australian culture. (Catherine: w)

Catherine was one of the few students who was able to articulate the aesthetic element of music video. She acknowledged that music video was not necessarily an educational medium, speaking the 'truth', but a medium where fantasy and delight in the visual could freely occur. She was also anxious to note that not all music videos are state of the art productions:

Music video educates people as well as entertains them. But not all video clips are like this. (Catherine: w)

This is something Catherine and others would like to change if they could. Though she is critical of 'sexism' in music video, Catherine's critique also focuses on the aesthetic, and not just the moral:

\(^5\) She is referring to her example above, of the Dannii Minogue video.
I think some video clips are junk, especially people singing in studios. It shows nothing. I'd change them! I would also maybe sometimes change some video clips because the slim bodies, good looking people are not always what everyone else is like. (Catherine: w)

I would change that everything is perfect make them real true to life instead of everything works out in the end because it doesn't and they don't show this at all. (Melissa: w)

I would try and get rid of some of the bimbos hardly wearing anything in some of these video clips and put more reality into the clips and give them a storyline! (Andrea: w)

I would try and get the glamour out of the video and try and show what real life is like. (Sasha: w)

I would change the women in the film clips, they usually are too fake, they don't look like a girl you see walking down the street. (Sarah: w)

Jackie wished,

That our country had a lot more influential rock stars that could influence our own country to the styles and images the society would like. (Jackie: w)

What is clear through these girls' comments is that they do hold music video to be responsible in some way for their own problems in being feminine. These comments illustrate the ways in which music videos could be seen to work as 'primers'; that is, the girls point out the influential nature of music video. Their recognition of this however, points to the ways in which girls have a 'double relationship' with popular cultural texts. That these girls recognise the contradictions within music video illustrates their competency as cultural critics. Cultural theorist and critic Henry Giroux has repeatedly stressed the need for teachers to develop 'critical pedagogies' that enable students to critique popular cultural texts (see for example, Giroux and Simon, [1989], Giroux [1994] and Giroux and McLaren [1994] ). As Cameron Richards (1996) points out, teaching students to "identify and resist hegemonic power relations" (p.99) in popular culture is a strategy which embodies a degree of "implicitly privileged and elitist framing of popular culture" (p.97). What is important is not 'teaching' young people 'how' to critique music video (and popular texts generally) from the perspective of the teacher (be it
feminist, poststructuralist, Marxist or whatever), but giving them the space to explore popular culture in their own terms. This is something which began to happen in this study. Such a strategy also avoids a problem in textual analysis identified by Barthes (Mercer, 1983) - the tendency to reduce cultural texts to a 'message'.

Ang's (1985) concept of 'emotional realism is also relevant here. Emotional realism indicates that the text resonates with the viewer's own emotions and feelings. If a viewer feels empathy with the text, it is because of the viewer's own feelings. Women who exist as erotic spectacles only, do not seem to address girls emotionally. This is why Madonna is such a popular figure with these girls. Although she is an erotic spectacle, she communicates a certain 'structure of feeling', an 'affect', which is emotionally real to the girls. As Ang explains in her analysis of the US soap, *Dallas*, the lifestyles of the characters may be nothing like those of the viewers, however their emotions mirror those of audiences. "[A]t a connotative level they ascribe mainly emotional meanings to *Dallas*. In this sense the realism of *Dallas* can be called an 'emotional realism' " (Ang, 1985: 45).

Also coming through in these comments is a general recognition of the fantasy space that music video is, as indicated above by Melissa's comment about the unreal nature of music video: "Maybe this is why people watch them though". It is not necessarily the case that girls want music videos to portray carbon copies of themselves, but they definitely want to be able to recognise their emotions and their desires in music videos. Ang (1985: 47) argues that Dallas has an 'inner realism' and an 'external unrealism'. This external unrealism includes the visual style: beautiful people, expensive clothing, extravagant lifestyle and housing.

The 'flight' into a fictional fantasy world is not so much a denial of reality as playing with it. A game that enables one to place the limits of the fictional and the real under discussion, to make them fluid. And in that game an imaginary participation in the fictional world is experienced as pleasurable. (Ang, 1985: 49)

Ang (1985: 50) concludes that pleasure is largely derived from "the field of tension between the fictional and the real". As Jackie states:

Music video shows are like a fantasy world where you can imagine or even wish that you were there. (Jackie: w)
When I asked the girls how they felt about the unreality of music video, Jackie and Sarah replied that their feelings about the representations of people in music videos were limited:

Not much you can feel about this because you know nothing is real. (Jackie: w)

It doesn't really worry me, I just think it's T.V. so it's not really the truth. (Sarah: w)

This seems to suggest a 'double relationship' (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991): that is, these girls may become emotionally involved but still retain a certain distance from the text, recognising that it is fiction. In this way, they actively produce their own readings of music video.

In the section below, I discuss the students' analyses of the video clips 'The Right Kind of Love', by Jeremy Jordan, and 'Beautiful Girl', by INXS. This included memory-work, informal and structured discussions, and written responses.

The Right Kind of Love

Catherine: "I don't like that video because it makes you feel guilty about eating..."
[Others laugh.]
Catherine: "...it does!"

I chose these two videos firstly because they were both in the 'Top 40' at the time of conducting my research, and secondly because although they both deal with the notion of physical beauty and perfection, the two depictions are very different. Sarah, Catherine, Michael, Andrea, Tim, Melissa, Jackie and Troy were involved in analysing these videos orally and in written form, which included memory-work.

'The Right Kind of Love', by Jeremy Jordan, is a standard girl/boy romance video. To use Janice Raymond's (1986) term, it is pure 'heteroreality'. However while other videos of this type may make reference to the emotional and perhaps intellectual attraction of the object of their desire, in 'The Right Kind of Love', the attractiveness of the main protagonists is rooted in their physicality. The video is set in a school playground. Jeremy Jordan is one of a group of boys playing basketball, and the camera's emphasis on his body and face clearly conveys that he is the 'Star'. This footage is interspersed with shots of a group of girls
running in slow motion. This maximises the image of their breasts rising and falling, and also makes them appear passive. At the time of doing this analysis of 'The Right Kind of Love', the popular US teenage series, Beverly Hills 90210, finished with this song. This meant that the students (who all regularly watched both 90210 and the weekend music video programs) were very familiar with both the visual and aural tracks of this song. (This is also a good example of intertextuality.)

When I showed this clip to the after-school girls' group, the first thing they said was that it was also the 'white' kind of love. The video is clearly divided into two groups - the 'girls' and the 'guys'. Jeremy Jordan and the girl he selects out as the 'right kind of girl', are the only white, European types in the video. All of the other young people appear to be of Hispanic and black American heritage. It is a very repetitive song - over and over Jeremy Jordan sings:

It's the right kind of love,
It's the right kind of night,
You're the right kind of girl,
I'm the right kind of guy.
Ooooh, ooh, ooh.
(Nevil, Faragher and Golden, 1993))

In his analysis of the female gaze in popular culture, Dyer (1992: 265) calls on the classic filmic scenario of 'Young Love', "where, in the canteen, at school, in church, the Boy and the Girl first see each other". Dyer explains that the Boy's gaze looks off camera (at the Girl), and the Girl returns this look with eyes downcast: "a pose that has, from time immemorial, suggested maidenliness" (1992: 265). There is no doubt, Dyer (1992) argues, that the Boy is looking at the Girl, and that she is being looked at. Dyer's description could have been written about 'The Right Kind of Love'. Jordan is very much 'the Boy' doing the 'looking', and 'the Girl' coyly returns his gaze. Her breasts are partly exposed throughout the clip, and there is emphasis on her buttocks, whereas Jordan only 'loses' his shirt (he slips if over the back of his shoulders) when he begins to embrace the Girl - who by this stage is wearing a purple satin bustiere and jeans.

I discussed with the students what the 'right' kind of girl or guy was, and what the 'right' kind of love was according to this video. All students agreed that in this video, the 'right kind of love' was based solely on physical appearance - being white and in compliance with current body fashions appropriate to their gender. The students then talked about
times when they felt 'right' and when they have felt 'wrong' because of their physical appearances. They then wrote memories about these instances. None of the students in either group wrote a memory about being 'right', they all wrote about being 'wrong'. For example:

Sarah had been at the party for a few hours now. She was still scoping out some of her opportunities, when Lee came up and asked her if she would get on with James. Sarah said she might, (which of course means yes if he wants too), and Lee asked James. James said, (in a meant to be funny way), "no, she's too short". Which left Sarah wondering if steroids help people grow taller.

Sarah is made to feel inadequate because of her height. This memory points to the public nature with which heterosexual romantic alliances are formed. It also demonstrates how Sarah's body was used as a site of assessment by James. Andrea wrote the following memory about going to a night-club:

When Andrea went to a nightclub one night she felt conscious of her appearance. Nothing made her feel this way but most of the people around her were skinny and beautiful. Being tall makes you stand out and she felt a bit hesitant because of this.

She then analysed this memory:

I remembered this because the people on the video ['The Right Kind of Love'] are portrayed as perfect. It made me remember that I am not perfect and [that] I felt conscious of this. At the time I tried to tell myself that I did not look that bad and to stop worrying about it. By the end of the night I had enjoyed myself but still at the back of my mind I felt ugly. When I think about this I would probably feel the same way if I went out again.

I then asked Andrea how influential she thought music video was in one's estimation of oneself. She wrote:

Music video is very influential in both fashion and how you feel about yourself. Trends are set and the 'right body or image' portrayed in videos. Sometimes I feel good about myself but most of the time I don't, especially if I've just watched a show like Baywatch or 90210 or something where everyone looks gorgeous! (Andrea: w)

6 'Getting on with' someone in this context means kissing, hugging and feeling the other person's body through their clothing. I have only heard it used in a heterosexual context.
In comparison, boys' memories and feedback generally were a lot less detailed and usually quite devoid of feelings:

When he was about 12 he was picked on because [he was] really tall and thin and was called things like "lanky". (Tim)

When asked to analyse this memory, Tim said he was no longer worried about this because "everyone has caught me up in height and I am [a] lot more solid". Tim indicates that he was able to overcome his feelings of inadequacy because the other boys had 'caught up' to him in height. It is noteworthy that he claims he has overcome his feelings of inadequacy, whereas Sarah and Andrea both still feel awkward. Could it be that if he were to state a preoccupation with his body, he might be accused of an 'unnatural' obsession with his body for a boy?

Michael's first memory in response to 'The Right Kind of Love' was about his girlfriend:

One day, my girlfriend said, "I'm fat," and I said, "No you're not". I was going to say, "Just because you're not as skinny as some of the models in the magazines, it doesn't mean you're fat". I got as far as, "Just because you're not as skinny..." and she hit the roof, and was in kind of a bad mood for about three days. (Michael: w)

The fact that Michael wrote about his girlfriend, and not himself, is very telling. He also wrote this about his memory:

I felt bad about this but I don't think it worried her because she knows she isn't fat at all. When I think of this, the whole statement I meant to make was encouraging for her, on the whole.
(Michael: w)

I asked Michael if he could write a memory about himself. After much agonizing, he wrote about a time when he did not have the 'right' body:

One day Michael was on the bus and it was hot, so he unbuttoned his top and Christie said "get a body, put your top back on again". It didn't worry him though. The thing [was] that Christie judged him and she didn't look too crash hot herself. (Michael: w)

Michael then wrote:

I don't really have any worries about this fact because I know this and I don't have my top off normally.
Michael's comment is interesting in that his perceived imperfections, if hidden beneath clothing, avoid critical scrutiny. I found no such comments by girls. Michael, Troy and Tim generally found it difficult to relate to girls' preoccupation with dieting and body image:

I know girls that think they are fat but they're not. Nearly every girl thinks they're fat just because they don't look like people who are models. People are born different to each other, they will never look like models. You don't need to look like that. It can be dangerous to diet. (Tim: w)

Tim's comments here are significant in that he recognises difference and the health risks of dieting. Although he premises his comments on a 'girls are stupid' sort of argument, his assertion that "you don't need to look like that" is important. Hearing these comments from Tim suggests that he, as a boy, is dismissive of girls' adherence to body fashions. Other comments made by Tim and Michael (below) reveal just how aware they are of women's appearances.

Troy could not manage to write a memory. He asked me several times what he 'had to do', and eventually he wrote:

Music videos are fairly influential in forming an identity because the people in the videos that we watch are all well dressed and [have] got good hairstyles, big muscles etc and we try to imitate the way they do things. If we are meeting someone we try and put on one of those people images just so people will like us. But I feel I don't really have to do this because I think I'm alright as I am. (Troy: w)

Like Tim and Michael, Troy concludes that he is satisfied with his current physical appearance. The response from Troy which mentions the importance of being well dressed, having a good hairstyle, and big muscles, was fairly typical of what he and Tim thought boys' concerns generally were. Troy, Michael and Tim however, all denied that they were personally affected by these things. Girls on the other hand, were far more likely to explain how the sexual iconography of music video affected them. Martin argues that whilst women have been almost non-existent in the "constitution of meaning and power in Western culture, the question of woman has been central, crucial to the discourse of man" (1988: 13). Martin argues that this is evident in literature, psychoanalytic theory and many other places where 'woman' is the question or riddle needing to be solved. Is it in keeping with this humanist tradition that males find it
difficult to answer questions in terms of their physical selves? When I questioned boys about their body image, I generally found myself running up against the 'brickwall' again.

"Hungry, throwing up, Barbie sux"

The daring insistence of early feminists that a woman is beautiful just as she naturally appears has been rewritten in a commercial translation as the Natural Look. The horrible irony of this is, of course, that only a handful of women have the Natural Look naturally. Most of us have flaws that must be disguised if we are to resemble the beautiful models setting the standard - a fact the beauty industry is counting on. (Chapkis, 1986: 8)

'Beautiful Girl' is a very different music video from 'The Right Kind of Love'. It focuses on women and the fashion and diet industries. The video begins with a woman trying to squeeze her foot into a stiletto shoe, and ends with the image of an unfilled glass slipper. The video has a nightmarish feel to it. In one scene a refrigerator door looms huge and menacing. The next image shows a woman stuffing chocolate cake into her mouth, and then hunched over a toilet bowl - a reference to bulimia. Another scene shows a young woman poring over a fashion magazine article on cosmetic surgery, then a hand is shown squeezing a silicon breast implant. One of the final scenes in the clip is of all of the women who have appeared in the clip parading on a cat walk. However they are not made up and wearing high fashion clothing, they are wearing bath-robies and carrying the designer dresses by the coat-hangers, which they dump at the end of the catwalk. All of the various scenes in this clip are interspersed with very rapid images of the faces of the men in the band, who have different coloured transparent strips across their eyes. To me this was suggestive of the male gaze. Below I have included some descriptive words the girls wrote while watching 'Beautiful Girl'. Many of these words appeared in the clip. It is intended to give a feel for the content of the music video:

sugar, pounds, truth, gain, boys, guilt, mannequin. (Catherine)

Shape, Guilt, Flab, Crave, boys, gain, I am a beautiful girl, mirror mirror on the wall, alternative to the knife, fake, barbie doll. (Andrea)
Below is a conversation after the girls' first viewing of 'Beautiful Girl':

Catherine: "I saw that the other day...it's really good, it's different."
Jackie: "I think they're trying to say that, you know, about the girls how they want them to be, kind of thing, like they're talking about anorexia."
Andrea: "I think they're trying to say a beautiful girl is whatever... it's just beautiful."
[Several agree.]
Jackie: "Definitely beautiful inside."
Melissa: "They're chucking away their beautiful clothes."
[I ask about the significance of the food.]
Andrea: "Yeah, guilt...because girls feel guilt."
[The following words come up: shame, guilt, pounds, bulimia, anorexia.]
Catherine: "They had numbers."
Melissa: "Yeah, like 36 and 24 or something."
Andrea: "36, 24, 36...that's inches."
Jackie: "24 is 64 centimetres, I think."
Jenny: "Do men get measured like that?"
Jackie: [Loudly] "Yes!"
[Others disagree.]
Catherine: "How many men do you see walking around measuring themself?"
Jackie: "Guys don't worry about that though."
Andrea: "Only muscles."
[They debate this point - difficult to distinguish voices.]
Catherine: "Boys don't wear really tight clothing like girls do - they wear baggy clothing."

Catherine's assertion that this music video is 'different' conveys that although girls realize anorexia and bulimia are serious health risks, they continue to be body conscious. All of these girls thought it was a 'good' video, however they also noted its position as a 'different' kind of music video. Being different is not something they want - as Sarah's and Andrea's experiences of feeling too short and too tall indicate. Therefore, although 'Beautiful Girl' presents a feminist text as a critique of the fashion industry, it does not create a desired fantasy space for girls. A
'beautiful girl' may be "beautiful inside", but how far does inner beauty get a girl at a party or a disco? Andrea draws out some of the prominent images in the video in order to make sense of them:

Andrea: "They have the Barbie, then they have the Mona Lisa. It must be a comparison, or something. Why don't they have a pregnant Barbie?"

Jackie: "A 'Happy-to-be-me' Barbie, that's it." [Others laugh.]

Jackie: "That's what it's called!"

Images of the Mona Lisa, Barbie and other famous 'beauties', are flashed up on the screen in rapid succession, and are interspersed with each word of the statement, 'I am a beautiful girl': I [image] am [image] a [image] beautiful [image] girl [image]. The girls read this out as they watched the images flash past. There is a strong narrative in this video, which the girls love, however it lacks viability as a fantasy space. Even when, at the end of the video, all the women walk down a catwalk and dump high fashion clothing, symbolising the rejection of the fashion industry, it is doubtful that this is a viable fantasy. If all the symbols of girls' fun - clothing, glamour, fashion, make-up, hairstyles, romance - are taken away, what do girls have left to play with? Haug et al (1987: 26) ask whether or not women should "suppress any kind of pleasure in their bodies, simply because it is in that pleasure that we subordinate ourselves to socially prescribed forms of femininity?". Although I think this video was extremely interesting to the girls, and it served as a springboard to discuss dieting, anorexia and body fashions, it did not present them with any alternative pleasures.

