

**Confession, surveillance and subjectivity:
a discourse analytic approach to advice columns**

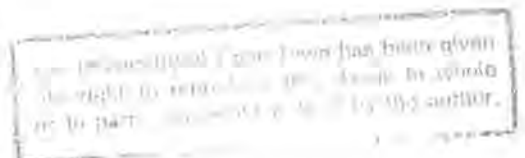
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1994

by

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I would really like to have slipped imperceptibly into [this dissertation] []. I would have preferred to be enveloped in words, borne away beyond all possible beginnings. At the moment of [writing], I would like to have perceived a nameless [text], long preceding me, leaving me merely to enmesh myself in it, taking up its cadence, and to lodge myself, when no one was looking, in its interstices as if it had paused an instant, in suspense, to beckon me.

Michel Foucault (1971). Inaugural lecture delivered at the College de France (p. 7). [Trans. R. Swyer].

Sometimes the generalized text of deconstruction [] is understood as a universal formalism which makes nothing real, nothing matter. But at its most powerful it could mean that everything matters; everything is real and everything is textual, mediated interpretable.

Jane Gallop (1988). Thinking through the body (pp. 89-90).

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Abstract

This dissertation applies the theoretical ideas of Michel Foucault - viz. confession, surveillance and subjectivity - to advice columns from three South African women's magazines. An interpretative analysis of discourses is employed which, through exposure of the structuring effects of discourse, renders salient the relationship between knowledges, discursive practices, power and institutions. Using, as a starting point, Wendy Hollway's work on subject positioning of women in discourses concerning heterosexual relationship practice, the ways in which women are impelled to "work" in psychologized and medicalized ways to effect normalization in "crises" of "physical attractiveness" and "monogamy" are examined in advice texts. These technologies and practices produce rewards of power for subjection, and these powers are critically discussed in terms of (a) "liberal" / "humanist", "feminist" and "Foucauldian" strategies of women's empowerment, and (b) the formal dynamics and constraints of advice columns.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to confession, surveillance and subjectivity

OK for sex but too ugly to love (JH 3)

Q I am 18 years old and feel unwanted by guys because I have acne and my teeth stick out. I am friendly with a guy, but we are just using each other to have a good time. I asked if we could have a long-term relationship but he said he would prefer things as they are. I sometimes think that no guy will ever want me - except for sex - because I am ugly and won't get anyone to love me.

A [] Acne can be treated and your doctor or a dermatologist would be able to help you. Orthodontics sorts out teeth alignment. A dental hospital associated with a medical school would be cheaper than seeing a private practitioner. That said, it is also important to know that self-worth has a lot to do with self-acceptance - that is, acceptance of yourself as you are and in spite of your looks. People are attracted to people who like themselves in spite of the pressures and the models set by advertising and the media. Trying to accept yourself the way you are would be infinitely more effective and long-lasting than an investment in outward appearance. It would help you form relationships in which people like you as you are and for what you are, rather than what they might get out of you.

Introduction

Published letters and replies from advice columns in South African women's magazines - such as the above advice text - are the focus of interpretative analysis in this study. My starting point was an awareness of my own ambivalence about the operations and effects of advice columns. First, I recognized the potential of the genre to empower individual women. For example, women might be encouraged to take responsibility for their own well-being, to stand firm against exploitation and abuse, and to seek support within existing institutionalized resources. Furthermore, while advice addresses the particular problems of a letter-writer (e.g. the powerlessness and despair of perceived physical unattractiveness, above), a wider audience of women / readers is educated as to their rights and available resources, enabling informed choice and action.

Second, as a feminist, I was suspicious of uses of the genre as an ideological apparatus for the regulation and control of women. In the above advice text, for example, particular issues are set up - through invisible editing practices - as relevant and problematic for women, viz. physical appearance and "the relationship". Furthermore, authoritative expertise from psychological and medical discourses is drawn in to valorize particular resolutions and reparative work, e.g. work by the individual or qualified professionals on the self/psyche and body, which disallows alternatives, e.g. socio-political critique, resistance, collectivity, social transformation.

The appeal of a Foucauldian framework is that it provides a way to theorize and analyze this ambivalence. Recognition of the significance and structuring effects of language (Burman & Parker, 1993), renders

visible the links between institutionalized knowledges (e.g. psychological and/or medical) and power. Advice columns become a site of confession, examination and surveillance of 'personal lives' by an increasingly minute grid of norms. Through professional procedures of motivation and mechanisms of reformation (Rose, 1990: 8), we are offered particular subject positions and corrective practices, thus effecting subjectivity and normalization.

Wholesale rejection of these norms is difficult, for as Foucault (1986) explains, "the art of existence... is dominated by the principle which says one must 'take care of oneself'" (p. 43). Thus, we depend on expert techniques for enhancing our capacities as individuals: we choose strategies and act on promises of health, well-being, fulfillment, tranquility or autonomy, in order to care for and actualize ourselves. This "entrepreneurial self" (Rose, 1990), although a form of subjection, produces a sense of control and directedness in individual lives: choice, agency, desire, responsibility and self-discipline.

Some feminist discourse analysts have expressed pessimism about the 'discursive determinism' a Foucauldian or post-structuralist view of psychological practice purports. It remains a feminist objective, then, to "politicize" the allegedly empowering effects achieved as perpetuative of patriarchal discursive practice (e.g. individualism; illusions of choice; agentic "work" on physical appearance / relationships, etc.); and to challenge the ineptitude of a notion of power and individualized resistance in effecting "real" social transformation [see Burman, 1991b, below].¹ This forges my critical approach to power issues.

Thus, two focal axes guide this study. First, an axis of psychologization and medicalization, where advice texts are used as 'surfaces of emergence' for confessions of perceived abnormality and the operations of institutionalized knowledges and practices of normalization. Chapters 4 and 5 examine how "physical attractiveness" and "monogamy", respectively, are constructed as "problems" or "objects" by psychological and medical discourses in the advice columns of three South African women's magazines.

In the above advice text, for example, perceived physical unattractiveness [i.e. acne and protruding teeth] is medicalized in terms of physical features deemed fixable / curable by proliferating forms of medical expertise [i.e. dermatology and orthodontics]. Psychologization produces a competing formulation of these problems in terms of "self-esteem", and an "inner" psyche and emotional life, which requires "work" of a different kind, and draws in other experts.

The selection of "physical attractiveness" and "monogamy" is not, of course, arbitrary. My study is embedded in, resistant to, and committed to extension of the work of Wendy Hollway (1983; 1984a; 1984b; 1991) on gendered subjectivities in discourses of sexuality and [heterosexual] relationships. Thus, using Hollway's reading of *women's* subject positioning as a starting point, I seek to explore the operations of psychologized and medicalized power-knowledge relations, and discursive practices [e.g. ongoing forms of "women's work" on physical appearance and sexual exclusivity in relationships], which labour to hold those conventionalized subject positions in place. I conclude this Chapter with an overview of Hollway's

¹ This is not an exclusively "feminist" argument. Several authors have challenged the political limitations of discursive theory with respect to social structures of power / oppression, and the "liberal" individualizing effects of decontextualized psychotherapeutic and medical technologies. I cover a range of these critiques in subsequent sections.

work, and my uses of it. This "withholding" until a concluding section of the centrality of Hollway's ideas might seem bizarre, but, structurally, strategically, it served to draw together the many related strands of this dissertation.

The second axis which guides this study is one of power and/or empowerment, where implications of and tensions between "liberal", feminist and Foucauldian approaches are explored. This focus on power, central in critical discourse analytic studies (Parker, 1992), is sustained throughout. In Chapter 2, literature about advice columns will be reviewed within a "realist", "feminist" and "Foucauldian" classification of writings (following McRobbie, 1991). This seeks to clarify various readings of the operations and effects of advice columns, via contrasting underlying assumptions about knowledge and power. Chapter 3 reviews discourse analytic methods in light of the axes of this study, and plots a course for the analysis and commentary which follows in Chapters 4 and 5. The advantages and limitations of Foucauldian power and resistance will be evaluated in Chapter 6.

This study draws on a number of theoretical concepts and writings on Foucauldian and broader post-structuralist fronts, e.g. practices of psychologization and medicalization; definitions of "text", "discourses" and "discursive practices"; disciplinary power and resistance; and subject positions. Thus, the remainder of this Chapter is devoted to review of these concepts, positions and terminologies. It is my intention to convey a sense of a post-structuralist framework here, signposting rather than comprehensive summary. These theoretical formulations (a) inform points of my resistance to Hollway's work [reviewed in the concluding section], and (b) are put to work in analyses of advice texts in later Chapters.

Psychologization and Normalization

Nikolas Rose (e.g. 1988; 1989; 1990) applies Foucault's ideas about discipline and institutions to "psychology" as a text, and argues that our inner psychic worlds (emotions, desires, personalities, etc.) and personal relationships have a normative public reality - socially structured and managed - rather than emanating from some private realm within the individual. Thus, Rose [drawing on Lynch's (1985) interpretation of *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977)] explains that several normalizing technologies are employed by institutions (e.g. psychology) to "make" individuals and relationships.

First, a "regime of visibility" is established (Rose, 1988: 187). This involves the objectification of the observed within a common plane of sight, examinable and measurable in "the objectifying gaze", e.g. an individual within psychotherapeutic practices: traces of "self" made visible via confessional techniques, techniques for calibration of aspects of personality, or case notes / files. Foucault (1978) refers to examination and confession as "rituals of discourse" (p. 61), or technologies of power: they are the means by which subjectivities and intersubjectivities enter the visibilities of experts.

Second, "grid(s) of codeability" (Rose, 1988: 187) refer to bodies of institutionalized theoretical knowledges [e.g. sets of norms, concepts, techniques, etc.] - as 'apparatuses of truth' - used to code or

classify previously unpredictable complexities of human experience in terms of conformity / deviation from such norms. These knowledges locate individuals in "chains of allegiance and dependency" (Rose, 1990: 8): powers to speak the truth, to diagnose, to advise / educate / motivate, to cure / reform, are vested in experts; others (non-experts) are obliged to accept the truths spoken (e.g. to be persuaded by the truth-status and/or utility of psychological or medical "science"), to comply with and/or be attracted by the images of life / self they offer, and to seek professional assistance and reassurance when made anxious by perceived deviation from these norms (ibid: 10).

Thus, a normalizing "grid of perception" [cf. intelligibility], a cognizable field, is established for registering and fixing diverse details of human existence "into an ordered space of knowledge" (Rose, 1988: 188). For example: individual identity is produced as stable, knowable, thinkable, via a perceptual process in which "the properties of a disciplinary regime, its norms and values, have become merged with and become attributes of persons themselves" (ibid). Normalization, then, refers to the processes of rendering the phenomenal world (e.g. the psyche, the body, the relationship, the worker) visible to various institutional and/or disciplinary systems where it is thought about in terms of coincidences and differences from norms, and the mechanisms of motivation / injunction or reformation / therapy employed (directly or indirectly) to "optimize" experience or functioning according to those norms.

Psychologization - the application of psychological discourses to a phenomenal world - refers, in a critical way, to the operations and effects of normalizing practices of psychology. As Rose (1990) points out, psychological knowledges (e.g. about the individual) inform and maintain various normalizing practices (e.g. health, medicine, law, education), and indeed, arose, at the turn of the 19th century, within programmes of social regulation and classification (e.g. demand for reliable norms / practices for separating the insane from the sane, immigrant selection, maximizing productivity in the workplace, etc.).

Thus, psychological knowledges are associated with the technological domination of subjectivity, a broad theme which has been explored by various authors. For example, Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine (1984) problematize the effects of psychological practices, revealing them, historically and currently, as participating in and maintaining social norms and conservative (rather than transformative) interests. Burman (1991a and 1992a) argues that developmental psychology occupies a key role in the reproduction of prevailing power relations and gendered social arrangements. Levett (1988) shows that the professional psychological discourse concerning the traumatic effects of child sexual abuse perpetuates existing power structures (expert/non-expert, female/male, child/adult), and obscures everyday practices which govern the lives of girls and women, against which they may struggle. Fairclough (1992) offers brief, insightful analyses of the ways in which counselling technologies, allegedly non-directive and non-judgemental, operate as a form of "colonization" and discipline of proliferating "problematic aspects" of individuals' lives [see Chapter 5].

However, psychological knowledges and practices of subjectification do not work exclusively by repression and domination, or coercion and constraint. As Rose (1988) explains, knowledges of subjectivity have produced personal goals (e.g. economic advancement, contentment in relationships / parenting, social

efficiency, happiness / well-being, etc.) which have become identified with personal responsibility, 'cultivation / care of the self' and subjective fulfillment (p. 197). Thus, psychologization: *stimulate(s)* subjectivity, *promote(s)* self-inspection and self-consciousness, *maximize(s)* desire and intellectual capacities to understand, *produce(s)* an individual "free to choose", whose life becomes worthwhile to the extent that they are imbued with subjective feelings of meaningful pleasure (Rose, 1990: 4, my emphases).

Therefore, as objects of regimes of competing psychological knowledges (e.g. about human emotions, capacities, needs, subjectivities), individuals become subjects of certain systems of power. We regulate ourselves "because we are construed (by mechanisms of subjectivity) as *active agents* in our own lives" (ibid: 10, original emphasis), i.e. actively wanting, thinking, working, feeling, relating to the self and others, making choices in terms of these psychological knowledges [e.g. about our bodies, family lives, relationships, leisure activities, etc.]. Thus, via institutionalized ("expert") techniques of awakening and enhancing 'the entrepreneurial self', political / structural power controls choices 'from a distance', infiltrating the interiority of our thought, experience and existence (Rose 1990).

Several authors have similarly explored 'the culture of self' in modernity or late-modernity. For example, Lasch (1979) argues that in the face of the de-historicization and institutionalization of modern cultural life, individuals, on a level of day-to-day existence, have given up hope of controlling the wider social environment. Thus, they have retreated to personal preoccupations - to self-improvement - in a pursuit of psychic security and physical well-being. While Rosen (1977) and Vitz (1977) address the effects of fairly specific psychological theories and practices on modern self-work / self-worship (e.g. the humanistic theories and therapies of Rogers and/or Maslow), Giddens' (1991) thesis of the emergence of new, institutionalized mechanisms of self-identity is more pervasive and globalizing, i.e. the self is a reflexive project permeated by mediating and contradictory influences from large-scale social systems.

Giddens (1991) does not espouse the contemporary 'search for self-fulfillment' (or 'search for intimacy') as *only* a negative reaction to or defence against an impersonal, alienating social universe. This view, akin to Rose's (1990) Foucauldian thesis and Sampson's (e.g. 1985; 1989; 1993) "post-modern self", opposes the one-sided social commentaries mentioned above (i.e. Rosen, 1977; Vitz, 1977; Lasch, 1979). Giddens (1991) explains that knowledges about the self, whether in personal life or social milieux, involve "processes of reappropriation and empowerment intertwine(d) with expropriation and loss" (p. 7). Also, the social spaces between individuals' practices and experts' regimes are occupied by trust and acceptance, but also reserve, doubt and resistance (ibid), opening up alternatives. Thus, a critical analysis of power should not entail the attempted liberation of subjectivity from repression, but an examination of the complex social relations, regulatory techniques and resistances which produce subjectivities.

Medicalization and "liberal" views of institutional knowledges

Much of the above discussion [on psychologization] would apply to the operation and effects of medicalization as a normalizing institutional practice, and vice versa. However, despite links,

commonalities and overlaps with psychologization, it is important to recognize the 'dividing practices' which maintain medical discourses as an epistemological space distinct from psychological discourses. Sontag (1978), for example, has written of complementary hypotheses / cures for "illness": medicalization locates the illness in/on the physical body and cures via bio-chemical or other interventive practices; and psychologization sees illness as a psychological event, and reformation is effected via injunction to inner psychic work, e.g. exploring unconscious motives or mobilization of will (p. 55). Thus, psychologization and medicalization both operate on the human subject as "object", but they produce distinctive, complementary, competing, entangled and over-determined ways of knowing and normalizing that object.

Allan Young (1987), using a Foucauldian framework, argues that medical discourses (plural) consist of "the totality of medical statements and practices (about the body, health / sickness, healing, etc.) circulating at any one time" (p. 115) [see also Guedon, 1977]. These discourses may shift historically, or rupture internally into several professional proliferations, but some shared epistemological space produces a semblance of unity. The human object / subject within medicalization is the physical body (*not* the psychologized self), and human existence is perceived in terms of bio-medical norms based on "facts of nature" and "universal physical processes" (e.g. reproduction, ageing, contagion, disease, etc.), and practices to correct / cure the ab-normal or the un-natural (ibid: 114). Furthermore, this epistemological space is policed by "distinctive circles of knowledge-producers" (i.e. *not* psychologists), whose practices and social arrangements guarantee closure and expertise (ibid: 113).

Several authors have commented on the historical expansion of spheres of human experience which have come under medical scrutiny and control - alcoholism, fertility and childbirth, nutrition, sexuality, etc. - what Illich (1976, in Riessman, 1983) refers to as "the medicalization of life" (p. 4) - in terms of professional ambition or "medical imperialism" (e.g. Strong, 1979; Abbott, 1988). Foucauldians Arney and Bergen (1984) show how the work of the physician has shifted historically, from treating disease and/or circumventing death, to "managing lives" in modern Western medical discourse. This management goes beyond individual doctor-patient contact, for as Arney and Bergen (1984) argue, professional alliances, based on a principle of 'preventative optimization' of life's processes and experiences, are forged between medical and other therapeutic discourses, and these permeate the deepest recesses of our subjectivities, our consciousness and understanding of everyday practices, our ways of being / acting. In this sense, then, everyone 'lives on the inside of' these totalizing, integrative discourses around well-being which emphasize self-discipline (Young, 1987).

Several fields of diverse writings are related to these ideas. First, within "medical anthropology" (or "medical semiotics") studies, Conrad and Schneider (1980) point out that medicalization could be understood to occur at various (inter-related) levels, i.e. institutionally, conceptually or in doctor-patient interaction. A "Foucauldian" *institutionalized*-consciousness approach to the operation and effects of medical discourses [e.g. Guedon (1977), Arney & Bergen (1984) or Young (1987), above] refers to the proliferating professionalization of medical expertise used to legitimate particular problems, approaches, practices / actions to optimize health. An allied *conceptual* level involves the use of medical explanatory models or medical terminology (in everyday practice) to define / "order" problems. For example, studies of lay talk about obesity and 'disordered' eating behaviours (Swartz, 1987), or "lumps" in breasts (Gifford,

1986), draw attention to the pervasive, educative collusion between Western medical discourses and the mass media (cf. Young, 1981).

Institutional and conceptual levels of medicalization, then, are germane to an analytic application to the functions of advice columns [see Chapters 4 & 5]. The vast literature on *doctor-patient communication* which details (linguistically or semantically) what happens in medical / clinical encounters (e.g. Coulthard & Ashby, 1976; Skopek, 1979; Fisher, 1980) is generally of less analytic import within a different interactional "context" (Cicourel, 1987). For example, a level of analysis which explores conversational ways in which "patients" resist physicians' power in medical examinations, e.g. via introduction of "inappropriate" information or refusal to answer questions (Treichler, Frankel, Kramer, Zoppi & Beckman, 1984), cannot conceptualize resistance (by readers) to the operation and effects of institutionalized medicalization in the tightly edited, ritualistic, question-and-answer format of advice columns.

However, more "critical" studies within the doctor-patient genre which focus on the *exclusion*, within medical discourse, of (a) emotive (psychic) components or narratives about the "self" (e.g. Plough, 1981; K. Young, 1989), and/or (b) socio-political contextualization of the individual or of "medical problems" (e.g. Zola, 1975; Katon & Kleinman, 1980), are more useful. Studies such as (a), above, might contribute to an understanding of the operations of Cartesian institutional 'dividing practices' between medical and psychological discourses (e.g. body versus self/psyche as "objects"), while those such as (b), above, alludes to the emancipatory potential of the social sciences within the arena of medical (or psychological) discourses, e.g. in exposing the operations and effects of such decontextualization [see below].

The second field of writings related to medical discourse, and empowerment might be labelled "feminist". Here, medical imperialism is associated with *male* colonization and control of women's bodies / lives. For example, Ehrenreich and English (1979) examine 150 years of advice from "experts" to women (gynaecologists, paediatricians, psychoanalysts, etc.) [not advice columns per se], advice which has, these authors claim, usurped 'age-old female skills' in areas such as love, sex and reproduction and "work" (waged and domestic). Riessman (1983) explores the medicalization of obesity and 'attractiveness', and sexuality in relationships, as specifically "women's problems". Murphy-Lawless (1989) critically evaluates the (feminist) notion that childbirth (as a "female text", woman-controlled, and experienced by women) has been wrested away from midwives by male physicians (e.g. Rich, 1977; Daly, 1978; Oakley, 1986).

A critical thread running through the above studies is an objection to the (patriarchal) medicalized constructions of female pathology and incompetence, which is 'internalized' by women, i.e. women need help / advice / expertise to manage an unruly "nature", and, thus, are "duped" into subordination and control. Riessman (1983) and Murphy-Lawless (1989) draw on Foucauldian ideas to escape this naturalist / conspiracy thesis, and point to the dangers of viewing either patriarchy or medical institutions as transparently obvious, homogeneous and historically consistent apparatuses of oppression of women (cf. Coward, 1983). The answer is not 'de-medicalization' (a return to nature or self-care), Riessman (1983) argues, but interrogation and exposure of the paradoxical "fit" (or mutuality) between the interests of medical discourses and the interests of women objectified and subjectified within them, e.g. expanding

medical jurisdiction and control of a female "market", versus women's liberation from 'inevitable' biological processes which governed their lives (e.g. pregnancy), symptom relief (e.g. PMS), or acknowledgement of their physical (or psychological) experience.

Thus, Allan Young (1987) has written of medical expertise produced as "unaggressive", unobtrusive, humanitarian and liberational, and simultaneously, as totalizing or "omnipresent in every nuance of life" (p. 109). Within critical approaches to social science, this may be theorized as a split between "liberal" and constructive / productive views of knowledge. For example, Brunt (1982) highlights this opposition in the distribution of medicalized sex advice (p. 160). Within a "liberal" framework, information, knowledge and technicist practices are seen as benign and neutral (value- and context-free): knowing what-to-do-how-and-when empowers individuals by providing ways out of ignorance, confusion and physical / psychological harm. A "constructive" view would situate those sexual knowledges / practices within a social-political / socio-moral context, i.e. rooted within cultural, institutional, capitalist, patriarchal structures and practices of daily life.

A Foucauldian formulation explicitly opposes liberal views and links knowledge to power: knowledge-power is a grid of institutionalized technologies operating on the body / self (cf. Foucault, 1982) [see discussion of power, below]. Rather than mutually exclusive frameworks ("liberal" versus "productive"), Young (1987) emphasizes "the dual character of discourse": enabling understanding and instrumental action, while simultaneously constraining what can be known, experienced, acted upon (p. 113-4) [cf. Rose, 1990, above]. The emancipatory potential of analyses of the human sciences (e.g. of psychological or medical discourses) would lie in the exposure of these multiple functions / effects via setting up disruptive or resistant readings and practices for exploration [cf. Foucault, 1978; Young, 1987; Parker, 1989b & 1992; Rose, 1990; Giddens, 1991 & 1992].

Clarification of Terminology

The location of the terms "discourse" and "discourses" within a Foucauldian framework does little to unravel their conceptual complexity, chiefly because Foucault's own definitions and foci changed historically [e.g. White, 1979; Sheridan, 1980; Weeks, 1982; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1984; Davidson, 1986; Parker, 1989a]. Diachronic unravelling of terminology is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and definitions adopted will be synchronic approximations. I will, in this study, draw on Ian Parker's theoretical and analytic writing (e.g. 1989a; 1989b; 1990a; 1990b; 1992), because he makes overt use of Foucault's work on discourse and power, and locates psychology within discourses of surveillance and subjectivity. Parker's Foucauldian approach is, however, one of many proliferating "strands" of discourse analysis. Definitional controversies and their divergent methodological directives will be reviewed in Chapter 3. My intention here is to clarify guidelines, following Foucauldian ideas, for usage of particular concepts in this study.

Parker's (1990a; 1992) working definition of a *discourse* as "a system of statements constructing an object" (1990a: 191) is qualified by ten definitional criteria.² Thus far in this Chapter, several "features" [or processes] of psychological and medical discourses have been mentioned, and these might be summarized through linkage to Parker's criteria as follows. (1) Discourses are coherent, regulated systems of knowledges, practices and power, (2) implicated in institutions, e.g. psychology or medicine, and (3) they shift historically. (4) Pieces of discourses are interpretable and analyzable within texts - in this study, selected advice texts from advice columns. (5) Discourses target and construct "objects" in distinctive ways, e.g. "attractiveness" as body-problem or psyche-problem. (6) Discourses offer individuals subject positions and practices to take up, e.g. work at being attractive via corrective medical practices, choice of particular lifestyles, diets or modes of exercise, work on/through aspects of the self via various psychotherapeutic techniques, etc. (7) These subject positions link knowledge and power: they enable *and* constrain understanding, experience and action, thereby maintaining existing power relations.³

Parker's remaining three definitional criteria refer to the reflexivity of discourses (see Parker, 1990a: 194-200). (8) Discourses are able to take themselves as objects and reflect on the terminology they use. (9) Discourses are embedded in one another and are, thus, inter-referential, e.g. contradictions within discourses may reveal operations of resistance to (or confluence with) other discourses.⁴ (10) Discourses have ideological effects, i.e. describing and reproducing particular, hierarchical power relationships, practices and truths.

These three criteria, not immediately visible in the above commentaries on psychologization and medicalization - in abstractum - are incorporated into the critical aims of this discourse analytic study, i.e. to reflexively examine these discourses as "objects", to expose distinctive coherences / contradictions within discourses and overlaps and resistances between them, and to produce a (hopefully) disruptive reading of the "truths" generated as ideological effects of discourses.

Throughout this study, mention is made of psychological *discourses* and medical *discourses*, i.e. not one psychological discourse or one medical discourse, but several. Although I have tried to show (above) that psychological and/or medical authority is grounded in fairly distinctive knowledges of the individual as object (e.g. psyche/self versus body), these knowledges are internally diverse and heterogeneous. Young (1987) and Rose (1990) have explained that medical and psychological knowledges are riven by competing schools and explanatory models, each of which have distinctive orientations towards treatment and "work" [cf. discursive practices, below]. For example, humanist versus psychoanalytic therapies work on the self in different ways, and "alternative" branches of medicine incorporate emotive / psychic components of the self into symptomatology and treatment (e.g. homeopathy). This multi-layered diversity provides contexts for both increasingly minute government / surveillance and increasingly inventive resistance and action.

2 *A discourse*: noun, singular, with an article or adjective (e.g. "the" discourse, "psychological" discourse); or plural, discourses.

3 A Foucauldian model of power will be addressed in the subsequent section in this Chapter. The post-structuralist notion of "subject positions" is included in a later section on Wendy Hollway's work in this Chapter.

4 Inter-referentiality echoes Kristeva's notion of *intertextuality*, i.e. the property texts have of assimilating, contradicting or ironically resonating other (prior) texts in overt or subtly intricate ways [cf. Fairclough's (1992) *interdiscursivity*: "the constitution of texts out of (existing) elements... of discourse" (p. 85)]. These examples conflate "texts" and "discourses", a conflation which Parker (e.g. 1990b) problematizes within a Foucauldian / non-literary analytic context [see below, and Chapter 3].

Various critics have commented on the blurring, within a Foucauldian framework, of "discourses" and "discursive practices", e.g. see Adlam's (1986) critique of Henriques et al (1984), or Fairclough (1992). Parker (1990a; 1992) maintains a conceptual distinction between these terms, even if this blurs in practice. Thus, following Harre's (1979) delimitation of "expressive" and "practical" orders of language, Parker (1990a) locates discourses within an expressive sphere [i.e. regulated systems of meanings, knowledges], and discursive practices within a practical sphere [i.e. material or social activities used to appropriate, communicate and reproduce discourses] (p. 199). Thus, *discursive practices* refer to the deployment of knowledges and power [discourses] in conventionalized activities which are implicated in the operations of institutions, e.g. medical examinations, diagnoses or interventions; medical research written up / used in journals, case reports, lectures or the mass media; everyday choices of "healthy" food or "safer" sexual practices, etc.

Discourse - without an article - is used broadly to refer to "language", and this usage is conceptually distinct from "a/the discourse" [with an article], or "discourses" [plural], the operations and effects of which form the basis of Foucauldian 'discourse analysis'. Parker (1990b) conceptualizes discourse analytically as "organized into sets of texts" (p. 227). *Texts* are demarcated areas of discourse - "delimited tissues of meaning reproduced in any form that can be interpreted" (Parker, 1990a: 193) - surfaces for the emergence / materialization of *pieces* of discourses, meanings, knowledges, power relations, etc. through reading and analysis, e.g. sections of writing or transcribed speech, psychological research practices, a segment of an advice text, advice columns as a genre, architecture, film, etc.

Parker (1989b) explains that the "author" of a text [the source of meaning] may be present, e.g. an individual stating opinions, or absent [cf. 'death of the author', Barthes, 1977: see Chapter 3 for a methodological application of these ideas to advice columns], but the various post-structuralist approaches emphasize interpretation: texts "have powers to weave new pictures of the real every time they are read or re-read" (p. 57). This view is suspicious of claims of access to an external signified, the "real", "true" world or self (or true meaning) outside discourse. The well-known post-structuralist axiom, "nothing outside of the text" (Derrida, 1976: 158), implies that what is "pre-textual" (e.g. events, phenomena) will be implicated in the meanings of the text, and the context in which a text is read - the implicature of the reader / analyst - produces yet another interpretable interpretation [a text] of an interpretation.

Disciplinary power and resistance

A Foucauldian understanding of power has, of course, underlaid the described operations of psychological and medical discourses in above sections. Various exegetical texts on Foucault's work present comprehensive commentaries on historical developments in his thinking about discourse and power (e.g. Sheridan, 1980; Cousins & Hussein, 1984; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1984; Merquior, 1985; Davidson, 1986; Parker, 1989a; Bogard, 1991). I take a more conceptual route here, and present a table - see Table 1 overleaf - to summarize differences between a Foucauldian approach to power, and "more traditional

Table 1: Oppositional models of power

<p align="center">"SOVEREIGN POWER" Traditional Models of power</p>	<p align="center">"DISCIPLINARY POWER" Foucauldian Model of power</p>
<p>Power is understood to be unitary, consolidated in, and according to the principles of sovereignty, to be the possession of an individual/group, e.g., political power, the king in a monarchy, men in patriarchy, "whites" in apartheid. [cf. "positions of exteriority of power": Foucault, 1978: 95].</p>	<p>Power is "always-ready" present" (Foucault, 1978: 92), i.e. an ongoing, subtle regime which we cannot possess or escape from, and is anonymous in the sense that it operates independently of individual intentions. Power is understood as relational in character, enmeshing power-holder and power- subject in dynamic interplays of power and resistance in local centres of immanence (e.g. knowledge-seeker and expert, man and woman, student and teacher, etc). "Disciplinary power" involves the process by which individuals assume responsibility for exercising control over themselves through knowledge constructed via technologies of examination, surveillance and confession.</p>
<p>Analytics of power attends to 'social structures of dominance', i.e. systems of domination and modes of subjugation. Violence, oppression, law/punishment, discrimination, exploitation, obedience; these examples relate negative, macro-structural forms that power assumes. [See "Feminist position", Chapter 2]</p>	<p>Analytics of power attends to the technologies and operations by which power is exercised and dominance reproduced, e.g. knowledge, status or wealth confer power. This micro-analysis focuses on 'capillaries of power' in local relations which target the individual body as a site of power ["bio-power"] and feature how individuals become subjects. Power constrains, silences and subjugates, but, positively, produces possible action, subjectivities, truths and resistances.</p>
<p>Radical challenge, collectivized critique, political revolution (i.e. overthrowing the existing mode of domination) and social transformation are understood as ways out [of existing power structures].</p>	<p>Resistance is power's 'counter-stroke': exercised from innumerable points of inflammation, distributed in irregular fashion, always on the "inside" of power. If modes of domination fall (historically), they are replaced by new ones, requiring new resistances (Foucault, 1982).</p>
<p>Compiled from Foucault (1977; 1978; 1982), Parker (1989a), Paternek (1987), Young (1987) and Burman (1991b).</p>	

approaches", an aggregation or homogenization of the "other" ["sovereign power"] against which Foucauldian understandings are anchored. Although such a table unavoidably reifies differences, and implies stasis of oppositions, it serves two functions here.

