Chapter Six

Policing the Borders: Sexual State-Forms in Action

> *His vision, from the constantly passing bars,*
> *has grown so weary then it cannot hold*
> *anything else. It seems to him that there are*
> *a thousand bars; and behind bars, no world.*
>
> -- Rilke, *The Panther*

> *Columbine is a clean, good place except for those rejects. Sure we teased them. What do you expect with kids who come to school with weird hairdos and horns on their hats? It's not just the jocks; the whole school's disgusted with them. They're a bunch of homos, grabbing each others' private parts. If you want to get rid someone, usually you tease 'em. So the whole school would call them homos, and when they did something sick, we'd tell them 'you're sick and that's wrong'.*
>
> -- 255 lb American-football-playing Columbine High School student quoted in *Time Magazine*

Sexual orientation can be understood as being very similar to government. Both involve representation, borders and policing. Not only are they similar, but they are mutually sustaining. I use Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the state-form to understand the ongoing production of sexual orientation as a micro-political process consistent with the State. Obedience to the borders of the state-form is encouraged to mechanisms of shame and violence. Just as the State depends upon numerous state-forms for its existance, so sexual orientation as state-form is also an effect of others state-forms. In addition to examining compulsory sexual orientation, in this chapter I also analyse participants' experiences of homonormative gendering and compulsory monogamy. Finally, I demonstrate how queer, developed as a nomadic alternative to rigid identificatory categories, can itself become reified, become a state-form.

Shame

Humans are social beings who depend upon social bonds for our identities and well-being. Damage to those social bonds results in feelings of shame. According to Thomas Scheff (1990), feeling ashamed of that shame then results in an intense fear of further damaging of social bonds and consequently rigid conformity, a condition he calls 'pathological shame'. Rigid conformity must necessarily leads to damaging of social bonds with those who do not conform, potentially treating a cyclical relationship of shame and fear. This theory has some explanatory power when it comes to understanding the ongoing production of sexual orientation categories. This is clearly the case in participants' narratives, though the terminology of 'shame' is not often explicitly used. Indeed, according to Scheff it wouldn't be if people were ashamed of that shame. And, as I suggested in Chapter Three, people living in hierarchical societies are likely to be; hierarchies of mind over body, masculine over feminine, and rational over emotional are integral to relationships of leaders over followers. So, while I can only offer a few explicit references to shame, I suggest that it is intertwined with the emotionally difficult experiences described throughout this chapter.

While constructing a clear line between pathological and non-pathological shame is probably impossible, I have identified some descriptions of shame from my interviews that I would suggest are closer to Scheff's description of 'normal shame' than to the 'pathological'. The first comes from Mark talking about going out with the intention of queerbashing during his macho homophobic period. He said, 'we never found any queers to bash, thank God. I'm embarrassed about that now'. While the motivation to go out queer bashing seems likely to have stemmed from pathological shame, the shame/regret/embarrassment that he felt during the interview seems to me to be the effect of having intended to damage social bonds (and bodies). I got the impression that he might have also feared damaging his social bond with me, that I would judge him badly for having done this. Meg, who described herself as 'remarkably unscarred', provided a couple of examples of (non-pathological) shame resulting from the poor negotiation of boundaries.

> The only two things I can think of are tiny. One is not managing non-monogamy well when I've let someone get a bit hurt. So the time when my lover, several years-standing boyfriend at the time, let himself in to the house with his own key, with a bunch of flowers for me one Sunday morning and caught me in bed with my flatmate. [...] That was really …

> it's a regret and a … ohhh. And the only other one is where I had sex … no, a couple of times … twice actually. Once having sex with this woman who … I was too tired. We had an amazing day and a bit of a wonderful drug-themed festival, came back and she was also an ex-student of mine. [...] It wasn't great and the next day she was all … I was a bit embarrassed and she was all perky [...]. So it was because it was uneven. So even though [...] we didn't have an age difference. She wasn't anymore a student. She was a student somewhere where I'd only been doing a very little bit of part-time teaching so even though in that way the different … the imbalance was minimised, there was actually an imbalance of interest that I should have been a bit more …

Her third example is similar in that she seemed unsure about appropriateness of her actions in terms of her boundaries/bond with an old friend.

> No, the closest to guilty is having a sexual relationship … OK, with a friend who was the ex-boyfriend of a good friend of mine at university but things long since had finished between them so it's not a betrayal. It's just a little bit of a … I'm a little bit embarrassed about that. And she goes 'well, you'd know about him. You've slept with him since I have', and I feel a little bit cringey. Everybody knows she's … neither of them … the two of them don't desire each other anymore.

The social nature of shame is made clear here with her reference to everybody knowing that this relationship was long over, that, implicitly, the ex-boyfriend was 'available' and, thus, her action was not a betrayal. But, at the same time, it was an undefined 'little bit of a ...'. This last example is not necessarily a poor negotiation of boundaries, but a difficult situation where boundaries were not clear.

More 'pathological' experiences of shame provide an emotional basis for the existence of sexual state-forms, and are thus to be found, implicitly, throughout this chapter. I also explicitly asked all participants about experiences of feeling 'guilty, embarrassed or ashamed about something to do with sex'. I offer here four examples of shame that resulted from breaking borders. Note how the use of language -- concepts such as difference, defense, justification, and apology -- indicate participants' experiences of borders. In this first example, Meg did not find her desires fitting within the box of appropriate teenage female sexuality.

> I always felt sexually different as a teenager but just because I thought I was obsessed and must have landed from Mars to want so much … to want to wank so much for a girl but that's partly because you don't hear about that.

Likewise, Diane felt embarrassed about her childhood sex play and, more recently, anxious about reactions to her same-sex desires.

> I know there was … play and stuff as a youngster, before I'd articulated sexuality and stuff like that, had a sexual element and I felt a little bit embarrassed about it, felt a bit awkward about it because I hadn't quite sort of identified that it was about sex and that I wasn't necessarily comfortable identifying that it was about sex. Yeah, that's the most sort of striking example of that I suppose. I think I was probably a little bit apologetic when I first came out as gay. 'I'm gay. Don't worry. I don't fancy you' kind of thing. Worried that people were going to say 'oh shit'.

Anita's greatest source of sexual shame was her erotic pleasure in sadomasochistic practices, so often constructed as beyond the borders of 'normal' sex. Both of her other 'deviant' identities, lesbian and polyamourous, are better supported through social networks.

> [T]he fact that I'm not out to my family or my sister or people at work or whatever about being into SM, which I guess is part of sex. [...] When I first come out to somebody [...], I'm still a little bit scared inside of what they're going to say. [...] but coming out to someone about being into SM …. Yeah, I still struggle with the whole SM aspect, I must admit. [...] it's difficult to say 'yes, I'm into pain and I don't see anything wrong with it' because I don't know many other people that say that and so I don't think … whereas I am, in a lot of ways, in a very lesbian subculture [...]. Almost all of my friends are gay or queer in some way, either lesbian or bi or gay or whatever. [...] and so it's constantly reinforced that there's nothing wrong with that, [...] and to some extent that's true with poly as well and I can justify that in a very theoretical argument to myself to but I can't justify SM in that same way.

Sandra, on the other hand, felt defensive about her transgression of lesbian purity -- having a male partner -- for which she had been punished in the past.

> I think that made me ultra-sensitive to that kind of thing and so I have actually said to some people 'I do love him, you know'. Like trying to justify and defend it and whatever but that's come from me in response to friends saying … feeling that I was a traitor in the past, not necessarily because of *it* happening repeatedly from other people.