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7 Jackie was referring to an actual doll, which she claimed was available.
I asked the girls this question: "What does the perfect person look like?" Catherine framed her answer from a male perspective.

Jackie: "Everyone's got their own opinion."
Catherine: "Some [boys] like short girls, some [boys] like tall girls."
Jackie: "Redheads!"
Melissa: "Brunettes!"
Andrea: "The hairdresser says, 'Oh, isn't it [her red hair] lovely'."

[Difficult to distinguish voices here - they are talking about freckles being called, "kisses from the sun".]
Sarah: "I'm glad I don't have that pale skin [like Jackie & Andrea]."

[Squeals of laughter/indignation at this.]

Jackie, Sarah and Andrea all have various shades of red hair, Melissa has brown hair, and Catherine has dark blonde hair. While it was good to hear some of them promoting their own hair colour as the 'best' (instead of expressing dissatisfaction with their appearance, as girls often do), this exchange also made me very uncomfortable. I felt sorry for Andrea and Jackie. It was awful to see their faces as they were having it so blatantly pointed out to them by Sarah that they did not have the right credentials to be beautiful because of their freckly "pale skin". (At the time I could not help but think of the words of Janis Ian's famous song of the 1970s: "I learned the truth at seventeen; that love was just for beauty queens"). I found myself quickly changing the subject at this moment, because I could not bear to see Andrea and Jackie so demoralised. I had become very aware of, "the discomforts and small humiliations which doing research can provoke" (McRobbie, 1991: 77). Catherine's suggestion that the look of the perfect girl is decided by boys demonstrates her understanding that men decide what is beautiful about women.
When the girls watched 'Beautiful Girl' with the volume turned down, they made the following comments:

A young woman is stuffing food into her mouth.\(^8\)

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<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>&quot;I hope guys don't see me like that.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>&quot;No, you do that ['pig out'] when your parents go out.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>&quot;That's disgusting.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>&quot;Doesn't look disgusting when the music's with it.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>&quot;Yes it does.&quot;</td>
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The young woman is hunched over a toilet bowl.

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<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>&quot;Ooh, I feel sick.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>&quot;I hate it when you see people, you know, vomiting...baahh! I can't do that...like make myself...like I can't do it...like if I've eaten too much I think, I'd better make myself vomit.&quot;</td>
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This final comment indicates that Jackie perceives there is almost a moral obligation to purge if one eats "too much". I see this comment as indicative of a shift in perception where no longer is bulimia seen as deviant or abnormal. Rather, being able to vomit and achieve unnatural thinness is prized. 'Pigging out' or 'bingeing' are seen as activities to be engaged in private, as Sarah's and Jackie's comments indicate. Bordo does not think of anorexia as an anomaly in Western culture, rather she considers eating disorders "as characteristic expressions of that culture, as the crystallization, indeed, of much that is wrong with it" (1988: 89).

Andrea and Catherine wrote these memories in relation to 'Beautiful Girl':

Catherine did dancing last year. Very competitive and it was difficult if you didn't have the perfect figure. Catherine had to wear all these tight fitting, skimpy costumes. Catherine felt she was fat. Catherine had a big backside, wide hips and big thighs. Catherine's dance teacher used to tell her that she had to go on a diet. Other

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\(^8\) The young woman is portraying what is commonly referred to as 'binging'. The girls called this 'pigging out'.
In the same way that Michael rejected Christie's comments because, "she didn't look too crash hot herself", so too has Catherine dismissed her dance teacher's comments. It seems that a form of defence that Catherine and Michael have engaged in involves assessing the physical perfection of the person giving the insults. Sarah however, when confronted with James's comment, "she's too short", did not object. Although it is not possible to generalise from these three instances, it is worth noting that two female pronouncements of imperfection in another were 'shaken off' by Michael and Catherine, whereas a male pronouncement, in Sarah's case, is simply accepted.

Andrea's memory, like Michael's earlier memory, is also not about herself. Encapsulated in this story is the idea that anorexia is bad only when it goes too far - ie, hospitalization. This view overlooks the ubiquitous monitoring of female body size and shape in Western society. Andrea's narrative style here is noteworthy. She has heightened the dramatic effect of this story through her use of stylistic conventions such as: "[t]hey weren't all that close anymore", "she was a skeleton", "finding it hard to put on the kilos", "she is still trying to get on track", and "[s]he will never look the same". Phrases such as these are what Haug et al (1987) referred to as 'cliches' in their memory-work, and they worked hard to both eliminate such phrases, and to deconstruct their meaning. Whilst I understand Haug et al's logic here, in their collective dislike of the cliche, they have overlooked a distinctively female pleasure in narrative form.

I asked the girls to write some type of response to 'Beautiful Girl', and below are the results:

It's finally showing that girls shouldn't have to go through hell to be beautiful. Barbie sux. (Sarah: w)
When I first saw this clip I was really quite shocked. But I think that this is a very good video clip. I also found it rather different that it was a male group that made the video, but I think that the males will have a better impact and a better chance of sending their message across to target viewers (girls) because the opposite sex are what females tend to care about most. Eg, I've never had a boyfriend because I'm too fat! I think the male view has more impact and [is] more likely to catch the attention. I think that it could even change the way girls feel. (Catherine: w)

I thought this video clip was excellent. The images are pretty sick but to the point and in need for the effect. It should be showed more often because a lot of teenage girls could relate to it. A beautiful girl should not have to be skinny and attractive which is what the video is trying to tell us. People can learn a lot from this type of clip, there should be more of them. (Andrea: w)

I suggested above that Sarah accepted being called 'too short' because this comment was made by a boy. Catherine's comments seem to bear this out: "I think the male view has more impact and [is] more likely to catch the attention. I think that it could even change the way girls feel". Andrea's assertion that "there should be more" videos like 'Beautiful Girl' is important because if there were more music videos of this nature, then it could not be such a 'different' sort of music video. This would then enable girls who rejected body fashions not to be labelled 'different'. As I pointed out above though, these 'different' texts would have to include symbolic references to fun and fantasy; which is not an easy task when common symbols of girls' fun are fashion, make-up, thinness, hairstyles and so on.

When I asked the girls to describe the women in 'Beautiful Girl', the comments included, "normal", "one had braces", "plain", "didn't have heaps of make-up", and "just average". However, Michael and Tim, used the terms, "ugly" and "definitely not pretty", to describe the women. This was significant to me, in that these comments demonstrate just how boys so easily and readily assess women on their physical appearance. Although both Tim and Michael said (above and below) that girls should not worry about dieting, these comments illustrate how critical they are of women's appearances. In the section below I outline how my research went with Michael and Tim when I tried to conduct with them the sort of session that I had with the girls above.
I began by showing the video to the boys, and then I asked them a question that included the words 'beautiful girl'. Before I could finish my question, Michael quipped, "which are really ugly". I asked Michael what he meant by this, and he got very annoyed saying, "[n]othing, it means nothing". Unlike my viewing of 'Beautiful Girl' with the girls, Tim and Michael were reluctant to make any comment, so I had to keep asking questions. I do not think I asked the right questions, but I include the following transcript as it conveys some very different responses to those of the girls.

I began by asking Michael and Tim how this clip made them feel about their own bodies. Tim did not say much at all, and Michael and I had this exchange:

Michael: "I don't sit there and say, 'Oh, I'm fat, I'm ugly'."
Jenny: "Why not?"
Michael: "Because it doesn't worry me."
Jenny: "Because you're a boy?"
Michael: " Might be that."

I then tried to explain to them what some of the girls' reactions had been to this video, and Michael said,

Michael: "People who aren't fat go on diets...all girls think they're fat."
Jenny: "Why do all girls think they're fat?"
Michael: [Laughing] "Don't ask us, we're boys! No, seriously, I say to girls 'No, you're not fat, don't be stupid'."
Jenny: [To Tim] "Why do you think girls all think they're fat?"
Tim: "Because of the pictures they see."

I asked Tim and Michael if they could imagine what it is like for girls to think they are always fat. I received no reaction from either of them, and Michael got up and started playing around on the computer. I then suggested that we watch 'Beautiful Girl' again. As we watched it, Michael said,
Michael: "They're not exactly...really beautiful."
Jenny: "You said before that they were 'ugly'."
Michael: [Shouting] "No!"
Tim: "Some are alright, some are pretty ugly."
Michael: "They are."

I then asked Michael and Tim if they could try to explain the meaning of the song. They both are floundering here, then Michael said,

Michael: "The women throw away their skimpy, skinny dresses."
Jenny: "Yeah...why?"
Michael: "Maybe they make them look bad or something."

This is a rather different reading of this video to what the girls made of it. The girls recognised the "skimpy, skinny dresses" as oppressive garments that symbolise female conformity to body fashions, whereas Michael thought the women in the clip were rejecting the clothes because they did not look good enough to wear them. Perhaps sensing my amazement at this answer, Michael then changed the direction of his reading:

Michael: "I like the video for its music, not the message."
Tim: "Yeah, the music...I like the music too."
Jenny: "Why did, why do you think INXS made this video?"
Michael: "Probably because he just finished dating a model, and - Kylie Minogue - and she's really ugly."

Michael giggles and says how he "hates" Kylie's clothes, make-up and, "those stupid shorts". I then asked them if and how sexual iconography in music video affects viewers. Michael becomes rather annoyed, and shouts,

Michael: "They don't influence me! I like the video for the music. I don't watch the video to watch the video. Maybe if a girl watches it, she'll think she's fat and ugly, but I just watch it for the music."

Jenny: "Do you think that this video is, you know, saying something about our society?"

Michael: "Ask Tim."
[Tim says nothing.]
Michael: "I don't treat girls like they're...lower class, or patronise them."

Jenny: "Why is it though that men seem active in music videos and women are mostly passive?"

Michael: "Because men write the songs. It just happens that more boys write songs than girls do. There's more boys than girls in the school band."

Jenny: "Why do you..."

Michael: "Because they don't want to do that! It doesn't interest them."

Jenny: "Is this conversation frustrating?"

Michael: "YES! [Laughs sarcastically.] We keep saying the same stuff over and over again."

Jenny: "Well we haven't solved anything..."

Michael: "No one's ever going to solve anything, it's just the way things are."

As stated above, conversation such as this made me change my approach in second semester with Wayne, Jacob and Sam. Once again being guided by Brown’s and Gilligan’s (1992) maxim to, ‘follow girls to the places they wished to go’, I decided that I should also follow the boys to the places they wished to go. I chose to work with Sam, Jacob and Wayne because of their interest in popular music, and my research was structured around what I perceived their interests to be. Without pushing them at all, they conveyed insights into their homophobia and masculinity, which I have discussed in chapters four and five, and also in chapter seven.

Information about the body image of the boys in this study however, is often more about what they have not said. It is especially illuminating to compare the girls’ ‘free and easy’ talk about their bodies with the boys’ characteristic silence on the topic. I do not wish to suggest that boys care less than girls about their physical appearances. What I am suggesting is that within girls’ culture it is not only acceptable to talk about being ‘too fat’, it is also a mark of femininity. For boys, the opposite is true. These gendered responses to body image are very much ‘relational’ (Connell, 1987). That is, masculine body image and feminine body image are constituted in direct opposition to each other.
The responses to both 'The Right Kind of Love' and 'Beautiful Girl' relate to Haug's notion that the process of individualization takes place in relation to the mainstream (1987: 201). I want to argue that this occurs in an effort to gain knowledge and access to power. Clearly, young people are measuring themselves against the standards they see in music video and other popular cultural texts in order to feel that they are 'individuals'. In chapter five I outlined Gilbert's and Taylor's (1991) argument that a 'double relationship' exists, whereby girls are both subjects and viewers of the texts. What needs to be remembered in this 'double relationship' is that, as viewers, girls are also critics. Even though boys may regard themselves as viewers and not subjects, (as Michael and Tim clearly did not), a comment like that of Christie's to Michael ("get a body, put your top back on again"), suggests that boys are vulnerable to normalizing standards as well. Boys however, have 'escape clauses' that girls do not. For example, Michael can choose not to take his shirt off. Girls however, can not 'hide' beneath their clothing. Their bodies are open to surveillance whether or not they wear 'feminine' clothing. Citing Pringle (1983), Gilbert and Taylor assert that while certain consumer products are "essential" to femininity and sexual desirability, for men the equivalent "male products" are "compatible with, but never essential to, masculinity" (1991: 13). The commodification of the male body in music video, and the growing 'sophistication' of the female gaze indicate that male bodies too are subjected to increased scrutiny. But - and this is a big 'but' - men do have alternatives and can gain validation in areas which do not rely on the attractiveness of their bodies. (It should also be remembered that, as Dyer [1992] points out, the male 'pin-up' is an unstable entity within a heterosexist economy.) Women however, are very much still assessed on their physicality (as the Euphoria and Technotronic examples above show).

Gaining approval - particularly male approval - is extremely important to girls, and to a large extent, their own body image relies on the assessment of others. If James thinks Sarah is not short, then she will be happy; if Michael thinks his girlfriend is not fat, she won't be in a, "bad mood for...three days"; and Catherine not only needs the approval of her dance teacher, she also casts the same critical eye that she hates from the teacher, onto the teacher herself. Michael too does this to Christie when
she tells him to put his shirt back on: "she didn't look too crash hot herself". Catherine's response to 'Beautiful Girl' above is an astute one in that she recognises that male views can "change the way girls feel".

**Diet Crazy**

In our discussions Catherine constantly vacillated between the need to diet and the need to eat. She wanted to wear fashionable clothes and look glamorous, but she did not want to deprive herself of food, or damage her health. At some point, the regulation which society imposes on women and food has become internalized in Catherine into self-regulation. Overcoming this self-regulation is perhaps more difficult than ignoring the surveillance of potential boyfriends and dance teachers. Our conversation began as Catherine told me that she had been on some rather "crazy diets":

Jenny: "Have you?"
Catherine: "Yeah, sometimes, but I only lasted three days - I'm hopeless! [She laughs.] I don't go on like really strict ones, I just like, oh sometimes I do, but I change my dieting habits all the time. I've given up now."
Jenny: [Laughing.] "Three days is quite a long time to stick to a diet, I reckon!"
Catherine: "Actually, I lasted one week. I'd gone for a whole week and it was a Saturday and it was a week after my birthday, or something, and it was a Saturday, and I sat down and I had soup for lunch, and I was very good, and then I was supposed to go and visit a friend. She invited me over to her place for the afternoon, and she [had] planned a surprise birthday party for me. And all this food, and I thought, 'Blow this! That's the end!' And that was the end of my diet. I wrecked it that day. [She laughs.] I ate all this food. I thought, well, I can't have a surprise birthday party and not eat anything."

Being 'good' or 'very good' is frequently used by girls and women (me included) to describe their eating patterns. Eating more than the 'ideal' amount is 'bad'. Hearing Catherine say, "I'm hopeless", gave me an
incredible feeling of hopelessness. Can a teenage girl be 'hopeless' because she 'fails' to stick to a diet? Naomi Wolf (1990: 186) asks,

Why should guilt be the operative emotion, and female fat be a moral issue articulated with words like good and bad?

Bordo (1988: 94) argues that sufferers of anorexia and bulimia fear taking even one bite of food for fear they may not be able to stop. Negative feelings towards the body are not actually a modern phenomenon however, and have a long history (Bordo, 1988: 94). The anorexic experiences her life and her hungers as being out of control:

Usually, the anorexic syndrome emerges, not as a conscious decision to get as thin as possible, but as the result of her having begun a diet fairly casually, often at the suggestion of a parent, having succeeded splendidly in taking off five or ten pounds, and then having gotten hooked on the intoxicating feeling of accomplishment and control. (Bordo, 1988: 96)

Andrea's memory above, about her anorexic friend, overlooks this aspect. Ninety percent of all anorexics are women, and the cult of slenderness is a very gendered phenomenon (Bordo, 1988: 100). Most women think they are too fat, regardless of their weight (Chapkis, 1986: 13). Catherine is an 'A' student, popular with her peers, physically attractive, and well-liked by her teachers. She should feel 'on top of the world', however, she feels "hopeless", "fat", and envious/jealous of 'ideal' girls/women she sees in the media.

Even Supermodels.

I didn't eat yesterday,
And I'm not gonna eat today,
And I'm not gonna eat tomorrow,
'cause I'm gonna be a Supermodel!
(Sobule, 1995).

In her song, 'Supermodel', American singer and songwriter Jill Sobule acknowledges the ridiculous nature of the fashion industry's demand for 'supermodels' who must starve themselves to meet the required standards of thinness. Her song is funny and quirky with a fast beat and catchy melody. 'Supermodel' is the sort of high energy, fun song that girls
- and I think many boys too - love. In contrast to the music video, 'Beautiful Girl', the song, 'Supermodel', leaves the listener a space for fun. Whilst I do think 'Beautiful Girl' is an excellent video and serves an educational purpose, it is not a fun video to watch. Sobule has achieved something quite unique in her song - she has combined feminism and fun.

In 1995 I watched a Sixty Minutes interview with Australian 'Supermodel' Elle Macpherson. When asked if she felt "beautiful", she could not answer "yes". Instead she said that she felt more "comfortable" with her physical appearance than when she was younger, but she could not say that she felt 'beautiful'. She also said she had 'figure faults', but declined to name them. Chapkis (1986: 6) argues that women grow up to see themselves as, "other and less": "[t]his experience of inadequacy means that no woman is allowed to say or to believe 'I am beautiful' ".

Schoolgirls are not allowed to, even supermodels are not allowed to! At the beginning of this chapter I referred to Bordo's (1988: 101) observation that women can only play romantic/lead roles if they have the "appropriate body". Bordo (1988) could have included popular music artists and music video performers in this equation. Madonna has that well-toned, muscular body that promises her beauty beyond youthful beauty. As Sarah said about Madonna, "you seen the butt on that woman?" But is Madonna's tight butt part of the 'cult of slenderness' identified by Bordo (1988: 100)? Dyer (1992: 273) asserts that musculinity (in the male pin-up) is the sign of power. So what does muscularity in women mean? This is explored further in chapter seven.