First, the table continues the interrogation of the operations and effects of power set up as focal in this dissertation. Thus, feminist appraisals and critiques of Foucauldian power are introduced in this section. Chapter 2 teases out differences, in terms of "models" of power, between "realist", "feminist" and "Foucauldian" approaches to advice columns. These threads are tracked through the analytic Chapters to concluding discussion in Chapter 6. Foucault's (1978) guidelines on how to "analyze" power are mentioned in Chapter 3 on methodology.

Second, I use the table to circumvent abstracted theoretical narratives on traditional approaches to power, facilitating attention to features germane to the focus and aims of this dissertation: *surveillance*, *confession* and *resistance*. It is noted that surveillance, confession and resistance will be set up fairly abstractly in this Chapter - as technologies of power - and will be "applied" to the operations of advice columns in Chapter 2.

Managing populations in modernity, argues Foucault (1977), has seen a shift from the imposition, from an agency above, of will over individuals / groups, to technologies of discipline which produce subjects as agentic and self-regulating. Power is, thus, both everywhere (or 'already there') and nowhere (or 'anonymous'), necessitating the examination of particular techniques / procedures operating in particular situations to betray its presence and effects (Paternek, 1987). Two such technologies of power described by Foucault are *discipline* [with 'surveillance' and 'examination' as core techniques: Foucault, 1977] and *confession* (Foucault, 1978).

The model form presented by Foucault (1977) to encapsulate the operations of disciplinary power is the Panopticon: a central guard tower circled by backlit cells, which expose the activity of each prisoner to view. The anonymity / invisibility of power is emphasized in this process, for prisoners are not sure if, when or by whom they are being observed, but awareness of constant inspection "exact[s] responsibility for his/her own actions" (Paternek, 1987: 108), i.e. self-discipline. The Panopticon refers less to a specific penal institution (blueprints drawn up by Bentham in 1791 were never implemented) than to the panoptic procedures in use throughout civil society, e.g. in factories, (fitness) gymnasiums, supermarkets, 'the male gaze', psychological experiments, medical examinations, sexual practices, etc. Foucault (1977) refers to "the infinitely minute web of panoptic techniques" (p. 224) at work on *bodies*, exacting normalized forms of control over bodily dispositions, behaviours, habits, demarcated body parts and movements via surveillance, and producing what Foucault has called 'docile bodies', i.e. bodies that may be "subjected, used, improved" [cf. dressage horses: p. 136].

Fairclough (1992) explains that 'discipline' (a political technology) works in highly individualizing ways, isolating individuals from one another and ceremonially "objectifying" them (pp. 52-3). The human sciences (psychology and medicine), for example, establish 'regimes of visibility' via examination and documentation to build up institutionalized knowledges about individuals as "objects", thereby subjecting

them. If discipline is a technology which objectifies 'from without', *confession* is the technique of normalizing subjectification 'from within' (Parker, 1989b: 63).

Confession had its origins in early Christianity - i.e. the encouragement of individuals to look within to discover faults and flaws, and to confess failings - but is now firmly integrated into disciplinary technologies of modern (Western) society as a form of "pastoral power" (Foucault, 1982). The modern twist introduces myths of individuality: (increasingly sexualized) truths about the self are buried deep within the individual, are held in place by the repressive powers of the social order, and are liberated via exhaustive and obligatory 'rituals of discourse': introspection / talk / writing [i.e. 'the repressive hypothesis': Foucault, 1978]. Liberation is illusionary / mythic, Foucault (ibid) argues, for confession draws an ever-widening scope of personal / social phenomena (e.g. relationships, physical inadequacies, sexual practices, etc.) into the domain of power.

Thus, Foucault (1978) comments on the power relationship between those involved in confessional practices:

one does not confess without the presence (or the virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, forgive, console, reconcile (p. 61).

However, it is not only the "expert" who prescribes / receives the confession who knows of its therapeutic and reformatory properties. Through the 'scientific status' accorded confession (e.g. the psychoanalytic 'talking cure'), the confessor interprets his/her difficulty in accessing "truth" as proof of repression, and redoubles efforts to receive promised 'exoneration', 'purification' and 'salvation' [from experts] (ibid: 62), effecting normalized subjectivity.

Is it possible within these two technologies of power - discipline and confession - to conceptualize the multiple points of *resistance*, which Foucault (1978) claims, are inscribed as "an underside" or "an irreducible opposite" in all power relations (p. 96)? First, resistance offers no radical rupture, for, always from the "inside" of power, it is individualizing: "no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt... or pure law of the revolutionary", but shifting, spontaneous points or knots of resistance that "inflam(e) certain parts of the body, certain moments in life" (ibid). Second, a feature of disciplinary power is its ability to mask its operations and effects, i.e. reproducing power relations "in such a way that resistance is suppressed" (Parker, 1989b: 27). Foucault's (1977) notion of "governmentality" - the supervision of individuals by a broad front of forces within society - sets up relations based on collusionary alliances and investments [cf. Gramsci's (1971) "hegemony"]: individuals *consent* to subjection through attribution (to them) of individual responsibility, agency and "rights", either incorporating the minutiae of resistance or obviating it.

Parker (1989b) comments that the very terms 'discipline' and 'confession' in Foucault's work are a critical indictment of modern subjectivity. Thus, Parker (1989b; 1990a; 1992) posits deconstruction / discourse analysis as an opportunity of resistance and disruption, i.e. exposing ideological operations and effects of discipline and confession, and unravelling the discourses and texts which hold these technologies of power in place. However, Parker warns of the dangers of idealism inherent in an analysis which claims to expose

the "lies" of ideology (1989b: 66), or attends to language at the expense of macro-structural power relations which endure "when text stops" (Parker & Burman, 1993: 158). These issues have received attention from various "political activist" critiques (e.g. Poulantzas, 1978; Callinicos, 1985; Muller, 1985; Reicher, 1988; Bhavnani, 1990), and are particularly germane to feminist ambivalence about a Foucauldian model of power.

Feminists across various disciplines - e.g. psychology, anthropology, political studies, philosophy, law, sociology, literary criticism - have welcomed Foucauldian formulations of power as liberation from monolithic models of structural oppression and an opening-up of sites and varieties of struggle (e.g. Coward, 1984; Paternek, 1987; Weedon, 1987; Bartky, 1988; Lydon, 1988; Fraser, 1989; Grosz, 1990). For example, some feminist writers have found the capillarization of power relations implicit in the anti-humanist, decentred (post-modern) subject particularly appealing: an individual may use multiple subject positions available within discourses to negotiate, resist and transform power relations in everyday material conditions (e.g. Hollway, 1984a, 1984b & 1989; Walkerdine, 1986; Gavey, 1989; Flax, 1990).

Other feminists are more cautious, e.g. about the absence of "gender" or the *female* body in Foucault's writings on power (deLauretis, 1987; Buker, 1990; Hartsock, 1990), or the denial / masking of structural oppression of women that voluntaristic Foucauldian resistance implies (MacDonnell, 1986; Sawicki, 1988; Phelan, 1990; Aladjem, 1991; Smyth, 1992). Erica Burman (1991b) warns against the idea that discourse theory / analysis, per se, offers a politically progressive position for feminists. She considers four features of a Foucauldian approach which might produce political immobilization, i.e. blocking collective action or militant social protest to effect structural change (pp. 330-333). These features are mentioned briefly here to "summarize" a diverse body of cautionary literature from feminists, and to foreshadow forthcoming sections / Chapters. I return to Burman's (1991b) emphasis of the *political application* of analytic research in Chapters 3 and 6.

First, Burman (1991b) argues, a celebration of the variability of local operations of power in specific situations or relationships, and of *difference* and particularity (rather than shared experience), removes the sting of structural oppression and avoids collectivity [cf. Probyn, 1990]. Second, Foucauldian notions of *resistance* are posited as inescapable effects of power and normalized subjectivity, and located at an intangibly diffuse micro-level, i.e. 'swarms' or 'capillaries' of spontaneous individual resistances (by the body) distributed within shifting institutionalized relations rather than directed struggle. The all-pervasiveness of this analysis of power, which necessarily "contains" resistance, ushers in "an exhausted and passive fatalism and surrender of political vision" (Burman, 1991b: 331) [cf. Poulantzas, 1978; MacDonnell, 1986].

Third, a *relativist* stance - the instability of "truth" within knowledge politics, for instance, or the diversity of possible meanings - undermines a moral-political impulse, i.e. privileging a particular reading over another (e.g. exposing "lies" or "oppression") becomes analyzable in itself in terms of reflexivity or reification [cf. DiStefano, 1988; Harding, 1990; Kariel, 1990]. Fourth, the *reflexivity* project in analysis busies analysts in various solipsistic self-monitoring / self-censorship activities (e.g. policing, "owning" or justifying the interpretations they produce), further detaching discourses (and analysis) from 'the real'

(Finlay, 1989, in Burman, 1991b: 332) and detracting from socio-political interventions [cf. Wilkinson, 1988].

Wendy Hollway: gendered subjectivities in heterosexual relationship practice

I return, at last, to the advice text which was included at the outset of this Chapter, and the forms of feminine subjectivity it reproduces. Several authors have commented on the prevalence of "relationship problems" - love, sex, boyfriend / marriage troubles, loneliness, etc. - in the advice columns of women's magazines [e.g. Kent, 1979; McFadyean, 1988; Weinberg, 1989; Mininni, 1991: see Chapter 2]. Within a Foucauldian reading, the advice column emerges as a site of confession, surveillance and normalization of subjectivities (i.e. "identities") and inter-subjectivities (i.e. "relationships") [e.g. Coward, 1984; Carter, 1988: see Chapter 2]. I have shown in above sections - following Young (1987), Rose (1990) and Parker (1992) - that such normalization may take place through objectification and subjection in psychological and medical discourses.

But what is the "relationship norm" [or "normal relationship"] set up, policed and reproduced by/in psychological and medical discourses? It is in answer to this question that the work of Wendy Hollway is insightful, and, although not about advice columns per se, pivotal in drawing together the diverse strands of this study. First, Hollway (1983; 1984a; 1984b; 1989) deploys Foucauldian / post-structuralist [*and* psychoanalytic] ideas to inform identification of discourses around sexuality and heterosexual relationships, and to unravel women's, and men's, gendered positions within these discourses. Second, in a later paper on psychologization, Hollway (1991) argues that these lay discourses (e.g. about relationships, gender, sex, the moralities of women and men, etc.) draw considerable support and legitimation from so-called "professional" psychological discourses (p. 29).

This dissertation aims to explore the interstices between Hollway's 'delineated' discourses around sexuality [i.e. Male Sex Drive, Have-Hold and Permissive discourses, see below], and psychological and medical discourses, in advice columns, where "relationship problems" are understood as motif for the genre. In this section, I briefly review Hollway's discourses, and conceptual writings on subject positions and 'investment' which impact on my aims. Critiques by Shotter (1990) and Widdicombe (1992) are used both to highlight disjunctive moments between "psychoanalytic" and "Foucauldian" borrowings in Hollway's (1989) work, and, by way of conclusion to this introductory Chapter, to summarize basic principles / guidelines of a post-structuralist perspective. Hollway's interpretative discourse analytic method will be presented in Chapter 3 [on methodology], and her discourses will receive closer analytic / critical attention in Chapters 4 and 5.

Hollway (1983; 1984a; 1984b; 1989) uses, as texts, unstructured dialogues and discussions with individuals and groups, women and men, friends and colleagues, about heterosexual relationships, sex and gender. This research explicitly examined *heterosexual* relationships: no claim to representativeness is suggested,

nor that these discourses and subject positions apply, unilaterally, to "other" sexual subjectivities. I follow this framing of heterosexuality within my dissertation.

Through detailed readings of these texts, Hollway (1984a) identifies three coexisting and potentially contradictory discourses concerning sexuality.⁵ The *Male Sex Drive* discourse [hereafter, MSD] is predicated on the hegemonic assumption of an aggressive, biological sex drive in men, oriented towards pursuit, penetration and opportunistic variety (ibid: 231). The *Have-Hold* discourse [hereafter HHD] takes "the relationship" as the locus of sexuality, i.e. "sex should take place within the framework of a lasting relationship" (ibid: 232), and thus, is shot through with Judaeo-Christian ethics associated with monogamy, partnership, reproduction of the species and family values [cf. the 'Malthusian Couple': Foucault, 1978: see Chapter 5]. The *Permissive* discourse [hereafter, PD] is an explicit challenge of the principle of monogamy, and presents sexuality as "natural" and "purely physical" - separate from significations around love, dependence, commitment, etc. - which "should not be repressed" in either women or men (ibid 234).

Linking these discourses to subjectivity, Hollway (1984a) explains that discourses make available *subject positions* for individuals to take up "in relation to other people" - like the *subject* and *object* of a sentence (p. 236). This grammatical metaphor, Hollway argues, serves to differentiate both "roles" and relationships between subject and object (p. 261).⁶ "Subjects", in a more general sense, occupy both subject and object positions, and are, thus, "subjected" within several possible positions in these discourses. Therefore, although HHD and PD may in principle be "gender-blind", in practice subject and object positions are not equally available to the genders, placing women and men in particular relations with each other through the gender-differentiated meanings, knowledges and practices a particular discourse produces.

In Hollway's (1984a) reading of popular assumptions about sexuality - and I use her positions of 'subject' and 'object' [of a sentence / a discourse] here - men are positioned as subjects of MSD, with women as its object, i.e. the "object" which precipitates men's 'natural sex urges' (p. 233). However, this formulation, drawing in/on Foucauldian understandings of power, resists the positioning of women as "hapless victims of MSD" or "passive sex objects" (ibid). Sex, for women, derives its meaning through HHD, in which women are traditionally positioned as subjects - wanting / needing a committed relationship, wanting him to want a committed relationship, and, once having procured this, policing it as moral custodians - with men as objects. Women's object position in MSD is charged with this power, then, as they "work" in various ways to 'catch and keep a man' [cf. McRobbie, 1981].

In this regard, the advice text [see beginning of this Chapter] presents an account of the powerlessness of a young woman who is unable to obtain desired "commitment" / "relationship" in return for her "looks" - which are apparently not good enough - or the implied investment of her sexual favours. She is, thus,

5 Hollway's earlier writings (e.g. 1983; 1984a; 1984b) are based on an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, and are "firmed up" with extensive methodological guidelines in Hollway (1989). They all contain similar potted versions of Male Sex Drive, Have-Hold and Permissive discourses. I use one account here, Hollway (1984a), for convenience and clarity

6 This grammatical metaphor - "subject" and "object" of a sentence - is allied with the narrative metaphors used in discussion of "subject positions" [e.g. "protagonist" and "antagonist", or "characters" in a story / plot: see Davies & Harre (1990) and Stenner (1993), in this Chapter]. Hollway's (1984a) psychoanalytic conceptualization of subject positions as individuals taking up positions in *relation to other people* (p. 236), is noted for later comparison to a more Foucauldian or discursive model.

within proffered psychologized and medicalized "resolutions", impelled to "work" on her body / self in particular ways to cement her transition from object of MSD to a subject position within HHD. These ideas will form the focus of the analysis in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 will focus on the forms of "relationship-work" women are impelled to undertake - as subjects of HHD - to enforce the sexual exclusivity of their relationship.

I have presented a "discursive" interpretation of Hollway's work thus far, and it is in this sense that I use her discourses in this dissertation. However, Hollway's reading is, above all, an account of the psychoanalytic subject, filling-in what she believes to be a "weakness" of or gap in Foucauldian theory, i.e. intra-psychic and inter-psychic subjectivities of women and men (Hollway, 1989: 47). This involves importation of various Freudian, Lacanian and Kleinian concepts, which emphasize the operation and effects of a dynamic and non-rational 'unconscious', e.g. projection, defence mechanisms, desire, the M/Other, splitting, cathexis. I illustrate her psychoanalytic borrowing, here, through brief framing of Freudian cathexis ['beziehung'] which is reformulated in Hollway's (1984a) notion of *investment* (p. 238).

Hollway (1984a) appears to employ the term "investment" in an attempt to explain (a) individual differences, i.e. to escape the 'discursive determinism' which undermines agency, and (b) resistance to change, i.e. why, when multiple positions are apparently available, women and men persist in taking up conventionalized, gender-differentiated positions [see above].

Thus, Hollway (1984a) argues, individuals have an investment [cf. an 'emotional commitment' or vested interest] in taking up particular positions because of an embedded / promised "pay-off" (satisfaction or reward) to them, in relation to other individuals. The pay-off is power, "inserted into individuals' subjectivity via adoption of these [historically conventionalized] positions" (p. 238). For example, 'being attractive' might accord women power over men, or in using sexual capitulation / activity to procure commitment; although, as deLauretis (1987) suggests, the promise of power is not necessarily fulfilled (p. 16).

The hegemonic discourses of sexuality (e.g. MSD and HHD) might be more prescriptive in terms of regulating positioning via social acceptance and approval, but Hollway (1984a) argues that there is always a choice or commitment involved in taking up positions: we "choose" power - or are emotionally committed to working towards attaining promised power - although this choice may not be simple, conscious or rational within the multiple layers and mutual effects of coexisting discourses (p. 239).

Sue Widdicombe (1992), in a review of Hollway (1989), is sceptical of the utility or the value of Hollway's "filling-in the space" left by Foucault's denial of the sovereignty of the individual with a psychoanalytic subject and/or psychoanalytic account of inter-subjectivity (Widdicombe, 1992: 493). Hollway's psychoanalytic interpretations of her "psychologized" participants' talk - e.g. academic colleagues, women and men who have been in analysis, psychotherapy or consciousness-raising groups, etc. - produces, Widdicombe argues, unreflexive assumptions of an unconscious identity / self [e.g. an inner, psychic life of needs, wishes, drives, desires], which is temporally continuous or unique, and played out only "in relation to other people" rather than in/via discourse (ibid).

Widdicombe's (1992) objection is not, of course, that Hollway's method / explanatory model is "wrong", but rather, "flawed" by a lack of reflexivity of the "truth" it produces [e.g. about sex, gender and relationships], effectively disallowing resistances, e.g. resistance to the "natural" or "obvious" link between femininity and 'physical attractiveness'. This objection is informed by Foucault's identification of psychoanalysis as 'a mode of subjectification', a *social* system of knowledges and practices, which is productive of our sense of individuality [cf. Rose, 1990, above sections].⁷

Widdicombe's (1992) critique (following Shotter, 1990) of the 'possessive individualism' underlying Hollway's notion of subject positions and investment - power may be possessed by individuals in relation to other individuals (i.e. the relational quality of Kleinian intersubjectivity *between people*) - is counterpoised against a more Foucauldian / post-structuralist understanding of subject positions. Within this understanding, then, the focus moves back, from "the person" as individual agent, to discourse/s, texts and discursive practices. Thus, a subject position is a 'part', a 'character' allocated to an individual through the use of shared discourses or narratives (cf. Stenner, 1993). Davies and Harre (1990) conceptualize this process thus:

'Positioning' and 'subject position'... *permit us to think of ourselves as a choosing subject*, locating ourselves in conversations according to those narrative forms with which we are familiar and bringing to those narratives our own subjective lived histories through which we have learnt metaphors, characters and plot. (p. 52, my emphasis)

This constructionist stance assumes that psychic *and* physical phenomena (e.g. love, jealousy, 'physical attractiveness', sexual practices, etc.) "have a public or collective reality" (Burman & Parker, 1993: 1), i.e. they are produced, according to culturally or institutionally available knowledges, within the 'interactive space' between relational subject positions and other discourses - in addition to between individuals at the level of discursive practices. Therefore, this view explicitly deconstructs individual intention or choice.

Although Widdicombe (1992) usefully highlights differences between psychoanalytic and stronger post-structuralist positions, Hollway's later writing on psychologization permits a "Foucauldian" re-interpretation of the alleged individualism in earlier accounts. Hollway (1991) posits that lay assumptions about women, and, indeed, feminist knowledges and practices which fetishize individual women [cf. Kristeva's distinction between "liberal", "radical" and "post-modern" feminists: Chapter 2], place "the individual" at the centre of the explanatory world, and this perspective is informed and legitimated by Western, psychological discourses (p. 30). Thus, we have learned to think about our lives in 'possessive individualistic', 'intentioned' or 'agentic' ways - Hollway's *investment* describes, embodies, theorizes and reproduces these knowledges - making informed choices to clinch power, or seeking out the advice of experts when these promises break down.

Several authors have examined sites of contact and filtration between professional psychological discourses and everyday practices. For example, Kadushin (1966) has explored passage of knowledges of

⁷ Hollway (1991) takes a broader socially-produced and subjectivity-productive view of the operations and effects of psychoanalytic knowledge and practices. Widdicombe (1992) does not cite this later publication.

psychotherapy and psychotherapists via *word of mouth* in social / acquaintance circles. Bouhoutsos, Goodchilds and Huddy (1986) examine, within the context of a "psychological" *radio-call-in programme*, what people understand about psychologists and what they do [cf. Schindler, Berren, Hannah, Beigel & Santiago, 1987]. Levett (1988) has written of the *media* as "eager champions of naive positivism" (p. 38), distributing medicalized and psychologized knowledges about the 'damaging effects' of sexual abuse of children to the lay public [e.g. "facts", information, statistics, case studies, etc.]. Rosen (1987) considers the (negative) influences on "professional" psychological practices by the popularity of *commercial "pop" (self-help) psychology books*. Squire (1990b) comments on the expansion of such self-help books into a female market, providing normalizing, psychologized "information" for/about women and (e.g. how-to "do" intimacy, childcare, relationships, sex, anger, etc.), or formalizing feminist resistance to traditional knowledges for/about women (e.g. Friday, 1977; Orbach, 1978; Wolf, 1990). Either way, Squire argues, the knowledge that women need expert assistance with "being women" is reproduced.

My study uses the advice column as such a site of confluence between institutionalized psychological and medical discourses, and everyday assumptions and practices that implicate and address women [cf. Hollway's discourses concerning heterosexual relationships]. Burman and Parker (1993) suggest that the different discourse analytic approaches are linked by (a) attention to the significance, structuring and transformative effects of language, and (b) association with interpretative and/or reflexive styles of analysis (p. 3) [see Chapter 3]. Thus, texts are the focus - not "individuals", "selves" or "the real" outside language - and an explicitly "post-structuralist" or "Foucauldian" discourse analysis is concerned with the operation of *discourses* (within those texts) at cultural and subjective levels. How are "objects" constructed by psychological or medical discourses, for example, and what positions are made available, within these constructions, for "subjects"?

Scrutiny of the forms of individuality made thinkable and possible through availability of particular cultural and institutionalized knowledges reiterates the over-arching theme of this introductory Chapter, i.e. the production of a social account of subjectivity. It is an account which is overtly concerned with knowledge-politics, political practice and power (Parker, 1992: 130), for, in the rights, choices and freedoms embedded in particular subject positions are concomitant constraints which marginalize alternatives and silence resistances. Chapter 2 examines how responses (e.g. by "realists" and "feminists") to this formulation of subjectivity vary within writings on/about advice columns.

Chapter 2

Review of literature on advice columns

Introduction

Writings on/about advice columns are diverse, which renders evaluative comparison difficult. "Popular" writings might be distinguished from "academic" writings via consideration of audience, e.g. site of publication or non-adherence to "scientific rules" regarding specification of theoretical frameworks and research methods. Academic writings span various disciplines [e.g. media / cultural studies, sociology, philosophy, psychology, political studies, etc.], each with different research foci, levels of analysis, institutional agendas and orientations towards scientificity. This variation has bred fragmentation as "one-off" studies do not, on the whole, refer to or build on one another in sustained, intertextual ways.

Reflexive hindsight is what impresses about Angela McRobbie's writing about advice columns. An initial feminist critique of *Jackie* magazine [a British magazine for girls] identified "romance" as a particularly oppressive ideology implicated in the construction of adolescent femininity (McRobbie, 1981). She showed how the *Cathy and Claire* advice column in *Jackie* colluded in this oppression by offering palliative, individualized resolutions to girls who were unable to measure up to the conventions of romantic exchange (e.g. inability to attract / keep a boyfriend, jealousy, loss of virginal virtue, etc.). McRobbie (1991) returned, ten years later, to "make sense of" her earlier analysis in response to various critics and within recent theoretical shifts. She offers a "categorization" of writings on and readings of advice columns into three "strands" of interpretation or "explanatory positions", i.e. realist, feminist and Foucauldian (ibid: 161-5):

A realist position reads advice columns as a neutral information-service: questions describe / reflect "real" problems, and answers provide support and information which is life-enhancing and empowering.

A feminist position confronts the "reality" produced above as non-neutral: particular problems are "framed" via editing and selection, and particular kinds of resolutions presented as appropriate, thus maintaining the patriarchal / capitalist oppression of women.

A Foucauldian position understands the advice column as a site of confession and normalizing, panoptic surveillance: we are subjected by the culturally and institutionally available knowledges and practices (e.g. around sex, relationships, emotions, etc.) in which we are embedded (see Chapter 1).

These positions provide a useful way to link and summarize the diverse writings in the area of advice columns according to underlying assumptions about the nature of language, subjectivity, knowledge and power. In terms of these positions, then, this review: (1) highlights studies which have examined the distribution of psychologized and medicalized information via advice columns, (2) evaluates the relationship between content and form of advice columns, and (3) briefly comments on the varying analytic methods

used to produce divergent knowledges about operations of advice columns, and thus, differential approaches to empowerment.

McRobbie's (1991) formulation is less useful in that the "evolutionary" perspective it adopts - the Foucauldian position is presumed to be "more complex" and "more true" than "naive" realist positions - masks contradiction within the positions themselves, and implies mutual exclusivity. This is reinforced by McRobbie's review of a single author within each of the three positions. Thus, "position" and "author" [an individual person] are blurred, which ignores the uneasy tension between the individual / social meanings of the positions and the conflict of contradictory positioning (e.g. drawing on all three simultaneously).

There are, for example, divisions in the feminist camp [see Chapter 1], and Ian Parker (1990b; 1992) would resist the simplistic division between a realist position [valorizing 'real objects'] and a Foucauldian position [valorizing 'texts']. I return to both these specific points in this Chapter, but more generally, this review emphasizes studies which display tension within and between McRobbie's positions to indicate moments of rupture. My study straddles and draws on all three positions, and the multi-layered effects these positions produce will be teased out in Chapters 4 and 5.

Realist position

McRobbie (1991) identifies the realist position in writings about advice columns by the assumption of "the transparency of the question and answer form in the production of meaning and knowledge" (p. 161, my emphasis). Thus, questions request assistance with "problems", and are seen as real, authentic expressions, directly reflective of the experience of pain and/or distress they describe. And, in keeping with a "liberal" view of knowledge [see Chapter 1], experts' or advice columnists' answers provide a service - information, assistance and support - which is empowering and without hidden ideological agenda(s).

More generally, these ideas draw on a philosophical thesis of realism, i.e. "objects in the physical, social and psychological world exist and have properties independently of our concepts of them and theoretical discourse about them" (Bhaskar, in Greenwood, 1992: 135). A realist model of language posits discourse as an unambiguous and neutral vehicle of access to and accurate reflection of those objects, e.g. attitudes, social trends, events, emotions, etc. (see Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Parker, 1990a & 1990b).

The dominance of realist understandings of advice columns is evidenced by the prevalence of studies drawing on such assumptions. These assumptions form both text and context for feminist and Foucauldian interpretations and resistances. Methodology is a case to point. Many "realist" studies use content analytic methods as a way to "describe reality". Although I perform a thematic content analysis in this study [see Chapter 3], content analysis per se - or a systematic comparison between content analysis and discourse analysis - is peripheral to the aims of this dissertation. Therefore, brief mention is made of content analytic studies for comprehensivity, and to highlight selected issues for later discussion. Studies which have

focused on the informative 'intervention' of advice columns, i.e. dissemination of psychological and medical information, will be reviewed in more detail.

1. Shifts in problems and advice: historical content analyses of advice columns

Content Analysis is usually understood as "the generation of categories which can be reliably coded and imposed over the data for the purposes of hypothesis testing" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 41) [see Holsti, 1969; Weber, 1990]. But, content analysis is not a unitary method, varying from the irrefutable rigour of reliability coefficients, to "common-sense", thematic applications. Within research on advice columns, content analysis has been used to describe the prevalence of particular "problems" or preference for particular forms of advice: in current, cross-sectional perspective, or in terms of historical shifts in problems and/or advice offered. A basic assumption is that advice columns are accurate indicators of readers' problems - "slices of life" - which, in broad historical scale, reflect the social and personal issues of the time.

Historical content analyses of advice columns for a "popular" audience (e.g. Ratcliff, 1969; Metzker, 1971; Kent 1979; Jordan, 1988) have followed a fairly standard method: themes are historically tracked via presentation of selected letters and replies, which are thought to document shifts [or 'universal essences'] in problems and advice. Several features contribute to the descriptive, journalistic, "realistic" tone of these studies. First, the thematic and historical scale is often vast, limiting opportunity for critical commentary, e.g. Kent (1979) examines "courtship", "marriage and divorce", "etiquette", "medical problems", "religion" and "beauty problems" between 1690 and 1976. Second, no attention is given to the method of research / analysis used - what criteria informed selection of letters for inclusion? - thereby elevating the "truth" status of the account.

Third, they reproduce historical evidence to support the "liberal" views of knowledge [see Chapter 1] which are at the foundation of a realist approach to advice columns, i.e. increasingly sophisticated psychological and/or medical information has liberated individuals from prior conditions of ignorance, inhibition and moralism [cf. Foucault's (1978) repression hypothesis: see Chapter 1). Thus, Hendley (1977), Kent (1979), Hays (1984) and Jordan (1988) document, with considerable incredulity and titillation, earlier circumlocutions around sexual activity as opposed to increasingly frank and "sexually explicit" letters requesting advice, and less moralistic advice.

A decline in the "moralizing" tone of advice proffered by advice columns is explored by Brinkgreve and Korzec (1979), Brinkgreve (1981) and Weinberg (1989). These papers mark a shift into a realm of "academic" writing on advice columns, with concomitant reflexivity about method, goals and results. Brinkgreve and Korzec (1979) use survey methodology and content analysis to examine over 5000 letters / replies from an advice column [*Margriet Weet Raad*] in a Dutch women's magazine, between 1938 and 1978. Their goal is to [interpretatively] link qualitative changes in content and tone of advice to social processes which took place during the same period, e.g. the decline of denominationalized religion, the professionalization of psychology, the popularization of psychotherapy.

Brinkgreve and Korzec find that the *content of advice* has become more information-based, e.g. psychological or medical reassurance, practical information, referrals to experts, etc. Correspondingly, the *tone of advice* has shifted from "moralization" (consoling clichés, judgemental and censorious homilies, clear "rights" and "wrongs") to "psychologization", i.e. a range of emotions and responses are examined, introspection and rational decision-making is encouraged, and problem-resolution is a process which draws in other institutional resources (e.g. medicine, counselling, psychology, psychiatry, sexology, nutrition, etc.). Thus, Brinkgreve and Korzec argue, the advice columnist functions as an "information monger" for the psychological professions: telling who to go where for what problem (p. 139) [cf. Abbot, 1988], as well as a textual-embodiment of psychotherapeutic principles and goals: "to strengthen an individual's consciousness of his/her own identity" (ibid) via injunction to self-exploration and self-work.