In each of these cases, 'pathological shame' acts as an agent of self policing. The shame, though, is originally the result of other forms of policing. In each of these examples, policing

came in the form of discursive violence. These could be understood in terms of repressive silences: silences surrounding female sexuality, childhood sex play, homosexuality, sadomasochism and bisexuality. This has been the general approach of identity politics, with its emphasis on making visible the invisible and speaking the unspeakable. However, as Foucault reminds us, this only partially addresses discursive mechanisms of control. He wrote,

> Silence itself -- the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers -- is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies (1990:27).

In other words, the constructions of what is possible or desirable are intertwined with constructions of what is impossible or undesirable, and, both are produced through discourses that include silences.

Sexual Violence

Sexual policing through discursive violence is perhaps most blatant in public experiences of verbal assault. Several participants' stories demonstrate that policing does not necessarily relate to the 'identity' of the target of policing, as the identity politics approach of viewing queer-bashing as a sexual minority issue would suggest. Sandra's story of having been aggressively labelled in various ways provides a particularly good example.

> It was weird because in one day I could be called a faggot with them thinking I was a guy and then that afternoon, walking past a construction site, 'hey baby!' It's like OK you yell at me when you think I'm a guy. You yell at me when you think I'm a woman. Was yelled at walking down the street with a friend, a straight female friend and 'hey! You lesbians' blah, blah, blah.

Sandra's experience was not unique. Kev and Laurence both described instances of verbal queer-bashing without feeling as though they had given any indication of sexual identity or practise.

> Kev: there's times that I've just gone to the toilet and it's known to be a

> cottage, and all I'm doing is standing taking a piss, when I've gone out, I've had people … like I had some council workmen who shouted 'queer' at me as I came out the toilets.
>
> Laurence: There's specifically one member of staff [at a previous workplace who] consistently referred to me as 'wee gay faggot' anytime he spoke to me in the entire duration of my time working at [this business] until he met me face-to-face he didn't stop. He wouldn't do it to my face but any time he spoke to me on the phone, he called me 'wee gay faggot'. [...] I'm still getting grief any time I walk pass a building site for some reason. I don't really understand it. I don't think I look in any way really outlandish or outrageous. I don't really dress that strangely. [...] sometimes I get wolf-whistles or I get … I've had 'faggot' and stuff shouted at me when I've walked past.

Anne described experiences of verbal queer-bashing for other forms of nonconformity -- not being 'heterosexual enough' and for being 'alternative' more generally.

> Anne: Eh, once me and my then partner [...], he had long blond curly hair and I had short dark hair, and we were walking down the street and somebody mistook us for a couple, a lesbian couple and shouted some abuse, but yeah, no, I think no is the answer overall. [...] It was just kids, and I, I mean they might not even have thought we were a lesbian couple. I think they might have been taking the piss out of the fact that Chris had long hair and I had short hair. [...] And neither of us were really fitting the mould in that way.

Like national borders and authority, sexual state-forms may be policed through physical violence. Mark and Erica, whose stories were explored in the previous chapter, were not the only participants to have experienced overt sexual violence. Anita also has been physically assaulted. These forms of policing are perhaps the most blatantly violent ways in which sexual state-forms are maintained.

Anita described her experiences of being queer-bashed and harassed, and the shame she felt for allowing this to frighten her into a degree of conformity.

> Anita: I mean the first time somebody shouted at me in the street, it was a little bit scary but now I'm quite used to people shouting in the street although I still find it unpleasant obviously and scary. It's happened before and I survived. It'll happen again and I will still survive [...] But you get used to it. And I think, yeah, I think you do, you get harder as you get used to being … you get used to putting on a defensive shell when you go out [...] If you look straight you don't get it so much. Believe me, I've had this

conversation with many people and people that I think are quite dykey [...] have said to me that they've never been harassed for being a dyke and that's happened … I'm like, wow! It's happened to me a lot. I guess it's a lot of body language and stuff as well.

Jamie: Are there any particular instances that stick out or is this just general background?

Anita: Mostly general background but also when I was just coming out, I did get attacked and I got a couple of punches by a gang of guys when I was walking down the street in my leather jacket and you know, that sort of thing. But I sort of … well I don't take it for granted but I was armed with the knowledge that that can happen, had happened and will happen again, no doubt. And so I'm always quite surprised when other dykes say to me they've never had any abuse. Wow! You're lucky!

Jamie: How did you deal with that? By becoming harder?

Anita: I think you do. I think you have to because otherwise if you let it get to you, you'd never go out by yourself or you'd never hold any girlfriend's hand in the street and … I mean now there are … certainly I make a considered decision about where I am, who's around me, what the feeling is like, before I would hold my girlfriend's hand in the street because I've been attacked and I don't want to be attacked again but at the same time I feel ashamed that I don't just do it [...] which is sad but what can I say? I'm only 5' 2". That's my excuse.

Jamie: Do you need an excuse?

Anita: Yeah because, politically, I believe that I should be … I should … if I'm with somebody, I should hold hands with them because straights do it all the time and don't think about it and they should see gay people doing that and then it wouldn't be such a big deal for everybody else that comes after us. So, politically, I believe that, yes, I should be. So, yeah, I do feel ashamed when I don't.

Compulsory Sexual Orientation

The mechanisms of shame and violence described above do not simply function to produce heteronormativity or a compulsory heterosexuality. The impact of feminist, gay and lesbian, bisexual, and transgender and queer politics, in all of their variation, has resulted in popular awareness of alternatives to normative heterosexuality. Of course, these alternatives are still arranged hierarchically, according to contextual conditions. Furthermore, the possible alternatives are often presented as limited to more egalitarian and less permanent forms of heterosexuality, homosexuality, and increasingly, though by no means entirely accepted as

even possible, bisexuality. Recognition of nomadic sexual possibilities, much less realities, is still exceedingly limited. Thus, I argue, the mechanisms of shame and violence, in many contexts, produce what might be called compulsory sexual orientation. We must all fit into one of the two, or increasingly three, boxes of gender-defined relationships, desires and sexual behaviours. The reality that the relationship between sexual identity and sexual behaviour does not necessarily confine itself to this system has been highlighted through research on the epidemiology of HIV (e.g., Lear, 1995; Zea et al, 2003). Despite this awareness, sexual orientation remains 'the truth of the self' (Foucault, 1990) or a supposedly 'necessary fiction' (Weeks, 1995).

As I argued earlier, the existence of compulsory sexual orientation depends directly upon two other formations: the production of naturalised binary gender and fear or anxiety about sexuality (erotophobia), including consequent disciplinary practices. The first is emphasised in feminist critiques of heterosexuality. In suggesting an emphasis on a compulsory sexual orientation, I do not offer of it as a replacement of queer/feminist analyses of heteronormativity, compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1999 [1979]), or heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990). But, homosexualities, too, depend upon gender division and can produce homonormative genderings. The relationship between erotophobia and compulsory sexual orientation has been discussed in earlier sections on sexual shame. So, here I focus on examples of homonormative gendering.

Homonormative genderings

The first is a relatively harmless example in which Eva talked about the inability of others to recognise certain aspects of her gender performance. As with all participants, I asked her how she related to a series of gendered labels including 'camp'.

> Jamie: Is there any way in which you could be described as [...] camp?
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> Eva: [...] camp? That would be great. [...] except most people can't really work out that a woman can be camp so it doesn't really happen very much.
>
> Jamie: So you'd think of yourself as camp but you think people don't see you as camp?
>
> Eva: Slightly sometimes but nobody notices.