Catherine's feelings of inadequacy and 'hopelessness' reminded me of the way I sometimes felt during my school days.

My Own Memories

When I was at secondary school, my friends often told me how skinny I was and how nice my hair was. I remember being selected to model in a school fashion parade in my final year, to raise money for our Graduation. I knew that only the most attractive girls got picked to model, and I remember at the time thinking, "Why? Why did they pick me?". I never thought I was 'worthy' of being in a fashion parade, nor did I think I was anywhere near as pretty as the two other girls who were chosen. I decided

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9 I borrowed this CD from my brother-in-law, so I know at least one 'boy' who appreciates this style of music!
it was because of my hair (being long and blonde) that I had been selected. I never went on diets like those Catherine describes, from magazines, but I did watch what I ate. My parents were very health conscious, so I always ate well. I also was very active. In summer-time, I went to the beach almost every day, swimming and walking. At other times of the year I would ride my bike, jog, and do aerobics. One thing I do remember is being very receptive to other people's 'advice'. I have written up one such instance in the memory-work style:

When Jenny was 14 or 15 she had a friend called Jacinta who lived in her neighbourhood. They also went to school together. Jenny used to hang around with Jacinta all the time. Jenny thought Jacinta was very attractive, however Jacinta constantly compared herself to Jenny. One day Jacinta was complaining to her Mum that she was 'fat'. Jacinta's Mum said that she should hold her stomach in at all times as this 'trained' the muscles. After that, I can remember both of us walking around with our stomach muscles constantly tensed to prevent us getting fat stomachs!

Until I began my fieldwork at Progress Secondary College, I had almost forgotten how I felt when I was a teenager. My discussions with these students brought many memories back to me. I have included this for several reasons, as noted in chapter three, and earlier in this chapter. Following Jones (1991a, 1992), McRobbie (1991), Davies (1993), Walkerdine (1990) and others who include the self in academic writing, I have written myself into this text in order to deviate from the idea of the rational, objective researcher. In Haug's memory-work model it is important that the researcher and the researched are one and the same. That is, that one puts oneself under the same scrutiny as one's 'subjects'. I also feel it is important to acknowledge how my subjectivity, as the interpreter of this data, has been constructed. It would be folly for me not to acknowledge that I share, with the girls in this study, the history of self regulation and adherence to Western standards of beauty. I feel I owe it to all of the young people in my study to 'confess' as they have confessed. I have tried not to be the neutral researcher telling the exotic stories of students. My own gendered subjectivity is constructed around popular cultural texts (as their's is), making it equally complex and contradictory.
Memory-work: A Reflection

We have been invited to innumerable readings by bookshops, universities and political organizations. In all the discussions, without exception, our experience has been that our topic has struck a chord. (Haug et al, 1987: 25-26)

The first time I ever heard of memory-work was in 1990, at Deakin University. I was working as a tutor for the first time, and attended a seminar where a visiting woman academic was speaking about writing stories, within a collective, of her's and other women's experiences of menstruation. Although at the time the last thing I had on my mind was research, (I had just finished my Honours degree), Haug et al's memory-work method 'struck a chord' with me too. In chapter three I explained how Walkerdiene's personal reflections provided an 'entry point', a 'way in' to her work. In the same way so too did these fascinating stories of menstruation act as my 'way in' to memory-work.

Initially when I thought of memory-work, I focussed on the actual process of writing stories about the self, in the third person, in a collective. However as I proceeded with my PhD reading and research, I became aware that this method is the result of a great deal of theorising. I then re-read very carefully Haug et al's text in its entirety, not focussing only on the 'how to do memory-work' sections. "How had I glossed over the integral role of Foucault's theory in their book?" I wondered. This new awareness prompted me to read Foucault first hand, and feminist poststructuralist work generally. Although I had initially set out to use memory-work as a method with the students, as I continued to read and as I experienced the students' responses to doing memory-work, I started to reconsider my agenda. In their introduction to Female Sexualization, Haug et al state that although they were unable to do all they had planned to in that volume,

[i]n our view this is not entirely a deficit, but also an invitation to ourselves and our readers to think and work further in this area. Much will have been gained if this book is read, not as a completed product sufficient unto itself, but as a preliminary outline worth taking further: if gaps in our research are read as a challenge, both to us and you as readers to work together in the future. (Haug, 1987: 31-32)

It is not so much the gaps in Haug et al's work that I am going to critique - for them, their method worked extremely well. What I am going to
critique is how successfully I have been able to 'apply' memory-work in a different setting. That is, how did a feminist research method, devised by a group of professional German women, relate to a group of male and female secondary school students in Australia?

Haug et al (1987) decided to write their own stories about their bodies, in order to make sense of the sexualization of the female body. Because I considered music video to be a site where the sexual is highly visible, I thought that memory-work would be an ideal method to investigate how music video affects the sexualization of the adolescent body. Being wary of doing research 'on' young people and risking pathologizing their pleasures, I thought the memory-work emphasis on self research was also important. In memory-work, the subject and researcher are intended to be one and the same. How fabulous, I thought, to have young people carry out research on themselves. Although I realised that by working with a group of school students I was deviating from Haug's model, I was still making myself subject and researcher, and was attempting to have them do the same. What however, worked for white, middle class, adult and highly educated German women did not work so well for young, mostly working class, girls and boys.

One of the first things I became aware of when the students began their memory-work was that this method privileged the written word over the spoken word. All of Haug et al's reasons for writing\textsuperscript{10} their memories, (which made so much sense at the time of reading them!), seemed to evaporate in the wake of student protestations. (The students' reasons for not writing their memories - "it's school-work", "don't want to", "it's boring", "talking's more fun" - seemed to make much more sense in the context of the classroom!) Writing in the third person also brought in an additional technical aspect which, through a lack of experience and motivation, proved to be a tedious experience. Although Catherine, Melissa and Andrea did not seem to mind writing their memories, Jackie, Sarah, Michael, Troy, Tim, Wayne, Sam and Jacob found writing not only hard work, but unpleasant work. And Catherine, Melissa and Andrea, although willing to write the initial memory, resisted strongly the collective discussion and re-writing that Haug et al engaged in. I also did not have much success at all in getting the three boys from the first

\textsuperscript{10} These include: to gain distance from oneself; there is a permanent record of what one has said; to value the everyday experience; and to work through (by re-writing several times) the "inconsistencies, gaps, interpretations...breaks and idiosyncrasies", in one's own writing (Haug et al, 1987: 56).
semester class - Michael, Tim and Troy - to write memories. Troy seemed unable to, Tim wrote one memory consisting of two sentences, and Michael struggled to write about himself. Most of the students were eager to talk to me on most subjects, however writing memories was too close to formal school work when I was supposed to be talking to them about fun stuff - music videos.

The memory-work style also emphasized the elimination of cliches in order to deconstruct their meaning. In so doing Haug et al have overlooked a distinctly female pleasure in narrative form. Andrea's memory above (about her friend's experience of anorexia) demonstrates her enjoyment in heightening the dramatic effect of this story through her use of what Haug et al (1987) term 'cliches'. Thus whilst eliminating cliches may facilitate the deconstruction of their meanings, it also eliminates one of the pleasurable aspects of writing stories.

As stated above, the process of memory-work, as Haug et al engaged with it, required sharing one's memories with the group. This was not something I felt I could pressure the students to do. Haug et al (1987: 57) warn against 'slippage', "into amateur psychotherapy", which is what any collective discussion resulted in with these students. The reason for this, and the other problems I mentioned above, is that the commitment of the students was not the same as my own.

I think that the physical space of the radio studio within the classroom, and my time being limited to two visits to the school per week, also worked against memory-work as a method. In the radio studio the students were still very aware of what was going on outside in the classroom. Their teacher, Sigourney, encouraged small group work and discussion, making the radio studio usually rather noisy. Such noise was too distracting for the students to contemplate and write personal memories. Watching the music videos held their attention and filtered out the classroom noise. These sort of 'hiccups' were not something that I could have foreseen, and once I was in the research setting I found that my own agenda 'took a back seat' to the students' and teacher's ideas, thoughts and priorities. At first this panicked me, then I decided to just 'go with it'. In the same way that I decided to 'follow the students to the places they wished to go' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992), I decided to adapt memory-work to their tastes. I found they really liked telling me their histories - for example, Jacob's and Wayne's first heavy metal concert; Catherine's "crazy" dieting; Jackie and the Guns 'N' Roses concert; and Andrea's first disco. These stories came up in the course of our music video watching,
and the memories that appear in written form in this chapter are the
result of me asking the students to write these down. This request was
always met with an "err", whereas I generally rarely had to 'pump them'
to talk.

In this chapter I have included one memory of my own, written in
the third person style devised by Haug et al (1987). As with many of the
other memories I have recalled during the writing of this dissertation, I
found that some of the student data resonated strongly with my own
experiences. I found myself recalling many instances from my teenage
years when I was busy making my body a "socio-biological unity" (Haug et
al, 1987: 30). Like the students, I did not do the formal collective discussion
or re-writing, however I found that when I wrote or simply thought a
memory, it would often find its way into our conversations. Although my
methods may have differed from the Haug et al collective's, in this
dissertation I have drawn on the same theoretical frameworks that shaped
their method of memory-work. I think that many of my interviews with
the students constitute an oral memory-work, and as such I think this
would be worthy of further research and study.

CONCLUSION

This chapter took as its starting point certain textual analyses of the
popular (male and female) body. By turning to the interviews, discussions
and written comments of the students I worked with at Progress Secondary
College, this chapter moves beyond textual analyses of the body and music
video made by academics. Looking at the ways in which young people
read music videos provides insight into how young people theorize the
body. Reality and identity were prominent themes that students were very
keen to talk about. I found some quite different responses from girls and
boys, and some similarities between them.

Initially I had little success in eliciting boys' comments about the
male body. However by changing my research focus from direct questions
about male bodies, to an emphasis on boys' engagement with music they
enjoyed, I found considerable rich theorizing about their social world.
This further develops our understanding of the very private nature of
boys' talk about their bodies, as well as the crucial role of research methods.
By looking at the body from the perspectives of ethnicity and class, a more
sophisticated view of the body was gained. Looking at femininity and
masculinity together also moves beyond feminist and cultural studies research which looks at girls and boys in isolation. In comparison with some studies of the body in popular culture which tend to ignore the author's subjectivity, I have included theorizing about my own body. This provides further insight into the notion of the participant researcher.

The commonly held view that music video is an essential part of the cultural capital needed to be an adolescent was generally supported by the students I worked with. In comparison with previous studies which view young people's engagement in popular culture as resistance, this research focuses on giving young people the space to explore popular culture on their own terms. My research with these students has demonstrated to me that,

while it is important to acknowledge the way in which gender ideologies work at an unconscious level through the structuring of desires, it is also important to understand that these desires are produced and are therefore potentially changeable. (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 5)

So who does produce these desires, and how? In the following chapter I turn to sexualization and power, in relation to my interactions with the students.
CHAPTER SEVEN

SEXUALIZATION AND POWER: MAKING MEANING FROM MUSIC VIDEO

Foucault insists that our subjectivity, our identity, and our sexuality are intimately linked; they do not exist outside of or prior to language and representation, but are actually brought into play by discursive strategies and representational practices. The relationship between the body and discourse or power is not a negative one; power renders the body active and productive... Discourse makes the body an object of knowledge and invests it with power. (Martin, 1988: 9)

In this chapter, I develop the theory outlined in chapters one and two relating to gender, sexualization and sexual iconography in music video, as a way of examining the students' discussions and written comments. As explained in chapter one, I have used the term sexualization throughout this dissertation in preference to the term 'sexuality'. The term is one I first encountered in the work of Haug et al, and explains how "innocent" parts of the body become somehow "guilty" through the social meanings attached to them (1987: 139). To Haug et al's definition I have added 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' meanings. In this chapter I demonstrate the ways in which the making of meaning in relation to music video took place through various formal and informal interactions with the students. This includes a discussion of a party which I had for the students in my home. This story stands as both a methodological reflection, and as a way of demonstrating the way that the students took control that evening and sought to make me their subject of research. In Foucauldian terms, (as expressed by Martin above), the students acted collectively to position themselves powerfully within discourse in order to make me 'confess'.

In chapter two I discussed how sexual iconography is deployed in music video. As music videos are typically three to four minutes in length, information has to be imparted succinctly. As with advertising, music videos often rely on heavily cliched 'stereotypes': the 'angry young man', 'the girl-next-door', 'the uncompromising parents', 'the policeman', 'the hooker', 'the bad girl', 'the stud', and so on. Many performers however challenge these stereotypes with unconventional use of such imagery. Intertextuality then, is a key feature of music videos. Madonna's combination of sexual iconography, female desire and sexual
behaviour in her videos has prompted feminist debate on whether or not she is a feminist icon, a post-feminist or an anti-feminist. In my research, when I asked the students to name pop stars who they thought were either 'feminine' or 'masculine', Madonna was repeatedly named as 'masculine'. The students referred to Madonna's 'attitude' and muscular body as distinguishing her from other 'feminine' performers such as Kylie Minogue. Asking young people themselves what they think of a controversial performer such as Madonna provided insights that textual readings by academics could not. As the student assessments of Madonna in chapter five indicate, there are a multiplicity of attributes that contribute to the gender status of the performer as conveyed in music video. Whilst I would argue there is a general correlation between women dressed in fluffy leopard skin bikinis, for example, and their status as sexual objects devoid of personhood, just how this meaning is made is less clear. As identified by the students I worked with, 'attitude' is very relevant. In this chapter I discuss how sexual iconography in music video is read by the students I worked with, and how they harness this information in their quest for knowledge and power.

**LOVE THEM, LOVE THEIR T-SHIRT?**

In chapter five, I referred to Jackie's comment about the girlfriend of her hero, Axl Rose: "She's pretty, and I want to kill her". I now tell another story about Jackie.

Jackie attended one of Guns 'N' Roses' Australian concerts in February 1993, to which she wore a Guns 'N' Roses t-shirt that depicted an illustration from one of their album covers. This image was of a semi-naked, bound and gagged woman. In chapter five, I discussed a university student's project which focussed on 'violence against women' in popular music (Bubose Brunner, 1995). This very same Guns 'N' Roses' album cover came in for harsh criticism from Bubose Brunner and her student. Bubose Brunner describes her student's project in this manner:

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1 Though this image is not directly from a music video, I include it here as it exists within the context of popular music.
The cover page of her project depicted an album cover by *Guns and Roses* (1985). It portrays a woman who is literally bound and gagged, her features distorted and her body contorted into a shape that makes this sexualized female subject into a monstrous or grotesque image. (DuBose Brunner, 1995: 367)

Jackie informed me that according to the lyrics of one of their songs, (which she had on video), this woman had just been raped. Jackie said, "nearly all the girls had them [the t-shirt] on". This sexually violent image had become a part of the discursive field through which Jackie had been actively constructing her gendered subjectivity.

Jackie had no dilemma about her t-shirt, saying the portrayed woman was "a prostitute or something, anyway". For Jackie there was no decision to be made about the t-shirt, she said she did not think twice about wearing it at the time, and when I discussed this with her, she did not see *Guns 'N' Roses* as bearing any responsibility: rather, she saw the woman as being responsible because she was a prostitute. The woman on the t-shirt could be read as a symbol of what happens to women who threaten the patriarchal gender order. The prostitute or 'loose' woman transgresses the notion of sexual subservience and dependence. Is this woman on the t-shirt "the 'groupie', the Whore of Babylon" that Simpson (1994: 191) has identified within heavy metal culture? As explained in chapter five, Simpson argues that the 'Whore' is seen as a 'test' of a straight boy's manhood; he must neutralise her to achieve that manhood (1994: 191). But where do female fans stand in such an equation?

On this occasion, Jackie has clearly positioned herself with the (all-male) band, and not the woman on the t-shirt. As a fan of *Guns 'N' Roses*, Jackie knew the story behind the t-shirt, which she assured me was a 'true' story. It is easy to ask why, as a girl, Jackie does not object to the t-shirt image. But why would she? The barely recognisable woman on the album cover has been conquered in a number of ways - sexually, physically and mentally. The threat to masculinity has been neutralised - why would Jackie align herself with the 'Whore'? Wearing this t-shirt seems to suggest that the wearer accepts the abuse levelled at 'whores'. Jackie positions herself clearly with *Guns 'N' Roses*, where she at least has the possibility of agency and power by virtue of not being neutralised. Jackie's fandom and awareness of the dominant gender order rule out any criticism of the band, even if this compromises her integrity as someone who would normally consider the brutalising of women (and the depiction of such assault) abhorrent.
Jackie’s feelings about her Guns ‘N’ Roses’ t-shirt demonstrates that sexual iconography is always actively read. In Jackie’s case, wearing the t-shirt may actually be a way of avoiding receiving unwanted sexual attention and/or violence. Because heavy metal music/culture is a site where male heterosexuality is actively being forged (Simpson, 1994), girls pose a threat to this. Wearing the t-shirt may signify “I recognise how powerful and threatening female sexuality is to you (boys); I will not threaten you with my sexuality”. The tendency of scholars to read music video in an ‘either/or’ (good/bad) manner, as demonstrated throughout this dissertation, does little to understand music video’s contribution to the gendered subjectivity of young viewers. As Jackie’s t-shirt wearing suggests, such acceptance and championing of heterosexism is not wholly unselfconscious or necessarily misogynistic. In Jackie’s case it is a way of negotiating some dangerous cultural territory.

Us Watching Them Watching Us

In the section below, Jackie, Sarah, Andrea, Melissa, Catherine and I were watching a series of music videos that I had randomly taped from a Top 40 selection of 1993. I asked them for their comments on one of these videos, ‘Rump Shaker’ by Wreckx ‘N’ Effect, which spent many weeks in the Top 10 and Top 40. I briefly describe this video now.