Brinkgreve and Korzec's (1979) work might be thought of within the "realist position" because links between "normalization" and "subjection" by psychological practices are not established [cf. Henriques et al, 1984; Rose, 1990: Chapter 1]. Indeed, moralization and psychologization are implied to be mutually exclusive practices: "moralizing" is historically bound up with, and unproblematically reflective of, organized religion, i.e. prohibitive commands, external norms; while "psychologized" advice is a liberation from these old prohibitions, an imperative to "discover your *own* boundaries" (Brinkgreve & Korzec, 1979: 139).

Using the same 40-year sample, Brinkgreve (1981) attends to the educative effects of increasingly psychologized advice [above] on the content of problems presented. She finds, in terms of "relationship problems", an increased number framed in "psychological" ways, e.g. "loneliness" or mutual misunderstanding in or "something missing" from relationships (p. 47). Brinkgreve adds a feminist twist by identifying women - increasingly "emancipated" due to feminism - as targets for the operations and effects of psychologization. Thus, much of the "psychological work" advocated by advice columns is gendered: it addresses, implicates and incites women to fulfil traditional roles as "relationship maintainers" [e.g. identifying and confronting "problems", seeking expert counsel, talking things through, etc.], and to "be someone to themselves" through self-knowledge and/or cultivation of self-esteem, a career, independent interests / friends, etc. (ibid). This echoes views of women as needing advice and women as willing psychological subjects.

Weinberg's (1989) replication of Brinkgreve and Korzec's (1979) and Brinkgreve's (1981) work is unpublished, but is useful because, within the paucity of *South African* research on advice columns, it elaborates a local sample / context. Weinberg (1989) compares content of problems and advice from South African advice columns drawn from 1955 and 1985, and links increased levels of psychologization of personal and relationship problems in advice columns to the professionalization of psychology in South Africa since 1950. A content analysis reports that problems presented to advice columns in 1955 are fairly equable with 1985, e.g. "post-teenage relationship problems", "parent-child trouble", "sex inquiry", "unhappy marriage", "shyness", "infidelity", "teenage relationship problems", etc. (in ranked order of prevalence for 1985, highest to lowest). [These findings compare favourably with published content analyses of current problems in European and American studies of advice columns: see subsequent section.]

Weinberg (1989) finds a significant increase in "psychologisms" in letters from advice-seekers in 1985 - evidenced by use of conceptual jargon or awareness of psychological practices, e.g. "lack of self-confidence", "manipulative", "depression", "obsession", "phobia", "trauma", "therapy", etc. This increase is positively correlated with increased psychologization of advice in the 1985-sample - evidenced by the advice columnists' framing of problems and resolutions in "psychological" ways, e.g. in terms of emotions, hidden feelings, self-esteem, counselling, talking about it, etc.

Weinberg's (1989) study offers a "Foucauldian" angle on the work of Brinkgreve and Korzec (1979). First, he argues that "psychologization" serves moralistic functions of censure, e.g. normalizing prohibition is effected through the setting up of dire psychological sequelae of particular actions [i.e. "deep anguish", "lasting emotional scars", "relationship damage"]. Second is the interpretation of his finding of the dominance of "humanist" psychological discourse in advice offered in 1985, e.g. listen to your "inner voice", find your "true feelings", "self-acceptance", open communication, etc. [cf. Rogers, 1961]. Weinberg argues that the alliance between "humanist" psychological discourse and advice columns achieves particular effects. It is intelligible to the lay public [cf. Rosen, 1977], i.e. natural-seeming, common-sensical, unobtrusive, as it insinuates its normalizing control into our everyday lives. And, it focuses exclusively on the individual, which eclipses social reality [cf. Dawes, 1985] and valorizes a "liberal" notion of choice, agency and infinite possibility [cf. Lambley, 1973].

2. Cross-sectional content analyses: fake-letters and pre-selection bias as methodological flaws

Several authors have performed content analyses of advice columns, which, they claim, accurately reflect the current landscape of problems facing women (and men) in everyday life. Melanie McFadyean (1988), advice columnist for *Just Seventeen* [a British young-women's magazine], content analyzed 12 000 letters addressed to her advice column during 1987, and found the following categories of problems to be prevalent: "Boyfriends, Love and Sex", "Careers", "Health", "Self-Image", "Pregnancy", "Family Problems", "School Problems", "Being Gay" and "Incest and Rape" (p. 15) [in ranked order: highest to lowest prevalence]. Similarly, Irma Kurtz (1990), advice columnist for American *Cosmopolitan*,¹ offers an informal analysis of "perennial problems" she regularly addresses for women in her column: "Independence Issues" [i.e. breaking away from parental control], "Depression and Low Self-Esteem", "Heartbreak", "Where are the Men?" and "Sexual Problems" (pp. 84-87).

Advice columnists have, of course, vociferously defended their realist position against various critiques - e.g. from feminists, social constructionists, etc. - and these studies might be read in this context, i.e. to persuade of the serious and sincere problems advice columns address. Both McFadyean (1988) and Kurtz (1990) appear to be writing for a "popular" audience [articles are published in a weekly news and women's magazine, respectively], and thus, show little of the scientific / positivist obsessiveness which characterizes

¹ Irma Kurtz's advice column is internationally syndicated to other *Cosmopolitans* elsewhere.

the "academic" content analyses of, for example, Gieber (1960) and Schoeneman and Rubanowitz (1985) [see below]. McFadyean's (1988) position as a "feminist" advice columnist (p. 14), is an interesting one, and I review her writing in the subsequent section.

The above findings of McFadyean (1988) and Kurtz (1990) [and Weinberg (1989) in the previous section] of an overwhelming prevalence of "romantic relationship problems" in the advice columns of women's magazines is supported by Italian academic, Giuseppe Mininni (1991), who compares the 1988-columns of two British and two Italian women's magazines. However, by assuming a firm constructionist stance, Mininni (1991) challenges the "reality" aspects of the "problems" ["topics"] he identifies by foregrounding *form* of advice columns, i.e. editorial control over what problems appear, how often and in what form. Mininni's (1991) ideas are pursued in subsequent sections and in my analyses of advice columns in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

While Mininni's (1991) constructionist approach to content analysis is the exception to the rule within realist studies of advice columns, it introduces [via attention to form] dilemmas of representativeness and authenticity for realists. A realist position is usually associated with positivist methodological rigour, i.e. adequate random sampling of advice columns and appropriate reliability of coding, so that an accurate picture of social, relational and personal life may be revealed. Schoeneman and Rubanowitz (1985) and Fischer, Schoeneman and Rubanowitz (1987) are testaments to such rigour with whole sections devoted to attainment of reliability in coding categories. Their interest in advice columns is as an apparently neutral vehicle for the exploration of attributions, i.e. advice columns are a "naturally occurring form of everyday discourse" which might expose the limits of traditional attribution theory based upon laboratory-produced discourse (Schoeneman & Rubanowitz, 1985: 315).

The theoretical subtleties of these studies, or critique thereof, are not relevant here. Paradoxically, the only insight into the operations of advice columns offered by Schoeneman and Rubanowitz (1985) is issued as an "apology" for a methodological flaw in their studies, and serves as a warning to future researchers within the realist position, i.e.

(R)andom selection of letters (does) not avoid a built-in pre-selection bias. Advice columnists can print only a tiny fraction of the letters they receive, and it is not clear how representative printed letters are of the total volume received. (ibid: 323-324)

Gieber (1960)² resorts to elaborate methodological defence of realist assumptions about the links between problems in advice columns and prevalence of 'real problems out there'. To boost sampling confidence, Gieber uses 548 "original" [unpublished] letters, obtained through co-operation with an unidentified American advice columnist. Conveniently, the mystery advice columnist had already "coded" these letters for various editorial procedures [e.g. selection of those for "possible publication", those for "personal response", and "fake letters" to be discarded], and Gieber's (1960) numeration and publication of these serve as one of the few statistical records in the literature on advice columns about the operation of pre-

2 Gieber's (1960) content analysis of "original" letters found the following categories of problems to be prevalent: "Psychological Counsel", "Courtship", "Marital Problems", "Pre-marital Problems", "Parent-child Issues", "Community Resources", "Sex", "Social Relations", "Inter-Cultural Relations", "Sibling Rivalry" (p. 504) [in ranked order: highest to lowest prevalence]. These findings are fairly equable with those mentioned above.

selection bias. Gieber reports that out of 548 "original" letters: 87 (15.9%) were deemed suitable for "possible publication"; 307 (56%) were to receive "personal replies" from the advice columnist; and 48 (8.8%) were to be discarded as "fake letters" (p. 501).

Other available statistics on pre-selection bias show that Gieber's (1960) estimate of the publication of 15.9% of letters received, might be optimistic. McFadyean (1988) claims that, on average, of 250 letters received by *Just Seventeen* per week, 12 to 14 (4.8% to 5.6%) were published (p. 16).

With regard to "fake letters", it is clear that the establishment of "authenticity" of letters in advice columns is pivotal to the "real problems of real people" approach to advice columns espoused by a realist position. Gieber (1960) explicates, with great seriousness, the criteria by which "a fake" may be identified, and advice columnists claim to be able to reliably detect and discard "fakes" and "leg-pulls" (e.g. Landers, 1961; Makins, 1975; McFadyean, 1988). Similarly, the popular belief that advice columnists write letters themselves, constituting another kind of "fake letter", is strongly denied by advice columnists themselves (e.g. Dunton, 1692, in Ratcliff, 1969; Landers, 1961; Makins, 1975; Crabtree, 1987; McFadyean, 1988).

Feminist and Foucauldian positions might view "fakes" differently, and thus, these positivist methodological concerns provide points of resistance and discussion relevant to this dissertation. For example, feminist critics might use the notion of pre-selection bias to expose hidden editing and censoring practices which "prescribe" particular kinds of problems as appropriate [cf. Winship (1987), see below]. A Foucauldian position might draw attention to the varieties of ways in which advice columns might be used, other than for the "truth" [e.g. ridicule, resistance, voyeurism, etc.: see McRobbie (1991), below]; or deconstruct the individual intention of the 'rebellious' author, i.e. recognition of the similar embeddedness of the 'joke' and 'serious' authors in culturally / institutionally available knowledges. I return to these points in subsequent Chapters.

Regarding the "embeddedness" of authors and advice-seekers, Gieber (1960) nudges towards this "Foucauldian" position, albeit from a positivist angle, through the identification of yet another form of pre-selection bias which plagued his study. Many letters which constituted the corpus for his content analysis, Gieber (1960) claims, were penned by the same authors, i.e. one individual had written several letters, each with a different problem. Gieber (1960) concludes that advice-seekers [as are "fake" advice-seekers] are drawn from a "faithful population of magazine readers", steeped in the regular features on romance, love, sex, emotion, gossip, etc. within the body of the magazine, and, indeed, the pre-selected contents of the advice column itself (p. 513). Thus, any generalization of prevalence of problems beyond the specific confines of magazine readers, should proceed with due caution.

3. Advice columnists on advice columns and advice-giving

Consideration of individual voices of advice columnists - e.g. varieties of accounts of their own advice-giving or their social role, etc. - is beyond the scope of this dissertation which deconstructs individual authorship in advice columns and avoids imputation of any one advice columnist's intentions and strategies

[see Chapters 1 and 3]. However, within a realist position, the writings of advice columnists form a celebrated edifice of experience and expertise. I *briefly* allude to the scope of this writing here, and mention several dominant "themes" which impact on my study in terms of empowerment espoused within the realist position.

Associated with the historical drift towards more information-based advice (Brinkgreve & Korzec, 1979: see previous section) is the "specialization" of advice columns, and the replacement of 'the junior journalist' or 'caring auntie' columnist with an institutionally legitimated "expert", e.g. a "professional advice-giver" [psychologist, social worker, counsellor] or "practitioner" [with specific clinical / medical experience and expertise] (Brunt, 1982: 148). Thus, a distinction might be made between the writings of traditional, general-focus "agony aunts", e.g. Ann Landers and Abigail van Buren (see Landers 1961; Castro, 1981; Pottker & Speziale, 1987) or Evelyn Home (see Makins, 1975), and the new "experts", e.g. Tom Crabtree (see Crabtree, 1987), Dr Ruth Westheimer (see Westheimer, 1981; and interview, in Olivier, 1991) or Dr David Delvin (see interview, in Newton, 1990).³

While Dr Ruth and Dr David Delvin draw extensively on the liberal view of sexual information distribution which circulates within medical and 'sexological' discourses [e.g. the orgasmic imperative: sexual pleasure as a *right*, see Bejin, 1985b], the alliance most commonly forged by advice columnists is with "psychology", here internally homogeneous. A recurrent metaphor of their role is of "psychotherapist to the masses". Makins (1975), McFadyean (1988) and Raeburn (in Jordan, 1988) comment on the listening-service, emotional support and counselling they have provided for individuals who do not have access to professional or institutionalized resources. For example: teenage girls may find it impossible to talk to parents, and have inadequate financial resources to seek professional assistance alone (McFadyean, 1988: 14).

In South Africa, this argument has seductive "political" ramifications. Elizabeth Duncan, advice columnist on *Fair Lady* magazine [see Chapter 3], claims that the "majority" of letters received by her are from lower socio-economic groups [possibly "African", or other "working class" groups], where (a) financial and time resources cannot accommodate the "luxury" of professional counselling or therapy, (b) there may be no facilities nearby [e.g. "apartheid" mental health structures], and/or (c) there may be no knowledge that such services exist (Duncan, in Belling, 1992: 56).

Of course, establishing a demographic profile of the "real person" behind the original letter - beyond the more obvious, ritually specified "gender" or "age" - is problematic for realists, given that the forum tolerates anonymity and polices confidentiality (see Gieber, 1960). It would appear that advice columnists gauge their own impact, influence and success via "fan letters" which arrive from advice-seekers, e.g. reporting back on progress made with "the problem", or sharing personal experience in support of advice offered to other advice-seekers (Landers, 1961; Makins, 1975; Crabtree, 1987; Duncan, in Belling, 1992).

3 *Since You Ask Me* (Landers, 1961), *Good Sex with Dr Ruth* (Westheimer, 1981) and *Tom Crabtree's Guide to Coping* (Crabtree, 1987) mark ventures, undoubtedly utilizing celebrity-status garnered as advice columnists, into the self-help-book market. This development is noted, and may, indeed, be extended to incorporate electronically mediated advice programs (see LaFountaine, 1989), but consideration of these is beyond the boundaries of this dissertation.

There appear to be (at least) two, interlinking trends in theories of advice-giving. First, Brunt (1982) has commented on the influence of "humanist" and counselling therapies on advice-giving, i.e. the individual knows the answer, but self-doubt "holds them back", and it is the task of the advice columnist to "unblock" this process by listening with acceptance and providing reassurance (p. 148) [cf. Weinberg, 1989: see previous section]. Thus, advice columnists make recurrent references to the healing process of writing the letter (e.g. Makins, 1975; McFadyean, 1988; Raeburn, in Jordan, 1988). But, as catalyst for catharsis, Makins (1975) suggests that advice should *facilitate* (not direct) (a) "a change of perspective" on the crisis-situation [e.g. positive aspects, information, humour],⁴ (b) the "acceptance of responsibility" for what has transpired, and (c) a decision on a future course of action [e.g. self-work, relationship-work, confrontation, further professional assistance, etc.] (p. 214).

Second is the previously mentioned trend towards the distribution of expert information, e.g. psychological and/or medical "facts" and "norms", or practical guidelines for coping with particular situations (McFadyean, 1988). Clearly, this information is shipped in [e.g. in quotation form] when needed in more generally focused advice columns (e.g. Landers, 1961; Makins, 1975; Duncan, in Belling, 1992), or is directly available from experts in specialized columns (e.g. Crabtree, 1987). McFadyean's (1988) writing is of particular interest here with respect to her positionings as realist information-distributer and feminist activist.

As advice columnist for *Just Seventeen*, McFadyean (1988) admits that her initial, feminist cynicism about advice columns evaporated, because "(s)acks full of heartbreak and exploitation aren't the greatest laugh going" (p. 14). She resolved to challenge the traditional tone of advice columns (e.g. conspiratorial, intimate, confidential sharing between individual women, etc.) with a direct, informational approach to all issues, and to incorporate "social problems" and "social causes of problems" into the forum, e.g. racial / gender discrimination, exploitative low-paid work, the tyranny of dieting, etc. Thus, she is aligned with a realist position via assertion of the "reality" (materiality) and seriousness of these young women's problems, and while her advice contains individualizing levels, she attempts to forge wider, "social" contexts for these problems [cf. a feminist position, see subsequent section].

4. Psychologized / medicalized information as intervention and empowerment in advice columns

This group of studies address how expert information is empowering. Tankard and Adelson's (1982) content analysis of three syndicated newspaper advice columns ["Ann Landers", "Dear Abby" and "Joyce

4 Ann Landers (1961) and Dr David Delvin [see Newton (1990)] have commented on the crucial introduction of levity into 'crisis situations' and 'sexual situations' respectively, and they liberally use "put downs", "wisecracks", "puns" and "double entendre" in their advice. Gieber (1960) and Hendley (1977) comment that this draws attention to the entertainment function of advice columns, i.e. to amuse readers. Realist critics (e.g. Havermann, 1968) have argued that this "frivolity" undermines the seriousness of the problems addressed. Feminist critics of sex manuals claim that the 'jolly tone' of sex advice masks the ideological function such information serves (e.g. Brunt 1982; Altman, 1984; Williamson, 1986).

Brothers"] produces statistical evidence to support the hypothesis that advice columns "refute" myths and misconceptions about mental health and marriage more often than they "perpetrate" (or support) them. For example, myths about mental health which were unequivocally refuted were: mental health problems are trivial, that they are untreatable, and that professional help is only for the insane. Myths about marriage which were unequivocally refuted were: having children can save "an ailing marriage" and that communication of negative feelings [e.g. anger, jealousy] indicates "a poor marriage" (p. 597).

The importance of Tankard and Adelson's (1982) study is in the establishment of the "truth" of the 'accurate information' [cf. norms] received via advice columns - here, specifically "psychologized" information - characteristic of a realist position. The circulation of advice columns via newspapers and magazines makes this "truth" widely available, thereby, Tankard and Adelson argue, achieving far-reaching empowering effects, e.g. encouraging individuals to seek "professional" assistance with emotional and/or relationship problems, or lessening prejudice towards mentally ill persons. The elaborate methodological means to establish reliability elevate findings beyond reproach from fellow-realists. Thus, advice columns are produced as a sincere, serious, objective and empowering resource of information.

Talbott's (1986) study highlights the theme of the empowering effects of psychologized information distributed by advice columns in a different way. He elicited the cooperation of "Dear Abby", who requested her readers involved with home-care of "mentally ill" family members, to write in with first-hand experiences and "problems". Talbott [and colleagues on the Committee for Psychiatry in the Community] content analyzed letters received and produced a "report" for mental health professionals, setting out of the problems which were perceived to exist, with recommendations for their alleviation.

Talbott (1986) acknowledges that this sample of letters suffered from pre-selection bias, e.g. determined by exposure to or compliance with the above injunction, and precluding those families who didn't perceive such a situation as "problematic". Most letters detailed anger and disillusionment with inadequate information and support provided by psychiatrists and mental health services, e.g. not caring, not understanding, blaming the family, etc. (pp. 53-66). However, "Dear Abby" was carefully excluded from abuse in the letters. She was perceived as "other" to the mental health experts: a kindly, non-threatening authority and friend who would offer forthright, objective, non-judgemental, balanced and informative advice (pp. 72-6).

Thus, Talbott (1986) uses the form of the advice column [e.g. readability, anonymous confession] and the 'otherness' of the advice columnist [e.g. popularity, credibility, sincerity], as methodological tools to facilitate intimate outpouring of "data". In broader perspective, however, "Dear Abby" is able to put the study to work in ways that increase the "truth-value" of her column, thereby achieving empowering effects. First, her professional credibility is affirmed via alliance with psychiatric "science". Second, through publication of informative feedback via her column, she entrenches her accountability to her readers and her 'otherness' from an "uncaring" mental health profession.

Whereas the above studies focused on the dissemination of "psychologized" information with the potential to enhance lives and alleviate suffering, Gerhardt and Van Staden (1991) explore the advice column's role

in the distribution of medicalized knowledges about "eating disorders", and claim that these knowledges have the capacity "to save lives" (p. 26, my emphasis). The importance of advice columns in the "prevention of eating disorders" (the power of the advice column to "influence" via information), hypothesized here by Gerhardt and Van Staden, has been suggested in broader surveys of eating disorders in various media forms (e.g. Murray, Touyz & Beumont, 1990).

Gerhardt and Van Staden (1991) replicate the "self-selection" method used by Talbott (1986) [above] in a different context, i.e. members of "Weigh-Less" [a commercial slimming organization] were requested to submit letters to an advice column in an in-house magazine. Results of an unspecified content analysis showed several functions of advice columns in the area of eating disorders. First, due to the anonymity of the forum, the advice columnist may be the first person told, and thus, a vital first step towards prompt and effective professional help. In cases where professional help may not be sought out, the provision of "correct and appropriate information" - e.g. diagnostic and prognostic features of anorexia / bulimia, and/or referrals to various medicalized or psychologized professional resources - may "correct misconceptions" in the lay knowledges of *all* readers concerning eating disorders (Gerhardt & Van Staden, 1991: 26).

Gerhardt and Van Staden's study embodies the empowerment via information espoused by a realist position. Armed with medicalized information, women readers are en-abled [cf. impelled] to monitor and diagnose their own and others' eating behaviour, and to know where to seek help. Gerhardt and van Staden mention that *all* the letters they received were from women, but there is no linkage of feminine "aberrant eating" or "weight problems" to, for example, patriarchal discourse, social constructionism, or the increasing medicalization of women's bodies [cf. Ehrenreich & English, 1979; Reissman, 1983: see Chapter 1], although "the media" is blamed for the distribution of misconceptions, distortions and contradictory messages about eating disorders. Medical information is the scientific antidote, and advice columns play a "pivotal role" in the distribution of this (Gerhardt & Van Staden, 1991: 26).

Feminist Position

McRobbie's (1991) feminist position challenges the service and information advice columns provide as "non-neutral", and, indeed, posits advice columns as part of an ideological apparatus which maintains patriarchal and capitalist domination of women. This involves the rendering of "the personal" - e.g. women's anxiety about appearance, eating behaviour or a less-than-virtuous sexual reputation - "political", i.e. embedded in a web of knowledges, practices and social structures over which individual women have no control, and which "construct" appropriate and acceptable resolutions, roles, positions and identities.

A feminist position seeks to "expose" the relationship between form and content of advice columns, e.g. by contextualizing advice columns within the discursive practices which characterize women's magazines [e.g. editorial intervention, production, distribution and consumption]. Taking a constructive stance, the relationship between form and content is seen as a moral-political problem within a feminist position, rather than a "methodological problem" obstructing accurate realism [cf. previous section], and this involves

critical analysis of the 'disempowering' operations and effects of advice columns. This position draws on the model of "sovereign power" set up in Chapter 1 [see Table 1], and has a goal of empowerment through transformation of socio-political structures of oppression. None of the studies reviewed in this section examine psychologized or medicalized information distribution per se, although they allude, more generally, to conventionalizing epistemologies for/about women.

1. Formal features of advice columns

Most "feminist" writings on micro-level, formal features of advice columns are fairly similar (e.g. McRobbie, 1981 & 1991; Coward, 1984; Winship, 1987; Mininni, 1991), and I review the major features thematically here rather than repetitively listing ideas by authorship. However, there are differences and tensions between feminist writings, and these are most clearly manifest in approaches to power and empowerment, e.g. Winship (1987) offers a "radical feminist" critique and calls for collective action, while McRobbie (1991) draws on "Foucauldian" approaches. I review these different approaches in subsequent sections.

Feminist critiques of the form of advice columns focus on the hidden intermediary practices of (mis)representation between "reality" [out there] and the reader, e.g. the editors and advice columnists who, via various constraining practices and techniques of construction, selection, editing and framing, determine *what* "problems" and "resolutions" are appropriate for *which* target audiences, and *where* and *how*, within the magazine, these issues will be addressed. Thus, the advice column [as artifice] might be contextualized within activities of intervention by magazine editors or advice columnists.

Clearly, not all letters received are published [e.g. Gieber, 1960; McFadyean, 1988: see previous section]. McRobbie (1991) and Mininni (1991) comment on the synchronic and diachronic selection of problems which provide the one-off and the regular reader the opportunity to witness the range of possible problems [e.g. weekly appearance of a boyfriend problem, a family-life problem, a work-related problem and a "non-problem"].⁵ Winship (1987) has commented that "the kinds of problems and styles of advice featured on any problem page are congruent with the profiles of the respective magazines" (p. 77) [cf. Mininni, 1991]. Thus, the particular problems which are regarded as 'appropriate' within more "feminist" women's magazines [e.g. incest, low-paid labour, sexual harassment], might be "absent" from magazines with more traditional or family-oriented profiles, "absenting" such problems from public discourse and, thus, from existence within a "problematic range" for these readers.

Furthermore, the "staging" of selected letters lies in editorial hands. Fairly innocuously, this might mean that the advice column appears in a regular site in the magazine - usually towards the back (Makins, 1975; Coward, 1984; Winship, 1987), where it "regenerate(s) flagging interest and sum(s) up the ideological

5 McRobbie (1991) details the a spectrum of problematic issues found in advice columns, and "the Non-Problem" is a formal variant of these. The non-problem is characterized by the semi-apologetic tone in which it is written, which indicates that "within the definitions of what constitutes 'a problem', the writer has no real problem and knows this" (p. 111), e.g. *I absolutely hate to admit this, but I'm rather pretty. Now, you may think I'm lucky, but...* [see Chapter 4].

content of the magazine" (McRobbie, 1991: 111). Or, as Mininni (1991) suggests, "staging" involves the proliferation of specialist sites of advice within a magazine, e.g. the appearance of "monothematic sub-columns" to expertly address specific topics. In Mininni's (1991) sample of British and Italian women's magazines, for example, *The Other Half* addressed "men's problems" [from male advice-seekers], *Your Gynaecologist* addressed women's medical problems, and *Father Francis* addressed religious problems (p. 77).

The editing of original letters for publication determines how an appropriate problem is presented. Coward (1984) has pointed to the process of pruning and homogenizing whereby meandering and multi-faceted problems are edited down to a fairly rigid formula: approximately 100 words in standard English; careful establishment of "identity markers" and/or "narrative sequence" to facilitate normative intervention [e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, length / depth of relationship, duration of problem, current emotional state, etc.]; and focus on a "single issue", which can be authoritatively and optimistically answered, resolved, corrected, reassured, etc. (pp. 137-8) [see also Mininni, 1991]. Winship (1987) notes that while reasons given for these editing practices [by editors and advice columnists within a realist position] are "practical" and "altruistic" - space is limited, and readers need to grasp questions and "problems" easily (p. 77) - they are problematic for feminists and other social constructionists.

Feminist objections to formal structures of and editing practices in advice columns often concern the entrenchment of hidden power hierarchies. Mininni's (1991) writing is particularly insightful in this regard. Mininni (1991) reads the stylistic features which characterize advice texts as functioning to mask the asymmetrical features of the relationship between advice-seeker and advice-giver. First, the forum requires the advice-giver to insert captions, headlines or other "metacommunicative assertions extolling the adviser's powers (to solve problems)" (p. 78), which set readers up as needing authoritative information and expert solutions.

Second, to safeguard "privacy" of the intimate, confidential disclosures required from advice-seekers, the advice-giver / editor polices "(the) indirect and impersonal nexus" of the forum, e.g. excising the identity of the advice-seeker by various editorial strategies (p. 77). In his British sample, for example, Mininni found no reference to the letter's author [e.g. names, initials or pseudonyms]; this having been replaced by a summarizing "title" which reflected the tenor of the problem / advice and which indicated "(the prevalence of) the interpretative frame of the adviser (over) the frame proposed by the enquirer" (p. 79).

Third, the asymmetrical power relationship was masked via formal emphasis [by advice-giver] on solidarity and familiarity with the advice-seeker's *weltanschauung*. Thus, an aura of "symmetry" is produced via use of colloquial communicative practice [e.g. lay terminology, idiomatic phrases, tacit knowledges] in two macrostyles of response: (a) "generalizations of agreement", whereby approval or encouragement is issued, and/or (b) "declarations of conflict", whereby an alternative view is propounded (p. 80). However, corrective advice operates via formal rhetorical devices of 'captatio benevolentiae' [e.g. "You sound too intelligent to waste your time with a man like that"] or by introducing alternative, unchallengeable knowledges, either "common sense" or expert (ibid). This means that the kindly, benign 'agony auntie' functions, powerfully, at the level of form in advice columns.

2. Feminist media critics, the "conspiracy thesis" and empowerment: divisions in the feminist position

In order to introduce divergent feminist approaches to the effects achieved by advice columns, it is necessary to move beyond the consensual themes on the relationship between content and form of advice columns reviewed above. Thus far, then, hidden selection, framing, editing and rhetorical practices set up a 'problematic range' of issues and appropriate resolutions for women, endorsing traditional gendered positions and masking power relations. Divergences amongst [and within] feminists are located in different approaches to the circumstances of readership of advice columns, and different understandings of power and subjectivity.

Some feminist media critics (e.g. Leman, 1980; McRobbie, 1981; Ferguson, 1983; Winship, 1987; Wood, 1987; Driver, 1993) have assumed a strong social constructionist thesis regarding the prescriptive power of the oppressive ideology reproduced by the media / women's magazines. This is most clear in feminist representations of the *content* of advice columns as offering women no alternative but to obey the imperatives as set out, in their daily lives.

For example, McRobbie's (1981) early writing [see introductory section to this Chapter] positioned the *Cathy and Claire* advice column in a "band aid" role within *Jackie* magazine for girls, i.e. providing the beauty, romantic and emotional know-how required to navigate the often contradictory conventions of romantic exchange established in other features in the magazine [e.g. fiction, interviews with celebrities, advertising, etc.].⁶ Ferguson (1983) draws attention to the links between this feminine conventionalization and consumerist capitalism [cf. Williamson, 1978], i.e. women are directed to "buy" particular products or services to achieve promised success, power, happiness, etc. [I return to shifts in McRobbie's (1991) position in the subsequent section.]

In an unpublished South African content analysis, Wood (1987) explains the presence of themes of "motherhood", "sexual relationships" and "physical attractiveness" in women's magazines and advice columns, and the total absence of class, gender and/or racial [apartheid] inequalities, in terms of collusion by magazines with structurally oppressive apparatuses, i.e. to uphold a white upper-middle class, privileged reality, a state of perpetual "social amnesia". Driver (1993) introduces a further patriarchal ideological agenda into the domesticization of feminine power and independence. In a textual analysis of the social construction of gender stereotypes in *Drum* [a general interest "black" South African magazine: 1951 to 1959], Driver comments that the prescriptions of domesticity, physical attractiveness and romantic love for women within the advice column were presided over by "a worried syndicate of men" (p. 8). Despite the feminine name of the advice columnist, *Dolly Drum*, this was "a contrapuntal 'feminine' voice, a voice produced largely by male journalists" (ibid).

6 As this "know-how" - emotions, relationships, knowing how to cope with life or how to improve oneself - is given out ritualistically, year after year, this knowledge becomes part of the "general currency of female knowledge" (McRobbie, 1991: 123), and is assumed to be prototypical of femininity. As Ferguson (1983) suggests, this induction process is also consistent with the assumption that women have to be *taught* femininity.

In the retrospective re-analysis of her 1981-writing, Angela McRobbie (1991) identifies this radical critique of media / mass culture as "the conspiracy thesis", i.e. an ideological "plot" (or apparatus) whose objective it is to keep the working classes and/or women "docile and subordinate" by diverting them into various entertainments, commodities, beliefs and behaviours (p. 85). For example, McRobbie (1981) argues, adolescent girls are victimized / destined, by a code of romance, "to a life ruled by emotions": infatuation, devotion, anxiety, rivalry, jealousy, humiliation and devastation (p. 107). Thus, the negative prescriptions of feminine opportunity laid down in the *Cathy and Claire* advice column, entirely masked oppressive social norms and structures, eclipsed alternatives and maintained the status quo.⁷

The above ideas about media-conspiracy - deliberate mis-representation to "dupe" women - and social determinism lurk behind the writing of Janice Winship (1987). Her work is useful here because it articulates a fairly consistent "radical" feminist position which may be contrasted with McRobbie's (1991) "shifting" one, or indeed, McFadyean's (1988) apparently "contradictory" one [i.e. straddling realist and feminist positions, see previous section].