Eva described an ongoing difficulty with the binary construction of gender and was frustrated that camp seems to be reserved for boys.

Anita experiences have been more difficult. She identifies as a poly, switch dyke. In other words, she is interested having multiple sexual partners simultaneously, enjoys sadomasochistic play (giving and receiving pain, thus switch) and has only so far been sexually attracted to women. The SM dyke scene in her area is organised around butch, femme and transgender identities, none of which Anita identifies with.

> I'm not tall enough and I don't wear enough butch clothes. And at my height … I'm 5' 2". I look cute regardless of what I wear. I can wear all leather and I still look cute. [...] And I'm not thin. I don't have long hair. I don't wear dresses and things just because … not for any particular reason, just because I don't wear dresses particularly. So people tend to look at me and go 'don't know, butch, femme just stay away'. And I actually heard someone say that to me once. I was … went to a gender identity workshop and I did a conference that I was at, an SM conference, and they were talking about gender identity, identifying as butch or femme or transgender or whatever and I said 'look, I don't identify as any of these things', and people turned around at me and said 'well, how do you play then? Because if you don't identify as butch or femme or transgender, how do you know who to play with and what role to take and stuff like that?' And I was like 'whoa! I know you all identify very strongly but the whole point of … ' well, OK, that's not quite true but, for me, one of the points of being at an SM conference is that you're outside of all of these boxes. You shouldn't have to fit into a box because you're already so far out on the horizon that … you know, you shouldn't have to label yourself and yet I was talking to people and they said 'I wouldn't play with you because I don't know how you identify because I can't tell from how you're presenting yourself'. And I was like 'oh, no wonder I'm not getting so many dates.' [...] I don't know anybody in the lesbian SM scene that doesn't identify as butch, femme, transgender really, really strongly -- really strong gender identities going on.

Anita emphasised the rigidity of gender identity on this scene.

> Anita: I don't do gender play because I don't identify as a gender. It would be easier if I did it because so much of the scene is based around gender play but I can but try but it just doesn't work. I mean look at me. It's just not a happening thing, is it?
>
> Jamie: So is the gender play kind of around fixed play … with fixed genders?

Anita: Fixed genders. The gender doesn't move.

Jamie: Right, so you can't play butch or femme because you're not butch or femme?

Anita: Yeah. And you can't play butch one night and femme another night, which I could try doing that because I could be quite fun but …

Jamie: … against the rules.

Anita: Yeah, against the rules.

Jamie: Wow!

Anita: The whole switch thing, it's … there's not many top/bottom switches. For me, it's gender switch as well. Because I don't identify as a gender, I can play with being butch. I can play dressing up butch. I can play dressing up femme.

Jamie: But then what happens if you do that? If it's against the rules, what's the punishment for breaking the rules?

Anita: People look at you and they can tell. That's sounds paranoid but I'm not projecting a gender identity. I can be wearing a dress but I still won't look like a femme [...]. And people will look at me and go … again, 'I don't know who you are. I'm not talking to you'. Yeah. I'm sounding like I'm being picked on and I don't feel like I'm being picked on. I'm just sort of pointing out that there's quite a big difference in the gender identities going on. [...] You know, if it was up to me I wouldn't dress up to try and fit into a role. If it was me I would just be wearing jeans and a t-shirt.

Anita's narrative described an example of a homonormative compulsory gender regime in which she has been sanctioned. This is not to return to arguments of against butch-femme desire as a reproduction of heterosexuality. Indeed, Anita also described butch-butch sex play modelled on gay male SM culture. Rather than criticising gendered play and gendered desire, I am concerned about the rigidity of gender and sexuality and the exclusions that this produces. To draw a comparison to heteronormativity, we might think of the ways in which intersexed, androgynous or otherwise gender-variant people are likely to be excluded or otherwise policed, especially when sex is involved. I would suggest that Anita's situation is comparable.

Anita described another example of gender policing in a former relationship.

I had an ex that I was with for seven or eight years and she was very femme and she was attracted exclusively to butch women and she was always at me to look more butch and to identify more butch and if I wore a skirt or something like that, she'd be like … so, yeah.

Here we can see the similarity between homonormative gender policing and its more documented and theorised heteronormative counterpart. Setting Anita's example next to Sandra's experience makes the comparison clear.

> [O]ne of the reasons that my first relationship with a guy broke up was because he felt threatened by my sexuality and that was a hard one because I expected to be with him until I was 80 and I never lied to him. [...] And so there was never deception, but 2½ years in, he decided that … he felt too threatened. I cut my hair. I used to have really long hair when I met him and when I cut my hair, people used to start screaming 'faggot!' at us when we walked down the street and then I started wearing dresses for him and they'd say 'who's the fag in the skirt?' And then I started to grow my hair long, which I didn't want to do but wanted to do anything to save the relationship and at that point it was beyond salvation really because he wouldn't talk to me about it. He just said 'no, I can't do this anymore. You're going to kill me because I'm going to have a heart attack and die from the stress.' And I was like 'whoa! It's time to leave then.' And so I left and that was a hard one.

In both cases, the participants' partners seem to have had rigidly gendered sexual identities. Of course, these identities were not purely individual -- perhaps if Sandra's ex partner had not been queer-bashed, he might have been perfectly happy with her gender expression. Likewise, Anita's ex partner's femme identity might have depended on her being seen with a butch. Regardless of the interpersonal complexities of these situations, we can see the interdependence between compulsory gender and sexually oriented identities[10].

Homonormative policing in gay spaces

The continuous production of gender division is only one of the mechanisms by which the hetero-homo division is produced. Other aspects of individual appearance and practice are also policed. Many of the participants' stories included experiences of homonormative policing within gay spaces. Beth had been heavily involved in organising an LGBT group up until just before she met her (male) partner.

10 Lesbian, gay and bisexual are not the only gendered sexual orientation identities possible. Butch-femme desire, desire for androgyny or transgenders, male desire for lesbian genders, female attraction to gay masculinities are just a few other possibilities, any of which could potentially develop into rigid identity categories.

> Nobody believes me on this one but I did actually pull back out of that stuff before I met my partner and the thing is I'd pulled back three days before I met him. [I had other commitments and] I didn't really have time to sort of keep up with it […] so I resigned and then three days later I met my partner. [...] I was starting to ditch interests left, right and centre because I … I had a life that was full of stuff. I didn't have space for a partner sort of thing, and [the LGBT group] was one of the things to go.

Beth had a difficult time because her friends in the LGBT group thought she had left it because of her new 'heterosexual' relationship. This emphasised her concerns about LGBT politics.

> I think that generally the politics of these things is too exclusive. You have to be the right kind of queer to fit in and even down to sometimes you have to have the right kind of clothes and things like that and I've always really hated that and I found that when I was at uni [...]. It was like that. It was very exclusive and it was for people who definitely knew what their sexuality was and whatever and I have a real problem with that. When I was the [involved in organising the group], I tried to make it as friendly as I could to people who were … didn't know exactly what their sexuality was, who didn't fit in on the scene and whatever and I just tried to make it very friendly and open.

When Beth returned to visit the group, she found it very difficult because she didn't fit into the stereotypes.

> But, to be honest, when I went back and I'd kind of lost touch and things, it was really … it did still seem quite nice. It did still seem quite friendly and stuff. [But] I just didn't know anyone and I didn't have that much in common. Again, I think queer people are as guilty of it as anybody else. They kind of make assumptions about what you're doing and whatever. It was hard to have to go back in and explain to them 'no, actually, I live with a bloke' and all this kind of stuff. You see people kind of going 'oh right' and not that interested to know you.