The music video ‘Rump Shaker’ makes great use of what Hayward (1990: 131) has termed “the erotic spectacle of female models”. The central protagonist in the video is the lead singer of Wreckx ‘N’ Effect, who appears to be of African American background, as do most of the people in the video. He mostly appears wearing a t-shirt or a wetsuit. Briefly he is seen bare-chested, driving a speed-boat. Only his head and upper body are shown and he always wears sunglasses. Unlike the uncertainty surrounding the gaze in postmodern music videos (Kaplan, 1987), the gaze in this video is clearly directed by the lead singer. This is done quite simply by his appearance with a video camera. The viewer sees him training his camera on something, and the following shot is of the central female model of the video. She is young, very slim, has long, dark hair, is wearing a bikini and is ‘playing’ a saxophone in shallow water. As the lead singer trains his camera in this woman’s direction, he sings, "All I wanna do is a zoom zoom, zoom zoom", and as he continues with, "and a boom! boom!", the camera shifts to the saxophone woman. The viewer sees the camera pan slowly up and down the woman’s body, lingering on
her breasts and her mouth, which is wrapped around the mouthpiece of
the saxophone. The camera looks at her face from above, so her coy smiles
are directed with upward, submissive glances. These shots of the lead
singer followed by the saxophone woman are interspersed with scenes of
groups of dancing young people at the beach and poolside. Men wear
oversized t-shirts, and women mostly wear bikinis, though some wear
high-cut, one-piece bathing suits. The camera frequently zooms in on
various women's buttocks - hence the title 'Rump Shaker'. Considerable
attention is given to the wearer of a fringe bikini. It is this woman's
breasts and buttocks - not her face - the camera focuses on, highlighting her
role as an "anonymous fragmented physique" (Hayward, 1990: 131). This
video is very much directed towards a young, male audience, possibly with
special appeal to black males. How then, do white girls in a working class
school in Australia read such a male addressed music video? As the
following transcript shows, these students refer out to other texts and lived
experiences in an attempt to make sense of this music video.

Jenny:     "What do you think of 'Rump Shaker'?"
Andrea:   "Err! Rumps!"
Jackie:    "Sexist, fucking...sexist!"
Melissa:  "I mean and they only show, they only mainly show
          women's bums, I mean..."
Jackie:    "They never show their chests, so they mustn't be
          masculine."
Sarah:     "And when they show them in the wetsuits, they look
          really small."
Andrea:   "Yeah they could show men's in that..."
          [Catherine interrupts.]
Catherine: "No, have you noticed that they always show the parts
           that both sexes would wanna look at, like they show
           women's backsides..."
Jackie:    "Oh yes, I really wanna see women's backsides!"
Catherine: "No, I'm talking about for the opposite sex, right! And
           their breasts, right? And for males, they always show
           the upper half."
Jackie:    "Yeah, I wanna see a bit of crotch."
           [Squeals of laughter from the others.]
Catherine: "Yeah, but most girls like definition in the arms and
           the ...back and the stomach. And they showed
like...with the guys with muscly tops on, they always show you..."

Jackie: [Interrupting] "Their chests and their bums and..."

Catherine: "...and in um, 'Funky', what, yeah, 'Funky Junky'2..."

Andrea: "'Funky Junky'."

Jackie: "He's got really yucky legs, they're so skinny."

Andrea: "Yeah."

Sarah: "Is that why he wears jeans?"

Andrea: "He probably hasn't got a bum either, so they just show his top half."

Catherine: "I know, but he's so broad across the shoulders, it's unbelievable."

Jenny: "What about in 'Rump Shaker', where the man's holding the video camera..."

Jackie: [Finishing my sentence.]...right on the bum."

Jenny: "Mmm - what does it mean?"

Jackie: "Couldn't stop purvin'."

Melissa: "Didn't go down the beach just to look at the waves."

Jackie uses the term "sexist" to dismiss 'Rump Shaker' as a music video of little interest to girls. Jackie calls this video sexist not because of the abundance of semi-naked female bodies, but because there is not the same portrayal of male bodies. This is an important point to understand - the girls are interested in looking at bodies generally, however they find music videos sexist when only female bodies are shown. Jackie uses a powerful term - 'sexist' - to give her view a certain legitimacy. Jackie also derides the males in the video, that "they mustn't be masculine" because their chests are not revealed. The suggestion is that lack of masculinity makes them open to homosexual innuendo. Catherine attempts to analyse the video in relation to other videos. She suggests that a heterosexual framework be applied to music videos, to understand the focussing on certain male and female body parts. Catherine is applying a normalising discourse which declares that 'normal' girls are only interested in looking at male bodies from the waist up. Jackie rejects this, declaring that she wants to "see a bit of crotch". Wolf argues that in popular culture, there is a double standard in relation to women's and men's nakedness.

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2 Catherine is referring to a music video of Peter Andre's.
The practice of displaying breasts, for example, in contexts in which the display of penises would be unthinkable, is portrayed as trivial because breasts are not "as naked" as penises or vaginas; and the idea of half exposing men in a similar way is moot because men don't have body parts comparable to breasts. But if we think about how women's genitals are physically concealed, unlike men's, and how women's breasts are physically exposed, unlike men's, it can be seen differently: women's breasts, then correspond to men's penises as the vulnerable "sexual flower" on the body, so that to display the former and conceal the latter makes women's bodies vulnerable while men's are protected. (1990: 139)

Wolf compares women's nakedness in popular culture with the practice of prisoners having to strip naked in front of prison guards, and the practice of young, naked, black, male slaves serving their white masters "at table" when slavery existed in the US (1990: 139). She concludes that,

To live in a culture in which women are routinely naked where men aren't is to learn inequality in little ways all day long. (Wolf, 1990: 139)

This inequality is expressed by Jackie, Andrea, Melissa and Sarah in their conversation. Catherine however, aware of the heterosexist context of the video, pathologizes Jackie's desire to see some crotch by stating that "most girls like definition in the arms" (my italics). Catherine draws attention to another music video, 'Funky Junky' by Peter Andre, to prove her point. Jackie and Andrea gleefully take this opportunity to criticise Peter Andre, thereby criticising what Catherine has declared to be the focus of legitimate female sexual interest. Though Jackie and Andrea's comments are playful, they are also tinged with anger - anger that 'Rump Shaker' is "sexist", and that their gaze is being controlled and defined. Jackie and Melissa conclude the discussion with comments that further denigrate this video and its 'stars'.

As a discourse, 'Rump Shaker' leaves little room for girls to position themselves, either as voyeurs or subjects. Catherine intellectualises, and the others, led by Jackie, ridicule and deride this text. Such analysis of a popular cultural text is very much a part of the quest for knowledge and power that the young people in this study pursued.
Body Language: A 'Genealogy' of Female Sexualization

Further evidence of the girls' desire to see meaning or as they called it, a 'storyline' is present in the following extract. The sexualizing process takes place as they endeavour to acquire knowledge. The five girls of the after-school group were watching the 'Beautiful Girl' video by INXS, which I described in chapter six. I taped the following commentary of the students as they watched 'Beautiful Girl'.

Catherine: "There's Mona Lisa."
Jackie: "How come Mona Lisa's famous, can I ask, I'm dumb."
Sarah: "Perhaps that's what women were meant to look like in the 1600s."
Catherine: "Why do they have silicon in this?"
[They discuss the meaning behind the women discarding their clothes. A young woman is reading a magazine article on cosmetic surgery.]
Jackie: "I'm a magazine-aholic."
Jackie: "I've just thought of a reason why they had Barbie and Marilyn in there - Barbie's skinny, and Marilyn Monroe was rather big."
Others: "Was she?"
Jackie: "Yeah."
Jackie: "They were saying that if she was in today's society, she would be called fat."
Jackie: "She had hips, unlike...who hasn't got hips? Claudia Schiffer."
Sarah: "Twiggy...I saw her in a magazine, she's coming back."
Jackie: "No, I don't think it will."
Andrea: "But they're trying to bring back an even skinnier look, aren't they?"
Catherine: "It's not so bad now...everyone's different...all different shapes."
Jackie: "More people look at how fit you are these days."

What these students recognise here is that women are judged and valued according to strict beauty standards, which have always been narrow. Chapkis notes that:
However much the particulars of the beauty package may change from decade to decade - curves in or out, skin delicate or ruddy, figures fragile or fit - the basic principles remain. The body beautiful is woman's responsibility and authority. (1986: 14)

In a Foucauldian sense, paradigms of female beauty - Mona Lisa, Marilyn Monroe, Twiggy, Barbie, Claudia Schiffer - can act as a "genealogy of gender ontology" (Butler, 1990: 32). Butler argues that "certain cultural configurations of gender take the place of 'the real' and consolidate and augment their hegemony through that felicitous self-naturalization" (1990: 33). In other words, ever changing signifiers of female beauty are portrayed as natural and normal. But as the transcript above indicates, the girls are very aware of the socially constructed nature of beauty, as Jackie's final comment - "[m]ore people look at how fit you are these days" - indicates. This emphasis on 'fitness' is explored a little more in the discussion below.

Female sexualization involves the constant surveillance of one's own and other girls' and women's bodies. The girls remembered many details from various music videos. For example, as a group we were talking about the general thinness of female music video performers, a discussion initiated by me. Jackie pointed out that one video contained "chubby" women:

Jackie: "Not in 'Informer', they're rather chubby in that, but really flexible. Especially that black one...at the very front, she was at the very front..."

At a later point in this same discussion, the music video that Jackie refers to above, 'Informer', was watched. Catherine agrees with her that the woman is "chubby", and Jackie then reasserts her point:

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3 'Informer' by Snow, was a Number One song in Australia in 1993. It featured Snow singing (rapping) in loose fitting, long sleeved shirt and trousers. Young women (black and white) dressed in skin-tight black bodysuits, leggings and 'crop tops', are filmed from behind, dancing suggestively, with their buttocks pointing in the direction of the camera. The women appear to be gazing at him, even though they are not shown together in any one shot.
Catherine: "That woman is chubby."
Jenny: "Really? You think she is chubby?"
Catherine: "No, but when I said she's chubby, oh hang on, hang on..."
[Others interrupt.]
Jackie: [Aggressively and impatiently] "She stands out from the other ones because she's a lot bigger than them, they're more petite, and..."
Jenny: "Is that what you meant, Catherine?"
Catherine: "Yeah, what I was going to say is, she looks chubby against all them because they're all..."
Jackie: [Laughing.] "What?"
Catherine: "People usually put in video clips are really skinny, but she's not chubby, but she looks horrible...that's what I reckon. Like she..."
Sarah: "She's probably just normal."
(?): "Yeah, I reckon she looks...[*]...she's really quite big."
Jenny: "Do you think she's got a good body?"
[Lots of conceding "yeahs" that don't sound very convincing.]
Catherine: "Yeah. Like I wouldn't call her fat or anything. But being really skinny now is sort of not 'in' anyway."
Jackie: "Times are changing, I mean if you look at the model industry, what's her name? Ingrid someone - she's not pretty but she's tall and thin and fit, but she's got a really yucky face."
Sarah: "Has she got like weird lips and teeth?"
Jackie: "No, she's bald head, tattooed, and..."\(^4\)
[Chorus of "Ooo, yuck!" from the others.]
Jackie: "...different."

Difference, as curtly demonstrated by Jackie, is perceived as 'yucky'. These girls often vacillated between difference being perfectly acceptable, and its signification of unattractiveness. Catherine's lack of assurity in this discussion reminded me of Sam, Wayne and Jacob's speechlessness when I asked them about the ethnic backgrounds of heavy metal bands, and if

\(^4\) The model Jackie was referring to is featured in Madonna's book Sex, where she appears with a shaved head, sporting tattoos.
there were any female townies (see chapter five). Being able to see attractiveness in a woman who did not conform to the normal thinness of female performers in music video was very difficult for Catherine and Jackie.

One afternoon Catherine mentioned a television talk-show that featured an interview with a female celebrity who posed in swimsuits for a calendar. The following discussion took place:

Catherine:  "There was on this sports [show], I don't know, I don't know what it was, I can't remember what I was watching, but they say a lotta guys go for...[excitedly] oh that's right! It was on Steve Vizard. Anyway, she was a model, and she posed for all these um, oh, she was, I think she was a sportswoman as well, and she posed for all these calendar shots, and like she was really, not really muscly but she had muscle. And apparently, I heard, it's not the skinny people the guys go after now, it's the muscly look."

Jackie:  "Not muscly, but fit."

[Lots of "yeah, yeah", "muscly" here.]

Catherine:  "Yeah, the fit look."

Jenny:  "So but why? What makes men go after that now?"

(?):  "Because it looks healthy."

[Jackie shouts over the top of the others as they try and answer too.]

Jackie:  "Because they're more energetic in bed! They've got more get up and go!"

[Riotous laughter at this point.]

Catherine:  "I reckon girls who are muscly look better..."

Melissa:  "Yeah, they do, don't they?"

Catherine:  "...than skinny girls...who've got nothing."

Jackie:  [Excitedly] "It was on, it was on um, there's two types of body-building, too, for women, you can either become [as] muscly as you can get, which you can only stop at some point, or there's where you've got muscles, but they only like, come out like when you tense them, but they can go back into hiding..."

Melissa:  [Laughing] "Go back into hiding!"

Jackie:  "...when they're all relaxed and that."
Sarah: "Detachable muscles."\(^5\)

[Others laugh.]

Susan Bordo takes a Foucauldian approach to the body, arguing that the body is not a stable, 'natural' phenomenon. Rather, like Foucault, Bordo regards the body as constantly "in the grip" of cultural practices (1988: 90). Bordo distinguishes between two types of body 'malleability': the "body-as-experienced" and the physical body. An example of the "body-as-experienced" is the medicalization of sexuality in the 19th century, which produced sexual 'secrets', "and eroticized the acts of interrogation and confession, too" (Bordo, 1988: 90). According to this view, social practice changed people's experiences of their bodies. Bordo compares this to the practice of dieting - an example of the physical body's malleability (1988: 91). Another example of the malleability of the body, and of the body as experienced, is the current emphasis on physical fitness. Jackie, who admitted to feeling guilty about not making herself throw up if she had eaten too much, and who also regularly went without lunch in order to lose weight, thinks that muscular women are "more energetic in bed". This is another example of the recognition that girls preen, starve and shape their bodies to please the supposed likes and dislikes of men.

The body can be 'sculpted' through a certain diet (which may include drugs) and exercise routines. What would once have been considered unfeminine, muscular, 'wobble-free' bodies, are now experienced as sexy, desirable bodies. What Catherine has identified as 'chubbiness' is actually female flesh that moves. The fact that the 'chubby' woman is black is also significant. Bell hooks (1994) argues that black women in Western culture are rarely seen as attractive, with their hair, skin colour, noses and body shapes generally being seen as 'ugly'.

**CHINKS IN THE ARMOUR**

In the section below I look at the way in which bodies and clothing and adornment (much of which could be considered sexual iconography) in music video and the wider context of pop music, are understood by the students to denote sexual orientation. Looks can be deceiving however, and challenges to the gender order are everywhere. Such contradictions can be viewed as 'chinks in the armour' of heterosexist culture.

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\(^5\) Sarah is making a pun of the title of King Missile's song, 'Detachable Penis'.
On one occasion I was discussing with the five girls how certain items of clothing were used in music videos and popular culture generally to suggest sexual orientation. We talked about stereotypical femininity and dresses, and what lesbians might wear (short hair, overalls, look 'butch', and so on). Sarah, who frequently voiced disdain for 'girly' girls and who loved to ride motorbikes, made this comment:

Sarah: [Indignantly] "Why can't lesbians wear dresses?"
Jackie: "They do."
Jenny: "They can."
Sarah: "I don't wear dresses, and I'm not a lesbian."

On another occasion Sarah wrote this comment:

I think 'Gender Benders' are dickheads, but I don't really care much about it. (Sarah: w)

Arguably she is bending her gender by not conforming to stereotypical femininity. What gives Sarah status - hanging out with boys, riding motorbikes, not wearing dresses - would give a boy (who hangs out with girls, plays netball and wears feminine clothes) the reputation of a 'poofer', perhaps earning him a beating. Tim also thought little of gender benders, and Michael found the whole issue a source of amusement:

Gender benders are stupid they look really gay, some people can't tell if they are male or female. (Tim: w)

I think transsexuals are mixed up. Seriously, they must have played with dolls at a young age. (Michael: w)

Michael assumption that all transsexuals are men is evident in his suggestion of them 'playing with dolls at a young age' - presumably there is nothing 'wrong' with girls playing with dolls. His suggestion that playing with dolls could determine a man's sexuality is actually concurrent with Butler's (1990) philosophy, that gender determines sex.

The issue of sexual preference being evident in a person's dress caused quite a stir amongst the students. The conversation below takes a curious turn when the disgust and shock expressed towards homosexuality becomes a source of amusement and interest. This is perhaps suggestive of the simultaneous fascination and repulsion that many boys feel towards homosexuality.
Sam: "You can tell Madonna is bi-sexual because of her book."

Jacob: "Because she just puts it out in her filmclips anyway."

Jenny: "So how do you tell? Someone like..."

Jacob: "If I ever found out that any of my favourite bands are poofers, I would, I wouldn't listen to 'em."

Wayne: "Like Nirvana. Ooh, we just found out that they're like..."

Jacob: "I know, they're gay."

Jenny: [In surprise] "They're gay?"

Wayne: [Speaking very fast and excitedly] "They're gay! They're hangin' off each other in Hot Metal 6..."

Jenny: "Really?"

Jacob: "Ohh? Really?"

Wayne: "Yeah, the drummer and the bass player, and I was readin' um, thingo that said, like the singer and the guitarist, like he said um, if I wasn't married 8, I'd rather be um..."

Jenny: "If I wasn't married?!"

Wayne: "...if I wasn't married I'd rather be um, suckin' on some old guy's cock or something. That's what he said."

Jenny: "Really?"

Wayne: "Yeah, ohh, I just felt like punchin' him in the head."