Winship's (1987) argument is exhaustive, detailing interwoven ideological, political and economic layers of magazine / advice column content and form. My review is, due to constraints of space, not comprehensive and focuses mainly on the operations of advice columns at the level of form. The popularity of advice columns, the "most read of pages" in women's magazines, argues Winship, is largely in the "reassurance" they offer women-readers: sharing or identification with problems reassures women that they are not alone with problems; and voyeuristic pleasure (*schadenfreude*) reassures women that the problems of others are far worse than their own (p. 77).⁸

Winship (1987) posits that the intimate disclosures required within advice columns are set up by codes of participatory intimacy which operate in other forums within women's magazines [cf. Leman, 1980]. Thus, as in the above section, the advice column as a site of confession operates within tight editorial manipulation of *content* ["women's interests": emotions, child-rearing, relationships, sex, men's foibles, beauty, etc.], *form* [first person address, case-studies, disclosure of personal experience, question and answer] and *tone* [informal, "gossipy", confidential, conspiratorial, facilitative, caring].

Of course, attention to communicative form implicates a vast body of more general literature on language form which has explored gender differences in communication styles and topic-selection, e.g. women and self-disclosure (e.g. Hacker, 1981; Michell, 1984; Rosenblum, 1986; Boe, 1987; Graddol & Swann, 1989; Dixon 1992). Links between this literature and advice columns have been implied rather than systematically analyzed (e.g. Coward, 1984; Winship, 1987; Belling, 1992). For example, Coward (1984)

7 The 'conspiracy thesis' is a trend in media criticism. McRobbie (1991) provides a brief overview of various other trends (pp. 84-7), and Hall (1977), McQuail (1983) and Berger (1991) provide useful introductions to this field.

8 Coward (1984) emphasizes the voyeuristic function of advice columns, claiming the narrativization of intimate relationships in advice columns function as "a distinct sub-genre of sexual fiction" [cf. soap opera, tabloid journalism, etc.] (p. 137). McRobbie (1991) argues that the voyeuristic element becomes less prominent "when the problems published are issue-based rather than narrative-based" (p. 159), i.e. story-elements are replaced by a more "impersonal", informational tone [cf. Brinkgreve & Korzec, 1979].

refers to advice columns as "acts of public confession" (p. 135), forging a Foucauldian link between confession, surveillance and *female* subjectivity within specific institutionalized discourses / practices [e.g. psychotherapeutic uses of talk as curative / cathartic].

Winship (1987) argues that the intimate and consensual "woman's world" and "sisterhood" offered women by magazines is illusory. The formal dynamics of advice columns reveal "ideological commitment to the individual" (p. 80), e.g. tone, resolutions, question and answer format, etc. Thus, while the advice column issues reassurance that women are not alone with their problems, it simultaneously undermines this support and engenders isolation via: (a) providing no access to knowledges "which explain personal problems in social terms" [e.g. *why* is this a problem?]; and (b) providing no access to collective action or militant protest [e.g. women "coming together" or organizing, beyond this text] (ibid). Thus, Winship (1987) concludes, advice columns are 'deeply anti-feminist': a sign of women's isolation from one another, and an oppressive reproduction of that isolation in their operation and effects.

Winship's (1987) and McRobbie (1991) have explicated the influence of feminism and feminist ideas on editorial policies, women's magazine content and the questions and answers in advice columns in Britain since the 1970's, e.g. Winship's (1985) analysis of resistant codes of feminine beauty and fashion, or McFadyean's (1988) "feminization" of the advice column of *Just Seventeen* [see above]. However, while McRobbie (1991) is able - from the perspective of her new Foucauldian or "post-modern" position - to welcome the possibility of "counter-discourse" and resistance [cf. Weedon, 1987], Winship (1987) claims that this 'textuality' does not go far enough to challenge and transform oppressive social / political structures which individualize women in order to subordinate them [see "sovereign power": Table 1, Chapter 1].

Kristeva (1986, in Davies, 1990) has elaborated three "generations" or "tiers" of feminism (and the relations between them), and these are of particular significance here in "classifying" the different positions put forward in the above paragraph. Kristeva apparently sought to avoid the danger of linking a speaker / writer with a particular position [see my critique of McRobbie (1991) in the introduction to this Chapter] by positing the generations of feminisms - which originally appeared in linear or historically distinct periods - as parallel, interwoven tiers, as "*signifying spaces*" (ibid). Thus, while the spaces may be useful in classifying complexity, they also amplify contradiction in that we may move between them in different contexts, producing different effects. The tiers of feminism (adapted from Kristeva, 1986, in Davies, 1990: 502) are:

Liberal Feminism - access to the male symbolic order, where assumption of traditional gendered positions (as individual women) may achieve considerable power.

Radical Feminism - celebration of femaleness and of difference and separation from the male symbolic order. Transformation of existing power hierarchies would require wide-reaching social action and change.

Post-modern Feminism - a move away from male/female dualism towards multiple ways of being. The desired end-point of such a shift is to reveal the fragmented nature of subjectivities, and the operations and effects of power.

3. Foucauldian (or "post-modern") feminists

"Liberal feminist" positions are drawn on and addressed in Chapters 4 and 5. This brief section seeks to make three points via review of several studies thought to incorporate aspects of Kristeva's "Post-modern Feminism", e.g. "sexism" is not simply 'out there' [in society's structure] or something which is done to us, but implicated "in the ways we have taken ourselves up as gendered beings" (Davies, 1990: 503). First, these writings are resistant to with the top-down, social determinism of the "radical feminist" conspiracy thesis [e.g. Winship, 1987: see above section]. Second, that this "category" of writing may be characterized by awareness of its own ambivalences, e.g. feminist objections to Foucauldian models of power [see Burman, 1991b: Chapter 1]. And third, these feminists have achieved these multiple and more fragmented understandings of readership of advice columns and possibilities for subjectivity through methodological shifts from traditionally used "content analytic" methods.

Lueck (1989) resists the simplistically dis-empowering reading of operations and effects of advice columns by feminists. She uses content analysis to "order" a large and unruly body of data - an advice column for women in the *St Louis Post Dispatch* [newspaper] between the years 1915 to 1925 - and to facilitate the focused emergence of discourses [cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987: see Chapter 3]. A "public discourse" focused on women's rights and direct public influence ostensibly achieved through the vote for women in America. A "discourse of indirect feminine influence", largely drawn on and reproduced by advice columnists, focused on achievement of tenable positions in patriarchy via manipulation of men through sweetness, flattery, caring, nurturance and seduction. These contradictory powers embody the tension between feminist and Foucauldian positions, a contradiction which, unreflexively, Lueck "resolves" by drawing in Chodorow's (1978) socio-psychoanalytic explanation of how this "indirect feminine influence" comes to be regarded as an innate quality / capacity of women.

Rosalind Coward's (1984) reading of advice columns is steeped in Foucauldian notions of confession and surveillance [see subsequent section], but she warns of the dangers for women of a Foucauldian model of power which positions them as "powerful" in heterosexual relationships [e.g. indirect feminine influence, or holding the emotional reigns]. Confession ["talking about it"] does not operate on women and men with equal effect, and, although men's sexual needs still dominate cultural representations [cf. Hollway's MSD: see Chapter 1], "women must bear the brunt of emotional-work in sexual relationships" (p. 139): negotiating, maintaining, interpreting, confronting and knowing when and where to see professional assistance [cf. Hollway's HHD: see Chapter 1]. From a feminist perspective, this injunction to talk-about-it produces, for women, more vulnerability and dependence on men, and/or reproduction of the myth that structural inequalities between women and men [power imbalances] can be resolved via women's emotional labour, "within the interior of a sexual relationship", an advice column or psychotherapist's room (p. 141).

McRobbie (1991) argues against Coward's (1984) feminist pessimism from a viewpoint asserting the multiplicity of readings and effects advice columns produce. Thus, for example, ten years on from her earlier analyses of *Jackie*, McRobbie (1991) reports remarkable shifts in the content of women's magazines,

viz a decline in romance and an ascendancy of fashion / beauty (p. 135). Advice columnists have become "experts rather than intimates, and professionals rather than 'aunts'" (p. 155), and advice now emphasizes "personal choice and the creation of a 'beautiful' individual identity" (p. 175). McRobbie (1991) attributes these changes to the influences of feminism, e.g. magazines and advice columns are written, edited, published and *read* by women for whom female passivity and traditional sex-role stereotyping have become problematized or sensitized.

McRobbie (1991) uses recent reader-centred media approaches [i.e. one text or image can produce multiple meanings] to expose her early work as naively deterministic. She argues that the ideological model or "conspiracy thesis" - adopted by herself and other feminist media critics [see above section] - assumes imprisonment by readers in a coercive "ideological block", i.e. the content of the magazine (or advice) is simply reproduced inside the heads and lives of female readers (p. 141). A more "post-modern" approach to readership incorporates Foucauldian resistance: girls / women are not passive "victims" of magazine or advice texts. They skim-read, skip sections, and place information alongside other advices, knowledges and meanings encountered elsewhere (p. 142). Advice columns are not necessarily read or written into for "the truth": elements of hoax (e.g. as resistance or subversion), exhibitionism, humour, pleasure, cynicism, incredulity and ridicule are implicated (p. 161). Thus, readers are capable of recognizing tensions and contradictions within and between knowledges, opening them up for contestation, disruption and resistance.

It would appear, then, that the strong social constructionist position of feminist media critics is tempered by McRobbie (1991) with a form of "realistic individualism" [cf. McFadyean, 1988]. Some notion is upheld of that which is represented in advice columns, is not *all / only* strategic or devious ideological misrepresentation. Problems are experienced at an "individual level", and advice addresses alleviation and empowerment (albeit "cosmetic") at this level. McRobbie (1991) wryly draws in economic factors underlying women's magazine and advice column production and distribution: an advice column "which continually pointed to the social origins of feminine discontent" [cf. a "radical feminist position"] would not attract enough letters to sustain its existence (p. 163) or would alienate, rather than attract, readers / buyers of magazines.⁹

McRobbie (1991) is able to reach this point of multiplicity via careful explication of a revised method, which she calls a "semiological analysis". Traditional content analysis with its concern for numerative, manifold appearance of content is eschewed, and semiology, significations and contradictions embraced. However, there is, says McRobbie (1991), "no fool-proof procedure" as analysis proceeds via "isolating sets of codes around which the message is constructed" (p. 91). "Codes" are identified as "rules / conventions by which different meanings are produced" [e.g. beauty, romance, domestic life, etc.], and can be analyzed at visual and/or narrative levels (*ibid*). The identification and consideration of these codes constitutes the interpretative analysis [e.g. how they cohere, how they are organized, how they relate to one another]. McRobbie (1991) follows guidelines of Barthes' hermeneutic "immanent analysis" (p. 92), i.e.

9 Winship (1987) has described women's magazine publishing as a 'fiercely competitive' and 'highly volatile' market. Several authors have referred to the tight spiral of production, distribution and consumption of magazines: high circulation / readership attracts advertisers, advertising finances innovative features and "expert" advice columns, which, in turn, attract more readers (e.g. Makins, 1975; Williamson, 1978; Winship, 1987; McRobbie, 1991).

meaning inherent or dwelling in the text. Thus, absence of definitive rules of procedure arises from the polysemic qualities of the narrative/image (text) (ibid).¹⁰

McRobbie's (1991) method is mentioned in detail here as it compares favourably with other "discourse analytic" methodologies in this Chapter, and with those reviewed in Chapter 3.

Mininni's (1991) study shares with McRobbie's (1991) the feminine / feminist ideological contextualization of advice columns within women's magazines. His study uses the letters and advice from two Italian and two British women's magazines (see previous section), and focuses on the complex ways in which the *rhetorical form* of advice columns - the ways they are "staged" in / by women's magazines - constrains what may be said / advised in that forum according to various conventionalized "ideological complexes" ("clots" of sense, p. 80) about femininity.

If McRobbie's (1991) analytic gaze is "semiotic", Mininni's (1991) is "linguistic", and he draws attention to methodological difficulties in exploring the "intricate complexity" of interweaving voices which make up advice columns (p. 75). He loosely refers to his method as "discourse analysis" [cf. McRobbie, above], but this is inlaid with various specific theoretical imports which facilitate his focus on letters / advice as "scenes of interlocution", e.g. semiotic theory and pragmatics to place the advice column in a dynamic communicative and ideological context, and notions of "diatext" [i.e. argumentative intertwining between "co-operation" and "conflict" principles of conversation: Grice, 1975] to understand how, within the 'coram publico' dialogical situation, multiple goals are achieved [e.g. intimacy, individual assistance, humour, information, pedagogical normalization of pro-social behaviours, etc.].

Foucauldian Position

McRobbie (1991) claims that a Foucauldian reading of advice columns turns the realist and feminist positions "on their heads" (p. 163). This claim is based on the rather simplistic "definitions" of the positions - as approaches to advice columns - she provides. As I have shown in the previous sections, McRobbie's (1991) positions rupture and bleed into one another, e.g. realist-feminist, realist-Foucauldian, feminist-Foucauldian. Although Kristeva's three tiers of feminism [see above] contribute some clarity at the interstices between "feminist" and "post-modern" positions, it would be unwise, for my purposes in this dissertation, to defuse this tension altogether. Thus, feminist resistances and ambivalences to realist and Foucauldian formulations are revisited and teased out at several points in subsequent Chapters.

McRobbie (1991) understands a ["pure"] Foucauldian position in writings about advice columns as an understanding of the forum in terms of technologies of power: confession, surveillance and subjectivity. These Foucauldian technologies were set out in descriptive and critical detail in Chapter 1, and I will briefly review studies of advice columns which have deployed these ideas here. Significant at this point are

10 *Polysemy* refers to 'floating chains of signifieds' - we choose a few and leave the rest - which invite interpretation (Barthes, 1973).

concomitant shifts towards more "discourse analytic" methodologies, which impact directly on or inform indirectly my own analytic approach [see Chapter 3].

Advice columns are not simply sites of isolated cries from lovelorn women, McRobbie (1991) argues, but a public forum which feigns privacy and intimacy to achieve normalizing effects. Participation in the advice column is encouraged because experience / emotions are more easily controlled "out in the open" (p. 163) [cf. Foucault, 1978]. Through confession, testimony and witness - the ceaseless telling and re-telling of personal failings, anxieties and dilemmas (Heath, 1982) - McRobbie (1991) reports, for example, that the *Cathy and Claire* advice column in *Jackie* magazine defines the contours of appropriate and acceptable sexualities for adolescent girls [e.g. "romance", kissing, petting, no female desire, no penetration] (p. 163). Even apparently objective, expert information from the allegedly benign advice columnist plays a policing role, i.e. to provide the terminology, and to define the parameters of how social subjects "are meant to feel, how they are meant to act" (p. 164).

McRobbie (1991) deflects the discursive determinism of this reading, too easily perhaps, by drawing on a Foucauldian model of capillary-diffusion of power relations: media-power is not a top-down, deterministic process within a perspective which embraces multiplitious meanings [see previous section]. Thus, she claims, although these institutionalized or "common sense" knowledges become focal points in the construction of appropriate subjectivities for adolescent girls, the explosion of information and clashes of discourses from other sources [e.g. in the home, schools, movies, literature, other magazines, feminism, etc.] require choices, breed awareness of contradictions and produce resistances, which are vital to any form of social / discursive change (p. 165).

A "less optimistic" Foucauldian reading might, of course, challenge notions of agency, liberal choice and individualism which haunt McRobbie's (1991) work. For example, girls who don't buy / read *Jackie* - or other magazines - and don't write into / read advice columns (ibid), are assumed, through agentic choice, to escape, resist or subvert the institutionalized knowledges and discursive practices around feminine subjectivity. Paradoxically, these "choices" and "resistances" are embedded in these (and other) discourses. These ideas form the crux of various feminist objections to Foucauldian power and resistance [see Burman, 1991b: Chapter 1].

McRobbie's (1991) comments on the normalizing effects of sexual surveillance touted by problems and information in advice columns is amplified by LaFountaine (1989). His rigorous Foucauldian analysis of the mediatized phenomenon of "Dr Ruth" links sexual practices, sexual knowledges and sexuality to technologies of confession, techniques of the self and panoptic bio-power [see Chapter 1]. This study uses Dr Ruth's "Good Sex" television show as text and a large part of the interpretative analysis explores the extended uses of the television screen as surveillance: a transparent panoptic window through which Dr Ruth and the viewers "see" one another and "communicate". However, his understanding of Dr Ruth is as "a gesture, sign and site for the implementation of surveillance and the implantation of moralization and normalization" (p. 124), or "a grid of decipherment" (p. 128) [cf. Rose, 1990: Chapter 1] - rather than a real person - and this is embedded within a post-structuralist framework [see Chapter 1].

Dr Ruth, argues LaFountain (1989), perpetuates Foucault's 'repressive hypothesis' by spreading bio-technical, medical knowledge/power, which polices and controls individuals in the name of liberating them. "Good sex" is liberation, openness, enlightenment, disciplined experimentation, transparency, self-knowledge, discussion, and is normatively divided from "bad sex" or not-good-sex" (p. 129). Her power to problematize and resolve / correct [via expert information] works through a technology of confession: "it is in the *decipherment* of what is said by a listener who is *a master of truth* that a *discourse of truth* is constituted" (p. 132, my emphases). This initiates the individual's passage "through sex to self-understanding and identity" (p. 133), and simultaneously reproduces the power of the truth-sayer (Dr Ruth).

Analytically, LaFountain (1989) approaches "the phenomenon of Dr Ruth" [as a whole] as a text, and as such, his analysis involves the production of a broad, deductive reading, closely informed by the writings of Foucault. That is, at no point do specific statements / images from the Dr Ruth's "Good Sex Show" appear in his account in a textually descriptive or inductive way. [See concluding section, below, for comparative commentary.] LaFountain (1989) offers the following very eloquent orientation for the critical goals of his Foucauldian analysis:

My analysis... does not fly under the banner of a theory of representation. As a genealogy, it is an interpretation of interpretations that themselves always participate in the making of truths, fictions, exaggerations, and lies. Its function is to fracture and transgress, to recognize discontinuity, by producing useful myths that induce truthful effects that in turn disfigure and delegitimize extant formulations (p. 124).

Coward (1984) approaches "the phenomenon of advice columns" [as a form, a genre, an apparatus] in a similar way to LaFountain's (1989) analysis of Dr Ruth. Although her analysis is not as theoretically deductive as LaFountain's, nor as carefully explicated methodologically - it is aimed at a more popular audience - it appears to have similar critical goals, i.e. to dislodge a common-sense, realist or liberal understanding of advice columns through the production of a disruptive, "different", "new" reading.

Coward (1984) focuses on the "discursive injunction" built into advice columns, an imperative to talk about it, confess or tell all: speak out, be honest and you'll feel better; organize your scattered emotions / experiences into coherent narratives and you'll see the causes and solutions, etc. (p. 138). But writing in is only "the beginning of the great verbal intercourse" (p. 136), as writers and readers are impelled to *talk* to partners, lovers, children, parents and friends, and to *talk* to professionals (doctors, counsellors, therapists) about "problems". The advice column, constituted by "acts of public confession" (p. 135), is forged within Foucauldian links between confession, surveillance and subjectivity and draws on institutionalized discourses / discursive practices: here, specifically psychotherapeutic uses of talk as curative, as cathartic and as essential for psychic, physical and relationship "health" [see Chapter 1].

Coward (1984) comments - following Foucault (1978) - that the distinctive (and historically specific) content of "modern" advice columns, e.g. emotional / relationship problems as the most devastating in women's lives, catapults sexuality to the fore as "the true expression of our most intimate selves" (p. 137). The advice column is an arena where this sexual consciousness "is made public in narrative (and informational) form" (p. 139), thereby forging normalized subjectivities. See previous section for Coward's (1984) warnings about the reproduction, via advice columns, of women as targets and willing /

malleable subjects of psychologization, and the pitfalls for feminists of assuming feminine power [in a Foucauldian sense] in the discursive practices of heterosexual relationships.

Erica Carter's (1988) writing attends to the formal conventions of advice columns which set women up as "willing", "malleable", "flexible" subjects. The historical specificity of her Post World War II sample may limit current applications, but her work provides useful insights into the form of advice columns and a Foucauldian approach to the operations and effects of power. For example, Carter (1988) explicitly resists "other" feminist accounts which simplistically assert women's lack of power, or resort to 'conspiracy theses' to explain contradictions of post-war feminine subjectivity [e.g. women duped into "giving up power" when men returned, or "going back" to family life] (p. 64).

Drawing on a post-war sample (1950 to 1953) of letters to and replies from *Frau Irene* [an advice column in the German general interest magazine, *Hor Zu*], Carter (1988) examines the discourses within which historical objects (e.g. "the family", "the relationship") and social subjects (e.g. women and men) are formed. She asks how and why female subjectivity shifted to accord with newly available discursive positions, and how and why did women *and* men actively re-negotiate and re-enact the discursive practices governing their subjectivities (p. 66). Carter (1988) approaches the advice column as a site in which social subjects [i.e. female / male letter-writers *and* advice column readers] were enlisted to participate in familial discourse, a process which channelled desires and anxieties in particular ways, re-fashioning and re-producing sexual difference within the family (ibid).

Methodological commentary offered by Carter (1988) is cryptic. The theoretical links between her historical project and Foucault's genealogy are not relevant to my dissertation. However, a "Foucauldian analysis of discourse" was performed because it provided a theory and a method which could accommodate contradictoriness of subjectivity and power relations. Carter's (1988) analysis links discursive reconstruction of the socio-historical and/or ideological conditions of the period [e.g. what was the state of the wartime / post-war marriage], with close analysis of the *linguistic form* or *narrative structure* of four carefully selected texts [i.e. letters to and replies from Frau Irene] (pp. 72-4).

Carter's (1988) assertions of the power of formal conventions of advice columns [i.e. letter-writing, editing practices and advice-giving] revolve around a central axiom attributed to Georg Lukacs: "form organizes into a closed whole the life given to it as subject matter" (undated, in Carter, 1988: 74). This produces a theoretical and methodological "twist" to the way in which form of advice columns has been addressed by "realists", "feminists" and "Foucauldians" reviewed thus far (e.g. Gieber, 1960; Coward, 1984; Winship, 1987; McFadyean, 1988; McRobbie, 1991: see previous sections). Carter (1988) draws on a narrative view of self-construction to show that, even though the original letter may be "invisible", the "I" (re)presented in the published letter is confused, fearful, anxious, desperate, resentful, etc.: formally, their story lacks "narrative closure" (p. 72). Thus, letters were written / edited to end with a question which identified "the problem" clearly for the reader, and invited the advice columnist into the narrative to provide resolution, coherence and closure (i.e. to "complete" the story).

Briefly, the narrative approach to selfhood asserts the relevance of the "story" or narrative as a metaphor in making sense of our fragmentary experience of the world or our "selves" (e.g. Bruner, 1987; Gergen and Gergen, 1987; Shotter, 1987; Gergen 1988; Cushman, 1990; Vitz, 1990; Howard, 1991). Markus and Nurius (1986) explain that these orderings are culture-bound knowledges [cf. discourses], which make available particular narrative models [e.g. feminism, individualism, the "psychological self"] and subject positions [e.g. possible "parts", agentic options, resistances] [cf. Davies and Harre (1990) and Hollway, (1984a): see Chapter 1]. The narrative approach articulates the possibilities of multiplitious, polyphonic or dialogical selves (Hermans, Kempen & van Loon, 1992) [cf. post-structuralist understandings of subjectivity]. Carter (1988) argues that formal conventions of the advice column "fix" possible narratives, "petrify" alternatives and allow only certain options through within the rigid symbolic structure of the patriarchal nuclear family (p. 74).

Carter (1988) found that *Frau Irene* offered little authoritative, institutionalized information or expertise beyond "common sense" advice about marriage and family life [e.g. the "laws" of monogamy, masculine / parental authority, the emotional labour of relationship maintenance, etc.].¹¹ These tacit knowledges and clichés are interpreted by Carter as "formal sources of benevolent fixity, certainty and anchorage" (ibid). She argues that:

(c)ritics who view... the agony aunt as a personification of authority (or information) have... misunderstood her function. She operates, not so much by fostering belief in the *content* of her messages; instead her power derives from her *axiomatic assertion of formal conventions - structures to shore up her readers' splintered subjectivities* (p. 72, my emphases).

Close analysis of selected texts allows Carter (1988) an opportunity to illustrate the effects of gender on form / narrative closure. Although her analysis is comparative (female versus male letters), I review only the analysis of a "female letter" here, i.e. concerning the adultery of a male spouse. Carter finds the female letter to be wracked with "the ambiguities of the writer's subjective positioning" (p. 70) [e.g. long-festering "reservations" about the marriage, and a husband's infidelity forgiven but not forgotten]. This is played out within a narrative which is "turned inward", i.e. questioning of her own identity, anxiety, fear and depression. Carter refers to this as "the interiority of femininity" (p. 74), and argues that this de-stabilized emotionality renders women "productive of future possibilities" (p. 70) in that the lack of closure permits / invites speculation on any number of options, e.g. anger, doubt, separation, divorce, revenge, independence, guilt, forgiveness, self-knowledge, etc.

The openness and flexibility of the wife's narrative renders her, within *Frau Irene's* advice column, then, an easy target for conventionalizing or normalizing "closure" [e.g. "taking him back" and thereby effecting closure on representations of gender in familial discourse] (p. 74). Carter (1988) acknowledges this feminist reading of feminine disempowerment: acquiescence, accommodation and self-sacrifice. However,

11 The more recent drift towards institutionalized, information-based advice / expertise has been documented [see Brinkgreve & Korzec (1979) and McRobbie (1991): previous sections]. However, at the level of *form* of advice, or function of advice columnists in narrative structures, Carter's (1988) argument would still hold.

in a broader view, the "flexibility" of feminine subjectivity (i.e. shifting to adapt to new discursive forms) could be read, within a Foucauldian frame, as a source of power and sign of hope and strength.

Concluding Comments

The advice column, from "feminist" and/or "Foucauldian" positions, is not a calm, neutral realm of problem-solving and empowerment via empathic caring and information-distribution as might be suggested within "realist" positions. Perspectives of advice columns as coercive, oppressive, disempowering, or as productive of subjectivities and resistances, embody tensions between, and within, these positions.

The rift between content analytic and discourse analytic methods is reflective of the tension between positions, i.e. divergent approaches to the role and function of language are implicated. Potter and Wetherell's (1987) critique of content analysis, for example, posits language [itself] as the topic of interest within discourse analysis: discourse is productive, and variable meanings and effects are closely related to context of usage (p. 41). A content analytic perspective regards language as a "transparent" medium of access to something more interesting beyond, e.g. attitudes, personality traits, real problems, etc., revealed by [reliable] "numerical assessment of occurrences within categories" (ibid: 173).

However, the lines between positions and competing styles of analysis are bleary. Content analyses may be used within discourse analytic contexts (e.g. Lueck, 1987; Mininni, 1991) [see Chapter 3]. The methodological shifts towards discourse analytic approaches is noticeable within "Feminist-Foucauldian" and Foucauldian studies, but these methods display considerable variation, drawing on different models and philosophical traditions, e.g. semiological analysis (McRobbie, 1991); analysis of rhetorical form, either as "diatext" (Mininni, 1991), or in historical narratives of the self (Carter, 1988); and analyses of power-knowledge (Coward, 1984; LaFontaine, 1989).

This contains at least two pointers for my own study. First, frameworks, methods and meanings of terminology need to be carefully specified to avoid confusion between interchangeable usages of, for example, "discourses", "codes", "narratives", "themes", "repertoires", etc. (Parker & Burman, 1993: 158). Second, the appropriateness of a particular discourse analytic methodology is subjectively navigated in coherences with research questions and goals of individual studies [e.g. descriptive, critical, etc.], rather than by blanket guidelines.

Thus, while the shift to discourse analytic methods usually coincides with a theoretically informed [e.g. to follow Foucault's work] and/or political intention [e.g. to expose sexism or racism], the varying methods achieve this differently, producing complementary knowledges of advice columns, e.g. the tension between "power-knowledge" and "descriptive" approaches (Figueroa & Lopez, 1991, in Burman & Parker, 1993: 12). For example, Coward (1984) and LaFontaine (1989) use broader, theoretically deductive interpretations of the operations and effects of a phenomenon, genre or discursive form as text [cf. Rose's (1990) analysis of the discipline of psychology as text]. McRobbie's (1991) approach, also "Foucauldian",

retains closer contact with selected advice columns and magazines in a descriptive way, i.e. elaboration of what a text is saying / implying, with textual extracts ("data") to exemplify interpretations.

This variation is related, within the studies reviewed above, to disparate levels of analysis. Levels of analyses implicate texts [e.g. the linguistic form, or content, of particular advice columns], discursive practices [e.g. production, distribution and consumption of advice columns or magazines] and/or socio-structural levels [e.g. power relations, ideological effects]. The motivation to go "beyond" textual description / interpretation may be a critical or moral-political one. Feminists, for example, delve into "contextual issues" [e.g. editorial interventions, structural power hierarchies, etc.] in order to challenge a realist approach to advice columns (see Winship, 1987), or to warn against Foucauldian models of feminine power (see Coward, 1984) [cf. Burman, 1991b: see Chapters 1].

This is shot through with a hegemonic (empiricist) belief (e.g. Abrams & Hogg, 1990) that that which is "textual", and therefore interpretable, is "not real". Parker (1990b) has attempted to defuse the dichotomy between "real" and "not-real", and between "social practice" and "textual interpretation". Parker conceptualizes 'real objects' as having three kinds of status: *ontological* status, attributed to objects 'that really exist' [cf. McRobbie's "realist" position]; *epistemological* status, attributed to objects through our research into and knowledge and discourse about them; and *moral-political* status, which 'calls objects into being' - treats them as if they were "real" - in order to critically explore the social / ideological contexts in which they have emerged as "real objects" (pp. 228-230).

Feminists and Foucauldians clearly attribute moral political status to the "real problems" they examine in advice columns. In reply to Figueroa and Lopez's (1991, in Burman & Parker, 1993) rhetorical question about how far the discourse analyst needs to go into the "context" [beyond the "text"] to reach interpretations (p. 11), Parker would argue that focus on the structures and significations of discourse in the text is sufficient. The text is both produced by the context in which it is embedded, and sets up "the ground rules" [e.g. choices, work, individualism] for discursive practices beyond it (Parker, 1990b: 231).

This does not dissolve the text-context tension, but offers a way to navigate it. Thus, it is to an outline of my analytic procedure - (mostly) following Parker - that I now turn.

Chapter 3

Discourse analytic methodology

Introduction

Guiding theoretical orientations of this discourse analytic study have been set out and discussed in earlier Chapters. Broadly, this dissertation seeks to put Foucauldian ideas about discourse, power-knowledge and subjectivity to work in analytic interpretations of advice columns. Other Foucauldian writings have framed the advice column genre as a public site of confession (Coward, 1984), and advice-by-experts as productive of 'a grid of decipherment' in the operation of normalizing surveillance (LaFountaine, 1989) [see Chapter 2]. Incorporating these broader insights into the operations and effects of advice columns, my study seeks to examine how these ideas are played out discursively in advice texts from South African women's magazines.

This project has two aims or axes. First, to expose the collusion between psychological / medical discourses and discourses concerning heterosexual relationships [i.e. Hollway's MSD, HHD and PD], in focal content areas [i.e. "physical attractiveness" and "monogamy"]. In discourse theoretical terms, this specifically sets out to explore institutionalized technologies of objectification and subjectification: how do the above-mentioned discourses construct "physically attractive" and "monogamous" *objects* in advice texts, and what perspectives, positions and practices of subjection are offered to women-readers? This is related to Parker's definitional criteria of discourses, viz. discourses constitute objects and contain subjects [see Chapter 1: Parker (1990a & 1992); Burman & Parker (1993)].