Beth's changing relationship with this particular LGBT group parallels other changes in her life that this time. Her relationship with a man who does not identify with queer encouraged her to get out of queer politics, though this was something she was concerned about getting burnt out on anyway. At the same time as she was excluded from a queer world, she was embraced by a 'straight' one. Her marriage with her partner seems to have been a catalyst in

this change.

> It doesn't really make a huge difference to our relationship but I find people's reaction to it is really strange. People have quite changed their reaction to us. I find some people are less … I don't know, less friendly. They'll invite us out to fewer things and all my friends, who went and got married, are kind of phoning up again and it's quite odd. It's like as if you've moved into something else and we didn't really think that we had. It's a wee bit different for us because we got married more or less so my partner could get his work permit so we didn't like marry for romantic reasons or whatever. [...] We stayed together for romantic reasons . We got married because so we could stay together. […] my parents, for example, think it's wonderful and they've started to treat us quite differently and they've started to treat me more like an adult and I guess I could have predicted that but I was … yeah, I was surprised by … I was especially surprised to have people start getting in touch again and wanting to go out and stuff, like we've been … we're getting pulled into this social circle of married people.

Needless to say, these changes were quite difficult for Beth. In particular, losing queer friendships was hard.

Others also described feelings of alienation in gay spaces. Phyllis described her difficulties exploring her desires towards women because of border policing.

> I'd feel a complete fraud … that was the other thing that was stopping me doing anything about wanting to be with women because I was like I know I'm not lesbian and how can I go to a lesbian club and what are they going to think of me? So you feel like a fraud.

Despite her fears, she felt drawn to lesbian clubs as a visible space in which to explore sexuality with women. At the same time, she felt uncomfortable trying to become a clubber in order to be queer. Pete, who does not identify with LGBT or Q, said he would not once to go into a gay bar because 'I would feel like an alien'. Likewise, Eva, who identifies as bi or queer, finds gay bars very difficult.

> The amount of times I haven't been given entry to gay clubs is alarming and as far as I can tell I don't really understand it. I don't know what I'm supposed to be. I think that I don't look straight or gay. I don't know what you think or whatever but I don't look very butch and I don't look very femme or anything and there's nothing particularly about me that screams whatever sexual orientation, I think. [A friend] says that I'm the only person she knows that actually looks bi, which is fine by me but I don't

> think people generally think that. But I've known straight girls that got into gay clubs no problem who were very femme and whatever, and then butch dykes, yeah, because they look so obviously dykey, obviously they might not be but they basically look really blatantly queer. They get in fine but me, I still don't. I kind of wind up going 'yeah, fuck it, I don't want to go in there anyway', which is true because [...] it is a horrible place but it's after 1:00 and everything else is shut and your friends are all going in there then you'd kind of like to be able to join them. [...] But at the same time part of me is a bit crap and just really wants to prove myself and sort of say 'look, I'm queer too' and stuff like that because well, yeah. But I don't understand it because if I'm in a gay bar and I look around, I don't decide that the person next to me is straight because they look like whatever. If they're in a queer bar, I'd just assume that they're queer but I don't know if people do that with me or if everybody else just sees it that way or what? [...] and I've heard like … people have been saying 'oh I was at this gay bar last weekend and there was this straight couple and they were all over each other'. Well first of all maybe they weren't straight but anyway … but I'm like wow! God! I'd never have had the nerve to do that in a gay bar. I could be all over a girlfriend in some straight-type place but I couldn't have the nerve in a gay bar.

This became even more difficult for either when she began dating a boy.

> Eva: I'd love to take him out with me [on the scene] and maybe I will but if I do, you can be guaranteed that I'll be looking over my shoulder the whole time worrying, which is dreadful and I really don't want to do that but the truth is I'd always be more comfortable taking a girlfriend to a so-called straight place than taking a boyfriend to a gay place because at least if I take a girlfriend to a straight place and people are assholes, I feel like I've got the right to turn round and say 'well, fuck you!' and just deal with it. But I don't feel quite as confident in a gay place to assert myself.
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> Jamie: Why is that, do you think?
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> Eva: I'm not sure. I mean, I know that for some gay people, not necessarily all of them, I don't know what the proportion is, but for some of them they don't think that bi people should really be that welcome there and stuff like that, in the same way that they are not going to welcome straight people being there. But I don't know … I should be able to turn round and just deal with it if that happens but I don't know, and it also might come across as a lot more subtle than someone being as asshole in a straight place.

The differences between heteronormative and homonormative policing for Eva seems to break down into two elements. First, overt harassment in straight spaces is much easier to address than her experiences of subtle policing of gay spaces. Second, it seems difficult for Eva to challenge the norms of a group with which she identifies. This second aspect is clarified in her

description of feeling ambivalent about Pride events.

> Eva: [...] sometimes there's kind of a bit of piss-taking of straight people and I've heard of bi people, although I've not been around when they've done that but … so it depends very much on who the speaker is and stuff like that. I don't know. It's very kind of … I know it's really LGBT pride these days but for most people it means gay pride so it doesn't feel like necessarily my thing.
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> Jamie: But sort of.
>
> Eva: Sort of, yeah. I always consider myself at least to be a *second cousin* of it or something, whereas I don't feel like that about straight people, which is kind of weird. [... Heterosexuality is] so default that it's never even questioned and it's so kind of privileged, not that I'm not and stuff like that but it's just something that's never challenged and the rest of us have to work through a lot of things. So I can feel that kind of thing in common with queer people, which is silly because a lot of them might be completely vacant. [...] I don't know; because I'd much rather hang out with a straight person who's really clued in and everything than a vacant disco bunny or something. But when it's put into like big abstract world, I'd rather the queer ones. [My emphasis.]

Beth, Pete, Phyllis and Eva all described experiences of policing and exclusion in gay spaces, as did Mark and Erica in the previous chapter. Their stories illustrated the state-like nature of gay and lesbian identities. Overcoding, which Deleuze and Guattari (1997:199) refer to as 'the operation that constitutes the essence of the State', is the process of judging practices in terms of certain identificatory categories. In this case, those categories make up what we refer to as 'sexual orientation'. As I argued earlier in this chapter, these categories are produced through shame and violence. This violence is representation -- claiming the authority to define for another how to behave or live. To conclude this section on the risk of homonormativity in gay spaces, I'll share Sandra's discussion of gay policing and how she negotiates it.

> Sandra: I haven't been, to my knowledge, but I have been concerned about that. I cannot remember many times going to a gay club with my male partner or a gay bar or whatever but I think that, in those occasions, I probably stepped even further away from him so to be seen as friends rather than in a relationship because I didn't want … because I don't trust myself if somebody was to like confront me with 'you're not queer enough'. *I'm not good with authority.* [My emphasis.]

Compulsory Sexual Orientation Identity

As Mark and Erica's stories in the previous chapter demonstrated, resistance to compulsory sexual orientation is met with intensive policing. Although there stories were exceptional in their extremes of both policing and resistance, several other participants explicitly described the effects of failing to conform to sexual orientation state-forms. Kev described his ongoing difficulties with sexual orientation, including looking back on his feelings in adolescence and early adulthood.