[Jacob and Sam are obviously in shock here, making lots of incredulous noises.]

Wayne: "That's what he said, something like that."

Sam: "Wouldn't ya just love to shoot 'em?"

Jacob and Wayne: "Mmm, yep."

Sam: "It's shockin', that is."

Jacob: "It's sad. Well ya can't tell."

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6 *Hot Metal* is a heavy metal music magazine. The edition they are referring to contained still shots from the US television program, *Saturday Night Live*, which saw Kurt Cobain and fellow Nirvana member, Chris Novoselic, "indulge in a sloppy French kiss" (Morell, 1993: 92).

7 Jacob had not seen this article before.

8 Wayne is referring to Kurt Cobain who was married to Courtney Love, lead singer of the band, *Hole.*
Sam: "You can't really tell, yeah. They're mostly heterosexual though, you know."
Jacob: "Yeah."
Jacob: "I mean Elton John always had a certain..."
[Others burst out laughing.]
Jacob: "...a certain thing about him..."
Wayne: "George Michael!"
Jacob: "...and then finally he [Elton John] admitted it."
Wayne: "Ah, Freddie Mercury - didn't know about that, and then one day he goes, 'I got AIDS', and the next day he's dead."
[Others laugh.]
Sam: "It's shockin', eh?"
Jacob: [Laughing] "Yeah, I know."

I can remember this incident very well. Jacob looked like he was going to pass out. Looking absolutely devastated, Jacob listened in horror as Wayne lasciviously told him and Sam of the magazine article. At this time, Kurt Cobain (who committed suicide in 1994) was still alive. Nirvana was a very popular band, both in the US and internationally. Their musical style - punk inspired grunge, with heavy metal overtones - earnt them many fans of Sam's, Jacob's and Wayne's ilk. Cobain's anti-homophobic views, lyrical brilliance and 'softer' songs also gained Nirvana a wide following outside of heavy metal circles (see Morell, 1993).

The boys' collective conclusion that 'Nirvana are gay' is indicative of their understanding that anything other than homophobia is equated with homosexuality. Although Cobain was well known for his anti-homophobic stance, these boys were not aware of this, nor of the possibility that men who live a heterosexual lifestyle can feel affably towards homosexual men. Butler explains the way the dualistic 'male/female' and 'heterosexual equals natural' logic perpetuates itself in this way:

The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of "identities" cannot "exist" - that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not "follow" from either sex or gender. (1990: 17)
Cobain’s "shockin' revelation that he would like to fellate a man means that his credibility as a heavy metal hero for these boys is immediately dissipated. *Nirvana's* 'fall' is met with declarations of desiring to do violent things to them - shoot them, punch them. Remarkably though, after all this talk of "you can't tell", Sam asserts that, "[t]hey're mostly heterosexual though, you know". The others agree. I then asked Sam, Jacob and Wayne about the practice of featuring male popular music performers surrounded by women in music videos, and if women ever appeared surrounded by men.

**Jacob:** "It's more, I don't know, like the people that are on the filmclips with women around don't usually get 'em anyway..."

**Wayne:** "Well Prince doesn't, but he's like a little..."

**Jacob:** "Jeremy Jordon..."

**Sam:** "He's gay anyway, I think."

**Jacob:** "He has to be. He loves himself."

**Jenny:** "Why do they bother giving themselves this heterosexual image then?"

**All:** "I know, I know..."

**Jacob:** "Because he [Jeremy Jordan] just shows his body off, and (*), he just thinks he's wonderful..."

**Jenny:** "So why do people who are trying to sell these songs, I mean, making these videos, why do they bother with having all these women in various dress or undress?"

**Jacob:** "To make themselves look good."

**Jacob:** "To make them look like they're big studs."

**Jenny:** "I mean, who are they appealing to? Why do they bother?"

**Jacob:** "I reckon they've got the girls around them so the guys think, you know, they're..."

[Others smirk and giggle.]

**Jacob:** "Yeah, yeah, you see a good looking girl in the filmclip, and you go, 'Uh, uhl!' Then you look at it. [Pause.] And people that do that sort of thing love themselves anyway."

**Sam:** "I suppose, with women surrounded by men, Madonna sort of does sometimes, doesn't she?"

**Jacob:** "But they're all usually gay anyway."
Sam: "Yeah, I know. I know, it’s like, have you seen In Bed with Madonna? There’s only one dancer in that that’s not gay."

Jacob: "And you still wonder about him, anyway. [He laughs.]

Wayne: "No, but he looks like, but like you watch him and if you’ve watched him, he sits there and goes, ‘I don’t want to hang around with them, they’re all [gay]...’ and you can tell he’s serious, he’s real oh..."

Jacob: "He’s stupid."

Sam and Wayne put themselves in a tenuous position here. By Jacob declaring all Madonna’s men to be gay, he seems to reject the possibility of her holding power over men. By assimilating gayness in Madonna’s male dancers with femininity, Jacob diminishes their potential as men with access to power. In chapter four, I used a comment of Jhally’s to suggest that male sexualization involves developing a voyeuristic gaze. This gaze does not only take in women however. Men in music video are equally subject to the scrutiny of the young male viewer. Lest they possibly be construed as anything less than ‘masculine’, Jacob, Wayne and Sam continually assess the sexual orientation of male performers. Those men who ‘love’ themselves cannot be taken seriously, and therefore are ineffectual as powerful, heterosexual men. ‘Loving’ yourself in this context means either having the appearance of, or actively paying attention to, one’s physical appearance. This is okay for women, but for men, it is connected with homosexuality, because paying attention to the detail of one’s hair, make-up, clothing, facial expressions and movements is considered feminine.

As heavy metal fans, these boys exist precariously in the world of music video. Their interest in popular music predisposes them to considerable pleasure in music video viewing, which in turn increases their knowledge of popular music. Yet many men in popular music videos push the acceptable boundaries of masculinity to its limit. Even ‘worse’, there are those performers, like Nirvana, who appear heterosexual, yet validate homosexual desire. Such a realisation alerts these boys to be ever vigilant, as Jacob’s final comment - “He’s stupid” - suggests.

Connell (1995) argues that the lack of hegemonic masculinity exhibited by gay men is the reason they are viewed as feminine. Lesbians are also often labelled masculine because they do not exhibit femininity.
With this in mind, and given student comments about how people look like 'poofers' or appear 'butch', I asked the students\(^9\) to respond in written form to a number of questions. I asked the students what was the main sexual orientation of music video performers, and whether or not it was possible to identify this by merely looking. They generally felt that although most performers were heterosexual, it was difficult to tell just by looking. (For Jacob, Wayne and Sam, the Nirvana incident had quite an impact on their answers to these questions.)

Mostly heterosexual but you can't really tell. Madonna is bi-sexual because she shows it in her film clips she doesn't care. Nirvana are gay. I hate them now. (Sam: w)

You can't tell who is gay unless they display it openly. (Jackie: w)

Mostly heterosexual, some are bi-sexual like Madonna who openly expresses this in her clips. (Wayne: w)

You can't tell if they're poofers or normal people unless it is on their film clip or unless they tell the public. (Jacob: w)

Most music videos have heterosexuals in them and only a few bisexuals are shown. I have never seen a homosexual film clip except for Madonna which is also under the bisexual category. (Sasha: w)

Those who felt it was possible to 'tell' a performer's sexuality from a video clip linked this clearly with the 'opposite' sex:

Heterosexual, because they usually have the opposite sex in the filmclip. (Sarah: w)

Heterosexual. You can not really tell from the video clip unless the artist tries to portray his own sexuality. In most video clips it is [a] guy chasing after a girl or vice versa. (Andrea: w)

It is mainly heterosexual because a lot sing love songs about the opposite sex. (Melissa: w)

Heterosexual, because most men are with women or women are with men. If not, if there is a group of females, they may be singing about men. (Catherine: w)

\(^9\) Nine students responded to these questions. They were: Jacob, Sam, Wayne, Sasha, Jackie, Catherine, Andrea, Sarah and Melissa.
These students recognised that generally it is difficult to tell a music video performer's sexual orientation 'just by looking'. Several of them do point to one defining characteristic of heterosexuality: the appearance of the 'opposite sex'. Hence if a girl is with a guy, or vice versa, they are automatically assumed to be heterosexual. The physical body can convey complex cultural meanings, as the cultivation of the body (discussed below) indicates.

Plucked into Submission?

In chapter five a discussion initiated by Catherine on femininity and masculinity in relation to music video, culminated in her admission that she liked 'Erica' from Baywatch because she did not pluck her eyebrows. That discussion continues below:

Catherine: "I sort of like her because she doesn't pluck her eyebrows."
[Laughter.]
Catherine: "So I sit there and go 'hrrr!'."
[She demonstrates how she plucks her eyebrows. Lots of laughing and acknowledgment of this issue.]
(?:) "My mum does that to me [plucks her eyebrows]."
Melissa: "I never pluck my eyebrows, and she [her mother] always gets them."
Jackie: "I don't pluck my eyebrows."
Catherine: "I know, it hurts."
Jackie: "I know."
Sarah: "My sister's got this little, you know, thing [arched eyebrow] that goes up..."
Jenny: "I hate thin eyebrows."
Jackie: [Sarcastically to me] "God you've got bushy eyebrows, like, any thinner and..."
Jenny: "Yeah I know...I haven't got any anyway, so there's no problem."
Jackie: "Mmm, don't bother about it."
Catherine: "My Mum did mine the other day and she was hopin' it was going, she said 'it'll hurt, it'll hurt, it'll hurt'. She didn't like pluck them, she was just shapin' them. She goes, 'it'll hurt, it'll hurt, it'll hurt'. I go, 'I don't
care, I don't care'. She's sitting there, she's rippin' 'em out going, 'does it hurt?'. And she's goin', 'ohh, this one's gunna hurt', and I'm just sittin' there and she goes, 'did it hurt?' and I said, 'nuh!'. And she's gone, 'oh'. She was really disappointed."

Jenny: "It didn't hurt at all?"
Catherine: "Not that much."
Sarah: "Did you wax it?"
[Chorus of "Oooh!" All talking at once about the pain of waxing.]
Catherine: "She was doin' it quick though."
Melissa: "Yeah but mine gets so bushy that it does that..."
Sarah: "Yours get so bushy you look like [†]."
[Inaudible, but all laugh.]
Jackie: "Mine used to be so blonde that I had to put a colour through them, and now the colour won't come out."
Catherine: [Incredulously] "Do you really?"
Jackie: "They used to be jet-black."
[Laughter at Jackie's eyebrows.]
Jenny: "It'll grow out eventually."
Jackie: "Eventually, yeah."

Eyebrows do not immediately come to mind when thinking about sexual iconography in music video and popular cultural texts generally. This conversation indicates that 'sexualization' is not necessarily connected to biology. The foci on breasts, buttocks, and hips can confuse the issue. The concept of the biological 'fact' of a female body serves to naturalize girls' and women's obsessions with the perfect, womanly body. Eyebrows however, serve no biological function. The thickness or thinness of one's eyebrows is determined by one's age, hair type and colouring; biological sex has no bearing on the differences between people's eyebrows. The fact that these girls and their mothers find their eyebrows problems to be dealt with speaks loudly and clearly about what is at stake here. Chapkis (1988) states that it is women's responsibility to be beautiful. This overt pressure to submit to painful eyebrow plucking also indicates that to be feminine is to consent to pain. This sort of masochism then becomes a bodily experienced practice and can even take on a moral significance. (Good girls let their mothers pluck their eyebrows.) It suggests a correlation between female pleasure and pain.
In chapter one I outlined Hauser's (1987) discussion of Foucault's term, 'the deployment of sexuality'. This abstract concept can be seen in action in the mother/daughter practice of eyebrow plucking - the desire for which is created culturally. Music video is a significant part of Western culture for young people, and as such it is indicative of sub-cultural fashions, as well as factoring in the structuring of desires. The practice of mothers conveying their knowledge to their daughters that eyebrows matter to femininity, is a part of the process of sexualization, whereby the eyebrows of childhood are shaped into the eyebrows of womanhood - contingent upon the ever changing norms of fashion. Currently, thin, arched eyebrows are fashionable, as music videos, television programs and magazines clearly show. Despite the pain, the 'possibility of knowledge' is very seductive. Not all sexualization is physically painful. The section below outlines another conversation between the girls and stands as another example of 'the deployment of sexuality' - or sexualization.

Dirty Minds and Nice Girls

In chapter four I discussed the importance of knowledge in relation to other forms of popular culture. I also included an excerpt from a transcript of a discussion between Jackie, Sarah, Melissa, Catherine and Andrea about the music video 'Hip Hop Hooray'. I pointed out how one exchange between Andrea, Catherine and Sarah was noteworthy for its silence on an implicitly sexual act. Andrea and Sarah position themselves as 'knowers' by recognising that the woman's act of removing her underpants is implicitly sexual, whereas Catherine does not, unwittingly positioning herself as an 'unknower'. During the second watching of this clip, the group discuss it in more detail, rewinding it and watching it several more times to understand it. In the manner which became typical of this group's interaction, the conversation meanders. I include it verbatim to once again illustrate recurrent themes - sexuality, body fashions, male and female desire - and the impossibility of discussing one cultural form in isolation from others or from lived experiences; in other words, intertextuality.
Jenny: "Alright, we'll go onto 'Hip Hop Hooray', um, what's that woman doing, like..."
[Laughter.]
Jackie: "Taking off her knickers?"
[General chorus of "taking off her knickers".]
Jenny: "Who's telling us the story, I mean, what is it about? Is it a male perspective or a female perspective?"
[Laughter.]
Jackie: "Male fantasy, I reckon"
[Echoes of "male fantasy".]
Jackie: "I was reading in a magazine that most women dream about having raped or gang raped..."
Andrea: "Yeah I read that too!"
Jackie: "...for their fantasy too. Did you read that too?"
Melissa: "What? Who said that?"
Catherine: "Most women's fantasies is to get raped?"
Jackie: "Yeah."
Melissa: "Really?"
Andrea: "Ya reckon? I don't reckon."
Catherine: "I read there was on this thing, there was in this um magazine or something about these guys or something and like it was both females and males..."
Jackie: "Was that in Dolly?"
Catherine: "I don't know."
Jackie: "No, I read mine in..."
(?): "I only read Cosmopolitan."
Catherine: "...their fantasies, and what they prefer, and most guys liked girls in school uniform."
Melissa: "Really?"
Jackie: "Yeah, and most guys don't like girls skinny."
Melissa: "Not these uniforms though!"
Catherine: "No, but school uniforms, but their fantasy were, were girls in school uniforms."
Jenny: "Why do you think..."10
[ Catherine emits a long, tortured sounding, guttural moan/scream in response.]

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10 I did not have to finish this question as the girls already anticipated my question of why men like girls in school uniform.
Jackie: "They're young...innocent!"
Catherine: "Because they wear 'em [school dresses] short."
Melissa: "And they wear 'em tight."
Jackie: "No, I say that..."
Catherine: [Shouting] "But they wear them short!"
Jackie: [Shouting] "...because they're pure and innocent!"
Jenny: "And who would be in control?"
Jackie: "They [men] would...they know more...supposedly."
[Others laugh.]
Catherine: "I know. I reckon it's sick, I really do, I reckon it's really sick."
Jackie: "It is."
Catherine: "But I didn't understand that video clip, that 'Hip Hop Hooray'. I didn't understand why she did it."
Andrea: "Mmm, mm."
Catherine: "I didn't get it."
Jackie: "She slept with someone."
Catherine: "'Cause wasn't she watching him on the tele?"
Jenny: "Mmm, mm."
Catherine: "Very weird."
Jackie: "It's like that um, that Madonna one, where she comes home, and she's rinsing out her knickers and bras and blood comes off 'em and everything."
Jenny: "Blood?"
Jackie: "Mmm, I think so, I've got it on the video."
[Everyone laughs, as they know Jackie has an extensive music video collection.]
Jackie: "What don't I have on my videos!"
Catherine: "But I've never seen that video clip ['Hip Hop Hooray'], I haven't seen all of it - has anybody seen the rest of it?"
Jackie: "Yeah, it's boring."
Jenny: "I suppose it's like this male fantasy thing, of like she's so into watching him on the television that, you know, she gets all hot and sweaty..."
[Someone gulps here, "huh!"]
Jackie: "I get it! I get it, yep!"
Sarah: "She gets all juicy in her pants for him."
Jackie: "Yeah, I was just about to say that. She's watching tele, and all of a sudden, she's lost control, she's lost it."
[Lots of laughing here.]
Jenny: "So then she has to wash her undies, or whatever they are."
Catherine: "Oh that's disgusting ... it's off."
Melissa: "It is, isn't it?"
Andrea: "Mmm."
Melissa: "It would've been males that would've thought of that, just to bring out the..."
[Affirmations of "yeah", "mmm" as Melissa says this.]
Catherine: "And she walks up to the television, I mean..."
Melissa: "I would never have thought of that."
Sarah: "Didn't you think of that?! First time I saw it, I thought of that!"
Jackie: "I didn't think, I only thought of it then after someone said she was watchin' the tele then she went, and I was thinkin', 'ohh'."
Andrea: "Bit sus[picious]."
Jackie: "Must be all those videos I watch."
Catherine: "Well I didn't, 'cause I'm a nice girl."
[Loud reactions - indistinguishable.]
Jackie: "I, I have a dirty mind - I can't help it."
Catherine: "Well someone's got to, haven't they?"
Jackie: "Runs in the family."