Second is a focus on power. "Physically attractive women" and "monogamous relationships" will be called into being as "moral-political objects" - treated as if they were "real" [see Parker, 1990b: Chapter 2] - to provide an opportunity for critical exploration of (a) the operations of institutionalized knowledges and practices that hold these objects in place, and (b) the possibilities for resistance, contestation and struggle. These dimensions will be explored in terms of the tensions between / within Foucauldian and feminist positions, e.g. scepticism about Foucauldian "resistance" as a political force for socio-structural transformation (Burman, 1991b: see Chapters 1 & 2). Again, this is related to Parker's definitional criteria of discourses, viz. discourses support institutions, reproduce power relations and achieve ideological effects [see Chapter 1: Parker (1990a & 1992)].

These aims set discourse analysis up as a *goal* in itself, i.e. an applicable theoretical perspective / method to particular issues, and as a *strategy*, i.e. with other goals in mind, e.g. critical evaluation of power issues and possibilities for transformation, production of a disruptive reading, etc. (Parker & Burman, 1993: 165). Thus, these aims will serve as guiding threads - to be traced and tugged at, but not necessarily neatly tied off - in the analyses and discussion which follows in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

With these guiding aims, axes, foci and threads in mind, a methodological orientation was required which would permit interpretation (and theorization) of the dynamics of power riven through the operations of discourses at subjective and political levels. Ian Parker's writing has been influential on my ideas in this study in many respects, e.g. setting up a digestible framework of Foucauldian concepts, and a workable analytic approach to texts through which the Foucauldian conceptual framework might be operationalized. First, then, this Chapter reviews Parker's analytic guidelines against a landscape of "other" discourse analytic methodologies. Second, details are provided of the specific texts chosen for my analysis. Included in this text-selection "step" is brief elaboration of a thematic content analytic study which was conducted at an exploratory stage. Third, a discourse analytic procedure, appropriate to the aims of this study, is plotted.

Discourse analytic methods: directions and directives to avoid directives

Parker's (e.g. 1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1990b, 1992) and Burman and Parker's (1993) approach constitutes one in a proliferation of brands of discourse analysis, each with divergent philosophical origins, different emphases and diverse levels and styles of analysis [for an overview of this variety, see Macdonell, 1986; Fairclough, 1992; Burman & Parker 1993]. Several "how-to-do-discourse-analysis" texts have become accessible within a psychological discipline [e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Hollway, 1989; Fairclough, 1992; Parker, 1992], but alongside these are dire warnings of the dangers of "reducing analytic sensitivity to discourse to just another thoughtless empirical technique" (Parker, 1992: 122); or a value-free and/or theory-free tool (Burman, 1991b), applicable, in an uncritical, [academic] imperialist way, to all texts (Parker & Burman, 1993: 158).

Despite the how-to texts, or perhaps because of them, "doing" discourse analysis is not easy. The array of versions present themselves as without a definitive version (Woolgar, 1988), but choices have increasingly come to indicate alliances with philosophical and "political correctness" implications, e.g. "ideology critique", "feminist research", or "empowerment" (Burman, 1990b; Burman and Parker, 1993). A danger of this is the production of censorship, or "interpretive vigilance" (Figueroa & Lopez, 1991, in Parker & Burman, 1993: 159). In addition to the requisite reflexivity, then, an increasingly sophisticated framework of criteria which constitute "good" or "bad" discourse analytic research [e.g. Fairclough, 1992; Parker & Burman, 1993] might be construed as panoptic surveillance.

Positively, however, the methodological versions are "debates" rather than definitive, unitary positions: they are reactive, intertextual and complementary; they problematize the choice of one without knowledge of, and critical commentary on, others. This feature is interpreted by Burman and Parker (1993) as an indication of the complexly layered and critically transformative contribution discourse analytic research might [continue to] offer psychology (p. 3).

Thus, although this study follows a "Parkerian" approach, a very brief review of other key texts - namely Potter and Wetherell (1987), Hollway (1989) and Fairclough (1992) - is helpful here. This review is

selective. It marginalizes approaches which, elsewhere, might be influential to the discourse on discourse, e.g. Pecheux, (1982), van Dijk (1985a; 1985b; 1990) and Billig (1987 & 1991). Critics from *within* a discourse analytic framework (e.g. Bowers, 1988; Potter, Wetherell, Edwards & Gill, 1990), are prioritized over those who agitate from "other", more positivist frameworks (e.g. Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Furthermore, this review does not examine specific applications of the discourse analytic frameworks in various social psychological areas "other" to the focus of this dissertation [see review in Parker, 1992; Burman & Parker, 1993]. Thus, my intention is to develop broad strokes of theoretical and methodological complementarity, and to build up a workable analytic procedure - what could / should discourse analysis look like? - which is applicable to advice texts.

1. Potter and Wetherell

Potter and Wetherell (1987) claim that a primary goal of discourse analysis is "to clarify the linguistic resources used to make certain things happen" (p. 171). Their approach to discourse is a "constructive" and "functional" one. Discourse is constitutive of objects / events, and, rather than conveying information [descriptively], individuals' accounts vary and contradict according to (a) context of usage, and (b) pre-existing resources ["interpretative repertoires", see below]. However, as various authors have pointed out (e.g. Bowers, 1988; Levett, 1988; Fairclough, 1992; Moir, 1993), this view deconstructs stability of attitudes or selfhood - i.e. opposes the fixity produced by power / ideology, or "subjection" - and posits, instead, an array of rhetorical tactics used by agentic individual speakers in conversations to achieve effects which might vary moment by moment.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) offer a ten-stage "method", which includes orientational guidelines about the formulation of research questions, sample selection, collection of documents, transcription of "talk", coding and analysis, validation, report-writing and application (pp. 160-176). These are useful lessons to those steeped in positivist technologies, e.g. small samples are valorized - or, indeed, in-depth analysis of single texts - on grounds of goals of contextual insight / understanding, rather than generalizability of findings. "Discourse" is understood to refer broadly to "all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds" (ibid: 7) [cf. Parker's distinction between "discourse" and "text": Chapter 1, and below].

Analysis of the constructive features of discourse involves the identification of "interpretative repertoires" emergent in/from texts, i.e. recurrent patternings of content [e.g. metaphors, figures of speech, etc.] and formal features [e.g. rhetorical strategies, grammatical constructions].¹ Attention is also given to "the functions and the consequences which arise from variable discursive organization" (ibid: 178) [see also Potter & Mulkay, 1985; Potter & Reicher, 1987; Potter, 1988; Wetherell & Potter, 1988; Potter et al, 1990; Edwards & Potter, 1992].

1 *Interpretative repertoires* are defined as "recurrent systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena... (and) a limited range of terms used in particular stylistic and grammatical constructions... organized around specific metaphors and figures of speech." (Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 49)

Differences between Potter and Wetherell's (1987) "inductive" discourse analytic approach [i.e. emergence of *interpretative repertoires* from discourse / texts], and the more Foucauldian position adopted by Parker (1990a, 1990b, 1992) [i.e. analysis of the operations of *discourses* in/beyond texts, e.g. in terms of power-knowledge, ideology, etc.], achieved sharp-edged relief in a debate conducted in *Philosophical Psychology* [see Parker, 1990a & 1990b; Potter et al, 1990]. Parker (1990a) sought to contextualize these analytic differences in terms of divergent philosophical roots: Potter drawing on "ethnomethodological" traditions [i.e. valorizing integrity of texts]; and Parker drawing on a more socio-critical French post-structuralist tradition [e.g. Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, etc.].²

Analytically, Parker (1990a) objected to "interpretative repertoires" on grounds of grammatical formalism and closure of textual meaning (p. 192). However, in more recent writings (e.g. Parker, 1992; Burman & Parker, 1993), Parker has explicitly sought to defuse the reification of differences, and this rapprochement has produced an ethos of tolerance for a variety of discourse analytic approaches, in which "interpretative repertoires" and "discourses" are similar-but-different structural units of analysis. I follow this lead in explicitly avoiding a synchronic summarization of conceptual differences between "Potterian" and "Parkerian" approaches. And, indeed, Wetherell and Potter's (1992) recent work on discourses of racism displays disarming shifts towards a "Foucauldian" appreciation of the effects of ideology and power on subjectivity, e.g. suggesting an ideologically "shaped self" to temper earlier voluntarism.

2. Hollway

Hollway (1984a) follows the Foucauldian definition of discourses [plural] put forward by Henriques et al (1984), i.e. a discourse is "any regulated system of statements (about an object)" (p. 105). Analysis proceeds via attention to statements in terms of the rules and institutional practices / conditions which make such statements possible (Foucault, 1972, in *ibid*) [see Footnote 2]. Hollway (1989) clarifies this process as "analysis of the production of knowledges within power relations" (p. 33). However, her stated intention to examine "a theory of the relation between meaning and subjectivity" (*ibid*), distinguishes her "interpretative discourse analysis", she claims, from (a) Foucauldian analyses, (b) deconstructionist analyses of literary texts, and (c) Potter and Wetherell's (1987) "non-psychological" approach to language (Hollway, 1989: 33). She draws the framework for her interpretation from psychoanalytic (particularly from Lacan and Klein) and semiotic theory (*ibid*: 47).

Hollway (1989) does not prescribe a structured format for analysis, but offers reflexive guidelines for a discourse analytic framework. Thus, for example, she advises careful selection of participants on grounds of the richness of "talk" they are able to produce, rather than positivist "representativeness"; and foregrounds the intuitiveness of the analytic process, viz. choice of excerpts for analysis from a body of transcribed texts. Practically, Hollway (1989) contrasts two approaches to analytic work: a *process approach*, in which an extract is analyzed because it "says" something significant / interesting [cf. an

2 Fairclough (1992) makes a similar, useful distinction between "textually oriented" / "descriptive" forms of discourse analysis [e.g. conversation analysis, Potter & Wetherell, etc.], and more "critical" / "abstract" analyses based on Foucault's "conditions of possibility" of discourse in power-knowledge relations (p. 38).

immanentist or ethnomethodological induction of meaning from texts]; and a more *functional approach*, which puts an extract to work in ways which serve particular purposes [cf. the analyst "produces" textual meaning in a more theoretically deductive, or argumentative way] (p. 38).

The approaches are not, of course, mutually exclusive or easily separable in practice. Both combine to specify particular networks of heterogeneous, contradictory meanings [around an object], and expose the effects of these meanings, e.g. in terms of contradictory subject positions for individuals (ibid). However, this advocated analytic process is divergent from Potter and Wetherell's (1987) [above] in at least two ways. First, it emphasizes content [i.e. "meaning"] above grammatical structure and rhetorical processes of language (Hollway, 1989: 38). Second, it uses a psychoanalytic interpretative framework to escape the idealism of ethnomethodological description, and thus, the boundaries around the text under analysis become less firm. This is in keeping with the post-structuralist axiom of the achievement of meaning through difference / deference in relation to other discursive meanings, in other texts or encountered elsewhere (e.g. Sturrock, 1979). Hollway (1989) claims that this enables the discourse analyst to reflect upon the role of theory and their own subjective positionings and experience on meanings produced (p. 39-46), and notes that reflexivity is a key feature of discourse analytic research [see also Wilkinson, 1988; Burman, 1991b; Parker, 1992; Burman & Parker, 1993].

However, as I showed in Chapter 1, Widdicombe (1992) has criticized the inadequacy of Hollway's (1989) reflexivity from a Foucauldian position which sees psychoanalysis as a productive social practice [i.e. a "tool" amongst other tools capable of producing particular insights about subjectivity], rather than the definitive version of inter- and intrapsychic gender difference. This view would echo Parker's (1992) appraisal of the contribution to discourse analytic research of the "psychoanalytic" post-structuralist strand of Hollway (1984a, 1989), Henriques et al (1984), and others. Without the psychoanalytic interpretative gloss, Parker's embeddedness in Foucauldian theory and proffered procedural guidelines for analysis are rather similar to Hollway's.

3. Parker

Due to the profound influence of Ian Parker's writings on my own approach in this dissertation, "listing" his ideas under a single heading is farcical. Rather like Foucault's notion of power, I find his ideas are "already there" or "everywhere". This brief section seeks to put Parker's analytic guidelines into a "context" of other discourse analytic approaches. As such, it is rather uncomfortably poised between earlier theoretical sections which foregrounded a Parkerian perspective [i.e. clarification of concepts, e.g. "discourses", "texts", "disciplinary power", etc.: see Chapter 1; and ontological, epistemological and moral-political levels of the "reality" of objects: see Chapter 2], and a subsequent section in this Chapter, in which my (mostly) "Parkerian" discourse analytic procedure is set out.

The ten definitional criteria of discourses set up by Parker (1990a; 1992) [see Chapter 1] guide an analytic procedure that is cognisant of the 'autonomous existences' discourses have, and the wider effects they reproduce, beyond "texts", i.e. before texts start and when they stop [e.g. in discursive practices, structural

power relations, ideology, institutions, subjectivities, etc.]. Thus, through interpretation of "texts" as objects of study - i.e. through "exploring [the] connotations, allusions and implications of the meanings evoked" (Parker, 1990a: 194) - we gain critical insight into the power relations and social practices of subjectivity by which individuals are governed, and through which individuals govern themselves [e.g. categories, goals, motivations, ground-rules, etc.].

Indeed, these criteria were issued by Parker (1990a) in response to a perceived "lack" in Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach, viz. (a) a lack of analytic / theoretical clarity in the "analysis stage" of their widely used and cited guidelines, and (b) a lack of theoretical attention to power, ideology and subjectivity. Potter et al's (1990) critique of the alleged "reification of discourses" that Parker's approach implies - i.e. discourses appear as reified systems of meaning [cf. "tectonic plates" or "objects"], which float above texts and construct social practices or produce individual subjects, in unclear ways - should be understood in light of Potter's above-mentioned "immanentist" approach to discourse / texts.

Parker (1990b) uses this reification-critique to reaffirm the "critical" impulse of his analytic endeavour. Thus, rather than attribution of agency or conspiratorial intentionality to a reified system outside discourse [cf. Potter et al, 1990: above], recognition of the constraining and productive forces that discourses exercise in/on/through "texts" provides an opportunity to engage with, and produce a potentially disruptive reading of, the operations and effects of power.³

Given the abstraction, instability and anonymity of a Foucauldian model of power [see Chapter 1], it is useful to briefly draw in Foucault's (1982) guidelines on how to "analyze" power here. The main idea is that power should be examined via the technologies, strategies and operations through which it is exercised, and through which individuals become subjects (Paternek, 1987). Thus, Foucault (1982) suggests critical analytic attention to the following points: the *system of differentiations* which permit one individual to exercise power over another [e.g. knowledge, status]; the *types of objectives* (cf. effects) pursued through the exercise of power [e.g. authority, maintenance of privilege]; the *means of bringing power relations into being* [e.g. economic disparity, surveillance, confession]; the *forms of institutionalization* which power relations assume [e.g. medical or psychological discourses]; and the *degrees of rationalization* employed to "justify" the exercise of power within a field of other possibilities [e.g. information / confession as "liberatory"] (p. 792). Italics indicate Foucault's terminology.

Fairclough (1992) warns that a critical Foucauldian focus on the relation between discourse and power, or the discursive construction of objects, social subjects and knowledge (e.g. Parker, 1992) can produce an analysis which is "abstract", i.e. theoretically deductive applications to wide areas of social practice in which actual textual analysis may be cursorily terse or even entirely absent [e.g. close examination of instances of speech / writing]. I have commented on Foucauldian writings on advice columns which display such abstraction [e.g. Coward, 1984; LaFountain, 1989: see Chapter 2]. Indeed, Parker's own work

3 It is noted that Parker's *Philosophical Psychology* papers (Parker, 1990a & 1990b) were extended to produce chapters in a later volume (Parker, 1992). I use these earlier papers here to indicate the development of an argument - e.g. through resistance to Potter et al (1990).

constitutes a proliferation of writings *about* "discourse analysis", or reflexive analysis of "discourse analysis" as a text (e.g. Parker, 1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1990b).

More recently, Parker (1992) has produced snippets of useful analysis in a range of areas which served to clarify discourse analytic procedure [e.g. what a discourse analytic "report" should look like?], and a comprehensive review of studies which put Foucauldian theorization about power and subjectivity into analytic practice in a variety of fields [e.g. see Hollway (1984a & 1989), Fine (1988), Gavey (1989 & 1992), Gilfoyle, Wilson and Brown (1992), Seidel (1993), etc.]. Burman and Parker (1993) also offer a compilation of discourse analytic studies using a variety of frameworks.

From these studies, then, the key to balancing textual analysis with broader "macro" [theoretical or socio-political] commentary would appear to be a fairly narrow analytic focus on a single text or extract. Stenner (1993), for example, examines "jealousy" in terms of subject positions assigned / assumed during an interview with a heterosexual couple. Indeed, Potter and Wetherell (1987), Hollway (1989) and Parker and Burman (1993) comment that restriction to the confines of a single text / extract is often necessitated for practical reasons: time and space do not allow for expansiveness, either in unravelling copious amounts of "data" in ethnographic detail, or in socio-political commentary.

4. Deconstruction

Nonetheless, it is Fairclough's (1992) contention that analysis of actual texts is weakly developed within a Foucauldian framework, e.g. the relation between linguistic construction, subjectivity and social practice (p. 89). Parker (1988) has explored "deconstruction" [rather than "linguistics"] as a technique / tool to examine everyday explanation in a text from a radio soap opera.⁴ Deconstruction, largely associated with the ideas of Jacques Derrida, is part of a wider wave of post-modernism which has critically examined literary texts (Spivak, 1976; Culler, 1982; Dews, 1987). Marginalized and resisted in psychology [see critics below], Parker (1992) argues that deconstruction has been successfully used to unpick / unpack psychology's dominant concepts and texts [e.g. Parker, 1989b; Sampson, 1989 & 1993; Shotter & Gergen, 1989; Parker & Shotter, 1990], and is "tactically useful as a way of disrupting theories, opening up conflicts" (Parker, 1992: 67).

Again, Parker (1988) is "loath to formalize the deconstruction of theoretical positions into an abstract method which can be applied to 'non-theoretical' texts" (p. 188), but, following Derrida, identifies several analytic steps which are useful in terms of the aims of my study. First, conceptual oppositions / polarities are identified in a text, especially instances where "one pole is privileged over the other" (ibid), e.g. "psychological" theories counted above everyday explanations. Second, an attempt is made to show that "the privileged pole of the opposition is dependent on, or could not operate without, the other" (ibid), e.g. to make visible the hidden or marginalized term. And third, possibilities for the intervention into the production of the text are explored, i.e. to produce new meanings and/or practices, by providing an analysis

4 Smith (1991) has followed a similar deconstructionist method in an examination of pregnant mothers' changing identities.

of the conditions which reproduce such constructions [e.g. hegemonic knowledges, power relations] (ibid: 189).

Deconstructionist methods have been criticized by discourse analysts who favour "linguistic" grappling with texts, rather than with meaning / content. Indeed, Van Dijk (1990) dubs such deconstructionist analysis "literary", and, therefore, "unhelpful" in terms of providing critical, empirical analysis of the ways in which power subjugates and oppresses at the level of everyday conversation. Hopkins (1990) is similarly sceptical of Parker's (1989b) appeal to Derrida and Foucault to resolve the crisis in modern social psychology.

The above criticisms are analogous to feminist objections, although these are not launched from "linguistic" strongholds per se. Burman (1990b), for example, identifies a danger of depoliticization in deconstructionist valorization - at levels of theory and practice - of difference, i.e. a focus on the "metaphysical dynamic" of the construction of opposition rather than "a starting point for resistance" (p. 214). This appears to be the central argument around which feminist debates on deconstruction revolve. For example, Arnott (1991) argues that deconstruction fails to gain access to political or public debates as a result of "favour(ing) theorization over activism" (p. 118).

This echoes the feminist objections to Foucauldian models of power reviewed in Chapter 1. Thus, despite the optimism of feminists such as Weedon (1987), Gavey (1989) and Hollway (1989) about discourse analysis as a "method" of operationalizing an analysis of power, Burman (1991b) is more cautious [e.g. about relativism, the focus on difference, diffused resistance and endless reflexivity]. Burman argues that discourse theory [e.g. a Foucauldian model of power] is not of or in itself "empowering" of women, and therefore, a distinction should be made between discourse theory and application of analytic research. "Application" refers to how research is used, its "strategic appropriation" (Parker & Burman, 1993: 169), e.g. critical, radical, politicized, interventive, empowerment, provision of resources, formulation of strategies of resistance, etc. Concern with application of research has led Parker & Burman to consider a moral/political imperative to a discourse analytic approach (ibid). These ideas and evaluative criteria will be returned to in Chapter 6.

5. Fairclough

Fairclough's (1992) objection to Foucault's writings / analyses revolves around similar objections to power: the discursive determinism of abstracted, theoretical analyses of the relations between ideology, knowledge and power, which "subject" individuals in immovable systems of power with resistance - 'contained' by power, power's "counter-stroke" [see Chapter 1] - as their cosmetic / lame recourse to transformation. As a linguist, Fairclough (1992) argues that this is as a result of a lack of *practice* in Foucault's work, e.g. text, textual analyses, real instances of individuals interacting, doing, writing or saying things (p. 57).

Thus, Fairclough's (1992) "method" is a linguistic address of ideology and power, an analysis of discourse at three levels (pp. 3-5). First, attention to *texts* via close, systematic, empirical, linguistic scrutiny of

vocabulary, grammatical construction, textual structure ("texture"), and how textual cohesion and coherence are produced and maintained. Second, attention to *discursive practices* via analysis of practices of production, distribution and consumption / interpretation of the above-mentioned text. And third, a level of *social practice* where critical analysis implicates wider social frameworks, e.g. ideology, power, the generation of consent by hegemonic alliances with institutions, historical shifts, etc.

These dimensions of analysis may or may not be separable in analytic practice, but constitute an attempt "to synthesize the fragmentation of (approaches to) discourse analysis" (p. 1). The emphasis on social change means that Fairclough's (1992) guiding impulse in analysis is "critical", i.e. to show connections and causes which are hidden to participants / others, and to explore means of intervention, empowerment or facilitation of resistance (p. 8).

I mention Fairclough's (1992) integrative "method" in detail, not as a panacea for discursive determinism (!) or cure-all for the variety of discourse analytic approaches available, but for the support it lends an eclectic approach to discourse analytic variety. Burman & Parker (1993) comment that several contributors to their edited volume of discourse analyses used more than one analytic framework "in order to highlight particular sets of issues" (p. 4). This is true, too, of studies which have tactically sought to combine "conversation analytic" techniques, or attention to "micro" linguistic features of texts under analysis, within broader "Foucauldian" or Potterian approaches, e.g. Kottler (1988), Lee and Ungar (1989) and Lea (1994).

An important guideline with respect to discourse analytic text-selection emergent from this review of various approaches, is the significance of fairly narrow analytic focus on a single text or demarcated extract, or carefully circumscribed body of texts. I turn now to description of the process of text-selection for this study, before the discourse analytic procedural approach to these texts is set out at the close of this Chapter.

Sample Selection

Advice columns in three South African women's magazines - *You*, *Femina* and *Fair Lady* - were scrutinized between 1990 and 1993. All letters published in advice columns in 1991 were content analyzed [n = 554]. Selected letters and replies in the 1991-sample which dealt with particular, focal content areas were used as texts for discourse analysis, i.e. "physical attractiveness" in Chapter 4, and "monogamy" in Chapter 5.

Selection of texts for analysis returns to the tensions between "text" and "context" [see Chapter 2]. The appropriateness of a Foucauldian / Parkerian discourse analytic approach - the focus on single texts or demarcated extracts - to achieve stated foci of this study was haunted by "feminist" dilemmas of *which* texts to focus on [and why], and, on entering the domain of women's magazines, the importance of *contextualizing* advice columns within the practices and policies of women's magazine publishing (McRobbie, 1991).

Four years ago, this study began in a fairly broad and unfocused way. While the historical refinement of the aims form a sub-text here, this section sets out a "funneling" process of text-selection - from expansive, to intensive - and addresses the following questions. Why were the advice columns from these magazines [and not others] used? Why was a "bounded" sample [the year 1991] used? How and why did a thematic content analysis contribute to this study?

1. Selection of magazines

Winship (1987) emphasized the congruence between problems / styles of advice featured in advice columns and editorial or readership profiles [cf. "target audiences"] of magazines, and Mininni (1991) pointed to the "staging" of sites of advice in magazines, e.g. traditional, generally focused columns, or "monothematic" columns with specialized foci and expertise [see Chapter 2]. Thus, if different women's magazines are colonizing different female markets, a comparative examination of various sites and forms of advice might produce interesting nodes for analysis, e.g. the favouring of psychological or medical discourses for production of particular, "empowering" effects for women-readers.

My selection of the three South African women's magazines - *You*, *Femina* and *Fair Lady* - was based on several factors. First, convenience. These magazines are readily available in bookstores, newsagents and supermarkets, have editorial premises in Cape Town, and are English-language magazines, thus avoiding the complexities of "transliteration" from Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans, etc. Second, the selected magazines contained advice columns in various proliferations of content and form [see below]. And third, magazine "profiles" indicate that they are targeted at fairly distinct and diverse corners of the population.

I set out brief descriptive profiles of the magazines and various sites of advice embedded within them below. Here, by way of introduction and contextualization of these, I reproduce the most recently available *Audit Bureau of Circulation* [ABC] and *All Media Products Survey* [AMPS] (December 1992) readership and circulation statistics on selected demographic features (gender, "race" and age) for *You*, *Fair Lady* and *Femina* [see Table 2, overleaf].

These statistics are produced biannually by two independent market research companies in South Africa. AMPS produces statistics on demographic patterns of readership / viewership of all mediatized communication forms [i.e. random surveys generalized to the national population], and ABC "audits" sales and circulation. These publications inform advertisers of lucrative markets, and assist compilation of "profiles" of "average" and/or "ideal" audiences of respective magazines by editorial staff.

It is apparent from Table 2 that all three magazines have predominantly "white", female readership. "Race" is parenthesized to problematize the salience of its categorization at multiple levels of South African society, and included here to qualify aims of this study. Thus, although an earlier "realist" argument posited advice columns as providing a service for predominantly "black" / "under-privileged" advice-seekers [Elizabeth Duncan, in Belling, 1992: 56, see Chapter 2], my focus is on "audience" rather than individual advice-seekers or letter-writers.

Table 2: Circulation and readership statistics for *You*, *Fair Lady* and *Femina*

	YOU		FAIR LADY		FEMINA	
Circulation (Sales)	242 436		149 857		116 069	
Readership	1 063 000		867 000		270 000	
Gender	Female	65.4%	Female	75.8%	Female	90%
	Male	34.6%	Male	24.2%	Male	10%
"Race"	"White"	56.9%	"White"	55.1%	"White"	65%
	"Black"	43.1%	"Black"	44.9%	"Black"	35%
Age Groups	16-24	23.4%	16-24	26.1%	16-24	31%
	25-34	20.3%	25-34	23.5%	25-34	31%
	35-49	29.9%	35-49	30.4%	35-49	24%
	50+	26.4%	50+	20.0%	50+	14%

ABC/AMPS (December 1992)

Therefore, no claim is made as to the representativeness of these magazines, and I acknowledge that selection of "other" magazines [e.g. "African" magazines, or "men's magazines") might have introduced advice texts which drew on different discourses, or employed similar discourses in different ways. Practically, the size of an already multi-layered analysis had to be limited, and, in keeping with discourse analytic guidelines, I did not entertain goals of identifying "individuals" beyond magazines / advice texts, nor of universalizing analyses to wider populations of individuals.

From a Foucauldian position, the focus on *women's* magazines shifts the critical attention to the operations and effects of objectification and subjection of women within / by psychological and medical discourses in advice texts, e.g. *problematizing*, rather than uncritically reproducing, the assumption of advice columns as a 'feminine genre', or of women as 'pathologically advice-seeking' [see Chapter 2]. This highlights two issues. First, a goal of such a discourse analytic reading of advice texts is to produce an account which will fracture common assumptions such as above, e.g. by exposing contradictory knowledge-power relations. Second, women's positions in psychological and/or medical discourses are intimately entwined with discourses around sexuality, relationships and gender differences [cf. Hollway, 1991; Widdicombe, 1992: see Chapter 1].

Thus, a women's magazine sample does not mean, as Hollway argues, that focusing on women 'leaves men out of the account', i.e. in terms of psychoanalytic, intersubjective relations "between people" (Hollway, 1989: 106). Here, advice columns address "problematic experiences" which (are thought to) afflict (heterosexual) women, e.g. relationships *with men*, sex *with men*, etc.⁵ Within a more "discursive" perspective, the focus is on relations between positions in discourses and relations between discourses (e.g. Widdicombe, 1992: Chapter 1). Therefore, men do not have to be physically present [or "textually" present, e.g. letters from men in advice columns] for discourses and discursive practices to work their relational and structuring effects, e.g. power relations, gendered division of emotional labour, subjectivity.

Importantly, then, *who* the readers and writers of magazines / advice texts really are, and *how* they "read" magazines / advice texts, is beyond the scope of this present study. Similarly, I did not "formally" interview magazine editorial staff or advice columnists for this study, although I did talk informally with them during numerous visits to editorial premises and archives of the respective magazines to gather advice texts. The policies and profiles of magazines and advice columns [below] draw on various sources, e.g. informal talk / analysis, publications on South African magazines, etc. These set up a "context" for advice texts, and pave the way for close textual analysis. I emphasize that my links between (1) professional psychological and medical discourses in different sites of advice, and (2) editorial policy and/or "target audience" of particular magazines, are interpretative, in a broader sense, of strategies of empowerment for women along the lines of realist, feminist and Foucauldian positions. I do not impute agency or intention to editors / advice columnists in this regard.

5 Several studies have examined "men's problems" in advice columns (e.g. Makins, 1975; Carter, 1988; Belling, 1992). Elsewhere, I have compared women's and men's accounts of sexual fidelity [*not* in advice texts] (see Wilbraham, 1989). The emphasis in this dissertation is *relational*, i.e. between positions, between discourses, rather than on *differences*.

(a) You

You is billed as "a family magazine", targeted at an English-speaking, general interest population (Magazines in Focus, 1993: 3). Female readership of *You* is estimated at 65.4%, but it reaches - if statistics are believed - a "broader spectrum" of readers in terms of gender and "race" than other sampled magazines below [i.e. 56.9% "white", 43.1% "black"].

You is published weekly. A "tabloid-type" focus includes regular real-life-drama features, and documentation of the private lives of celebrities and/or royalty. Other diverse contents cater for the interests of all family members, e.g. recipes, knitting patterns, serialized romantic fiction, beauty and fashion features, an television guide, the latest models of motor cars, comics, educational sections for school projects, etc.

One advice column is a regular feature of *You*.

Janet Harding's Life-Line. "Janet Harding" is a *Lifeline* counsellor [not a *You* staff member], and this column is sponsored by *Lifeline*. Question and answer format is used to address "general" problems.

(b) Femina

Femina may have a comparatively lower circulation to *You* or *Fair Lady*, but reflected a 7.5% growth in circulation in 1992 when most other magazines were struggling within a recessionary economy (Magazines in Focus, 1993: 11). The ABC / AMPS statistics for *Femina* reflect a "narrowing" of the targeted market, e.g. in terms of gendered readership [i.e. female 80%, male 20%, compared to *You's* 65.4%: 34.6%], or classification of readership by "ethnicity" [i.e. "white" 65%, "black" 35%, compared to *Fair Lady's* 55.1%: 44.9%]. Thus, *Femina* is a glossy-paged, "up-market", monthly publication - its cover-price per issue is higher than that of *You* or *Fair Lady* - aimed at a young [under 40 years], "sophisticated and educated female audience" (Femina Factsheet, March 1993). This "factsheet" - an in-house publication circulated to advertisers - relays the following psychographic profile of the "average" or "ideal" *Femina* reader:

Self-motivated, intelligent, contemporary woman who belongs to a New South Africa generation. Her aspirations are to live better, to improve her appearance and to improve her mind. A woman who uses her free time to pursue her many interests. Or, the younger married working woman with a husband, small children, home and a good job. Or, she is the young woman who is still unmarried but is committed to a future with a man and/or a family in it. To all these women time is just as valuable as money. (ibid)

This profile might usefully be linked to Kristeva's "liberal feminism" through emphasis on career, ambition and intelligence *and* men, "physical appearance", motherhood, marriage and domesticity [Kristeva, 1986, in Davies, 1990: 502, see Chapter 2]. The slogan of *Femina* - printed on the spine of the magazine - attests to this liberal feminist agenda, i.e. *The Power of Being a Woman*. This power is contextualized within a patriarchal symbolic order [e.g. the power of being attractive to men], and a "New South Africa", which, apparently, indicates presence of "liberal" socio-political values [e.g. individualism, non-racism, non-sexism, affirmative action, etc.].