> I might want to try [sex with a man]. This is a sexual fantasy. I can never be romantically entangled with a man so I'm not really gay still. I suppose it was a straight identity then. And then it was this whole, well, maybe I am gay. Oh, no, I'm not. It just went back and forth a while and then I sort of found out about bisexual … I thought 'wow'. It seemed closest at the time to what I was thinking, that you could like both people. You didn't have to go to one … gay or straight. And at the time there was lots of things like bi lists and bi newsgroups and bi groups and so on, which I went to a couple but [...] the only thing I had in common with them was the sexual behaviour sometimes and I didn't really get into the politics of it because I couldn't be arsed. Yeah, most people there were there because they all sort of banded together for strength and had a chip on their shoulders at the time. […] I never thought of it as being identity. [...] I was just thinking about sex with men and in those days you couldn't just be a man who had sex with men or anything like that. It was always just this whole lifestyle choice.

Kev did benefit from finding out about the possibility of bisexuality, because it had provided him with an alternative to the binary options he had been presented with in the past. While it fits better than either a gay or straight, he rejected and continues to reject a bisexual identity -- 'I'm not a bisexual but I can be bisexual.' He was not interested in bisexual categories, communities or politics. Sexual state-forms, however, do not allow for this nomadic approach. Rejecting sexual orientation identity continues to be difficult for Kev.

> Jamie: Are there other labels that you've used or sometimes use now?
>
> Kev: Not really, no. I mean if people ask me … actually if people ask me if I'm gay, then I say I've got a male partner [...] but I sort of try to not say any one particular label. I describe […] my situation in life as opposed to the label. I very occasionally use 'queer' when talking about … I wouldn't usually say I was queer but I've talked about other things being queer, like queer life or queer stuff in general. OK, it's not really me.
>
> Jamie: So if someone does kind of press you on it and you say well,

actually I have a male partner, and they say 'well, doesn't that mean you're gay?', how do you respond to that?

Kev: It depends how bolshie I'm feeling at the time. I once said 'no, but I can be attracted to women as well', [to] which [...] they say 'then obviously you're bi'. I'll say 'OK, that's close enough'. And if they question me further then ... most people just leave it there because they're not really interested. *They just want to have you set in their eyes as what you are*. Occasionally if someone said you're gay because I've said I've got a male partner, and I'll say 'well, I wouldn't describe myself as gay' and if they say 'why not?' I'd say 'because it's too restrictive' and usually inaccurate as well. If they don't, then I might as well go to … again, for most people, it's just really 'don't call me gay, I don't like it.' [... and talking to some people on an online gay chat room] you've got to admit you're something and it can't be too weird [...] and people keep pushing at you to say 'well, are you this or this?' And if you don't say it it's like 'well, you're just being awkward'. And you do that and it's funny how they're so desperate to have you set as one thing or the other because then they can work out whether you are available, I think. [My emphasis.]

Kev's refusal to pick a box seems to raise anxiety among people who expect him to be sexually oriented. His failure to conform to this seems to upset their notions of a (sexually) ordered world.

The following exchange with Douglas further supports my analysis of the crucial role of emotions -- particularly shame and anxiety -- in maintaining the sexual state-forms of compulsory sexual orientation.

Jamie: So you don't fit into any boxes?

Douglas: [LAUGHS] Oh, God!

Jamie: Is it difficult?

Douglas: It's hell. [...] Yeah, sometimes I would just love a box. Oh, how I would love a box.

Jamie: So what's the feeling about the box?

Douglas: Oh, just having something that you can say … I mean everybody else sticks their hand up and says 'I'm this. I'm that. I'm this one and I've got friends over there and they're all shouting for this.' That would be wonderful. [...] it hasn't been easy and there are times when it feels absolutely impossible.

Jamie: Like when? Any examples that come to mind?

> Douglas: When it's ghastly. When I feel I want a shortcut way of saying to someone … I'll often say to someone that you'll have to accept there's not a straightforward answer. Just take it or leave it. That's it. [...] I and for most people, that's actually all right. I feel sad that I haven't been able to talk to my elder brother although I think he knows and accepts. I haven't talked frankly to him. But we're close in a way. I feel sad about things like that. I haven't talked actively, straightforwardly to my son about it yet. He's 13. But we're very, very close and I just … I can't imagine him not understanding or not … I think he'll be surprised if it was anything else

Douglas finds it difficult to communicate about his sexuality because he doesn't have a box. In the next chapter I describe the benefits he feels from his nomadism, but here he expresses envy of those whose sexualities appear to be simple.

I conclude this section on compulsory sexual orientation with three brief examples of the power of discourse on the everyday production of sexual orientation. We might loosely refer to these respectively as: 1) corporate media representation of sex, 2) scientific models of sexual desire, and 3) 'commonsense' notions of sexual orientation. Of course, these three discourses are not discrete, but interact and intersect in various combinations. Most of the participants expressed frustrations with mainstream pornography. Erica's critique focused on how sexually categorical and gender normative it tends to be.

> Jamie: Are they like any combinations of people that you'd like to watch or are there particularly sexy images? Like straight, lesbian or gay or mixed or other things?
>
> Erica: Mixed stuff I think would be good. In a way, I think, it's part of the problem that I have with erotic images and stuff, that it is straight or it's gay or it's lesbian and its rarely [a] mixed thing with no description made, no boxes, no identification [...] and no shiny chests or shaved cunts and things. That pisses me off and […] I'm too busy getting politically pissed off at stuff to actually get horny about it.

Alasdair's description of his sexual identity seems to draw on scientific models of sexual orientation advocated by Kinsey in the 1950s.

> Jamie: And how long have you felt yourself as bisexual?
>
> Alasdair: Well, I've been aware that there is a spectrum of sexuality, I suppose, for a very long time and I guess I've placed myself somewhere along that spectrum as long as I've been aware that there is such a thing.

> Originally I suspected that I was just gay. People tend to put a label on themselves. But for a long time I had assumed that I'm somewhere around the … somewhere along that spectrum, not at 100% gay.

When I first asked him about his sexual orientation, he described it in numerical terms: 'about 60% gay, but it's varied throughout my life.' Phyllis described early anxieties about sexual identity which draws on more commonsense discourses of sexual desire.

> Jamie: And then, so before you identified as queer, did you have a label before that or just kind of …
>
> Phyllis: I don't think I had a conscious label. I knew that I fancied women. I was really clear about that from when I was at school. I was really clear about that but I had been scared to do anything about it and then I had a couple of boyfriends and it was like 'this is not really … I'm not really enjoying this. There's something wrong here.' And then … I remember talking about this with my husband and saying 'what am I going to do? What if I sleep with a woman and it's bad as well? What am I going to do then?' So I was kind of scared to actually get into anything. But then I did and it was brilliant, really, really brilliant. So by then I didn't mind.

Here, Phyllis's anxieties stem from the assumptions promoted by compulsory sexual orientation. There are only two types of sex, heterosexual and homosexual, and everyone should like at least one of those. If she had had bad sex with a woman, she feared it would have meant that there was something wrong with her, rather than recognising that the limitations of any particular sexual experience are not necessarily based on the gender category of one's partner.

Compulsory Monogamy

The institutionalisation of monogamy has long come under criticism for the compulsory regulation it entails. Long before monogamy was questioned by other feminists, 19th-century anarchist feminists in the US and UK challenged the role of the State apparatus, capitalism and patriarchy in forcing marriage on women (see e.g., Greenway, 2003; Haaland, 1993; Presley, 1999). More recently, compulsory monogamy has been tied into contemporary consumer capitalism and notions of ownership (McPheeters, 1999), patriarchal religion (Stelboum, 1999), race and class (Willey, 2003), and gender and compulsory sexual orientation (Rosa, 1994). The relationship between compulsory monogamy and so many

forms of hierarchy makes it an important point of analysis. More specifically, the incomprehensibility of alternatives to heterosexuality and homosexuality stem from the monogamous ideal of one person being able to fulfill all of one's needs (see e.g., Queen, 1995). This can also be illustrated through my discussion with Pete on how he thought he would feel if he found himself attracted to a man.