My first attempt to initiate an analysis of the music video gets swept aside in the girls' discussion of 'male fantasy'. Jackie positions herself as conversant with the idea of 'male fantasies', the content of which - women's rape fantasies - shocks Melissa, Catherine and Andrea. Though she finds this repugnant, Catherine is eager to share her knowledge of another male fantasy, that "most guys liked girls in school uniform". Jackie's assertion that men like women dressed up as schoolgirls" because they're pure and innocent", could be seen as the 'flip-side' of the female rape fantasy. That is, in a masculine hegemony, male and female sexual fantasies are premised on the erotic innocence of girls/women - either as the wearers of signifiers of innocence (school uniforms), or as having to be raped rather than possessing the desire to have sex. Although there is general consensus that this is "really sick", the realisation that sexual
innocence is highly prized (at least mythologically) can be evidenced in Catherine’s final comments that she is a "nice girl". Thus Catherine is able to use her lack of knowledge as leverage to make a grab for power in the discussion. Bordo (1988: 91) argues that in relations of power, the dominated can use their position to gain power for themselves. Whilst Catherine is not 'dominated' by Jackie, she is less knowledgable on topics which Jackie is fully conversant with. Catherine uses her ignorance to manoeuvre herself into an authorial position. Jackie's position here is quite different to Wayne's when he describes Kurt Cobain's admissions to Hot Metal. Like Catherine, Wayne grabs the 'moral high-ground' by positioning himself within masculine hegemony.

My comments in the above transcript demand analysis too. As the 'asker of the questions' I was very wary of the students' comments being shaped by my questions and information. I did not want to tell them what I thought this music video was about, I wanted them to articulate their own readings - after all, that is what I am arguing is different about my study. After their second attempt to interpret the video, I drew on their earlier comments about male fantasies to push the discussion along. This could be read as teacher talk being devoid of explicit sex talk (Epstein and Johnson, 1994), however I wanted them to work out their own understanding, rather than me telling them my understanding. As soon as I made this connecting comment, they all indicate that they understand the insinuation of masturbation in the video. None of the girls 'name' it as such, however.

**Bimbos, Studs, Sluts and Poofs**

In my after-school sessions with Andrea, Melissa, Jackie, Catherine and Sarah, they often levelled heavy criticism at the 'bimbos' in music videos. 'Bimbo' is an interesting term because it seems not to moralise in the way that the term 'slut' does. Bimbo implies lack of intelligence, which is quite different to implying sexual immorality. Although girls (and boys) are still engaging in a type of misogynistic practice by labelling women bimbos, the term bimbo appears quite benign. Or is it? Does the term bimbo 'neutralise' sexual power? A 'slut' or 'whore' is seen to have power through the realm of the sexual - she has no allegiances to any man, and therefore cannot be controlled by men. Those female performers who not
only dare to speak the sexual but also to control the sexual, are punished with labels that connote immorality.

Madonna was never referred to as a bimbo by any of the students, whereas Kylie Minogue was perceived to fit the bimbo mould. In much the same way that non-masculine men are regarded by the boys as ‘poofs’ to neutralise their power, women who fulfil the ‘erotic spectacle’ role in music videos are also neutralised by the label of bimbo. In chapter five I referred to Simpson’s thesis that for the male teenage heavy metal fan this genre is a fantasy space where he can rehearse adult masculinity by being “He-Man freeing She-Woman with his mighty sword” (1994: 191). But as well as the ‘babes’ who need rescuing in heavy metal, there are the sluts and whores who need to be neutralised:

Against the ‘babes’/‘chicks’ there is posited the ‘groupie’, the Whore of Babylon who threatens to literally gobble men up; in the words of Sammy Hagar from Van Halen, explaining why he steers clear of groupies, ‘by the time you meet one of those girls she’s already sucked about three yards of dick’. (Simpson, 1994: 191)

Thus the groupie is feared for what she is seen to ‘take away’ from the man (Simpson, 1994: 192). She must be obliterated, (which is exactly what has occurred in the illustration on Jackie’s Guns ‘N’ Roses’ t-shirt).

‘Studs’ - those men also depicted as erotic and sexual spectacles - exist precariously in the world of music video. As outlined in chapter two, Dyer (1992) claims that the sexual spectacle of the male ‘pin-up’, or the stud, is unstable. According to Dyer the stud ‘does violence’ to well established codes of who is looked at and who looks. Although the male pin-up appears to address women, it really functions as "the actual working out of male sexuality" (Dyer, 1992: 269). And because the penis “can never live up to the mystique implied by the phallus”, (Dyer, 1992: 274), it is the straining to be masculine that "makes a man a man" (1992: 276). Although Jackie, Catherine and Sarah state that they do not like ‘pretty boys’, they all enjoy looking at the eroticised male body in music video in some form or other. For example, Jackie liked to see Axl Rose’s muscles "rippling up the back of his legs”; Catherine found Peter Andre’s chest to be "unbelievable”; and Sarah was just as active (as were Andrea and Melissa) in assessing male bodies in music videos. Although the girls had different tastes and preferences as to how they liked their male popular music performers or model to look, ("rough around the edges", for example), they did not find the idea of the male as sexual spectacle
objectionable. The boys however, viewed most male pin-ups with scorn. Because studs are seen by boys to 'love themselves', their masculinity is questionable. As stated in chapter four, McRobbie (1991: 26) suggests that the, "subcultural elevation of style [can] threaten the official masculinity of straight society which regards fussiness as cissy".

As mentioned above, I asked the students what it meant when they saw men in music videos surrounded by women, and if they ever saw the reverse, that is, women surrounded by men. I also asked if being surrounded by the 'opposite sex' made the performer powerful, and what effect this has on teenage relationships.

He [Snow\textsuperscript{11}] looks like he can get any girl he wants. They usually have power over women because they are famous, and women really like them. I think it makes guys look for girls who look "sexy", not girls who are just wearing their bumming around clothes. (Sarah: w)

It makes them look like they are the guy who is cool to like. The only reason they have power over women is because of their body and their looks. If guys see this they will try and act like this to attract all the girls. (Sasha: w)

This is supposed to make the male performer look like a real stud. It is supposed to show that he could score with any of the girls so [he] would be a real legend in the eyes of his mates. If a girl did this then she would probably be labelled a 'slut'. Men like this appear to have power over women. This may affect [teenage views] if men think that they are superior to women or can sleep around. (Andrea: w)

It makes them [male performers] cool because they've got women wanting them and lusting after them. They can [have] whoever they want and use and hurt the women. It makes male viewers think they can treat women like dirt. (Melissa: w)

The male looks good and cool because females are around them if they weren't [good and cool] the females wouldn't be there. This shows that men have power over women. I think this is wrong because it degrades women. (Catherine: w)

These readings seem to suggest that girls perceive music videos to be very much constructed around the teenage boy's fantasy world, where 'He-Man' gets 'She-Woman' (Simpson: 1994: 191). These comments also suggest that gender is seen not only to be performative, but to be

\textsuperscript{11} In 1993 Snow had a 'Number One' single, 'Informer' and at least one other Top 40 single.
performed to achieve certain goals. Although many male fantasies of power and control over women are enacted in music videos, the boys appeared uncomfortable when asked to look at and evaluate the men in music videos. Jacob disapproved of men as erotic spectacles in music videos because it did not fit his idea of masculinity. He and Wayne were also in no doubt as to why clips featured men surrounded by adoring women:

People that do that sort of thing love themself. They have the girls on the clip so the guys look at it. (Jacob: w)

They try to make themselves look good. They use women to attract males to the clip and the effect on [the] female is to make him look irresistible. (Wayne: w)

Presumably the precept of homophobia precludes any voyeuristic gazing at male bodies. The presence of women frees the boys from being labelled homosexual, and their dismissal of men who 'love themselves' clinches their status as males within masculine hegemony.

Sam, still recovering from his shocking discovery that "Nirvana are gay," posed this question:

If they dress up like Prince or Snow they think they can get women. But they don't. Why do they have women in their film clips when they're gay? (Sam: w)

Jackie assessed the situation in terms of her theory that music video is a fantasy space:

Teenagers can relate to these performers because that's how their fantasy relationship is like. Guys want lots of women who they can shake off whenever they feel to show they have power and control in front of their friends. (Jackie: w)

Jackie's reading is significant as she reads the proliferation of 'babes' in music video as an orchestration of men, in order to bolster their own self image. Her comment that boys must be able to "shake off" women, is important. A 'whore' cannot be 'shaken off' but a bimbo can be. She also suggests that masculinity is performed by boys for their peer group, rather than for girls. Simpson argues that although 'girls' are very much part of the "rock and roll legend", they are only important insofar as "the exchange they bring between 'the guys'" (1994: 192). That is, a 'babe' or
bimbo girlfriend brings virility to the teenage boy, which earns him respect as a masculine young man. Jackie's comment was written at least six months after our discussion about her t-shirt, and I think our conversations and analyses of music videos had made her slightly cynical about gender in heavy metal.

I also asked the students whether or not women are shown in music videos surrounded by men. Wayne, Jacob and Sam made these comments:

Madonna is usually surrounded by men but they are gay. Madonna would have power of every guy. (Sam: w)

Madonna would have total power over a guy. (Jacob: w)

Madonna is usually surrounded by males and can hold heaps of power over them. (Wayne: w)

Although Sam 'neutralises' Madonna's power by claiming that the men in her videos are gay, he and Jacob and Wayne are quite resolute that Madonna is able to hold power over all men - gay or heterosexual. These comments show that Jacob, who earlier seemed reluctant to attribute power to Madonna, acknowledges her power here. To these fans of heavy metal, Madonna is 'the Whore'; she is not only the woman who can threaten their virility, but she is also not a groupie - she is the rock star. She is in a position of power as Madonna the performer, she is in control of her sexuality and she has the sort of muscular body which signifies power (Dyer, 1992). On its own, Madonna's body could be construed as that of a bimbo, however coupled with her status, sexuality and attitude, her body can be read as an allegory of her power. Madonna is a truly daunting and scary figure to these boys because she does not need rescuing like a babe does, and she is never neutralised like the groupie. Although she might look 'pretty' or sluttish at times, and may play at being submissive, ultimately she remains in control. Madonna is the slut who triumphs - her aim is sexual gratification, she obtains it and then 'walks'. She does not suffer, nor is she punished. And a woman who cannot be controlled in one way or another (rescued or obliterated) is perceived to be a dangerous woman in Western culture. If, as Foucault tells us, power is exercised through the realm of the sexual, then feminists need to locate themselves in this realm and fight back. This is exactly what Madonna does, although whether or not teenage girls can wage the sort of 'war' that Madonna does, is questionable.
In relation to theorizing Madonna, the boys are placed in quite an unenviable predicament. Because Madonna is sexually receptive to men, if these boys argued that Madonna did not 'have power', they could have been construed as gay; as not responsive to the sexy Madonna.

Andrea and Jackie viewed the situation of women surrounded by men in music video in a complex manner. They recognise that to be the 'slut' or 'whore' that Madonna is, risks being not only rejected by men, but annihilated like the woman on Jackie's t-shirt. Although all of the girls loved Madonna, they did not necessarily want to emulate her.

Sometimes women appear surrounded by men, but not very often. Women may have power over men in this case, but it only looks this way, it may not necessarily be like that. (Andrea: w)

When women are surrounded by men that is [so as] they can have the control they want. They may not have the power but wish it. (Jackie: w)

Not usually, if they do people think they're sluts. Women who are portrayed like this are the same as the men (famous) so they do [have power]. Girls usually stay with the one guy because they don't want guys to think they have been "around". Madonna usually is surrounded by guys. (Sarah: w)

If men are surrounding a woman it tends to make her look more like a slut not cool or anything. This affects females because they don't want to be surrounded by men so they don't look like a slut. (Catherine: w)

Women do not have as much power over men as men have over women. No I don't believe they do, it's like the woman is still going after the guy. (Melissa: w)

In few videos are women surrounded by men. This means that only really beautiful and attractive women can get all the guys. This is not very common. If girls see this they will try to get as slim and as beautiful to attract the guys. (Sasha: w)

It is nice to think that girls would emulate Madonna. That they would act upon their observations about how "in control", "strong" and "powerful" she is, and decide to copy her. The pull of heteroreality however, is much more pervasive than Madonna's images. Their lives are complex. They recognise the harsh reality of the sexual double standard, yet they still are prepared to accept it, even in view of Madonna's triumphs. They may not be able to be like Madonna in real life, but her songs and videos create a
fantasy space within which they can 'express' themselves and survive. Some critics (for example, Tetzlaff, 1993; Dubose Brunner, 1995) have blamed Madonna for the fact that teenage girls cannot emulate her. I find this blame unjustified. It is much more likely that it is the context within which Madonna is read, rather than any deficiency in her texts, which leaves girls little room to move. Below I discuss a filmic parallel of Madonna’s antics.

Feminist interest in the cinema and pleasure has focussed on the centrality of women. In film, sexual difference is constructed in such a way that "the gaze is split (men look, women are looked at)” (Gordon, 1984: 191). In her film Variety, Bette Gordon explores female pleasure in looking:

Feminists have been suspicious of pleasure promoted in the cinema, dependent as it is upon the objectification of the female body. Consequently, we have avoided dealing with sexual pleasure in film. The insertion of the questions posed by fantasy provides a point from which to begin, and a challenge to the notion of sexuality as a fixed identity. In fact, it is precisely the gap between sexual fantasy and sexual identity that provides a place for exploring a number of issues which surface at the intersection of feminism and film. (1984: 191)

Gordon (1984) argues that admitting our sexual fantasies, even to a lover, is taboo in Western culture. In Variety, the main character, Christine, breaks new ground:

Although the language of desire may be male, Christine’s articulation of sexual fantasy represents a new and radical activity. The film suggests that women, even in patriarchal culture, are active agents who interpret and utilize cultural symbols on their own behalf. (1984: 196)

Christine transgresses women’s usual sexual role. She tells her boyfriend her sexual fantasies, and enters the male domain of porn shops. "She speaks her fantasies, which silence men: they can't deal with her desire being spoken” (Gordon, 1984: 196). In the porn shops, Christine looks at the magazines. Men look at her, and she looks at them looking at women. Gordon argues that, "[m]en often leave when a woman enters an adult bookstore because they are caught in the act of looking” (1984: 196).

Gordon points out that in mainstream film, three 'looks' operate - the characters look at each other, the camera looks at its subject, and the
viewer watches (1984: 197). Gordon turns to the work of Paul Willeman
(1980) which suggests that,

pornography contains a fourth look: an observer looks at the viewer
of pornography, catching him in a taboo act...A woman in a porn
store represents the fourth look and so makes men uncomfortable.
Other men are complicit, but a woman is not. She is supposed to be
the object of their gaze. (Gordon, 1984: 197)

Madonna can be both the object of the viewer's gaze, and the one who
looks (at other characters in the text, and at the viewer). Madonna's
violations of who looks at whom 'makes' what Butler (1990) terms
'gender trouble'. DuBose Brunner (1995) sees Madonna's performances
not as an alternative to sexual violence in music video, but as operating
just as much within its logic. Drawing on Shari Benstock (1991) and bell
(like Madonna) can "subvert the dominant order" by reversing
subordinate positioning "the powerful roots of her female agency remain
locked in a phallic economy that brings her role under subjugation and
returns the male's role to that of the privileged conqueror". But does it?
Do Madonna's masquerades and parodies ultimately amount to nothing
more than a confirmation of men's positions as 'privileged conquerors'?
If answering this question *textually*, I may have agreed with Benstock,
hooks and DuBose Brunner. However, in light of the students' comments
above, I have begun to understand how significant and disruptive
Madonna's performances are.

**DISCursive Power**

My analysis of the student comments and conversations has been
premised on the Foucauldian notion that power exists in language and
social interactions. This power is what sustains our heterosexist culture.
Other factors - gender, class, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation - also operate
within masculine hegemony. For example, by virtue of being regarded as
an authority figure, interested in popular culture, middle class and older,
the students afforded me power in our interactions. Being knowledgeable
on a topic can harness power in one's favour, however in some cases this
is not so simple. For example, Jackie's knowledge of female sexuality
places her in the unfeminine position of having a "dirty mind", whereas
Catherine's lack of knowledge is used to position herself as a "nice girl" - a
'point scorer' within the heterosexist gender order. There are problems for boys too, as the transcript on Nirvana 'being gay' indicates. To be heterosexually masculine, they must shun unmasculine men but they must also demonstrate they can recognise gayness. In this section I look at a specific instance when some of the students in this study actively positioned themselves powerfully within discourse. I do this in the form of a methodological reflection, where I highlight the ethical dilemmas of conducting research with young people.

In chapter three, I outlined reasons why I decided to 'write myself into the text'. I also touched on the ethics and power dynamics involved in conducting research (Crinall, 1993; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989; Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994; Reinharz, 1992; Haug et al, 1987). In chapter four I discussed McRobbie's (1991) views on being sensitive to the 'small humiliations' of the researched. Building on the work of such scholars, I also want to draw attention to the question of ethics and power in research relationships. In pointing out the agency of the young people, I also want to discuss the benefits of following the researched to the places they wished to go.

When I conducted my research at Progress Secondary College, I generally felt that I was the main manipulator of power. That is, as 'the asker of the questions' I was seen to be knowledgeable. At times the students made 'power grabs' that contested my position of authority, however this was infrequent. One example is documented in chapter three when I used the word 'popstar' to describe members of bands. Jacob and Wayne seized this opportunity to position themselves as sophisticated music 'buffs' by their disinterest in pop. My use of the word 'popstar' meant that I did not have the knowledge that they did, therefore I was placed in a non-expert position. They regarded their interest in a 'real' band, Pantera for example, as separating them from unsophisticated 'teenyboppers'. I was relegated to the powerless position of teenybopper because I used the word popstar to ask them about male popular musicians that they liked.

Grabs for power amongst the students occurred with great frequency. This can be evidenced in interactions between Jacob, Wayne and Sam, for example, when Wayne and Sam contest Jacob's pronouncement that all 'Madonna's men' are gay. It can also be seen in the interactions between the five girls - a particularly good example is in the discussion of the music video 'Rump Shaker' in this chapter. However mostly I, as the 'asker' of the questions and primary 'chooser' of
the music videos, was positioned with access to power. This changed when I had a party for the students and teacher in my home.