The sophisticated and intelligent "ideal reader" is appealed to through the content of the magazine, e.g. "quality" fiction; in-depth features on 'interesting' individuals (Jodie Foster, Clint Eastwood, Madonna, Camille Paglia, etc.); and regular features on fashion and beauty, sexuality and relationships, self-improvement, styling the home, and "serious" socio-political issues of topical interest to South African women: the ozone layer, rape, battery, abortion, HIV/AIDS, women's rights in a new constitution, 'the education crisis', etc.

Four thematically arranged "advice columns" appear in *Femina*. This proliferation of sites of advice is understood within the above editorial agenda and a broader "liberal" context of a realist position: empowerment via information-distribution where realms of problematic experience are directly addressed by "experts" [cf. Mininni, 1991: Chapter 2].

Susan James Answers Your Questions. "Susan James", a personnel consultant with an Honours degree in Psychology, is paid a monthly stipend as a regular contributor to *Femina*. Question and answer format is used to address "general" problems.

Dr David Delvin: The Sexpert's Guide. "Dr David Delvin" is a British gynaecologist / sexologist who has achieved acclaim as an advice columnist in *She* magazine [a British women's magazine]. This advice column - letters and responses - is syndicated from *She*, for which Delvin is remunerated. Question and answer format is used to address sexual and/or gynaecological problems.

Couple Clinic. This is an advice feature sponsored by *Famsa*, a counselling organization. Case study format is used to address a single "relationship problem" [per issue] faced by a couple.

Beauty Clinic. Compiled by *Femina's* "Beauty Editor", Sarah Hetherington, this forum imparts information about physical appearance, attractiveness, cosmetics and beauty-work in response to readers' queries.

(c) Fair Lady

Fair Lady was included as a foil to *Femina*, i.e. a "woman's magazine" [with 75.8% female readership], without the overt liberal feminist agenda. *Fair Lady* is targeted at "all women literate in English" (Magazines in Focus, 1993: 6), e.g. 55.1% "white" readership, and 44.9% "black". No "psychographic"

details are provided in the form of a profile of the *Fair Lady* reader, but the following editorial policy is offered instead.

In tough times, *Fair Lady* will be cheerful, positive and life-enhancing, a trusted friend to whom women will turn for useful information and entertainment to help them see the light at the end of the tunnel. (Magazines in Focus, 1993: 4)

Fair Lady is fairly similar in content to *Femina*, but has a more "family-oriented" tone, which is reflected in regular features on child-care and parenting, marriage, recipes and knitting / sewing patterns. As is evident in the above policy, *Fair Lady* takes its "informative" role seriously, and this includes careful management of the three advice columns which are regular features of the magazine, e.g. archivization of original letters received from readers, and maintaining a personalized "reply service" [i.e. from the advice columnist, on a *Fair Lady* letter-head] to every letter received, irrespective of publication (personal communication) [see Gieber, 1960: Chapter 2]. The sites of advice within *Fair Lady* are:

Elizabeth Duncan Answers Questions on... "Elizabeth Duncan" is a psychiatric social worker who is paid a monthly stipend as a regular contributor. Question and answer format is used to address "general" problems.

Rene Raff on... "Rene Raff" has an Honours degree in Psychology and works as a sex educationist in private practice. Her "sub-column" [shared with Elizabeth Duncan] uses question and answer form to address one "sexual problem" per issue.

Family Forum. Family Forum is chaired by a panel of medical / allied practitioners, e.g. a doctor, a clinical psychologist, a nutritionist, a paediatrician, a gynaecologist, etc. These "experts" address a variety of issues related to general health, parenting and child-care. A question and answer form is used.

2. Selection of advice columns from the year 1991

All letters and replies from the above advice columns published in the year 1991 were selected for close scrutiny [n = 554]. The selection of 1991 - and not 1993, for instance - was arbitrary in terms of socio-political significance, but the use of a "bounded" sample served at least two functions.

First, as I was not a regular reader of *You*, *Femina* or *Fair Lady*, this sample facilitated the immersion in a fairly contained body of data, both magazines and advice columns. Historically, this constituted a fairly "descriptive" stage of the research process [see Thematic Content Analysis, below], out of which more focused discourse analytic aims were crystalized and single texts pertaining to focal content areas were selected for close analysis.

Second, 1991 provided the maximum amount of formal variation of sites of advice in *You*, *Femina* and *Fair Lady*, i.e. all eight advice columns listed above were featured. This facilitated critical analysis of the "staging" of advice texts (cf. Mininni, 1991), i.e. separate realms of problematic experience and expertise [e.g. "general", "sexual", "beauty" problems], and transmutations of form [e.g. case studies, questions and answers].

Table 3 [overleaf] summarizes the variation of advice columns sampled from 1991-magazines. For the purposes of content analysis, the constitutive numbers of sampled letters per magazine are provided. Discrepant publication frequencies of the magazines determined accumulation of advice columns from unequal numbers of magazine issues [e.g. *You* is a weekly publication, *Fair Lady* bimonthly, and *Femina* monthly]. Also, the average number of letters addressed - per magazine issue - in respective advice columns varies. The numbers of letters from different advice columns, crucial to arguments of comparative prevalence [cf. "realist" position], are not relevant within the discourse analytic focus of Chapters 4 and 5.

Examination of the proliferating sites of advice highlights historical appearances and discontinuances of advice columns and sub-columns as features in magazines, and Table 3 [overleaf] displays "presence" or "absence" of sampled advice columns over a four-year period. Interpretative analysis of these historical shifts is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but a diachronic, contextual twist highlights the power of magazine editorial policy in the manipulation of the supposedly benign informational service rendered by advice columnists [cf. feminist position: Chapter 2]. For example, "Dr David Delvin's Sexpert's Guide" is the *only* site of advice currently featured in *Femina*, and the disappearance of a forum for "beauty" or "emotional problems" would have to be interrogated.

This study, within a Foucauldian discourse analytic framework, has a more circumscribed or "textual" approach to the above-mentioned issues, i.e. to examine the concordance between magazine editorial profiles [e.g. 'empowerment'], and the particular discourses [e.g. psychological or medical], which are drawn into their respective advice texts [see Chapters 4 & 5].

3. Thematic Content Analysis

Tensions between content analytic and discourse analytic approaches to language formed a sub-text in the review of writings on advice columns [see Potter & Wetherell's (1987) critique of content analysis: Chapter 2]. Thus, although content analysis was developed to deal with open-ended discourse (e.g. Taylor & Bogdan, 1984; Mostyn, 1985; Altheide, 1987), and although there are similarities with 'sifting out of recurrent themes' - the oft-cited (crude) recipe for discourse analysis - the difficulty is one of straddling differing assumptions about language and discrepant goals of research. Incorporating a content analytic step into a discourse analytic study must, therefore, be carefully explicated to avoid conflation of assumptions and goals.

There appear to be at least two interlinking trends in the employment of content analytic methods in "discourse analytic" studies. Both trends produce particular effects which amplify another kind of analysis, rather than the coding into categories, or frequencies of occurrences, serving as "the analysis" itself. First, discourse analysts have used content analytic methods to indicate prevalence of the rhetorical devices they identify and/or interpret in texts. For example, Lee and Ungar (1989), in an investigation of moral discourse around seal-culling in Canada, augment the unravelling forms and functions of arguments [cf.

Potter & Wetherell, 1987] with key-word counts and frequencies of "topics" introduced by the different positions [cf. Fairclough, 1992].

Second, discourse analysts have used content analytic methods to "order" discourse to facilitate the more focused analysis of discourses in selected texts, e.g. Lueck's (1987) and Mininni's (1991) studies on advice columns [see Chapter 2]. Thus, content analytic methods are employed, strategically, with pragmatic, rather than analytic goals, serving as a step akin to the "coding" stage described by Potter and Wetherell (1987), i.e. to facilitate familiarization with a large or complex sample, and "to squeeze an unwieldy body of discourse into manageable chunks" (p. 167). My usage follows, albeit critically, this trend⁶

"Thematic content analysis" is understood to operate within hermeneutic, ethnographic approaches to content analysis (e.g. Mostyn, 1985; Altheide, 1987; Parker, in press). Thematic content analysis has been applied, for example, by Danziger (1963), DuPreez, Bhana, Broekman, Louw and Nel (1981), Hosin and Cairns (1984) and Dawes and Finchilescu (1993), to code themes within children's essays on "My Country" or "My Future". Although no formal guidelines are cited, this "method" appears to incorporate (a) a fairly flexible, semantic unit of analysis, (b) the possibility that each protocol would contain many themes, and/or (c) one semantic unit may "fit" into more than one theme. This obviates the either/or categorizations usually associated with content analytic methods [see Levett's (1988) critique], enabling multi-thematic "contradiction".

Thus, thematic content analysis provided a flexible method - not overtly antithetical to discourse analytic valorization of indexicality, variation and contradiction - which was thought to be useful and appropriate as a "first step" in this study: familiarization with the 554 letters to 8 advice columns which constituted my initial discursive sample, and coding this material into "themes".

Themes were *content-based*, i.e. themes of experience represented as "problems" in advice column letters [e.g. jealousy or possessiveness, rape or child sexual abuse, requests for legal advice, etc.]. I intentionally use "theme" to distinguish it conceptually from "discourses" [see Chapters 1 and 2], i.e. to convey a fairly static, exhaustive, descriptive sweep of the content of sampled advice columns, which contrasts with the shift to productive, transformative, normalizing, institutionalized discourses as an effect of knowledge / power in Chapters 4 and 5.

Eighteen themes were developed / identified: (a) inductively, through trial and error, from the data itself; (b) from literature on advice columns which had produced similar content analyses [e.g. McFadyean, 1988; Weinberg, 1989; Kurtz, 1990: see Chapter 2]; and/or (c) from more "general" literature which informed my overall approach [e.g. Coward, 1984; Young, 1987; Carter, 1988; Levett, 1988; LaFontaine, 1989; Rose, 1990]. The themes were not equally sized, constant units: some are broader than others and they are

6 Parker (in press) warns of the difficulties with such "logical" processes of reducing or abstracting particular kinds of "sense" or information from large amounts of 'unmanageable' discourse, e.g. the context and the complexity of the material may disappear. This warning is noted and is returned to in Chapter 6. Parker might argue that interpretation of a single text is sufficient [Parker, 1990b & 1992: see Chapter 2, and above].

not internally homogeneous, i.e. several "strands" might be discernible within each. Brief descriptions of themes are provided below. Themes 2 to 10 refer to "relationship problems".

1. *Family or Friendship* involves (a) familial functioning problems which detail parent-child, child-parent or sibling disputes [e.g. not coping with "problem" parents, children or siblings; discipline or independence issues; privacy or communication in families, etc.], and/or (b) a relationship with a friend, not necessarily same-sex, but where "romantic" involvement is contra-indicated [e.g. divided loyalty; lying to friends; being assertive about boundaries of friendship, etc.].
2. *Commitment Confusion* concerns (a) hesitation or confusion about "entering" a committed relationship for whatever reason [e.g. perceived incompatibility due to age, class or race differences; perceived compromise for women, etc.], or (b) relationship dissolution as an option [e.g. exit, termination, divorce].
3. *Relationship "Dissatisfaction"* details a specific "problem" within a relationship, which has led to an impasse requiring "negotiation" for what one wants, to avoid sacrifice or compromise [e.g. she wants commitment, a baby, her career back after motherhood - but he resists these things].
4. *Sexual-Relationship Problems* refer to sexual difficulties in a relationship which are experienced / expressed as threats to the relationship [e.g. male or female "sexual performance" problems; celibacy; threatening sexual practices, fantasies and/or preferences]. This theme is often (but not always) distinguishable from requests for medical / clinical information about sexual technique, normality, advisability of practices, etc. [see Theme 16, below]
5. *Jealousy or Possessiveness* includes any reference to jealousy (own or a partner's) where it is perceived as a relationship threat, and/or as "sick" or "pathological".
6. *Infidelity and/or Desertion by a Partner* refers to requests for advice and/or support by the letter-writer following (a) the sexual unfaithfulness of a partner, and/or (b) the exit from the relationship (experienced as "desertion") by a partner.
7. *Own Infidelity* details extra-relationship sexual activity by the letter-writer, e.g. women involved in committed relationships who are having affairs, or "Other Women": single women who become involved with "unavailable" men.
8. *Living with a Partner's Abusive Behaviour or Addictions* includes relationship and/or personal problems which ensue from a partner's addictive or abusive behaviour [e.g. alcoholism; physical battery; verbal abuse; compulsive gambling, etc.]
9. *"External pressure"* refers to "disapproval" of the relationship from an outside source [e.g. parental disapproval; clashes of cultural / religious / political values elicited by inter-group relationships, etc.].
10. *Financial Problems* includes any mention of financial strife which is experienced as threatening to the functioning of the relationship [e.g. a partner lying about money; exorbitant alimony demands from an ex-wife; the effects of a partner's unemployment or bankruptcy, etc.]
11. *Homosexuality* codes any reference to homosexuality (gay or lesbian) in a variety of non-coercive contexts [e.g. one-off homosexual events; same-sex sexual attraction; difficulties in established gay relationships, etc.].
12. *Rape and Child Sexual Abuse* relates to mention of any form of coercive sexual activity, abuse, molestation, incest or rape, e.g. the reportage of a current or recent sexually abusive event and/or the consequences thereof [e.g. pregnancy; sexually transmitted diseases; emotional instability, etc.], or an historically previous event / period of sexual abuse [e.g. where abuse is identified as an aetiological factor in the development of a present problem: recurrent nightmares, depression, sexual dysfunctional problems, etc.].

13. *"Psychological Problems"* includes any reference, in "professional" and/or "lay" terms, to emotional and/or psychological distress: *loneliness* [e.g. isolation; inability to communicate, "join in" socially, or keep friends, etc.], *depression* [e.g. "baby blues" following the birth of a baby; 'life has no meaning', etc.], *grief* [e.g. difficulty in coming to terms with the death of a partner, child, parent or friend, etc.], and/or *"self-esteem"* problems [e.g. no confidence, etc.].
14. *"Physical Attractiveness"* refers to dissatisfaction with physical appearance [e.g. over- or underweight; breast-size; skin problems; physical ageing; "ugliness", etc.] which might be linked to self-esteem issues, being discriminated against on the basis of appearance, attracting / keeping a partner, and/or to comparison or rivalry with others.
15. *Medical Information* includes requests for specific information - usually medical or psychological - pertaining to sex [e.g. "male" problems; sexual advice or information; gynaecological problems, etc.], general physical / emotional health and well-being [e.g. information about therapy or support groups; information on high blood pressure, diabetes, warts, haemorrhoids, etc.], and/or child-care [e.g. a sleepwalking infant; tantrums; what to feed a toddler, etc.].
16. *Spiritual or "Value" Conflict* refers to any mention of the inner spiritual disquiet or questioning by the letter-writer [e.g. faith, suffering as "punishment", prayer, God / Jesus, etc.], or outer conflict related to clashes of values between self and other / society [e.g. an event, situation or practice which is experienced as "sinful", troubling or offensive: Satanism, prostitution, sexual practices enforced by a partner, etc.].
17. *Legal Advice* includes any request for legal information or advice on "rights" [e.g. divorce; child maintenance; child custody disputes; prosecuting rapists / molesters; rights in the workplace; technicalities of adoption or abortion, etc.].
18. *Career / Educational Problems* refers to reportage of school or study problems [e.g. lack of motivation; anxiety about examinations; political upheaval disrupting education, etc.] and/or requests for advice / information about careers or career-planning [e.g. becoming a journalist, going to university, etc.].

The "question section" of each letter [n = 554] was regarded as a protocol and coded for the presence or absence of the above 18 themes. Advice columnists' responses [i.e. the "answer" sections] were not coded at this stage as it was thought that these might be more usefully and contextually addressed in the discourse analytic investigation of psychologization and medicalization [see Chapters 4 & 5]. The semantic unit of analysis was variable: on occasion a sentence, a paragraph or the whole letter. That a "whole letter" might be "monothematic" is understood in terms of formal features of the advice column, which are policed by rigorous editing practices [see Chapter 2].

However, a number of themes may appear in one letter. Consider the following example, which introduces multi-thematic coding and questions around the author of the letter:

Q My best friend has been going out with her boyfriend for about two years. They have a very close relationship and she told me that they sleep together. Recently another friend of mine told me that she had gone out with my best friend's boyfriend and they had sex. I was shocked at his disloyalty and I know that my best friend would be deeply hurt to know about this. I am torn between telling my best friend - from whom I keep no secrets - and just leaving it all alone, in which case I will also feel bad and she might be even more hurt later. What should I do? (Should I tell her? JH 51)

This letter was coded as referring to two themes: family / friendship [Theme 1, above] and infidelity and/or desertion by a partner [Theme 6, above]. This involved a deconstruction of authorship, i.e. it does not

detail the sexual infidelity of the letter-writer's *own* partner, and a focus on the "issue" at the level of content.

The "presence" or "absence" of themes was transformed into categorical variables [i.e. presence = 1, absence = 0], and punched into a statistics soft-ware package [i.e. Minitab]. Several identity-markers [e.g. "gender" and "age"], and the site of the letter [e.g. in the *Janet Harding* advice column, etc.], were coded to provide cross-tabulations with thematic content. Tallies and percents were produced for overall themes and cross-tabulations. These statistical manipulations were intentionally modest in keeping with contextualization within a wider discourse analytic study.

Raw data, tabulated by advice column and gender, are presented in Appendix 1. For comparative purposes, e.g. to establish thematic specialization in respective advice columns or magazines, the use of raw data [i.e. actual frequency of occurrence] was problematic because the constituent components of the sub-samples were unequal [e.g. within *Femina*, Beauty Clinic: n = 42, Couple Clinic: n = 12, etc.]. Therefore, all raw data were transformed into percentages [i.e. proportions of the sub-samples], and these are represented graphically in Tables 4, 5 and 6 [overleaf]. Brief interpretations of these distributions are offered below.

Reliability of thematic coding - percentage of inter-coder agreement - was calculated on 10% of the sample [n = 55 (of 554), randomly selected], coded by an independent coder. Overall, agreement was high, 91.84%, although this dropped in individual themes which were more "ambiguous" or "overlapping" (e.g. 77.55% agreement on *Relationship Dissatisfaction*, theme 3). Reliability percentages for all themes are appended [see Appendix 2]. In positivist discourse, these percentages mean that an "acceptable" degree of consistency of categorization, using these themes, was achieved. Discourse analytic perspectives ironicize such consistency, and thus, it would be specious to pursue discussion of these statistics in this differentially focused dissertation. I acknowledge that another researcher might produce different themes of equable strength and persuasiveness.

In terms of validity, evaluation of these "results" against other content analyses [see Chapter 2] is difficult because: (a) themes used were slightly different in content and size, as, indeed, were contexts, and (b) goals of the studies were different. Overall, there appears to be support for previous findings of the dominance of representations of "romantic" or "sexual relationship problems" in advice columns in women's magazines [e.g. Coward, 1984; McFadyean, 1988; Weinberg, 1989; Kurtz, 1990; McRobbie, 1991; Mininni, 1991: see Chapter 2]. However, I strongly disassociate myself from any "realist" intention to impute the "accuracy" of that which is represented in my sampled advice columns to the prevalence of "women's problems" in social realities beyond these texts [cf. Mininni, 1991]. A constructionist perspective is maintained. Thus, representation is recognized as mediated by editorial policies and practices of magazines [see Chapter 2], and moving from specific texts or usages to a wider context, offering generalizations, is inadvisable (Parker & Burman, 1993: 156).

Returning briefly to the thematic distributions - see Tables 4, 5 & 6 - these show the complexities of specialization and overlap of content in the different advice columns. Usefully, at least two trends become visible in this distribution format. First is the "generally focussed" advice column which is evidenced by a

Table 4: Graphic distribution of "themes" / "topics" in *You* [Thematic content analysis]

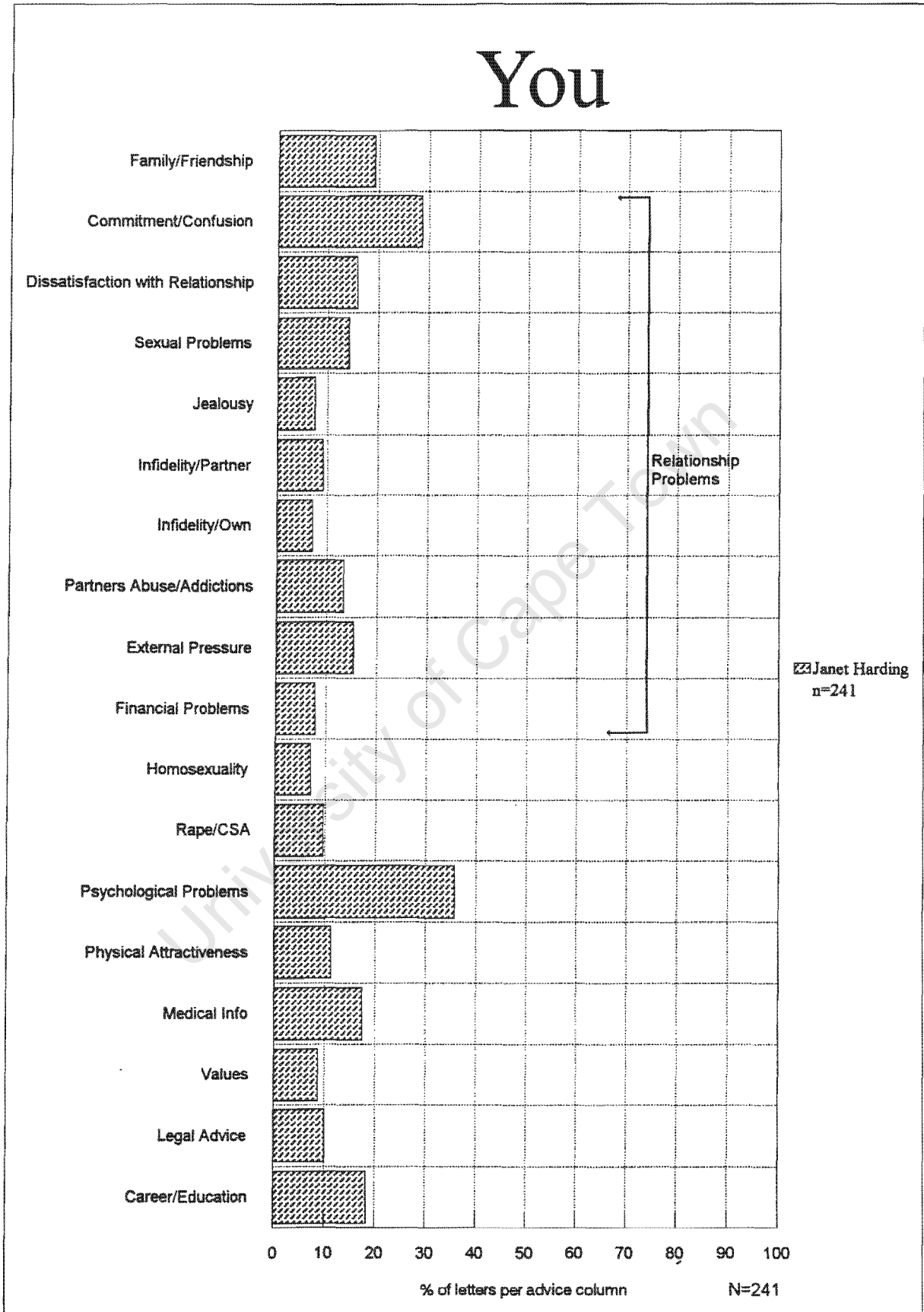


Table 5: Graphic distribution of "themes" / "topics" in *Fair Lady* [Thematic content analysis]

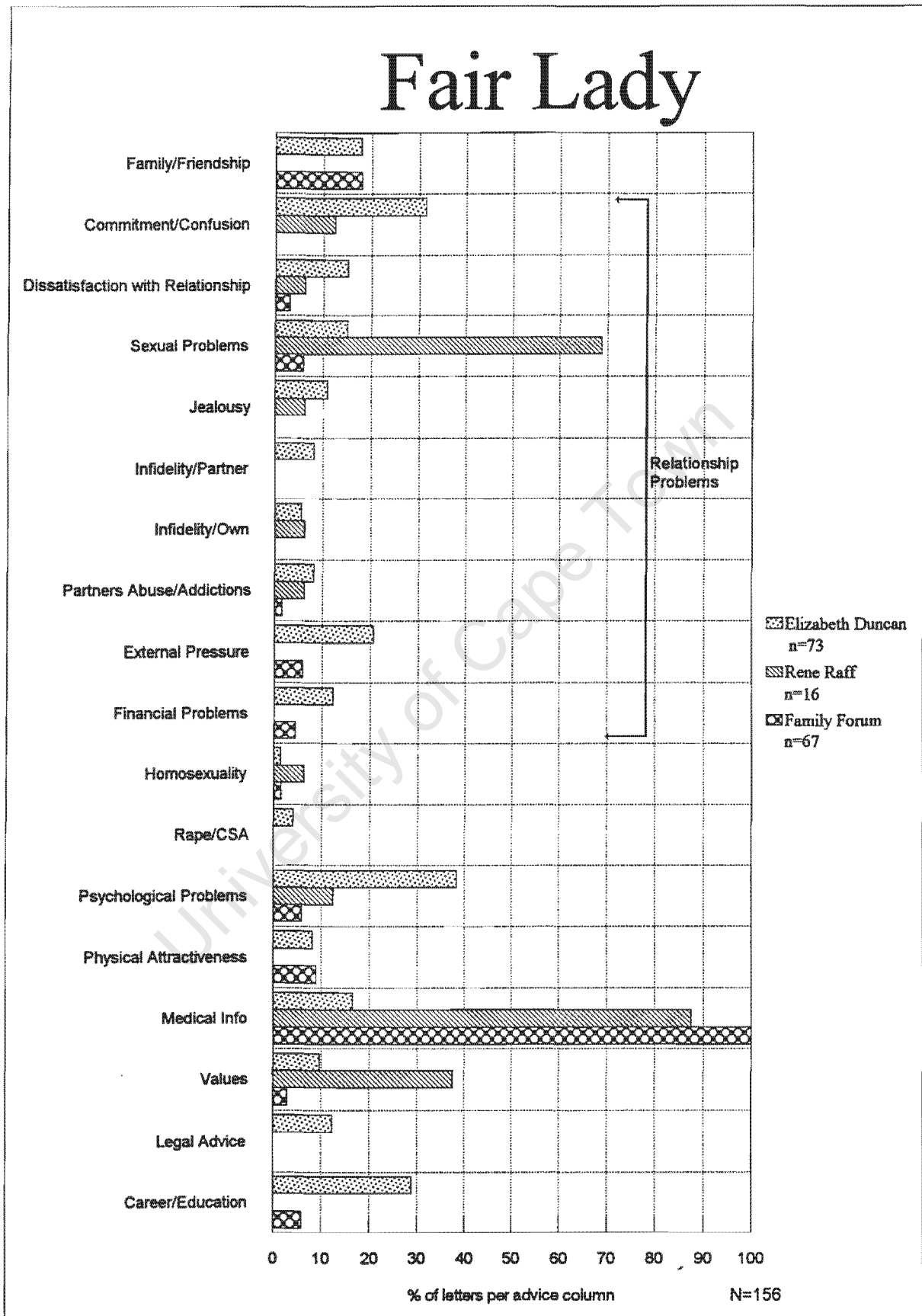
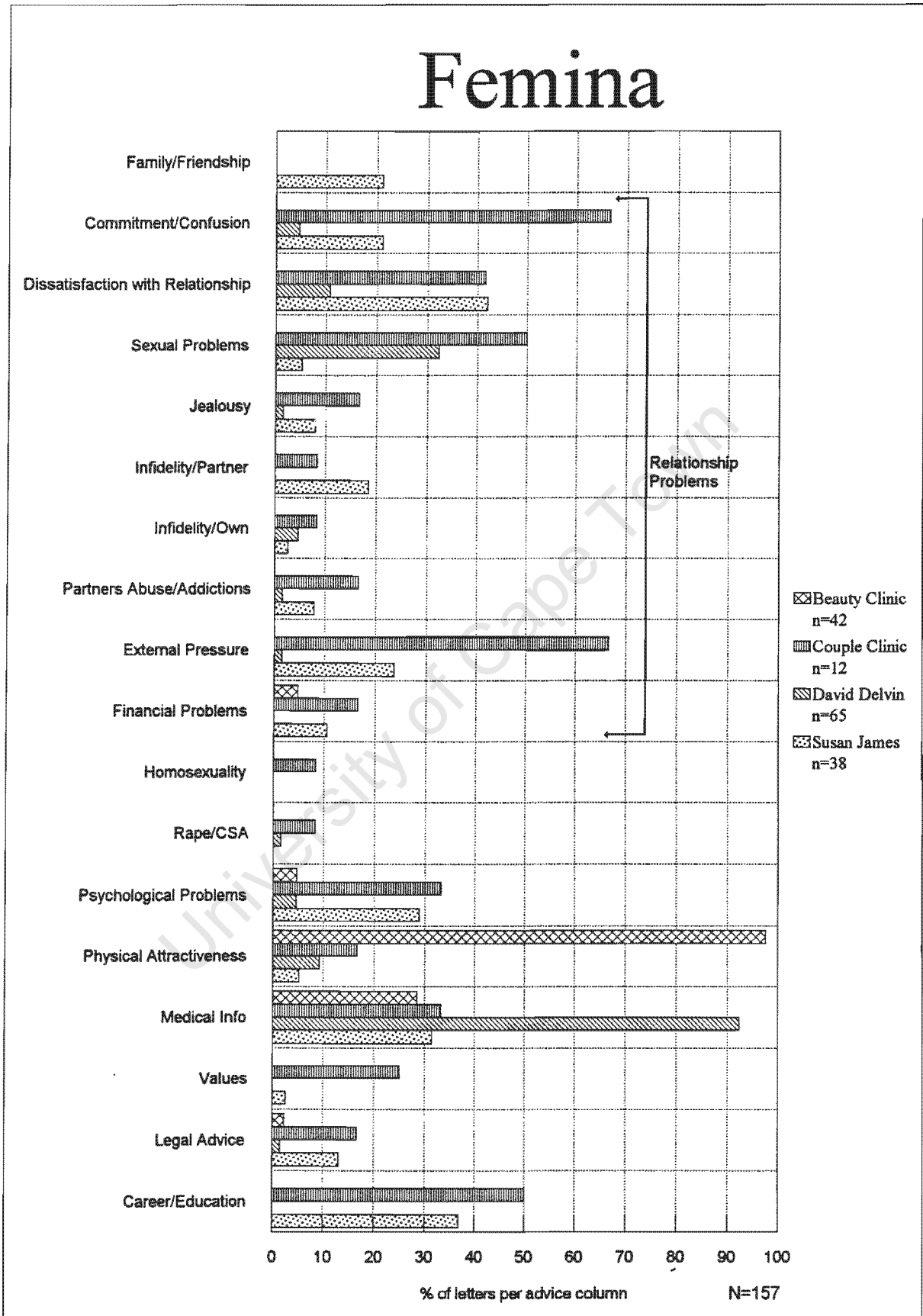


Table 6: Graphic distribution of "themes" / "topics" in *Femina* [Thematic content analysis]



fairly equable spread of all 18 themes [e.g. *Janet Harding, Elizabeth Duncan, Susan James*]. Second is the clearly "specialized" advice column, usually associated with an "expert" of some persuasion, which are characterized by almost monothematic content (cf. Mininni, 1991).