> That would be very difficult, yeah, because [...] I always was very naïve, in a way, or I always had these big dreams of [...] finding the big love [...]. I would … this would break … because now, I think, I've found it. This would break then I would be really quite destroyed.

Bisexuality has long been criticised based on assumptions of its incompatibility with monogamy, and the assumption that monogamy is an intrinsically superior characteristic of relationships (Murray, 1995; Norrgard, 1991; Rust, 1993) -- representation rears its ugly head again. Because the participants in this research project are in mixed relationships, similar assumptions have been made about their incapacity for monogamy. One academic discussing my research in the planning stage asked me, 'do you mean promiscuous couples?' Monogamy obviously had to be addressed. I asked participants about their relationship status in terms of monogamy, how that decision was made, and how they continue to communicate about it. Eight of the participants were in relationships they defined as monogamous, five were in non-monogamous relationships with one other person, and three had polyamourous relationships (i.e. maintaining multiple ongoing romantic and/or sexual relationships).

Little, if any, research has looked at the everyday production/policing of monogamy. Nor was it a key aim of this research project, though some examples did come up in the interviews. Kev spoke the most extensively about his experiences of compulsory monogamy.

> Jamie: Can you think of any examples where you felt embarrassed, guilty or ashamed about something to do with sex?
>
> Kev: Yeah. It depends who you're with. If I'm with my colleagues from work and something … even if we were talking about general sex and someone says something like 'oh, well, no one does that' and I do do that, then that's kind of embarrassing. But, yeah, if you're with queer friends then it's different usually because in some ways they're much more forgiving. I think that the idea of monogamy as well is something that's come up I know with colleagues at work and one colleague in particular […] he'll make a joke about me having sex with somebody who isn't my partner and they go 'ha, ha' unless you and your partner ... 'ha, ha.' And it's

> kind of … yeah, it's almost like a … I don't know whether it's actual probing, is this the case or not or whether it really is just a … because obviously you wouldn't because you're a nice person but that's … it's not embarrassing itself. It's kind of awkward and I think if I were to say 'well, actually, we do do that' then I'd be embarrassed because the expectation is like 'you wouldn't do that'. So, yeah, sometimes.
>
> Jamie: Is that the main kind of thing that comes to mind [...]?
>
> Kev: Probably. I think the monogamy thing's the biggest thing just because it seems like a moral judgement, that anything to do with that, even … no matter what it is, it's a kind of implied that if you do that, you're not really committed to your partner or it'll never last or … and it's like it's such a big expectation. There's not a lot of things that would be embarrassing like getting caught having a wank with someone else in a public place wouldn't be really embarrassing if it came out but it wouldn't be *as* embarrassing, in a way, because it's just kind of a small thing. It's not this … it's like 'oh, that's inappropriate behaviour' as opposed to 'oh, my God! You've done something that God's going to smite you for', which is kind of the impression you get sometimes. [...] But it's a big thing. It's a big package. It all goes together as opposed to a single act. It's sort of like if you do this one thing then all these other things must be true. It's even worse than identity in a way. It's a non-monogamy identity that's imposed on you and therefore your entire personality changes.

Kev's fears of acknowledging that his relationship is non-monogamous have been further supported by experiences of scandalised friends.

> Even again with friends, the two of us have been out with friends before and I've been sort of distracted looking at someone going past and my friends have been scandalised at me doing this and then my partner looks over and says 'who are you looking at? Oh, yeah, I like him.' And they've been even more scandalised then.

There are couple of things going on here in this part of my interview with Kev. First of all, sexual policing is contextual. Compulsory monogamy as state-form seems to be alive and well in the culture of Kev's workplace. Among his 'queer' friends, however sexuality is allowed to be more nomadic -- 'they're much more forgiving'. Second, and more importantly, compulsory monogamy is 'the biggest thing' in terms of Kev's experience of sexual policing. Much as Foucault (1990) argued that the homosexual had been produced as a new type of being, Kev

finds the experience of being judged as non-monogamous as encompassing the entirety of his identity.

Like many other aspects of producing sexual state-forms, emotions, particularly jealousy, play a role in the existence of compulsory monogamy. Relationship therapist Marny Hall (1999) has argued that jealousy depends upon other feelings including fear of loss, poor self-esteem and a sense of powerlessness. Thus, jealousy does not indicate the strength of one's love for another, as some seem to believe, but is tied up with emotions, including pathological shame, that inevitably result from institutionalised competitions and hierarchies. My analysis supports Hall's.

Sandra spoke of jealousy at a few points during the interview. The first quote refers to her partner and the second is on the topic of feeling envious of other people.

> he mentioned to me that there was a woman that we both knew that he found really attractive and she was like this petite little thing, that was like the stereotype of what men *do* find attractive and I just thought 'Oh' grumble, grumble, grumble because I suppose I'm insecure in some ways. I don't really want my partner to find anybody else attractive and I don't want anybody else to find *my* partner attractive.
>
> Envious, I don't know, of people and their relationships. Like 'oh, I wish I could be as close as you guys are' or 'I wish you would tell me your secrets' and 'I know you tell that other person your secrets and it would be kind of nice if you felt close enough to me to …'. I can't think of anybody or any situation in particular really but I know that I have had thoughts like that at times.

Like other participants, Sandra's discussions of jealousy or envy refer to feelings of insecurity and loss. Jealousy can also have a negative impact on open communication within relationships. Eva talked about difficulties talking with her partner about attractions to other people.

> I, for one, don't want him to feel threatened or whatever because sometimes we would … we could be talking to each other about stuff like that and it would be in more of a sexual setting already and we'd be quite turned on and it would be cool. But other times I would be worried that it would freak him out and it might be something nice to talk about in a fantasy kind of way but then I worry that he's worried that I actually really want to run off with so-and-so. And I think that's a legitimate worry because it does seem that he thinks that way, which is kind of crap because it's fine to talk about this tonight but in the morning he's going to have a wee drama about it.

Eva described herself as generally being much more comfortable with sexuality than her partner. Meanwhile, Kev talked about being in the position of feeling less comfortable with sexuality than his partner.

> Kev: I still find it quite difficult about being open about some things and there's still … I think there's some pressure when you have a partner who's sort of much more sexually open than you are, to be as sexually open sometimes but not hugely.
>
> Jamie: So it's kind of like you're pressured?
>
> Kev: It feels like you're … you feel pressure in a way but obviously you're internalising the pressure. It seems almost like an envy thing almost, that you … in some ways you'd like to be at the same stage your partner's at, in some ways. And in other ways, you don't want to be that but it's more sort of pressuring yourself than your partner pressuring you, I think. [...] you [also] know that a lot of the negative aspects are pressure from like society, other people around you and so you resent that too so a lot of it's trying to say 'oh, to hell with them', but then you try to work out, what do I really want to do with this. Now am I doing this just to rebel and … it's a whole range of things.

As Kev's quote, along with the literature on microsociology and emotions (e.g., Scheff, 1990), suggests it is not possible to separate self-policing from 'external' policing. While understanding the impact of jealousy on sexual communication and compulsory monogamy would require more focused research, like fear and shame discussed earlier, jealousy clearly has policing effects. I return to this issue in the next chapter, when I discuss resistance to compulsory monogamy.