In chapter one I outlined an exchange between a nursery school teacher and a pair of three and four year old boys, as told by Walker (1990). What this demonstrated was the use of language (discourse) to position the speaker powerfully. I found this a useful concept in understanding the students' behaviour in my flat at the party which I discuss below. Drawing on my discussion of power in chapter one, I want to argue that it is not only in language that power exists, but also in broader social interactions - in the unspoken and the physical. What transpired when I had a party for the students caught me off-guard. The following extract is from my fieldwork diary:

I videoed the last 45 minutes of the party. I had planned to run around with the video camera, asking them some final comments, observations about music video. However, on the night, it just seemed so inappropriate to try and get information out of the kids. Here they were, turning up to a party, and I was treating it like another source of data for me. I had the camera set up on a tripod, but I left it where it was, and only turned it on towards the end of the evening when they were playing truth or dare 21 - the card game '21', and the penalty for 'busting' was the choice of truth or dare. Funnily enough, everyone went for 'truths', (probably due to the confines of my flat), and they all revolved around the 'opposite' sex - crushes, dates, bodies, fantasies, embarrassing moments. I got asked what part of Michael's body (a class-member) did I like the most? I got so embarrassed that they could consider that a 27 year old woman, would look at a 15 year old boy's body in a sexual way! I felt very uncomfortable, and remembering that some of the kids call him Bart Simpson, I said I liked his nose because it reminded me of Bart. Michael is a very popular boy, and many of the girls like him. He's very cool, and has a groovy hair-cut. Although I got on well with him, my interactions with him were somewhat tentative as he resisted engaging with my questions. I was mortified that the kids would think that I'd be looking at his body. Thankfully he was absent from the party, and didn't hear this - but they probably wouldn't have asked the question if he was present. The next question I got was what was the most embarrassing moment I had ever had with a guy. I wracked my brain, but every embarrassing instance I could remember was associated with sex or alcohol or drugs, so I tried to think of how I could tell these stories without mentioning these things, but I couldn't, so I told them that I couldn't remember anything, and the kids were really disappointed, verging on pissed off, I think. Understandable, I had heard their truths, yet I felt responsible, as a role model for them. I also realise that they go home and tell their parents what I've said. So I don't
want the parents to withdraw their children from the study. It's controversial enough already, looking at gender and sexuality - how would they react to me telling the kids about my sexual encounters, or being drunk/stoned? I felt bad that I didn't 'come to the party' so to speak in honestly answering this question, but felt I couldn't. So they decided to ask me about my most embarrassing moment. I told a travelling tale of being in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with my friend, Sue Dalton. They seemed to enjoy this story, so I was glad that I could satisfy this question. (Fieldwork Diary, 1993)

I had this party because I wanted to express my thanks to the students and teacher for being so generous with their time. I also genuinely liked all of them and wanted to spend some non-research time with them. After I had organised the party, the idea of setting up a video camera to obtain more data occurred to me, but I did not really give this decision much thought. However I have not used the data that I recorded that night. Even though I captured some very insightful interactions, ethically I felt I should not use it. When I watched the video the day after the party, I saw the students having fun and being relaxed. Captured on the video were many moments that spoke loudly about how much they trusted me. I decided not to dissect and analyse this video in the manner that I did the transcripts of our interactions within the school setting. Instead, I have focussed on my reactions to the truth and dare game, and posed some questions about this game.

Whenever I read my reflection above, I feel extraordinarily embarrassed and cringe at some of the things I wrote. My discomfort with the students' questions alerts me to many things - my discomfort with being put on the spot, my poor handling of taboo subjects, my consistent erring on the side of caution. I have thought about rewriting or excluding this reflection, however being mindful of my supervisor's warning not to 'romanticise' myself, I have left it as it is.

Why did the students want to play this game of truth and dare? How did they feel when I would not answer their questions? Were they trying to embarrass me? Has my focus on music video made me privy to their private world? This methodological reflection opens up many issues: the exploitative nature of research; the 'neutral' role of the researcher; the asymmetrical relationship of those being researched; and the active participation of the researched in setting the agenda.
The students gave me a present of a video of a Paul Kelly\textsuperscript{12} concert, a Smash Hits magazine (complete with a free-standing Luke Perry\textsuperscript{13} cardboard cut-out), and a small embroidery which Sasha had made herself:

I just couldn't believe that they had got me a present, and that they were grateful to me. It just seemed so wrong that here was I, getting a PhD, they were pouring their hearts out to me for no worldly gain, and they get me a present. This is why I wanted to have the party, to say thank-you and express my gratitude to them. I didn't know what to say to the present - "you shouldn't have; I'm supposed to be thanking you, not the other way round". I was so touched, I almost started to cry, and if their parents hadn't started to arrive, I probably would have. Sasha embroidered a posy of flowers and framed it in a card for me. (Fieldwork Diary, 1993)

The young people in my study actively and assertively reversed the roles we had been positioned in at the school. Not only did they prove how well they knew me by selecting a video by one of my favourite performers, but they took the focus off themselves, and put me under their surveillance, firstly in the 'truth and dare' game, and secondly by drawing attention to my role - not as the researcher as I thought, but as their teacher and friend. They wanted to thank me for what I had enabled them to discuss and write about. These students were under no delusions as to the 'neutrality' of the researcher - they got to know me and my thoughts, ideas and my points of view. The truth and dare game was a very neat way of them asserting their power to have us sit down as equals where we were all compelled to disclose 'truths'. This contrasts with the situation in the classroom, where I was in control, asking all the questions. It was their turn to question me about the same sorts of things I had questioned them about. The difference was however, that the confidentiality which I had assured them about, did not exist for me. I was cautious in responding to their questions because I was aware that they may tell their parents about our conversations, and I was worried about repercussions. I was immediately reminded of how, at the outset of our discussions at the school (where I always had a tape recorder set up), the students constantly asked me who the tapes were for. For many weeks I needed to reassure them that they were just for me, not teachers or parents. Whilst I am reasonably confident that I did not answer the questions they wanted me

\textsuperscript{12} Paul Kelly is an Australian songwriter, singer and musician.
\textsuperscript{13} Luke Perry played 'Dylan' in the internationally successful US television series, Beverly Hills 90210.
to for a legitimate reason, my first methodological reflection above still reads as a rather worrying instance of a researcher who was afraid of answering student questions candidly. It also suggests that I have been very aware of the heterosexist culture of schools which positions students as either asexual or as oversexed (Epstein and Johnson, 1994; Davies, 1993; Walkerdine, 1990).

I have included these memories of the party as methodological reflections. They stand out as paradigms of the myth of the objective researcher, thus linking some of the theory outlined in chapter three with actual examples. These reflections also illustrate how power relations change in different settings, how power is not only existent in language, and how alternatives to dominant/submissive modes of interaction do exist.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided further insight into Haug et al’s (1987) concept of sexualization as outlined in chapter one. For example, I used the body technique of eyebrow plucking to further develop an understanding of Hauser’s (1987) discussion of Foucault’s term, ‘the deployment of sexuality’.

By investigating student readings of discourses of heterosexuality and homosexuality in music video, a greater understanding of the possible multiple readings of music video has been outlined. In comparison with DuBose Brunner’s textual analysis of heavy metal iconography, in this chapter the focus shifted from the semiotic to actual lived experience. In focussing on the story of a student who chose to wear a t-shirt featuring misogynistic representations of women, some understanding of girls position in heavy metal culture was gained. Similarly, the girls’ readings of ‘sexist’ music videos reveal a range of competing and conflicting ideas about the display of bodies in music videos. The detailed discussions of music videos that the girls had suggest that they do in fact involve themselves in an intellectualization process in relation to music video. When confronted by ‘sexist’ music videos, the girls worked hard to criticise and discredit such imagery, although there were often disputes amongst them as to what was sexist. My discussion of the party I had for the students further develops our understanding of how young people use popular cultural discourses to their own advantage. The students were
not shy about making 'grabs for power' at opportune moments, as my recollections of the party reveal. The notion of 'chinks in the armour', that is, that music video contains anti-heterosexual and anti-racist discourses, moves beyond limited textual analysis of music video.

Cultural and feminist critics have, at times, assimilated Madonna with the misogynistic portrayal of women in many music videos, for example, heavy metal music videos. Student readings of Madonna suggest an alternative reading of Madonna, however. This moves debate along from academic readings of music video towards readings grounded in young people's actual lived experiences.

The importance of music video in young people's lives has been highlighted throughout this dissertation, and it is particularly prominent in this chapter. Difference from the mainstream of teenage culture has been clearly identified by many students as undesirable. In the following and final chapter of this dissertation I provide an overview of the research and theory outlined above.
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CONCLUSIONS

In this section I provide an overview of the thesis in relation to social interaction and the production of pleasure, gender, theorizing the body, and sexualization and power. I draw conclusions in relation to each of these themes in terms of theory, evidence, methodology and music video scholarship. I also comment on the contribution of my study to the field, and make some recommendations for future research. I now reiterate some of my general concerns in relation to music video and gender, and then discuss some methodological issues.

Music video is part of the discursive field through which young people construct their gendered subjectivity, yet just how this occurs has not been adequately researched. When MTV was introduced in the US in 1981, it was met with an outbreak of moral panic. Immediately there were broad based claims that music videos were sexist, racist, violent, 'too sexy', classist and generally a 'bad' influence on young people. Academics responded swiftly to this moral panic by conducting a plethora of textual analyses of MTV and other music video networks/programs. Whilst the results of these studies were wide-ranging in their pronouncements about music video as a genre, most studies were methodologically similar. Very few studies actually made young audiences the focus of music video research. Although in recent years there has been a shift towards more positive readings of music videos, studies still remain heavily focussed on the text and not the audience. In my study of gender and music video I was most interested in exploring if, how and why young people are influenced by the text.

In my research I pointed to a number of ways in which young people become gendered, specifically in relation to music video. I demonstrated this through theory and through evidence from the study I conducted with a young audience. I drew my theoretical tools from feminist and poststructuralist theory, educational theory, and cultural studies. In relation to gender, music video and young people, my approach was inter-disciplinary and eclectic. The common threads in the theory I drew upon were feminism, cultural studies and poststructuralist theory.

In the introduction to my thesis I outlined a number of questions that I asked in relation to gender, music video, young people and methodology. Briefly these were: what determines one's approach to
research? How do one's 'best intentions' translate to the practical task of gathering data? Why have I chosen to identify myself as a feminist researcher? What is feminist research, and what is its relationship with theory, for example, poststructuralist theory? How do my life experiences and social positioning/s influence the ways in which my research was planned, conducted, understood and transformed into a doctoral dissertation? How has keeping a diary of my research contributed to methodological debates about the nature of participant-observation? How did my research actually 'get done'?

Like many feminist poststructuralist scholars, I have turned to the work of Foucault to explore the ways in which the very foundations of Western thought have disadvantaged women. My research supports the idea that feminist theory and practice can benefit from the selective use of poststructuralist 'tools'. By employing feminist and poststructuralist ideas, I exposed that which is usually unspoken and concealed in the research and writing process. The use of such tools has facilitated my goal of conducting research in an ethical and feminist manner. Both the structure of this dissertation and my use of specific research methods have flowed from feminist and poststructuralist thought. I have not written in the typically detached, 'objective' manner of much academic writing. I have included myself in a number of ways in this dissertation. These self reflexive accounts are only partial insights into my subjectivity, but nonetheless they do discuss what is usually relegated to the irrelevant within much academic writing. It is not so much that the reader needs to get an accurate picture of me, but that the sorts of issues and dilemmas common to researchers are made visible. In making such issues visible, extra light has been thrown on the topic of the research itself, as I will now make clear.

PLEASURE

When I first began my research into music video in 1992, an extensive library search on music video revealed the marginalized place of pleasure in this popular cultural form, as I showed in chapter four. In this section I indicated that as a fan of music video, and as a feminist interested in poststructuralist theory, I was able to identify the attraction that music video held for young people, and the sorts of interactions which young people had with music video. By exploring the concept of pleasure itself, I showed how the general Western and Christian antipathy towards
pleasure has influenced the ways in which academics, theorists, educators and 'moral guardians' of society regard young people's pleasures. Pleasures which are not those of white, middle class men have been pathologized as deviant. Because music video is seen to fall outside of mainstream culture, it has consistently been considered as potentially dangerous to young people. Educators, feminists, Christians, black activists, the Left, the Right (and many other groups) have expressed worries about the 'messages' which young people could be receiving from music video. In this dissertation I have investigated the legitimacy of some of these claims, whilst simultaneously taking care not to pathologize young people's pleasures.

In my small group work with eleven students I concluded that boys watch just as much music video as girls, if not more. Although all of the students named reasons why they watch music video, none of them were able to fully articulate the irrational allure of music video. Whether I considered this unknown quality as 'affect' (Grossberg, 1995), 'emotional realism' (Ang, 1985) or 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 1976), I showed it to be closely linked with the possibility of knowledge, and ultimately, power. The anticipation of pleasure sustains the desire to continue watching music videos, even when disappointments do occur. The young people in my study chose to view music video for pleasure and social interaction, with the latter being a corollary of the former.

As I showed, a good deal of learning and interpreting went on in the viewing process. For example, the cultural significance of, and prohibitions surrounding food for women meant that the girls in my study read music videos from a different perspective to boys. My research supports the view of Ang (1985) which is that emotional realism in texts is a key source of pleasure for viewers. This was weighed up by the students in my study in terms of discourse. For example, some boys identified with heavy metal bands whose masculinity and social standing matched their own, and girls often assessed music videos in terms of their 'storylines'. I also found gender, class and ethnicity to be inseparable in the readings that young people made of music videos. The intertextuality of popular culture became apparent as a range of other texts (for example, television programs, movies, magazines, compact discs, rock concerts and clothing) were referred to by the young people to explain/explore music video. Pleasure and sexuality were identified from the outset as contentious issues.
In terms of pleasure and methodology, I found that writing myself into the text was a pleasurable experience as well as a poststructuralist and feminist project. Girls' desire for romance and adult women academics' experiences have something in common - they both constitute a subordinated or silenced form of experience. Romance is not taken seriously; women's experiences of alienation in work and everyday life are not recognised and discussed as mainstream issues. When girls and women have the opportunity to watch, discuss or read about such experiences with other girls and women, enormous pleasure and satisfaction can be derived. As implied throughout, 'writing the self in' can be justified in poststructuralist and feminist terms. However it also fulfils another, 'secret' function: it fulfils female desire for narrative and pleasure, and for contemplation of subordinated experiences. This is demonstrated in my 'as a girl,' 'as a fan' and 'as a feminist' sections of Part One. In making this point I make a distinctive contribution to the feminist literature on research methodology.

My reasons for including my experiences as part of this dissertation were: to dispel the myth of the objective, distant author; to acknowledge my own active participation in the dominant discourses of gender, sexuality, age, race, class, religion, and the effects this has had on my research and writing; and that by endeavouring to declare my own subject position I create 'a way in' for the reader. Acknowledging such pleasure is important as a valorization of specifically female pleasures - in this case, narrative and subjectivity. Disrupting notions of the objective and rational expert assisted my recognition of the personal relationships, and the feelings which emerge throughout the research process. For this reason in chapter four I identified three pitfalls which should be avoided when researching young people's enjoyment of music video: the pathologization of young people's pleasures; the tendency to view their actions as 'resistance'; and the ill-preparedness of the researcher for the relationships that develop.

The conclusions I have drawn about pleasure in music video in relation to theory, evidence and methodology have significant implications for music video scholarship, and also for future research with young people in this area. My conclusions suggest that textual analysis of music video is a deficient methodology in terms of young people's pleasures and that researchers should work with young audiences themselves in order to research the pleasure of the text. Scholarship which reduces texts to a message (as described by Mercer [1983]) offers little
in the way of understanding of popular pleasures, especially of young people. Whilst the work of Tetzlaff (1993) and DuBose Brunner (1995) amongst others, is valuable in many ways, it does little to contribute to a general understanding of young people's pleasures in the popular, in fact, it relegates young people's readings to the status of 'false consciousness'. My research moves well beyond this approach, and as such I recommend that researchers who work with young people in relation to music video (and media studies generally) focus on young people's pleasures in the text.

GENDER

In chapter five I argued that the term 'gendered subjectivity' is a metaphor for the feminist/poststructuralist recognition of the malleability of gender. The discursive interactions through which women and men enact their gender indicates the power which individuals can 'harness' through discourse. Whilst many girls' fictional texts contain discourse about the inevitability of women's social position, I support McRobbie's (1991) contention that the existence of disruptive texts is significant. Fantasy spaces are very important to young people in that they allow a safe (and sometimes private) space in which performances of gender can be enacted. My research develops the ideas of Walker (1988) who points out that boys' choices about their gendering are limited, and that some boys' choices are privileged over others. This situation also applies to girls' gendered subjectivity. My study demonstrates that femininity poses problems for boys and for girls, that gender is often contradictory, and that negotiations of gender are commonplace.

When conducting my research with the Progress Secondary College students I found that certain behaviours, attitudes and physical attributes/appearances were regarded as typically masculine or feminine. Although some of the students felt that class and ethnicity should be irrelevant in relation to gender and music video, all of the young people acknowledged that there were observable differences between performers in terms of class and race. All of the young people actively brought their own social positionings to their readings of music videos, and many expressed a dislike for the unrealism of most texts. Active reading demonstrated that musical genre worked as a signifier of social class and/or lifestyle: heavy metal - working class; rap - gangs; teeny bopper - middle class. Both girls and boys used music videos as opportunities to
'perform' and to re-construct traditional feminine and masculine gendering.