Within *Femina*, for example, *Beauty Clinic* shows an exceptionally high frequency - in relation to other columns - of topics related to "Physical Attractiveness" [Theme 14, above]. A similar specialization is encountered in *Dr David Delvin's Sexpert's Guide* viz requests for medical / clinical sexual information [Theme 15, above], and in *Couple Clinic* in various themes related to "relationship problems", e.g. commitment confusion, relationship dissatisfaction, sexual problems and external pressures to a relationship [Themes 2, 3, 4 and 9, respectively: above].

Although these specializations might seem "common-sensical", or could have been noted in a single sentence of a more interpretative study, this initial, descriptive research-step was useful in removing the openness of supposition, in orienting my study within a body of writings on advice columns, and concretizing the "otherness" of my approach. Thus, my selection of focal content-areas - "physical attractiveness" [Theme 14, above] and "monogamy" [Theme 6, above] - for discourse analysis in Chapters 4 and 5, was not made according to thematic frequency, but for the following reasons related to the aims of this study.

First, "physical attractiveness" and "monogamy" are represented within more generally focused advice columns, but draw into the analysis specialized sites of advice, e.g. *Beauty Clinic* and *Couple Clinic*, respectively, within *Femina*. This permits interpretative analysis of the interstices between form of advice columns, institutionalized knowledges and practices [e.g. psychological and medical discourses], and empowerment of women [e.g. what positions are advocated within a "liberal feminist" / "realist" context?]. Second, these areas permit exploration of power relations within Hollway's (e.g. 1984a; 1989) positionings of women as objects working towards "physical attractiveness" within MSD, and as subjects, enforcing monogamy in heterosexual relationship practice, within HHD.

And third, this was a practical step, following guidelines reviewed of discourse analytic methods [see above], to "contain" analysis within specific areas and/or texts for focused attention to the operations and effects of discourse, discourses and discursive practices.

Discourse Analytic Procedure

My discourse analytic procedure in subsequent Chapters borrows eclectically from the guidelines reviewed [above], but attempts, mainly, to put Foucauldian ideas to work by following Parker's analytic "advice". Parker (1992) suggests two "preliminary" discourse analytic steps - taking texts as the objects of study, and exploring the discourses at work in these texts (p. 7) - which I will use to briefly set out my orientational and analytic approach to advice columns.

1. Taking texts as the objects of study: phantom texts and transcription conventions

Selected advice texts [i.e. questions / letters and answers / advice] from 8 sampled advice columns, which were coded as pertaining to themes of "physical attractiveness" and "monogamy" [see above], form the texts for analysis. Conveniently, the published forms of letters and advice were used and this excluded necessity for transcription. However, this introduces a notion of "phantom texts", i.e. texts severed from authorship by "real" people, or reflective of "real" problems, through editing operations of an intertextual chain [e.g. "original" to "published" version].

Advice columns as texts are approached in my study as "addressors" (Parker, 1992), i.e. texts which address an audience of predominantly women-readers with a normalizing, pedagogic function; and offer positions and/or perceptions of selves and others. This adopts an explicit "death of the author" position in deconstructing the "original" author who wrote the text [see Barthes, 1977; Foucault, 1984]. This includes deconstruction of the individual-with-a-problem ["advice seeker"], the advice columnist, various editors, and their respective "intentions". As Foucault (1978) explains, texts are often imbued with clearly decipherable calculations, aims, intentions, objectives and strategies, but these are "non-subjective", i.e. anonymous, or not as a direct result of individual choice, decision or invention (p. 95).

Thus, "question" and "answer" sections will be marked, not to differentiate authorship, but as part of an interpretation of a formal, rhetorical technique used in advice columns to set up the "unassailable truth" of institutionalized resolutions. Assuming a pedagogic / addressing function of advice texts means that questions and answers will not always be analyzed as "units", i.e. a particular response to a particular "problem" / letter-writer. Similarly within this approach, establishing the "authenticity" of letters is irrelevant [cf. sniffing out "fakes", Gieber, 1960: Chapter 2]. "Problems" - "real" or "fake" - are understood to be forged within collective ideological frameworks, and arguments about authenticity may be more usefully translated into possibilities for resistance to norms and dominant meanings [see Chapter 6].

Parker and Burman (1993) emphasize the importance of clarity around "whose analysis" is being written / voiced in a discourse analytic study (p. 165). Here, published advice columns provide the sole texts for analysis [e.g. no interviews or group discussions], and within the strong 'death of the author' position adopted, the interpretive reading of them is my own. I do not pretend that this reading is representative of or generalizable to women universally, or to communities thereof. Nor is the reading definitive in the sense that I am able to comprehensively recognize discourses where others have failed. My reading is forged within my own gendered positionings, and has a moral-political agenda in attempting to disrupt and/or resist taken-for-granted assumptions [see Chapter 6].

The following conventions are used to indicate, identify and clarify textual extracts in the analysis, or reference to selected texts:

- (1) A bold Q before a section of text indicates that this is [from] a published "question", and an A indicates a published "resolution" or "advice-section".

- (2) Extracts from letters or advice are referred to by three identificatory features: the *initials* of the advice columnist [e.g. JH = Janet Harding, DD = Dr David Delvin's Sexpert's Guide, etc.]; a *number* identifying the letter within the wider sample of letters from that advice column [e.g. JH 129, ED 73]; and the summarizing *title* appended in the publishing process in place of the letter-writer's name [e.g. OK for sex but too ugly for love, Squash that affair, etc.].

These identificatory features correspond to Appendix 3. Thus, *all* questions and answers used in the analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 are restored to "Q & A" units and appended in full to provide a contextualizing resource. It is noted that all these texts are selected from 1991-issues of *You*, *Femina* and *Fair Lady* magazines. Exact references [i.e. per magazine issue and page number] for texts used are included in Appendix 3.

- (3) When material is omitted from the quotation of text, this is indicated by a pair of square brackets, thus [] (adapted from Atkinson and Heritage, 1984, in Parker, 1992: 123).
- (4) When content / flow of a quotation is disrupted by omitted material, clarification is square bracketed, thus [to help the reader] (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984, in *ibid*).

2. Exploring the discourses at work in texts

Analysis of the operations and effects of psychologization and medicalization will proceed through intuitive exploration of the connotations invoked in advice texts, guided by Parker's (1992) definitional criteria pertaining to discourses, e.g. discourses construct objects and contain subjects, etc. [see Chapter 1, and above]. Thus, examination of how "attractiveness" [in Chapter 4] or "monogamous relationships" [in Chapter 5] - as "objects" - are constructed within psychological and medical discourses will focus on the particular institutionalized dialogue, statements and metaphors which are set up in advice texts.

A focus on subjectification takes as its starting point an approach to texts as 'addressors' [see above]. Thus, Parker (1992) has suggested the following questions be considered in analytic interpretation: who is being addressed by this text?; what are they expected to *do* when addressed? [e.g. adopt particular perceptions and positions, and perform appropriate, reformative "work"]; and what rights / powers does this discourse bestow on these subjects to speak (p. 10)? I will explore these questions in relation to feminine subject positions in Hollway's (1989) discourses of sexuality and heterosexual relationships, i.e. women's object positioning in MSD [in Chapter 4], and subject positioning in HHD [in Chapter 5].⁷

Psychological literature on / around "women's physical appearance", or "monogamy in relationships", will not be systematically reviewed in this dissertation. This is intention rather than oversight. The aim of this study is to examine how psychological and medical discourses set / hold these "objects" up in advice texts. As such, these objects are accorded "moral-political" status to facilitate a critical / disruptive reading [see

7 "Attractiveness" and "monogamous relationships" might be constructed differently within psychological or medical discourses concerning, for example, homosexuality [e.g. Kitzinger, 1989], or concerning physically disabled / disadvantaged women [e.g. Chapkis, 1986]. In this dissertation, I follow the heterosexist bias of advice column representations of relationships [see above], and Hollway's (1983; 1984a; 1984b; 1989; 1991) writing.

Parker, 1990b & 1992: Chapter 2], and deployment of the vast scientific or popular formulations to bolster their accuracy and/or legitimacy [cf. "epistemological status", see *ibid*] was considered counter-productive, e.g. clogging up an already complex approach. Thus, I recognize my analytic work in this dissertation as largely "deductive" in putting Foucauldian ideas to work. Psychologization and medicalization are used as 'grids of decipherment' to read the peculiarly institutionalized perspectives, practices and positions associated with women's attractiveness and relationship-work to police monogamy-rules.

However, this does not imply a blanket-ban on academic literature. Selected, relevant literature about physical appearance and monogamy will be incorporated into my interpretative analyses in Chapters 4 and 5. These moments of intertextual reference will labour as loci of clarification of and agreement with my own reading - as Levett (1988) has argued, lending "validity" to one's own analysis - and, crucially, as points of resistance.

Analytics of power will proceed via critical attention to the technologies and operations through which it is exercised, and through which individuals become subjects [see Foucault's (1982) guidelines, above]. Institutionalized discourses have, thus far, been regarded as fairly discrete and having divergent "targets" for the operation of their powers, e.g. psychologized targeting of mind / psyche / emotions, and medicalized colonization of the physical body [see Chapter 1]. However, in daily practice, psychological and medical discourses form merged, overdetermined, competing or complementary imperatives for experience and action. Thus, a fair amount of analytic work will be devoted to teasing out the inter-related operations and effects of institutionalized knowledges and practices, particularly in terms of the tensions between "realist", "feminist" and "Foucauldian" perspectives on power / empowerment [see Chapter 2].

This in keeping with a "moral/political" (Burman & Parker, 1993) or "critical" (Fairclough, 1992) goal of discourse analysis: (a) to produce a disruptive interpretation which exposes assumptions, knowledges, connections, conflicts and implications; and (b) to explore ways to challenge, intervene, empower, enable resistance, etc. These goals will be reflexively evaluated in Chapter 6.

Selection of texts for analysis is intuitive [see Hollway, 1989, above], and I will attempt to account for intuitions in this regard during the various analytic processes and arguments in Chapters 4 and 5. Drawing on the various discourse analytic guidelines reviewed in this Chapter, I will use several techniques to "physically" approach texts, i.e. to facilitate Parker's (1992) general guidelines [above]. These techniques may be tactically employed to achieve particular effects, or to highlight particular issues, but their use is more often intuitive. Again, these technical shifts / intuitions will be reflexively accounted for in the body of the analytic work [Chapters 4, 5 & 6]. I foreground the procedures and related issues here for methodological clarity.

First, selection and analysis of a "whole" advice text, or longer textual extract does not pretend that these texts are "representative". Rather, these process-oriented analyses are intended to expose discursive phenomena at work, e.g. complex inter-relationships between discourses, shifts in advocated positions, etc. This might imply ethnomethodological description of processes / repertoires "emergent" from texts [e.g. Hollway's (1989) "process" approach, or Potter and Wetherell (1987): see above]. However, this study is

steeped in a Foucauldian framework and my theoretically informed "eye/I" will undoubtedly perceive some texts-as-a-whole as "more interesting" than others, and produce a particular reading of them (Parker & Burman, 1993: 156).

Second, *smaller chunks of a range of advice texts* might be used in "illustrative" and/or "descriptive" ways [e.g. Levett's (1988) use of lists of statements]. This is helpful in exposing variation or contradiction in the patternings of content / form of an object [e.g. different ways of describing something], or of course, the cohesiveness of similar patternings.

Third, *relevant / striking grammatical constructions* are noted. This approach follows Fairclough (1992), and others, who have used conversational analytic techniques within discursive frameworks (e.g. Kottler, 1987; Lee & Ungar, 1989; Lea, 1994). Importantly, my "linguistic labelling" [e.g. "adjacency pairs", "imperatives", "interrogatives", attention to tense or vocabulary, etc.] is not intended to reflect the "true" intentions of the writer, nor to close the text off to alternative meanings or interpretations. Brief critical attention to selected features - not systematic or comprehensive - is used to launch an analysis of their *productive* operations, functions and effects on social relations, i.e. simple identification / description of features or discourses is not enough: language constructs, reproduces and transforms social relations (Parker & Burman, 1993: 157).

Fourth, analytic attention will be given to relevant *single words or key terms*. Without taking on board the slippery edifice of Derrida's theory, deconstructionist techniques [following Parker (1988), above] will be deployed because, in the analysis of advice texts as "phantom texts" - where rigorous editing guarantees the production of uni-dimensional, seamless meanings - deconstruction provides a route of subversion and resistance. Thus, through bringing other "hidden", marginalized, silenced, or implicit terms / meanings into visibility, it might be possible to show how structures of institutionalized knowledge and power maintain hegemony. As Parker (1992) suggests, this technique permits analysis of "the absence of particular terms" (p. 126), i.e. in terms of the what may and may not be said within the confines of discourses.

I turn now to praxis: putting the theoretical framework, discourse analytic guidelines and aims of this study to work on selected advice texts in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4

The psychologization and medicalization of "physical attractiveness" in advice texts

Introduction: Physical attractiveness, Hollway's discourses and exchange of/by women

Feminist discourse on the politics of women's physical appearance and objectification is vast. As with the feminist critique of advice columns (see Chapter 2), the most strident feminist voice has been, perhaps, a radical challenge of "the beauty myth" as capitalist / patriarchal media-conspiracy against women (e.g. Williamson, 1978; Coward, 1984; Winship, 1987; Wolf, 1990; McRobbie, 1981: see Chapter 2). The pervasiveness of this discourse is countered by softer voices of resistance, e.g. uneasy feminist confessions that looks-really-*do*-matter (Chapkis, 1986), psychoanalytic accounts of the operation of 'the beauty system' (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1987), or post-modernist approaches to the protean forms of power and struggle, multiplicity of meanings and/or kinds of "skilled work" expected of women (Wilson, 1985; Haug, 1987; Probyn, 1988; Smith, 1988; Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer & Hebron, 1991; McRobbie, 1991).

Wendy Hollway's formulation of subjectivity draws on aspects of these resistances. Hollway (1984a; 1989) argues that due to gender-differentiated discourses concerning sexuality and relationships, women are traditionally positioned as "objects" of Male Sex Drive discourse [MSD], and "subjects" of Have-Hold discourse [HHD] (see Chapter 1). These positions, and the transitions between them, introduce a Foucauldian twist to power relations. Women may use object-positions in MSD (e.g. as attractive / desirable objects, or the ongoing labours to become and remain attractive / desirable objects) to facilitate, manage and maintain positioning as subjects of HHD (e.g. 'catching and keeping' or 'having and holding' men). "Being attractive" [here, physical features: being pretty, slim, sexy, etc.] is both powerful *bait* and *relationship-glue* in coupling with a man (positioned in MSD), which reproduces particular relationship practices and gender subjectivities (Hollway, 1984a: 240-241).

Implicit in Hollway's formulation of the uses of attractiveness is a model of relational "exchange". It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to systematically review literature concerning the "exchange of women" [see Rubin (1975) for a comprehensive "feminist" review of this literature, centred around the perspectives of Marx, Engels, Levi-Strauss and Freud / Lacan]. Levi-Strauss's (1969) formulation of the systems of patriarchal kinship relationships posits men as exchange partners (sexual subjects with rights of ownership), and women as merchandise, i.e. sexual objects to be exchanged by or given as "gifts" to men. Thus, patriarchy appears as a relationship between men.

Luce Irigaray (e.g. 1981; 1985) has extended Levi-Strauss's analysis within a psychoanalytic feminist approach to sexual commerce. She argues that women's power in patriarchy is located in their labour to function as a means of exchange - in roles as care-takers and controllers of themselves as merchandise or "goods" - and knowledge that their worth "will be valued by the standard of their *work* [on themselves]"

(1981: 102, original emphasis). Thus, active styling of a self (e.g. improving self-esteem, toning the body, camouflaging flaws, etc.) which is attractive, desirable and desired by men is the "[phallic] mark" of their value in sexual commerce (ibid).

Hollway (1984a) might argue that discursive use of this exchange system is reproduced by the powers and investments inherent in the positions women take up. Thus, using an exchange-model in the exploration of romance novels for adolescent girls, Christian-Smith (1988) explains that a discourse of romantic love establishes a "market relationship" between gendered positions (p. 82). Terms of fair exchange are implicitly bound up within traditional courtship and relationship practices, and the success / failure of romantic liaisons depends on the maintenance of this exchange, e.g. the masculine terms: prestige amongst other men (if the woman is attractive), satisfaction of sexual needs, etc.; and the feminine terms: satisfaction of emotional needs (e.g. love), status of having a boyfriend / husband (e.g. among friends, family, other women), physical protection (e.g. from sexual exploitation by 'other' men), etc. [Several authors have explored similar ideas about romance and romantic love: see Connell, Davis, McIntosh & Root, 1981; Radway, 1987; McRobbie, 1991.]

Of course, "fair exchange" euphemistically masks the complex power relations between these masculine and feminine positions, and the instigation or negotiation of the terms of exchange is often fraught with risk and/or hurt for women. In the advice texts examined in this study, this powerlessness and vulnerability was noticeably articulated in metaphors of exchange. I briefly describe two ways in which "failed" or "unfair" terms of exchange are set up as "relationship-crises" in advice texts.

Due to the diversity of "un-attractiveness issues" represented in advice texts, e.g. "ugliness", breast-size, protruding teeth, stretchmarks, allergic skin reactions to cosmetic products, etc., I focus specifically on representations of *body-weight* or *body-shape* in this Chapter. Texts are selected for analysis accordingly.

First, to enter the market relationship as an "overweight woman" means that her body-shell - as text, sign or "goods" - is read (by herself and others) as "worth-less" or "in-visible". Thus, she may be prevented from the opportunity for reciprocal exchange, because (a) she isn't able to attract a suitable "buyer" to exchange with, or (b) no-one wants to "buy" anything that she offers. Consider the following extracts from questions in advice columns, which echo the example used in Chapter 1.

Q [] No guy wants to ask me out because I'm so fat - and I would so like to have a boyfriend as all my friends do. (I'm too fat for boys, JH 138)

Q [] I am overweight and find it difficult to find nice men to date [] (Can't get over the loss, ED 11)

Second, strategic sexual willingness, as "investment" or "capital outlay", may be used to enter into exchange with men. In a discourse analytic study on heterosexual sex and relationships, Gilfoyle, Wilson and Brown (1992) found that women talked of "giving themselves" [sexually] to men. The risks of such an exchange or "gift" (e.g. of "casual sex") may be elaborated in terms of medical discourses, e.g. physical dangers of pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV-transmission, etc. (see Fine, 1988). However,

within Hollway's gender differentiation in discourses concerning sexuality, these physical risks assume "psychic" proportions which police women's sexuality. Thus, strategic sexual willingness (by women) does not produce contractual exchange because it is forged in terms of MSD: men (as subjects) are positioned as biologically programmed sexual opportunists, and women (as precipitative objects of the drive) are permitted no sexual desire of their own (Hollway, 1989: 54). In the extract below, feminine motives may be read in terms of a desired subject position in HHD, i.e. as "other" than sex, or perhaps, to get "beyond sex" to "relationship".

Q I am a 16 year old girl, fat and ugly and madly in love with a neighbour. He visits me almost daily and we have sex. He told me not to tell anyone about this, but won't say why not. I had a crush on him long before the relationship started and I really don't know where I stand with him. Perhaps I am just a standby for him. Maybe he doesn't want his friends to know about us because they might tell him that he could have got a better girl than me. I know that his previous girlfriends are far prettier than I am. He has never once told me how he feels about me. I feel such a failure with boys and I know I have been just a standby with other boyfriends. Why do I always land up with the wrong guys? (Fat, ugly and used by lovers, JH 160)

This advice text sets out many layers of feminine powerlessness within an exchange-model. The visual form of the outer body-shell ["fat" and "ugly" goods] emerges as a salient feature in the experienced "failure with boys". Thus, a less-than-perfect body lacks the lucre to "buy" love or "clinch a deal" on commitment, and may be "used" sexually ["just (as) a standby"], or replaced by an-other "far prettier" one. In terms of MSD positionings (above), access to "appropriate" feminine gender positioning in the exchange situation (as subject of HHD) is controlled by the male position, e.g. denying her public / private affirmation of "a relationship" via insistence on keeping the sexual activity secret and/or keeping his feelings secret. Thus, this relationship might be read as "going nowhere" (Surra & Huston, 1987), foregrounding the powerlessness of an 'unattractive object' to direct its course.¹

Male secrecy as a source of power in this extract is counterpoised against the feminine outpouring of feeling - she is "madly in love" and "[has] a crush on him" - which emphasizes the vulnerability of being swept along by non-rational, uncontrollable emotions (see Kovecses, 1988), and of the imperative to confess them. Confession of "failure with boys" brings this relationship-crisis into the visibility of expert / advice columnist and reader.

The pathos of this construction of powerlessness saturates an absent or mythic "beautiful woman / object" with power, e.g. power over men: to enthrall, bewitch, keep (men); to be an object worthy of possession (by men); to make the relationship "go somewhere". This produces a desire for power in the reader, and invites the advice columnist into the narrative [via the question / plea for advice] to provide closure (cf. Carter, 1988: Chapter 2). Closure might take the form of institutionalized knowledges and intentioned practices which channel agency into the shaping of a more desirable (and therefore, more powerful) self, e.g. rituals of diet, exercise, counselling and psychotherapy to "work on" and "care for" the body/self.

1 This advice text clearly does not draw on Hollway's Permissive discourse [women and men have reciprocal rights to sexual expression / pleasure: see Chapter 1], because of the explicit displacement of the female sex drive onto significations of need, love, commitment, etc. (p. 235). I return to the liberating effects [for women] achieved by adopting a resistant position in PD in Chapter 6.

These techniques fashion a sense of control (over body/self), which might facilitate a more powerful stand against exploitation and abuse.

Widdicombe (1992) argues, in response to Hollway's (1989) formulation, that women's bodies as sites of and material for the construction of identity is nothing new (see Haug, 1987; Lesko, 1988). However, what is lost in Hollway's reliance on psychoanalytic theorization of the intra- and inter-subjective workings of agency and resistance, is a sense of the complex social and/or discursive practices in which women's attractiveness, sexuality and subjectivity is embedded and forged (Widdicombe, 1992). This includes tension between feminist discourses which valorize subjective and political transformation, and the operations and effects of normalizing psychological and medical discourses, e.g. addressing the "ideological" nature of women's body-size denies the powerlessness, pain and hurt around appearance that individual women may experience, and vice versa.

This chapter, then, focuses specifically on the psychological and medical strategies and discursive practices which embed and address women's concern with body-weight and body-shape in advice texts. Even within these specifications, my analysis is selective and committed to the production of a critical reading of power-knowledge and/or empowerment (see Chapters 2 & 3), rather than exhaustively "descriptive" of issues emergent from a body of advice texts. This means that related areas of represented experience of "attractiveness" have been marginalized or "left out" (e.g. women's own sexual desire, cosmetic surgery, development of femininity according to age and culturally appropriate milestones, etc.) to meet spatial requirements of this dissertation.

What remains is this: psychological and medical constructions of "attractiveness" are rooted in a notion of an exchange-relationship (above), but legitimate, reproduce and/or disallow fetishization of attractiveness in particular ways - e.g. institutionalized technologies of self-acceptance, self-care, self-styling and self-transformation. This happens differently in various sites of advice in my sampled women's magazines, and I close this Chapter with an examination of *Femina's Beauty Clinic*. While these institutionalized technologies serve as injunctions or imperatives of agency and are undoubtedly empowering on an individual-relational level, they are, as I shall show, accommodatory or reproductive of particular sets of structural and/or institutionalized power-knowledge relations (Kitzinger, 1989).

Psychologization

Previous studies on psychologization in advice columns (e.g. Brinkgreve & Korzec, 1979; Brinkgreve, 1981; Weinberg, 1989) have attended to the frequencies of institutionalized vocabularies of psychology (e.g. "self-acceptance", "depression", "neurotic", etc.) in advice columns [see Chapter 2]. My Foucauldian agenda in this study draws on psychological discourses in a different way. Advice texts set up "crisis-issues" through confession, which are then "read" and rearticulated through particular institutionalized frameworks of knowledges, producing normalizing insights, procedures of motivation and techniques for reformation (Rose, 1990: see Chapter 1).

I have mentioned, in earlier Chapters, the divisions between institutionalized knowledges and their objects (e.g. "psyche" versus "body"), and also how these knowledges are implicated in one another. Thus, psychologization of body-size, shape and weight produces a reading of the physical body as a psychological sign or text, an outward (physical) manifestation of disquiet / crisis on the inside. Following a deconstructionist identification of oppositional dichotomies (see Chapter 3), this sets up dividing tension between "inside" and "outside", or "deep" and "surface" (Grosz, 1990), i.e. a deep inner core, a psyche, "the real person" within, and an outer shell / surface (physical body), which contains, protects, reveals and/or disguises what is inside.²

Corinne Squire (1990a) has identified three discourses which structure psychological accounts, i.e. detective, autobiographical and science fiction discourses. Letters to advice columns might be read as autobiographical narratives, whose confessional qualities work to affirm their authenticity (cf. a realist position). However, it is the *detective narrative* which I highlight in the psychologization of body-weight in advice texts: reading outward signs as clues to inner crisis, uncovering hidden symptoms to make links visible (to the advice-seeker / reader) and establishing "motive" and aetiology of problems.

Thus, there might be many ways in which "being fat" might be read - qualitatively different kinds of body-weight problems and various psychological reasons for over- or under-weight - each requiring specialized psychological intervention and work. The following sections highlight two of these to illustrate operations and effects of psychological discourses.

1. "Deeper, underlying needs": serious psychological problems

Advice texts present particular body-weight problems as caused by "deep", underlying psychological problems - the return of the repressed - and are produced as "serious" by virtue of their referral out to "clinical psychologists" rather than "counsellors". This division of labour implies hierarchical layers of professional status and expertise, with "clinical psychologists" seen to possess the techniques for in-depth exploration and reformation appropriate for graver levels of emotional distress and/or damage. As health-care professionals are not permitted to advertise services in South Africa, such division lays down, via the advice column, professional profiles and recommended routes of referral (Abbott, 1988), i.e. a gate-keeping function, distributing information about where readers should go for what problem / service [see Chapter 5].

The following advice text sets up "serious" psychological problems underlying perceived / manifest obesity, i.e. in terms of a "compulsive eating syndrome".

2 Foucault (1977) has written of the inner / outer relationship between the soul and the body. The soul - or the effect of the structuring of interior psychic space - has no concrete existence, and is "produced permanently *around, on, within* the body" (p. 29), i.e. is signified through its inscription on the body. Foucault's preference for the term "*inscription*" [e.g. above notions of ideological "internalization"] targets the body as an ongoing project of material practices of corporeal signification, i.e. the body is actively "marked" (or inscribed) with the attributes of subjectivity (see Butler, 1990; Grosz, 1990).

Q I cannot stop spending money, can you please help me? [] I simply cannot stop myself, and when I get home after a spending spree I feel so bad when I realize what I have done that I start eating. I am now the size of a bus.[] (I spend and eat compulsively, JH 36)

A crisis of powerlessness is revealed, i.e. a body-shell taken over, or compelled, by powerful internal or "other" forces which are terrifying (unknowable) and beyond rational control (Grosz, 1990: 65), as in epilepsy, shamanism, 'amafunfunyane' [African spirit possession]. While the metaphor of a "bus" might be read as alluding to large body-size [as big as a bus], the advice columnist, in response, introduces a more sinister reading, i.e. the "bus-driver" is someone other, some "deeper need" that the writer is "as yet unable to recognize, understand or deal with", viz.

A Now that you have recognized your problem and reached out for help in writing to me, I urge you to use this same courage and insight to seek treatment. [] (Y)our [eating] habits arise out of some deeper need which you are as yet unable to recognize, understand or deal with. Hence the frightening helplessness you feel when you say you cannot stop yourself in the compulsion to behave in this way, which needs attention in getting to the underlying needs. For this you really need the help of a clinical psychologist. [] (I spend and eat compulsively, JH 36)

The "deeper needs" of the inner-self serve as motif in this advice text. The appearance of the outer body-shell is marginalized (or trivialized) through the prioritization of "underlying needs" which require working through with the professional assistance / treatment of a clinical psychologist. Thus, the "dis-order" of the outer body-shell (big as a bus) might be normalized through the ordering or shaping-up of an inner chaos, a process Grosz (1990) has referred to as "psychic inscription on the textualized body" (p. 65). By implication, this means that gaining control over an unruly inner self might simply generalize to other forms of self or body discipline, e.g. spending, eating, exercising, etc.³ The congratulatory praise offered the confessor, i.e. the "courage and insight" required to confess, works as an imperative, hailing and impelling readers, and promising empowerment through alleviation of psychic / physical misery; it sets confession up as a difficult yet essential practice in caring for, and seeking expert care for, the self.

However, the "difficulty" of confession and advocated, professionally facilitated, psychic work elevates these practices above the realm of ordinary activity and experience and, indeed, denies the multiple uses of body-weight and the effectiveness of everyday coping strategies and resistances. Consider the following extract:

Q [] By the time I was in Std 4, I realized what had happened [sexual abuse at age 9] and started making myself fat so that boys would not like me. I am now 15 and desperately trying to get my weight down, but I am still afraid of boys.[] (Eating to escape abuse by boys, JH 90)

The "serious emotional damage" and "deeper needs" which might be visited upon this 'victim' through professional psychological discourses (such as in the previous advice text) produce the manifest weight-problem as caused by inner vulnerability. To prescribe normalizing psychological intervention is to

3 This implication may be due, in part, to the formal constraints of the forum, e.g. question and answer, which selectively frames a single issue and "resolves" this with a single intervention. The various processes of psychotherapeutic intervention and healing are, thus, hidden. I return to this point in Chapter 5.

obscure the resilience of the survivor's re-actions (see Levett, 1988), e.g. attempts to understand the incident, subsequent development into adolescence and 'resistant' use of body-weight ["I started making myself fat so that boys would not like me"]. Thus, "being fat" is a form of resistance to conventions of femininity, enforcing self-protective "invisibility" to boys / men. Orbach (1978) notes a similar case-study, where Barbara uses "fatness" as a resistant means of establishing equality with male work colleagues, i.e. "fat made me one of the boys" (p. 46).

A reading of Foucauldian resistance is, however, counterpoised against the more traditional "realist" reading of powerlessness, i.e. within the respective advice texts, both women ("Barbara" and JH 90, above) are framed within desperate battles to reduce their body-weight, to become visible, to assume appropriate gender positions within heterosexual relationship practices, and are to be "saved" (liberated from individual unhappiness and despair, etc.) by psychological interventions.

Rooted within a liberal or realist position (see Chapters 1 & 2), different sites of advice - through subtle shifts of form and/or expertise offered - achieve "empowering" effects in different ways. Thus, the following extract from *Family Forum* (in *Fair Lady*), a site of specialized advice chaired by a panel of experts [see Chapter 3], is intentioned to highlight the effects of a shift towards information-dissemination

Q I am worried about my friend. She was a vivacious, bubbly woman who has become tense, depressed and overweight since the difficult birth of her son. He is now 18 months old and she is too protective of him.[]

Our psychologist replies: I share your concern for your friend. It seems to me that she's suffering from postnatal depression (PND). Anxiety is often the predominant feature of this depression and usually takes the form of excessive worrying about the baby's health and safety even though there's no obvious or real cause for concern. Feeling out of control and tense, mood swings, aggressive outbursts, social withdrawal and depression also fit the broad picture of PND.[] Once she accepts that she needs help, suggest that she confide in her doctor so that he (sic) can prescribe the required medication and refer her to a therapist with whom she can work out unresolved emotional issues. (Not coping after birth, FF 53)

Again, "overweight" functions here as a sign on the body-surface (in the body-shape) of repression or inner distress, one of a laundry list of psychological symptoms. The objective tone is produced by direct address by a "clinical psychologist", who establishes professional credibility by providing a DSMIII-R diagnostic label (Post Natal Depression: PND) for the syndrome. *Our* clinical psychologist - possessive pronoun (plural) - draws us [as readers] into the psychotherapeutic alliance and invites us to share the insights produced; it also enfolds us, via its consensual code of intimacy, into the bosom of shared sisterhood of this women's magazine (see Winship, 1987: Chapter 2). This problematizes resistance, and makes rejection of information difficult (see Gramsci's hegemony: Chapter 1, and Chapter 6 for a critical discussion of resistance).