Continuous Colonisation

Compulsory sexual orientation cannot be entirely reduced to the effects of heteronormativity, homonormativity and compulsory monogamy – the state-form's need for overcoding is insatiable. Practices, identities and desires excluded from these sexual state-forms -- bisexuality, polyamoury, 'queerness', etc -- are not inherently nomadic. They may also be captured and disciplined by the state-form – they are deterritorialised spaces ripe for colonisation.

In a largely competitive and hierarchical world, it is all too easy to succumb to the temptation of the reverse discourse, to transform feelings of stigma into feelings of superiority. In fact, this is sometimes even advised.

> Fears about polyamoury can be internalised in ways similar to homophobia. It is easy to internalise the social approbation for having multiple relationships which include sex. There can be an inescapable suspicion that there is something wrong with oneself. If other people are able to be successfully and blissfully monogamous with a single partner forever and ever, then there must be something wrong with me if I can't do it. On the other hand, one can also begin to see oneself as more highly evolved and special for wanting and being able to do this really wonderful thing -- love more than one (Halpern, 1999: 159).

While such strategies might have some mental health benefits for the individual, they will also have other effects. Representing the desire or capacity to have sex with more than one person, more than one gender, or any other 'transgressive' gender/sexuality as superior to others contradicts the ethical principles of anarchism and poststructuralism. 'Equal opportunity lover,' a phrase sometimes used in the US for bisexuality, combines a disturbing bi supremecy with a liberal corporate discourse suggesting the possibility of hierarchical, yet fair, workplaces. And, as I argued in Chapter Three, queer, in many contexts, has become an identity label with borders.

In the next chapter, I talk about how some people find queer to be an open and liberating concept. But first, several of the participants offered their understandings of queer as a limited category.

> Anita: Whereas being queer, that sort of came more in the mid 90's. God, I feel like I'm so old. And that's sort of more polysexual to me in a lot of ways and it tends to be quite a young-identified thing as well. You're in your mid 20's. You're queer. You've got lots of gay boyfriends. You're maybe a bit punk, you know, that sort of stuff.
>
> Meg: [T]here's two sets of kind of associations [...]. Probably like a political one and … or a more politicised thing and it's a very metropolitan, contemporary sort of identity thing.
>
> Sandra: Queer I find weird. Queer I suppose I associated more with guys. Queer's a weird … queer is a queer term. Yeah, I would never use it for me. It doesn't seem as friendly. It seems like guys, like black people calling each other 'nigger' or guys calling each other 'queer'. It's not a term I would

use.

Participants in their forties and older were particularly uncomfortable with queer as a label, having grown up with it as a purely negative term.

> Alasdair: Well it's a derogatory term generally in this country. Although a lot of gay people use it on themselves, traditionally it's a word used by people who are not sympathetic to gay people and therefore I tend to dislike it.
>
> Douglas: Queer just, to me, sounds terribly old-fashioned and insulting, just about … I think it's just utterly old-fashioned. It says more about the person using it … queer … you're queer. I just … I can't relate to that.

The constant threat to nomadic identities is further demonstrated by participants sometimes feeling 'not LGBT enough'. While I have addressed this to an extent in the discussion of policing gay space, homonormativity is limited to the notion of a correct way to be gay or lesbian. Both Anne and Meg described feelings of not being bisexual enough. Anne's nomadic sexuality eludes the state-forms of heterosexuality and bisexuality, causing her some concern, including her legitimacy as a participant in my research.

> Anne: I also don't see myself as straight, in that kind of really, really rigid kind of perceived kind of cultural notion of straight [...] because I have, like, you know, fancied women before and pursued women as well, so, dunno. I suppose I'm not happy with the categorisation. [But,] I don't want to be one of those lipstick lesbian, pseudo-lipstick lesbians that go around saying oh yeah, I'm bisexual, right, cos that's so cool, cos I'm, at the moment, I'm, do you know what I mean?
>
> Jamie: So you, you'd worry, worry about cashing in on bisexual chic or something?
>
> Anne: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.
>
> Jamie: You don't feel like you've the right claim, huh?
>
> Anne: No, because if, cos if me and [my partner] split up tomorrow, I can't, I just can't envisage myself looking at women sexually, but then give it another six months and I dunno it could change again. It's just about where, do you know what I mean, what you feel comfortable with at the time. Does that make sense? [...] So does that mean I'm a crappy interviewee now?

Meg has also had anxieties about her queer status. She mentioned being teased about not having had sex with any women recently.

> One of my best gay boyfriends said to me 'what's your contribution to women's sexual pleasure been in the last three years? I've made more contribution …' [...] Oh, that's gay friends. That's 100% gay friends taking the piss out of me for being largely heterosexual. I practiced being heterosexual over the last three years.

Meg emphasises that this is due to a disappointing lack of opportunity rather than desire.

> Ha, ha, ha, yes, yes. It is true. I had more sex with men in the last three years. It's easier. There's more men … there's more heterosexual men and more heterosexual men who offer sex, invite sex and who are in a game of flirtation with one, with me, than there are women *and* there's also a connection to the thing we were discussing earlier on, which is that in some … more sexualised parts of the women scene I don't code as very interesting to people, I don't think, and generally in the dyke scene, I don't pull very well, I don't think, because [...] I don't do cute enough, fashionable tank tops and I've not kept up with that, and I think I don't look … I possibly look too femmie. […] if you look a bit femmie in some dyke bars, you're seen as not that lesbian or you're just bi-curious or …

In her research on compulsory heterosexuality in the context of Ann Summers' parties, Merl Storr (2003) argued that teasing was a technique used by the women to keep each other in (heterosexual) line. Not only has Meg being teased about her own 'heterosexuality', but she is also self-conscious about the apparent heterosexuality of her relationship with a (formerly) gay man.

> Meg: I don't work at it with him. I was a bit self-conscious that other people might think I had. I was very keen and got together to point out that I hadn't seduced him because he's seen as being gay and I'm seen as being the slag. So I was really like 'actually I didn't seduce him, actually'.
>
> Jamie: Is that a kind of 'I wasn't the one who made him straight'?
>
> Meg: Yeah.
>
> Jamie: 'It wasn't me. It wasn't my fault.'
>
> Meg: I'd joke about … yeah. I'd joke about straightening him out and getting a grant from some bigot church to straighten out men. It's a bit of a long-term project. Yeah, there's ... some discomforts there, sort of at a

jokey level but also …

Anne and Meg's experiences demonstrate the fragility of resisting the hetero/homo division for sexual nomadism. Their capacities to mobilise bisexual, queer or other sexual identities have met with policing, indicating a degree of rigidity to these categories.

Like gay and lesbian identities, bisexuality becomes reified through identity politics strategies. Sandra talked about her political reasons for using the label 'bisexual'.

> I feel it's important to go to Gay Pride and be a regular person rather than a caricature, which is what I tend to see the drag queens as, kind of cartoon … playing … taking advantage of the circumstances so that they can play dress up, which … I kind of don't want to take it away from them but at the same time, in terms of educating the public, like you can have feelings for men and have feelings for women. I think that if you're somebody who appears like anybody else, that it can only help because they know … because I'm monogamous. I'm not a nymphomaniac. I'm kind of regular in a lot of ways and so I think I do latch on to the label for educational purposes, to help further the cause. [...] I want to fight against the stereotype [of] on the fence, undecided, sex-crazy, by carrying that label and not being those things. So I think that has sort of gelled in the past few years. That's probably also part of why I go. 'Hi, I'm bisexual' so that people can go 'oh, but you're not like snogging everybody in the room' or whatever their stereotype is.