The limitations of the term 'sexism' in music video and the active reading of music video were demonstrated in relation to Madonna and Kylie Minogue. The young people's comments about these two performers also point to the possibility of deviating from the relational aspect of gender. Although for the most part I have agreed withConnell (1987) - that all gender is relational - this example raises questions about Connell's view. Although Madonna and Minogue texts both employ visually similar sexual iconography, students read the two similarly attired women differently. Madonna's perceived autonomous confidence was seen to be lacking in Minogue. Because Madonna's attitude and autonomy signals to both boys and girls that she is powerful, they regarded her as masculine; however her use of clothing traditionally used to denote women's status as sex objects brings her into the realm of femininity. This disrupts the relational aspect of gender within her texts, and as such caused the young people in my study - invested in establishing their gendered identity - to express contempt for, zeal for, bewilderment and rejection of Madonna's gendering. This is why Madonna as a text is positioned with access to power; for as Foucault (1984) says, power is fragile, and the exposure of power dynamics diminishes power. In Western culture women are supposed to exist through the male gaze, not in an autoerotic sense, as Madonna does in many of her texts. Madonna disrupts the relational aspect of gender, which, as I suggested, is where her power lies.

Although I found some support for Fine's (1992) argument that adolescent girls want to be 'one of the guys' (for example, motorcycle riding and heavy metal fandom), in most cases I found that girls were more concerned with being 'one of the girls' (as their discussions about femininity and masculinity in music videos reveal). Similarly the boys in my study were very concerned about being suitably masculine; that "boys should be boys, and girls should be girls". Rather than boys overlooking girls' gender because of their lack of femininity (as Fine [1992] argues), in Sarah's case I think her male friends accepted her as part of their social group because of her appearance of femininity. In the same way that Madonna can 'get away with' her masculinity, so too can Sarah, by virtue of her appearance of femininity. Appearing feminine however is not always enough, as my 'as a girl' story in chapter one points out. One's position within relations of power is crucial. As a young child I was positioned with little access to power, however Sarah, as a teenage girl, was
positioned more favourably in relation to male peers. Likewise Madonna, as a successful, adult woman, has access to power. Even though the appearance of femininity is a performance, the girls in my study distinguished between looking like a girl and acting like a girl. This was particularly apparent when the students compared Kylie Minogue with Madonna: both performers have the appearance of femininity, however only Minogue was seen to act in a feminine manner - submissive, gentle and dependent. These observations point to a definite tension between looking like a girl (or boy) and acting like a girl (or boy).

My research into gender and music video with a young audience demonstrates that asking young people themselves for their ideas about music video produces unexpected answers that textual analysis alone cannot. As I showed, this is partly due to the two-fold nature of gender - the appearance and the performance; 'looking' and 'acting' like a girl or boy. This highlights the deficiencies of textual analyses which reduce texts to messages, as they overlook the complexities which audiences read in texts. By 'following young people to the places they wish to go' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992) the researcher is alerted to a much wider perspective. Working within a school setting enhanced my study of gender, as the school stands as a striking example of the gender relations common to Australian and Western culture generally. In this setting it is possible to observe Foucault's notion of power taking effect through discourse; for example, boys shunning of femininity and homosexuality.

Throughout the thesis it is has been my contention that music video scholarship which only looks at femininity or masculinity is inadequate. For the most part, I have argued, along with Connell (1987), that gender is relational; that there is no femininity without masculinity, and vice versa. Madonna texts do, however, disrupt the relational nature of gender. It was only by asking a young audience for their opinions of Madonna that I was alerted to the disruptive nature of Madonna's texts. My research supports Mercer's contention (1983) that the reduction of texts to single messages overlooks their complex and contradictory elements. The acknowledgment of this allows understanding of the disruptive nature of performers such as Madonna, glam heavy metal artists and homo-friendly bands like Nirvana. Heteroreality is precisely the reason that girls and boys need to be looked at together, and also why the notion of texts as 'primers' is inaccurate. Not only is young people's relationship with music video 'double' (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991), it is multifarious. This needs to be taken into account by researchers in their work with
young people, as the relational aspect of gender is obviously key in establishing gender. Researchers may need to rethink their foci on girls or boys, and pay more attention to the contradictions present in individual performances of gender.

THEORIZING THE BODY

In investigating the body through theory and through my own research, it has become evident that the cultural and social distinctions which are made between the male body and the female body are inordinate. Just as Connell (1987) has identified the relational nature of gender, as I have made clear, so too are male and female bodies relational - gentle/rough, small/large, thin/well built, feminine/masculine. Muscularity is both a sign of power and of class, as it not only signifies physical strength, but sufficient leisure time to devote to sports and other physical activities. In music video however, muscularity is not a dominant sign of power. Rather, the guitar, the microphone and the 'groupie' are. Therefore, in music video the strict body standards (age, ethnicity, beauty, thinness) that apply to women are relaxed for men. Although there are many examples of youthful, handsome and muscular male popular music stars, such qualities are not mandatory for men. However the maxim of beauty for women which Bordo (1988) identified in relation to film, is applicable to women in music video. My research endorses Langman's (1993) analysis of the videos 'Love You Right' and 'Pump up the Jam'. Exceptions to this rule (in the form of older, supposedly 'less attractive' female artists) are few (but significant). This did not go unnoticed by the young people in my study, however the music videos of such artists were not chosen by the students to study, and therefore have not been explored in this study.

The differences which are generally perceived in Western culture to exist between the female body and the male body were evident in the ways the young people in this study viewed and presented their own bodies. Generally I found the boys very reluctant to talk about their bodies, whereas girls freely articulated a complex and contradictory range of feelings about theirs. Such feelings, imbued with the students' class and ethnicity, shaped their choice of clothing and adornment, and also their self esteem. Both boys and girls thought that music video generally only featured 'perfect' people. This was seen as being out of step with the 'real' world by some students. Although the portrayal of 'rich' kids was perceived as being all too real to one boy, several of the girls acknowledged
the importance of fantasy in music video. Ang (1985) explains in her analysis of the US soap, *Dallas*, how the lifestyles of characters may be nothing like those of the viewers, however their *emotions* mirror those of audiences. The outer unrealism of soaps is balanced by an inner realism (Ang, 1985), which, I have concluded, is true of many music videos. The general lack of 'normal' women in music videos however, left all of the girls feeling inferior, and several of the boys had come to expect this unrealistic standard of female beauty and thinness in music videos generally. Within girls' culture it is not only acceptable to talk about being 'too fat', it is also a *mark of femininity*. For boys, the opposite is true. Whereas the girls felt obliged to adhere to strict cultural regulation of their eating and body size, the boys were at pains to convince me of their disregard for such concerns. They emphasized that they watched music videos for the music, not the images. Whilst the unnatural in women had come to be seen as natural, different standards applied to men. The commodification of the male body in music video, and the growing 'sophistication' of the female gaze indicates that male bodies too are subjected to increased scrutiny. It should be remembered though, as Dyer (1992) points out, that the male 'pin-up' is an unstable entity within a heterosexist economy. The students' negative reactions to Michael Jackson are a good example of this. Jackson's perceived efforts to be what he is not 'naturally' - feminine and white - disrupt his masculinity.

I included some theorizing about my own body in an effort to demonstrate that the researcher is not an objective, rational 'outsider'. As a woman I also acknowledged that I share, with the girls in this study, a history of self regulation and adherence to Western standards of beauty and body size. In dwelling on my own historical relationship with my body I became more aware of the vulnerability that research can subject participants to. This was especially evident in asking boys about their bodies. When I followed the lead of the boys, I learnt far more and they were more comfortable and relaxed, which was important to me ethically.

Being wary of doing research 'on' young people and risking pathologizing their pleasures, I found the memory-work emphasis on self research very valuable. Methodologically memory-work draws on psychotherapy and discourse analysis; theoretically it draws on feminism and socialism. Like Haug et al (1987), I explored the 'Foucauldian problematic'; that is, the disjuncture between the how and why of lived practice. In demonstrating *why* young people position themselves discursively I have illuminated the dominance of certain cultural and
moral discourses that facilitate young people's self regulation and surveillance of the body.

In terms of method the students and I deviated considerably from Haug et al's (1987) model. Most of the students were eager to talk to me about most subjects, however for many of them writing memories was perceived as formal school work, which carried with it typically negative connotations associated with school work. Haug et al's emphasis on the elimination of cliches in order to deconstruct their meaning also meant the elimination of a distinctly female pleasure in narrative form. A number of the girls' written memories demonstrate their enjoyment in heightening the dramatic effect through the use of 'cliches'. Thus whilst eliminating cliches may facilitate the deconstruction of their meanings, it also eliminates perhaps the only pleasurable aspect of writing stories for young people.

Many of my interviews with the students constitute an oral memory-work, and as such I think this is worthy of further research and study. In terms of theory, Haug et al's emphasis on self research, sexualization and the cultural and moral regulation of the body framed my research. Although my methods may have differed from Haug et al (1987), I have found their work to contain powerful theoretical frameworks for feminist research.

What young people bring to the screen in relation to music video is as important as the actual content of music video. In my study, the young people's gendered identities greatly influenced the way they read music videos, and also how they assessed their own physical appearance.

In theorizing the body in music video with young people, I found it was far more productive to 'follow them to the places they wished to go' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992). Such a strategy acknowledged their expertise as critics of music video and society, and to some extent avoided a situation whereby young people only focused on issues identified by me as important. In terms of future research with young people, it is vital to listen to what young people have to say, and to actively pursue their concerns. In choosing an area of the media to study, researchers should adequately establish what the young people's likes and dislikes are. I deliberately avoided an approach which assumed the 'low culture' status of music video - an assumption which has plagued the work of some notable cultural critics, as Richards (1996) has identified. Instead, I endeavoured to allow the young people in my study to set the frameworks by which they explored music video. This contrasts markedly with a
considerable amount of music video research, which has often revolved around adult, academic concerns, and enhances the methodological armoury of the field.

**Sexualization and Power**

Young people actively inscribe their bodies with cultural ideas in order to achieve knowledge and power. They also actively position themselves within language to 'grab' power. Both of these strategies have been demonstrated in the many stories I have told about my research. I support Martin's (1988: 9) view that discourse makes the body an object of knowledge. In making the body an object of knowledge, certain parts of the body are ascribed specific cultural meanings - as Haug et al (1987) argue, 'innocent' parts of the body become 'guilty'.

Within music video there are many examples of challenges to the heterosexist gender order - what I have called 'chinks in the armour'. Texts such as those of *Nirvana* and Madonna actively make 'gender trouble' (Butler, 1990). Despite creating confusion about men and women as 'opposites', the context within which young people read such texts appears to be more powerful than individual texts. Thus whilst some feminists may wish that girls *would* emulate Madonna, or that boys *would* become tolerant of homosexuality, the pull of heteroreality seems to be pervasive. This is not to say however, that such texts do not create certain weaknesses in the dominant discourses which young people actively locate themselves in. Girls may not be able to be like Madonna in real life, but her songs and videos may create a fantasy space within which they can 'express' themselves. Blaming Madonna for the fact that teenage girls may not emulate her is to ignore the context within which Madonna texts are read. Madonna's and *Nirvana's* violations of a dualistic, heterosexist, gender order made *lots* of gender trouble for the young people involved in this study.

Certain discourses in music video can alienate the audience. For example, texts which validated homosexuality turned some boys off; music videos which girls deemed "sexist" were rejected. Strategies employed by young people to deal with such texts included intellectualizing and ridiculing them. Our discussions fostered the articulation of these views. The students used available discourse to assess music videos. For example, terms such as bimbo, slut, stud and poof were called upon to critique music video performers. 'Loving yourself' was
another way in which the boys would assess the sexuality of male popular music performers. The realization however, that all popular music performers were not heterosexual resulted in a general consensus that 'you can't tell by looking' (although some boys still maintained that most music video performers were heterosexual). The presence of the 'opposite' sex was usually seen as establishing the appearance of heterosexuality in music video performers. Being knowledgeable about sexuality was not however, always a positive thing. Girls' knowledge of sexuality can make them unfeminine, and admitting to simply looking at a male performer can make a boy dangerously unmasculine.

Inscribing one's body with such knowledge and actively living that knowledge, is what occurs in the process of sexualization. Boys take care not to be seen to 'love themselves', and girls adhere to the cultural and moral regulation of the female body. For girls, eyebrow plucking stands as a good example of female sexualization.

Conducting research ethically with young people was identified as a major concern of this dissertation. I found that I had to enter into personal relationships with the teacher and students. It was only when I had learnt how to engage with them in a personal manner that I could understand what they had to tell me. Keeping a low profile in many of our discussions had a number of effects. In some ways I found that I did not explore some issues that I wanted to, however this became insignificant in light of the general information they imparted. Following up the students' readings of Madonna enabled me to look beyond her texts as morally reprehensible, as many scholars have done. Due to the students' comments about Madonna I have begun to understand how significant and disruptive Madonna texts are.

Resisting the urge to keep the students 'on task' meant that what at first glance appeared to be a meandering conversation, turned out to be excellent demonstrations of the intertextuality of popular cultural texts. The students' regular deviations from the topic under discussion has itself constructed a narrative throughout Part Two. Such references to other texts and to their social interactions also guided me in subsequent discussions. My account of the party I had for the students and teacher stands as a methodological reflection and as a paradigm of the myth of the objective researcher. This reflection also illustrates how power relations change in different settings, how power is not only existent in language, and how alternatives to dominant/submissive modes of interaction can occur. Although my research with the students was not officially part of
their school curriculum, the interactions which took place between them and myself demonstrate Mac an Ghaill's (1994b) assertion that popular culture destabilizes power relations between students and teachers - or in this case, between young people and a researcher.

As stated earlier, music video is part of the discursive field through which young people construct their gendered subjectivity, yet just how this occurs needs further attention. This dissertation has begun to explore why young people position themselves within certain discourses and why they reject others. This recognizes a tension between young people as active subjects and young people as passive consumers. I have tried to avoid positioning young people as one or the other. Rather, I have documented their active readings of music video (positive, negative and ambivalent) and have examined why music video viewing brings pleasure to young people.

I found the term 'sexual iconography' to be preferable to 'sexism' when reading music videos and demonstrated why this was preferable. For example, Madonna can appear to occupy the same position as bimbos or whores in music videos - as argued by Dubose Brunner (1995) - however this is not how the young people in my study understood Madonna. She may wear similar attire to women who exist as erotic spectacles, however she was perceived as strong, in control and powerful; in short, she was seen to exude masculinity. If however, I had labelled her texts 'sexist', I would not have ventured into analysing them with the young people involved in my study. I only learnt this because I allowed myself to be guided by the students. I regard this conclusion as different to 'pro-Madonna' scholarship (see Schwichtenberg [1993] for example) because the basis for my view of Madonna is different. My rejection of Madonna as an anti-feminist or bimbo has been informed by a young audience, not by my own adult, academic readings. DuBose Brunner (1995) and Tetzlaff (1993) both miss the point of Madonna, because they did not listen to, or did not ask young people for their views. This conclusion suggests that in conducting research in relation to young people and a popular cultural form such as music video, it is vital to firstly include young people in the study, and secondly to listen to them. Researchers must be prepared to reassess their assumptions and beliefs, and change tack where necessary. Power relations between the researcher and the researched should also be analysed. This can begin by reflecting on one's own subjective positioning, and regularly recording one's reflections on the research.
Overall and in summary, my research with young people in relation to pleasure, gender, the body, and sexualization and power suggests that music video is a key site in the construction of young people's gendered subjectivities. Music video is a text which specifically addresses young people. Gendered identity and sexuality are integral concerns of young people, and music video is a site where they can discuss, rehearse, fantasize and reject specific cultural formations of gender and sexuality. But young people do not passively read music videos; they actively assess music videos according to their gender, social class, ethnic origins and cultural locations. Whilst music video may contain many examples of 'chinks in the armour' of Western culture, disruptive texts are read in terms of dominant discourses, one of which is 'heteroreality' (Raymond, 1986). Young people can use music video texts to position themselves powerfully in their social world if they align themselves with certain dominant discourses. Dominant discourses are inscribed on the body, and can be evidenced in the form of eyebrow plucking and dieting in girls, and in the 'straining' to be masculine in boys. Not only do young people talk themselves into existence, they also pluck, diet, fight and strain themselves into becoming young women and men.

Although there are some notable exceptions, most music video scholarship has overlooked the dynamic relationship between young people and the text. Textual analysis alone cannot take into account the measuring and comparing that young people do in the face of music video, and this has certain methodological implications. Firstly, researchers need to understand themselves as subjective and involved participants in the research process, acknowledging the personal and historical origins of their research. Being aware that research methods determine research outcomes is particularly pertinent to music video research, as I demonstrated in chapter two. In arguing that music video research should take into account the readings made by its audience, the need to develop ethical models of research is paramount.

This study has focussed on young people reading the visual aspect of music videos, and therefore there are many aspects of music video which I have deliberately not attended to (for example, the music itself, music video as a commodity and the production side). My focus on young people as active readers of music video has aimed to discuss issues which textual analyses of music video have been unable to do. I do not wish
however, to claim that this study is representative of all 'youth'. As outlined in chapter two, efforts to make grand statements about 'the' adolescent audience of music video has been a problem for a good deal of music video scholarship to date.

My recognition of the pleasures and interactions that the young people in this study had with music video was appreciated by them, as their behaviour at the party (discussed in chapter seven) demonstrated. It was important to them that their feelings and experiences were seen as valid. Throughout my thesis I have demonstrated that young people actively read music video, and that gender is understood in relational terms. Such conclusions have been reached by following the lead of students, rather than only following my concerns.

Working with young people's memories in relation to gender and music video has considerable potential in terms of the genealogical construction of gendered subjectivity. Written memory-work however may present a problem for some students, and as such the development of an oral memory-work method may prove valuable.

My research with the young people in this study indicates the importance they placed on fantasy, escapism and fun in music video. The dominant discourses of sexuality, gender, ethnicity and class within which young people and music videos are both positioned, can, however, interfere with pleasure. More work that avoids the populist/pessimist dichotomy needs to be done with young people about their pleasures.

Although this study has made some progress in relation to knowledge about boys and music video, more research with boys in relation to their bodies, popular culture and masculinity is needed. Having said this, the importance of acknowledging the relational nature of gender means that future research should be conducted with girls and boys together.

In this study I have contributed to the existing academic literature and debates on youth and music video, methodology, gender and feminism. My particular contribution arose from listening to what young people had to say. This enabled me to move into unforeseen and rewarding cultural territory.
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