Sandra clearly rejected an overtly authoritarian approach to policing to keep it 'normal'. But, referring to drag queens again, she said 'you don't get that chance too often and like go for it and have a lovely time but that's why I wouldn't say you can't do that but maybe I wish you wouldn't.' Likewise, she does not want to force, but encourage, people who are not 'out of control' to represent their stigmatised category by adopting the label.

> Jamie: So you haven't got any problem with people who say 'I don't do labels', even though one could fit to them?
>
> Sandra: Yeah, generally not because I think it's a matter of personal choice but I think if somebody does fit a label really well, especially if they would represent it really well and that could be a really good tool for other people, that *it's a shame that they don't accept the label*, if they fit it. It's the old … it's the same as Gay Pride. Somebody who fits this label isn't necessarily really terrifying or really out of control or whatever and the more people who sort of fit labels and are good examples, I think it's kind of a shame sometimes that … if they don't accept the label to be used as a tool. I can understand not wanting to do labels because we are not … the

> label is not all we are and I can see that people would rebel against that on that basis. I am not just that label or that label or the other label. I am much more than what you might think of when you see that label. So I can understand that and that's fine but I think labels can be used productively as well, constructively. [My emphasis.]

I am concerned that this approach has the unintended effects of promoting authoritarianism, which is necessary to maintain the borders of identity categories. Eva described her changing relationship with the politics of labels.

> Politically, I think, one thing, now that I think about it that has changed is when I first came out as bi and was very out about it in a kind of uppity sort of way, I really disliked people calling themselves things like lesbians that sleep with men and stuff and a lot of people seeming to be just scared of the bi label and that really bothered me and I felt that they should reclaim it and get over it and we could do with a bit more support, but now I'm more tolerant of that, I think, because I think if that's the label that works best with you then go with it. And just seeing even more examples of how people can be a lot more fluid. Like I do have a friend who considers herself gay. She says gay. I would say lesbian, whatever. Whatever. And she's been with this guy for like two years but she considers herself gay except for him and that's fine [...] because not everybody's head works in the same way as mine and that's for the best really.

While I've argued that gay and lesbian identity politics is in danger of depoliticising heterosexuality, queer identity runs the risk of producing 'straight' as the dull cousin of queer (i.e. Non-heterosexual and/or non-transgressive). Beth and Eva talked about how their partners were uncomfortable with the label 'straight'.

> Jamie: Has he got a label that he would use for himself?
>
> Beth: No. He really doesn't like labels. He really resents it when I say 'straight' just meaning not anything else.
>
> ---
>
> Eva: We had problems this morning and it's a bit awkward, which isn't too much to do with my sexual orientation but I think it comes into it a bit because partly he's just kind of … I don't know, he's kind of insecure and he thinks 'oh, I'm just a boring straight boy' and I'm like 'no, you're not'. [...] The [book] I'm reading at the minute is straight and queer women writing about sexuality and he kind of flicks through it but he kind of gets freaked out by the sort of stuff in them and just kind of noticed … he seemed to find a lot of things in it, which would be things like … 'he copes

> rather well for a straight boy'. 'He was quite clued in for a straight boy'. So he's not thrilled. There's issues around that sort of thing. And because a lot of my friends are queer or transgendered or whatever, it's not very so-called normal, which he doesn't have an issue about. It doesn't freak him out and he doesn't have anything stupid to say on the matter but I think it makes him feel like he is boring, which is a shame.

Conclusion: The State-like Relationships of Sexual Orientation

One of my initial questions in undertaking this research project is how to understand sexual orientation. Based on analysis of this chapter, one might suggest that it is an effect of State-like relationships. The State depends upon hierarchies of mind over body (Albert, 2004), masculine over feminine (Brown, 1995; Daly, 1988; Ferguson, 1984), and, consequently, rational over emotional (see also discussion in Chapter 3). This results in, and depends upon, relationships of violence and shame to maintain these hierarchies. That this violence originates from the dominant ideology is disguised through the onus placed on deviation rather than policing, even in instances of self-policing.

> State or lawful violence always seems to presuppose itself, for it preexists its own use: the State can in this way say that violence is 'primal,' that it is simply a natural phenomenon responsibility for which does not lie with the State, which uses violence only against the violent, against 'criminals' -- against primitives, against nomads -- in order that peace may reign (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988:448).

Like the compulsory nature of the State, sexual orientation is itself compulsory and is intertwined with compulsory monogamy and gender. Like the State, the violence necessary to continuously produce these concepts is justified by the dominant ideology which assumes their necessity or even their essential nature. Efforts to escape this compulsory logic through the production of oppositional identities can result in reification of those identities and the continuation of policing. Politics aiming to eliminate the hetero/homo dichotomy must challenge the State-like relationships of which it is an effect. Similarly, an effective anarchist politics cannot simply challenge the State as institution, but must disrupt State-like relationships in all aspects of life. Sexuality is one such aspects ripe with policing. To emphasise the mutually supportive nature of relationships within the State apparatus and the State-like relationships of sexual orientation, I conclude with Alasdair's encounter with the State. Here, hierarchies of sexuality, class and authority are used to justify officials' and

villagers' efforts to shame Alasdair, violence justified by its use against against a criminal, a nomad.

Jamie: Can you think of any examples where you've felt embarrassed, guilty or ashamed about something to do with sex?

Alasdair: Yes. The outstanding example is my wife was nine months pregnant and I was in the local town, cottaging, and I was caught in a police trap and … the embarrassment went on and on but for a start I was concerned because my wife would be worried, not knowing where I was and then, when it got out in the village, we lived in a small village, that caused her long period of considerable difficulty. It put my marriage under great strain. It didn't do either of us any good at all. It went on over a month. That's the outstanding example. I can't, offhand, think of any other instance that's anywhere near that one.

Jamie: Were you charged?

Alasdair: I was charged. I think I was admonished but it's … I believe it's something I had to declare when I apply for a licence or something for certain things. It's a stain upon my character. But it was a very transitory thing and of course somebody in the village, who we knew very well, heard about it and … 'how could you? With a taxi driver!' I didn't even know he was a taxi driver! I'd never exchanged one word with him. It was through the partition of a public toilet.

Jamie: Why do you think she picked out taxi driver?

Alasdair: Because she thought of me as a gent. She was a right old-fashioned lady and she felt that I wouldn't have sex with a taxi driver.

Jamie: So it wasn't because he was a man. It was because he was … 'common' or something?

Alasdair: It seemed so, yes. That just made it worse, the fact that it was with a member of the lower orders. She herself was of the sort of class where she would call me 'Mr' although she knew me very well. Yes, that was quite interesting, her reaction. [...] Other people I've known … I mean I've continued to have friends in the village and one guy that I still know, he never referred to it 'til one time we had a drink or two, he said 'despite what they say about you, I think you're a good chap'. That's the only reference he ever made to it. Most other people have never spoken to me about it. There was plenty of whispering in the village. And one of the effects was that people who sent their young children to my wife for piano lessons, ceased to do so. It made life very difficult for my wife. She was really hurt by that. But we survived it. […] I don't think it came as any great shock to her but it was the social aspect of it that really [...] The Judge got great pleasure out of telling me off in front of the Press and everybody saying 'if you're going to do that, you don't do it here'. They

went on and on for about 10 minutes but [...] just admonished me. [...] The police were not very nice in that I told them my wife was heavily pregnant and I didn't want her unnecessarily worried and they left me in a cell for about three hours, cold cell, and they took my trousers to be analysed to see if they could find semen on them and so they had to go … they had to send a police car to the house to get another pair of trousers for me. So that was the first my wife knew about it when the police car turned up.