The PND-mother is produced in this account as "the chaotic other", an object or issue, which "a friend" and the psychologist discuss in a rational and informative manner. Use of the third person (a friend's account of symptoms) functions as a formal distancing device: we are able to stand external to a messy, emotional narrative of psychological chaos, and identify with the concern of the friend and the objectivity of

the psychologist. The geographic separation of this issue-based site of expert advice (*Family Forum*) from the "emotional problems" presented elsewhere in *Fair Lady* (e.g. in the *Elizabeth Duncan* column) compounds this informational detachment and neutrality.

From a realist position, then, this information (in lesson-format: practical tips on how-to-help-your-friends-with-PND) reaches a wide audience of women, who are able to apply the "truths" in daily practice: understanding and legitimating their own experience; offering appropriate advice to friends or daughters; teaching men / husbands about women's needs as mothers; and, suggesting or seeking treatment from specialist agencies for these "problems". A Foucauldian understanding might draw attention to the proliferating panoptic surveillance implied in this process, i.e. women watching over women, monitoring feminine and mothering behaviours according to increasingly minute grids of psychological norms.

2. "Attractiveness isn't enough" and "You are more than your looks": self-esteem problems

The above techniques of psychologization prioritized serious and unruly "deeper, underlying needs", thereby de-focusing attention from the outer body-shell. The production of an understanding of the psyche in terms of a need to confront non-rational, "unconscious" or repressed aspects of the self (unknown to the self) draws on *psychoanalytic* assumptions and techniques of reformation, e.g. bringing these "deeper, underlying needs" to consciousness through therapeutic confession and 'working through' them with a professionally trained therapist / analyst (see Hall & Lindzey, 1978; Frosh, 1987; Taylor, 1990).

Where issues of attractiveness / unattractiveness (to men) are perceived to be "less serious" in advice texts, different psychological discourses might be drawn in, viz. humanistic knowledges and techniques. Here, emphasis shifts to "the construction of a worthy self" (Giddens, 1991: 79), e.g. an inner self that is worthy of esteem by the self and by others. This mode of psychologization - more "conscious" in focus - disallows (outer) physical attractiveness as a desired goal in particular ways, thereby defusing some of the "romantic promises" of discourses concerning relationships (e.g. MSD and HHD) on psychological grounds.

Thus, being physically attractive (to men) "is not enough" to assure a "good relationship", or guarantee personal happiness, fulfillment or inner peace. These advice texts present the "emptiness" of young women who are "pretty", "attractive" and have "good figures".

Q I am 20 years old and have never had a real boyfriend. I've been told that I am pretty and have a good figure. I've got a very ordinary job and my life is so boring. [] What is wrong with me? [] Do I feel like this because I so badly want someone to love me? When will the right guy come along? (20 - with no real boyfriends, JH 4)

Q I have a great job as a PRO and I'm in my 20's. Until now, I haven't worried too much about steady relationships, but just recently I've been getting fed up with men who just love and leave. [] Less attractive friends seem to be able to keep relationships together, so why can't I? [] (Living behind a mask, SJ 23)

Q I am 26, happily married with two beautiful children and a good part-time job. I am not pretty, but I have a good figure. [] Why am I so unhappy? I think I am just ungrateful. I know there are many people less fortunate than I. (At war with my 3-year-old, JH 182)

In terms of problems of un-attractiveness, McRobbie (1991) would refer to the above texts in advice columns as "the non-problems" (p. 11), i.e. within the definitions of what constitutes a problem, no "real" problem exists, hence the often semi-apologetic tone used (see Chapter 2). McRobbie asserts that editorial inclusion of "non-problems" serves a moral function, e.g. to show women that "looks aren't everything" (ibid). In the above texts, the tone is less apologetic than genuinely puzzled, but the effect is similar: being pretty "hasn't worked" or "isn't enough". The puzzlement might be read in terms of the exchange model elaborated earlier in this Chapter - a promise of fair exchange - being pretty *should* provide the bargaining power (as bait or glue) to clinch a lasting relationship with a man, which *should* produce some kind of "inner" contentment.

MacCannell and MacCannell (1987) have offered a causal equation - "BEAUTY = MAN = HAPPINESS" - to incorporate this traditional promise of exchange, and the social / subjective processes it lays down for women (p. 230).

Within a discursive formulation following Hollway, then, "a *real* boyfriend", in the above advice texts, is one who "loves and *stays*". Psychologically, "*real* relationships" are expected to be "transformative experiences" (Christian-Smith, 1988: 84), whereby emptiness is filled, meaning imbued, status provided (being a "girlfriend" or "wife"), and through intimacy and social recognition of the union, a personal sense of "worth" is accrued. This transformation should "happen" before a particular age, seen as culturally appropriate, e.g. before the age of 29 [in the first two texts, above], and perhaps before (youthful) "beauty" fades. The promise of transformation (in the moment of subjection), and the exposure of this promise as "fake", serves as a powerful hailing-device to *all* women, i.e. women with "ordinary jobs" and "boring lives" [JH 4], career-women with "great jobs" [SJ 23], and "wives / mothers" [JH 182].

It is noteworthy, in terms of empowerment, that the *Susan James* advice column in *Femina* ["liberal feminist" editorial profile] presents the up-market version here, framing a supposedly intelligent and successful career-woman within a need "for a future with a man and/or a family in it" (*Femina* Factsheet, March, 1993: see Chapter 3).

The broken promises represented in the above texts are resolved by drawing on psychological discourses, once again through setting up an inner / outer division. Here, however, there is no reference to unknown or uncontrollable "inner selves" (or "deeper, underlying needs"), but rather an "empty" inner self [JH 4, above], or of "living behind a mask" [SJ 23, above], i.e. allowing your "true self" to be "masked". The psychologized construction of "an empty self" opens up professional therapeutic opportunities to "fill it up" (Cushman, 1990). Here, this implies a psychological / psychologized work-process of construction of a "worthy" [read "normalized"] self, i.e. develop "a personality", "have interests" and "take control of your own life" [JH 4: see text below]. And this work, practices of independence and concomitant orderings of

the inner psyche (psychic inscriptions), will "show" on the surface of the body as marks of another kind of attractiveness (surface inscriptions), to be read by others (Grosz, 1990).

The analytic interpretations in subsequent paragraphs are produced through close reading of the following advice text, which responds to an above text [JH 4]. This intertextuality is interesting only in as far as it supports the detective narrative of the psychological endeavour: the advice columnist's answer reveals a "truth" or wholeness which is hidden from the questioner / reader.

A [] You see, you are [by wanting a steady boyfriend] operating from a position of need. Your need consumes you, dampens your spirit and your qualities and is a big switch-off for people with whom you come into contact. If you are bored with your job, your life and yourself, it is very difficult for someone to become interested in you. But where do you start to change? Develop an interest in yourself and for yourself. Your job is boring - is this because you are capable of more? In that case, do more, either within or outside your job. Think of something you like doing, and pursue it: anything from a sport to a course of study. This will energize you to discover more interesting things about yourself and around yourself. If you work harder at developing interests you become an interesting person - and so attract people to you. As you sit around thinking about how boring it all is, you wait for people to become interested in you. But if you take control of your own life, people will react to this. (20 - with no real boyfriends, JH 4)

The truism, "attractiveness is not enough", becomes, within an articulation drawing on humanist psychological discourses in the above text, "you can't be attractive to others unless you are attractive to yourself". The implication of an exchange-model is fairly bald (i.e. the implied goal remains becoming attractive to others / men), but psychologization achieves a careful rearticulation of the feminine self-as-object. Women are impelled to find their "true selves" by becoming interesting / attractive objects to themselves. Thus,

(w)e become ourselves by virtue of our reflexive capacity to become objects to ourselves, to view ourselves from the standpoint of the other (Mead, 1934, in Tseelon, 1991: 120).

As Dorothy Smith (1988) suggests, this sets feminine subjectivity up in a way that women become objects of their own "work" (p. 47) [cf. Irigaray, 1981]. "Work" involves, not 'working through' unresolved emotional issues or deeper needs [previous section] or 'working on' the body via diet and/or exercise [subsequent section], but, here, "common-sense" activities that are easily insinuated into daily practice (e.g. hobbies, interests, an area of study, taking on more responsibility at work, seeing friends, etc.). This filling up of the 'empty self' and labour to build self-esteem lie at the heart "true personhood" of humanist psychological discourse (Rogers, 1959 & 1961), and serve ideological functions in eclipsing socio-structural power hierarchies and valorizing individual choice and agency (see Weinberg, 1989: Chapter 2). Thus, the emphasis on self-transformation is contained within this liberal frame of individualism.

The work imperative, discursive injunction or will to agency / transformation is expressed in a direct, present-tense form: "But where do you start to change?" The conjunction "but" functions as a pivotal formal marker in at least two ways. First, temporally, it divides what "is" [in the present, or "was" in the past], viz. the problem of emptiness, from what "could be" [in the "future"], viz. the resolution of self-transformation. Second, rhetorically, "but" separates a statement of agreement from a declaration of conflict (Mininni, 1991). This has implications for the operations and effects of psychological

normalization. Pre-conjunction, the columnist 'reflects back' the problem [e.g. indicating that the questioner / reader has been empathically and accurately "heard", understood, accepted, etc. in humanistic therapies: see Rogers, 1961], and reaches a state of agreement with the questioner / reader. This functions to soften or conceal the post-conjunctive introduction of "conflictual", normalizing information and techniques, achieving ideological effects and making resistance to the revealed "truths" difficult (see Chapter 6).

Furthermore, the rhetorical form of the question (again, within the question-and-answer constraints of the advice column) assumes that the women addressed (a) desire to transform themselves, and (b) have the resources to "take control of (their) own lives" (e.g. knowledges and skills, time, money, etc.). Indeed, this desire and the *psychic* resources are structured and reproduced within / by these psychologized practices [cf. women as malleable psychological subjects: see Carter, 1988: Chapter 2]. The question is not whether or why to work / change, but *how* to work / change ("where to start"), and *towards what and into whom*, thus establishing agency as a moral imperative in accordance with particular psychological knowledges.

This psychologized subject / agentic object, then, labours to become normalized: independent, in control of her own life, her own person, balanced, an interesting person so as to "attract people to (her)". This stands in stark opposition to "(operation) from a position of need", the folly of which is revealed to the questioner / reader [prefixed by "you see"] in the opening line of the advice text. Operating from 'a position of need' might be read in several ways, e.g. sexual desire [sexual attraction to an-other], vulnerability [needing affirmation / support] or boredom [needing input / entertainment from others]. Indeed, MacCannell and MacCannell (1989) note the de-focus of heterosexual love as endpoint or mode of motivation in modern psychological and beauty systems, which valorize selfism, individualism, independence, self-assertion and self-discovery as ends in themselves ["HAPPINESS = MAN = BEAUTY"] (p. 230). Thus, by implication in the above advice text: "need" is disempowering as it invites abuse by others.

This section has been devoted to analysis of advice texts which address disjunctions between "physically attractive" outer body-surfaces, and "empty" inner selves. Psychologized techniques and practices were aimed at transformation and construction of the inner self: "filling up" with self-esteem and self-reliance; and advocating an "interesting" (rather than a "needy") self. These practices (as psychic inscriptions), as I have suggested, enhance the attractiveness of an already-attractive body-shell. *Self-acceptance* - a cornerstone of humanist psychologization, e.g. "being true to yourself" or "accepting yourself as you are" (see Rogers, 1961; Lambley, 1973; Weinberg, 1989), and in some ways oppositional to an ethos of self-transformation - was absent in the above text. Thus, advice-seekers / readers were not impelled to confront and/or accept that they were "boring" or "empty".

Very briefly, by way of contrast with the above and conclusion of this section on psychologization, I introduce an advice text which implicates humanist psychological knowledges and practices in a slightly different way, addressing "physically un-attractive" outer body-surfaces, e.g. "fat", "ugly" or "worthless" body-shapes.

A [] You can't suddenly switch from seeing yourself as fat and ugly to seeing yourself as slim and beautiful, but you can acknowledge that there is more to you than your looks. You could do something about your weight [] but it's more important to find and acknowledge the things you do like about yourself, and then accept and learn to like the whole of you. We all need to do this to a greater or lesser extent []. Setting a higher value on yourself will enable you to refuse to allow yourself to be used, and to expect and demand and get a better deal for yourself. People who like themselves are inevitably likeable and so attract more suitable people. If self-esteem remains a problem for you, phone your nearest Life-Line Centre and talk to a counsellor. [] (Fat, ugly and used by lovers, JH 160)

A discourse of transformation is shot through with ambivalence about the appearance of the outer-body, expressed oppositionally: "being fat" might be changed to "being slim" ["you could *do something* about your weight": see subsequent section on medicalization (my emphasis)]; but "being ugly" is apparently immutable (!) as it cannot be transformed into "being beautiful". Thus, inner qualities must be drawn on. The imperative to acknowledge that "there is more to you than your looks" functions as a powerful "disembodiment" of the self (K. Young, 1989), i.e. there is "more" than a body, or a self "other" than a body. This might be read as a disentanglement of the "true (inner) self" from the "false (outer) self" [here, the body] (cf. Laing, 1965). However, in a sudden, re-integrative twist, "liking" the disembodied self is not enough: the questioner / reader is instructed to "accept and learn to like the *whole* of you" [my emphasis], i.e. a phenomenologically inspired "embodied self" is asserted (K. Young, 1989), dissolving tension between "good" and "bad" parts, inner and outer, deep and surface.

What "self-acceptance" is and the process of how it is learned (e.g. how are the above contradictions navigated?), is mysterious in the above advice text. On the one hand, it is a "common-sense", everyday, universal practice which "*we all* need to do to a greater or lesser extent" [my emphasis]; on the other hand, a professionally policed psychologized technique, learned through engagement with psychotherapeutic counselling. What is clear, however, is the imperative for self-acceptance and self-esteem, and this is conveniently cloaked in metaphors of exchange, e.g. "setting *a higher value* on yourself" and "to expect and demand and get *a better deal* for yourself" [my emphases]. Thus, failed by fickle physical attractiveness, psychologization appears to provide the liberatory techniques of self-care: self-esteem and self-acceptance are sources of power over the self and over others, e.g. to assert oneself against sexual exploitation and abuse, and to attract "more suitable people", i.e. men.

Medicalization

In the above sections, advice texts presented feminine anxiety about body-size and body-shape as crises of (im)perfection, crises of identity, and crises of power. This was articulated within an explicit framework of relational exchange: an unattractive body-shell dis-abled its owner from negotiating and asserting terms of fair exchange, and an attractive body-shell "wasn't enough" to clinch personal contentment. Advice columnists "psychologized" these problems which set up a binary opposition between "inside" (deep) and "outside" (surface body-shell), and between "self" (emotions / psyche) and "body". Techniques of reformation and intentioned work prioritized the "inside", e.g. in "working through" unresolved or

unconscious emotions, "filling up" an empty self or learning to "accept" (and "esteem") the self. These psychologized activities, then, impelled advice-seekers and readers to become "objects" ["selves"] to themselves, firmly positioning them as reflexive subjects within various psychological discourses.

"Medicalization" was defined as referring to the institutionalized practice of giving "medical meaning" to bodily symptoms (Riessman, 1983: 4), and to the "management" and "optimization" of proliferating aspects of life-experience (Arney & Bergen, 1984) [see Chapter 1]. In the texts analyzed thus far in this Chapter, the tension between psychological and medical discourses - e.g. as competing / complementary knowledges and practices overdetermining body-shape - has been marginalized thus far. Reconsider the following examples in terms of potential, overlapping positionings within psychological and medical discourses.

A [] *You could do something about your weight* [] but it's more important to find and acknowledge the things you do like about yourself, and then accept and learn to like *the whole of you*. [] (Fat, ugly and used by lovers, JH 160, my emphases)

Q [] I am now 15 and *desperately trying to get my weight down*, but I am still afraid of boys. [] (Eating to escape abuse by boys, JH 90, my emphasis)

"Doing something (about weight)" or "desperately trying (to reduce weight)" draws in medicalized knowledges about "normal" body-weights, nutrition, exercise, etc., but these knowledges are marginalized through the territoriality of institutionalized prioritization of "inside" over "outside", "self" over "body", "psychological" over "medical" [and vice versa]. In daily practice we might work on our "selves" and our "bodies" in varieties of inter-related ways. However, in advice texts, due to rigorous editing and form-al constraints (e.g. question-and-answer format offers a single resolution to a single issue, or monothematic advice columns offering institutionalized expertise: see Chapter 2), medical discourses produce "attractiveness" as a distinct realm of problematic experience through unidimensionality of focus on the physical body.

The analyses in sections below draw on the duality of a Foucauldian approach to medicalized discourse for the purposes of an analytics of power. Thus, medicalized technologies operate on *the body* as an object of clinical scrutiny, and grids of normalizing perception constrain what may be known or acted on (e.g. all experience which is "not-body" is eclipsed), and enable understanding and instrumental action (e.g. diet, exercise, etc.) [see Chapter 1].

The "otherness" of these medicalized advice texts [from texts analyzed in previous section] introduced considerable methodological confusion. It was difficult to find a point of analytic entry - a structuring focus for the analysis - due to complex entwinings of (a) the diffused, "everyday", ongoingness of medicalized practices of surveillance, normalization, self-styling and care of the physical body, (b) discourses of "health" ("nature" and "medicine") and "beauty" ("work"), and/or (c) the confluence between "tone" and "form" of sites of advice, and editorial profiles of magazines, which achieve particular "empowering" effects.

This impasse was resolved as follows. An examination of formal features of a particular site of "beauty advice" (drawing almost exclusively on medical discourses) - *Femina's Beauty Clinic* - will conclude this Chapter. Within the continuous rituals of body-work operating in advice texts, a sequence of medicalized work on body-shape / weight, an advocacy of work progressing along a particular course, a series of institutionally produced and policed "priorities", was identified through repeated reading of my corpus of texts. This sequence, see below, forms the 'structuring focus' of the close analysis of selected advice texts which follows, but should not be seen as linear: the imperative to "work" is ongoing and self-perpetuating. "Cosmetic surgery" will not be included in this dissertation due to limitations of space.

- (a) *Objectification* of the physical body as an object of scrutiny and work, and disarticulating it into segments, fragments or "problem areas".
- (b) Use of discourses of medical *normalization* to establish and assess (il)legitimacy of "problems areas", and appropriate techniques of intervention and reformation.
- (c) "*Body-work*": engagement in networks of regulation, discipline and transformation of the body, e.g. nutrition and exercise, overseen by the panoptic gaze of the self / qualified health professionals.
- (d) "*Other skilled work*": use of strategies of concealment and camouflage (e.g. "clever dressing") to disguise bodily resistance or recalcitrance.
- (e) *Cosmetic surgery* (e.g. liposuction, stomach-tucks) to remove or repair recalcitrance, re-writing the body's surface. This is produced as a "last resort" or "radical step" in advice columns.

1. "I'm not fat but my thighs are large": objectification and fragmentation

Analytic interpretation in this section focuses on the following advice texts.

Q I'm 14 years old and I recently started taking laxatives. [] I'm not overweight but I feel I should lose a few kilos and I can't stick to a diet. I sometimes overdo the dosage - despite that, I'm still the same weight, probably because I eat as much as I like. Am I bulimic? (Teen puppy fat, ED 12)

Q I'm 17 and in matric. I'm not overweight, but I have a large, protruding stomach and fairly big thighs. I need advice on how to reduce them before my matric dance in October. (Of stomach and thighs, ED 48)

Q I'm 16 years old and I'm embarrassed about my body. I'm not fat but my thighs are large and I can't get them slim. Last year I went on a diet and lost weight but everyone told me to stop because I didn't need to [] (On weight and career, ED 56)

What is striking in the above advice texts - all published letters to the *Elizabeth Duncan* advice column - is the presentation of "body problems" by advice-seekers. The level of physical objectification and focus on the body shell precludes emotional narratives, e.g. the potential-bulimic's concern is with inner "physiological" damage [laxatives ruining a digestive system] rather than any psychological disquiet or uncontrollable feelings (ED 12). There is a silence, too, around motivations for the desire to "lose a few

kilos" (ED 12), or for having slim thighs and a flat stomach (ED 48). Beyond oblique reference to a broad cultural ideal, a "generic woman" who is slim (but not thin), curvaceous *and* firm, etc. (Coward, 1984), these problems are not presented as specific heterosexual relationship problems, or in terms of an explicit relational exchange model.

This might be interpreted as a medicalized forging of a relationship between the self and the physical body - the 'incarnated' self or body as self - where "body-work" equals care of the self. This does not necessarily involve, as Katherine Young (1989) implies, a dehumanizing "(displacement of) the self from the body" (p. 153) [i.e. something doctors do to 'patients'], but rather a generalized (cultural) knowledge of the conventions of medical discourses. Thus, the advice-seekers in the above texts produce the individual body (deep physiology and surface appearance) as an object of self / clinical scrutiny, and emotional issues (cf. the introduction of a psychologized gaze), and relationship issues (cf. the introduction of a male gaze), are inappropriate narratives.

The above texts display, then, a steeping in medical discourses, i.e. the knowledges and practices such discourses reproduce and the conventions of medicalized exchange. Physical imperfections / problems are confessed to elicit practical, interventionary "service" or "information" to effect normalization [see Jefferson & Lee (1983) for linguistic distinctions between "troubles-telling" and "service encounters"]. First, for example, confirmation of a medicalized self-diagnosis is requested: "Am I bulimic?" (ED 12). Use of a diagnostic label, and knowledge of the symptoms, underlines the pervasiveness of medicalized knowledges about 'eating disorders', and, indeed, the role of advice columns in disseminating these knowledges (Gerhardt & Van Staden, 1991: see Chapter 2). Within a Foucauldian gaze, the proliferating forms of surveillance and self-monitoring of eating-behaviour - in terms of medicalized norms - become evident, e.g. "I went on a diet [] but everyone told me to stop because I didn't need to [lose weight]" (ED 56).

Second, advice on various medicalized interventions (work imperatives) may be specifically requested to effect normalization, e.g. in terms of exercise or diet. This emphasizes the proliferation of specialized technologies which are supported, legitimated and reproduced by the scientificity of medical discourses, e.g. dermatologists, nutritionists, fitness experts in gymnasiums, beauticians, etc. These technologies do not, of course, offer "top-down" cures: reformative "body-work" requires an *agentic subject*, desire, mobilization and commitment to ritualistic daily practices of surveillance and action (e.g. eating moderately, etc.). The above texts might be interpreted as instances of agency (e.g. writing-in, requesting assistance with body-problems, as active mobilization), and, indeed, as gender-appropriate assumption of reflexive positions as subject and object of their own body-work (Smith, 1988).

The power of such medicalized objectification and subjection might be read in the above texts as an ability to foreclose alternative interpretations of their physical experience of themselves. Riessman (1983) has commented that this is major factor in women's "collusion" with medical discourses, i.e. acknowledgement of "body problems". Thus, manifest / perceived "fatness" or "a large protruding stomach" cannot be "psychologized away" as a self-esteem problem, or caused by unresolved emotional issues, if concrete, medicalized intervention is requested to inform instrumental action on the body.

However, the above advice texts may be read in a way which suggests that editorial intervention has interceded in the way the "problem" is constructed or framed. For example, the texts (all from the *Elizabeth Duncan* advice column in *Fair Lady*) use an identical disclaimer: "I'm not overweight / fat, but []". This suggests the possibility that an editorial point is being made on the non-appropriateness of such concerns to teenagers (backed up by medical normalization), e.g. the unreasonableness of these feelings about their bodies. This is supported by the flippant title of one of the letters, "Teen Puppy Fat" (ED 12), which trivializes the problem - implies that it is something that will be "grown out of" - and is oppositional to the ("serious") medicalized monitoring of 'dis-ordered' eating-behaviour in the above texts. This title underlines the pedagogic function of normalization: it provides an institutionalized interpretation of the "problem" which precedes and frames the construction of the problem.

The young ("teen") ages of the advice-seekers represented in advice texts in this Chapter is noted. A comprehensive analysis of "chronological" development of feminine subjectivity is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I take a synchronic view: ongoing objectification, "work" and transformation of women's bodies is essential to maintain gender-appropriate positioning, at *any* age. Formally, I recognize that "age" functions as an "identity-marker" in advice texts which have been depersonalized in the shift towards issue-based "information" (e.g. names removed, titles inserted, etc.: see Chapter 2). In terms of normalization, "age" in advice texts is the determining criterion for what advice / response / intervention might be considered institutionally, culturally or morally appropriate, e.g. *Elizabeth Duncan's* framing of "teen puppy fat", above.

The disclaimer-constructions in the above texts, i.e. "I'm not overweight, but []", whether authorship is attributable to advice-seekers or editorial intervention, set up a contradiction between (a) "not-fat-whole-body" ["I'm not overweight"], and (b) "fat-body-parts" ["I have a large protruding *stomach* and fairly big *thighs*"]. This apparent contradiction - not recognized to be contradictory in the advice text - is managed via "disarticulation" of the medicalized body into segments (K. Young, 1989: 155), or fragmentation into "problem areas" (Haug, 1987; Dull & West, 1991). Coward (1984) argues that such "problem areas" (e.g. breasts, stomachs, bottoms, thighs) are targeted as foci for various forms of skilled and ongoing body-work and/or products, and are, thus, produced as "perfectible" (p. 40).

This means that negative values, moral epithets, are culturally attached to the possession of "imperfect" body-parts, hence the confession of social shame and embarrassment in the above advice texts. "A large, protruding stomach" (ED 48) is a case to point. "A stomach" - indefinite article - reinforces medicalized objectification: it functions as a technique of reflexive distanciation, i.e. a construction of "my stomach" as an "it"; and universalization, i.e. indexically drawing in all women's stomachs. "Large" and "protruding" are used as adjectives descriptive of space, which suggest that "it" (the stomach), or metonymically, "she" (the owner, the reader), might be taking up more space than is culturally or gender / age appropriate. Large physical size has been read as powerful or resistant within a Foucauldian frame [see previous section], but in this advice text, it is produced as disempowering, i.e. alienating or socially embarrassing where "notions of the *average body* [e.g. among other girls at the Matric Dance] can come to represent a

bond of belonging", a desire for social integration, of not wanting to "stand out" as different (Haug, 1987: 118).

Coward (1984) has drawn attention to the cultural significations of a big stomach, i.e. over-indulgence, lack of self-discipline, greed, laziness, unattractiveness, 'letting oneself go', etc. (p. 44). The disclaimer-construction ["I am not overweight, but I have a large, protruding stomach"] and the medicalized objectification of "a stomach" serve to foreclose "moral" meanings, i.e. the-problem-stomach is presented as due to some medicalized reason "other" than "simple" over-eating or general laziness, e.g. muscle tone in a particular area, posture, constipation, eating "wrong" foods, etc. This sets up the advice-context as a site of normalizing, medicalized information about "large, protruding stomachs", or as textual parameters of courses of action: through adoption of particular practices, we [as readers] are en-abled to "control" our own stomachs (pull / hold them in), and in so doing, institutionalized forms of control are extended across the outer surface of the body and its inner muscles and systems.

I have explicitly used a Foucauldian reading of the advice texts in this section, emphasizing the empowering and constraining effects of medicalized objectification and fragmentation. The empowering effects render medicalization of appearance an attractive strategy within a liberal feminist agenda, e.g. *Femina's Beauty Clinic* [see subsequent section]. Coward (1984) comments that techniques of objectification and fragmentation of bodies "save us from despair" (p. 45). Thus, emotional investment and social / ideological contextualization is eclipsed, and the body divided into (self affirmative) "good bits" and "not-good-bits" ("problem areas"), which we take responsibility for, work at/on and transform. Focus on "bits" of bodies might absolve us of responsibility for the rest of our bodies or, indeed, for other aspects of our whole lives (Haug, 1987).

2. "Girls often think they are overweight when in fact they are the normal weight for their build and height": medical information, reassurance and normalization

Riessman's (1983) definition of medicalization includes an understanding of the operation of socio-biological norms, i.e. medical practice becomes a vehicle for deciding (a) what bodily experience is "normal" (adherent to socio-biological norms), and (b) how to eliminate or control experience which is "ab-normal" (p. 4) [see Chapter 1]. Rather than a construction of these "norms" as "other" than daily physical / psychic experience - e.g. imposed by some external institutionalized agency - Foucauldian formulations of the normalizing effects of psychological and/or medical discourses (e.g. Arney & Bergen, 1984; Henriques et al, 1984; A. Young, 1987; Rose, 1990: see Chapter 1) have emphasized the embeddedness of these knowledges and practices within modern social consciousness, i.e. they "constitute the very form of modern individuality" (Henriques et al, 1984: 1).

The propping up of existing norms, then, is inherent in advice columnists' acknowledgement of particular experience as "problematic", i.e. textual advocacy of courses of reformative action for "problem areas" (e.g. "a large, protruding stomach" or "big thighs") implies institutionalized acceptance that such "problem

areas" exist. This draws in the thorny debate between radical feminist calls for the social and ideological contextualization of "beauty problems" (cf. Winship, 1987; McFadyean, 1988: see Chapter 2), and liberal views of the dissemination of medicalized information and techniques as empowering of women.

The following text constitutes the advice issued to a young potential-bulimic.

A At 14, most girls carry quite a lot of chubbiness. Leading a normal active life and eating a normal varied diet usually takes care of this chubbiness in time. It is indeed unhealthy to make such artificial intrusions into the natural functioning of your body. Taking unnecessary laxatives will upset the chemical balance of your body and your metabolism. It is definitely harmful to you. Discuss this with your family doctor and also tell your mother how concerned you are about your weight [] (Teen puppy fat, ED 12, my emphases)

First, "normality" is assured. The subjective experience of unease about body-weight is defused through assertion of the "normality" of "chubbiness" for 14-year-old girls. This is achieved in several ways. "Most" - a quantitative adjective indicating prevalence - invokes a sense of universality, and because "most teenage girls" are "chubby", adolescent "chubbiness" is normalized. However, a discourse of "natural" / "normal" development is drawn in - girls grow out of chubbiness "in time" - implying a gradual development (via assistance from "a normal active life" and "a normal varied diet") towards a "normal" adult shape, which is, apparently, not-chubby. The diminutivization of "adolescent fat" with culturally loaded euphemisms, such as "chubbiness" and "puppy fat", simultaneously produces these young female bodies as "cute" or "innocent" [or, normatively concerned with things "other" than sex, power, attractiveness, etc.]; and powerfully legitimates and reproduces the "fat versus slim" dichotomy for girls and women (Diamond, 1985), i.e. where "slim" equals "healthy" equals "medically normal" equals "cultural ideal".

The confluence between medicalized constructions of normality (i.e. nature, development, health) and cultural ideals of beauty (i.e. "work") is masked via recourse to medical discourses. Thus, the invocation of "a *normal* active life" and "a *normal* varied diet" forges links with exercise and nutrition [see subsequent section], and these daily practices are "normalized" as the natural / healthy means to achieve desired slimness. This construction of "normality", then, silences the experienced discomfort of the advice-seeker / reader (e.g. powerlessness, lack of control, shame, stigma, etc.), and serves as a medicalized strategy to expose the "ab-normality" [deviance] of particular actions.

"Normal" developmental paths, eating habits, exercise habits and life-styles are set up against the "definitely harmful" "quick-fix", "artificial intrusion" of purgatives. Medical jurisdiction over the "natural" functioning of the body is asserted over the rights of the individual to control of her own body. Thus, purging by laxatives is produced as an "*artificial intrusion* into the natural functioning of (the) body" [my emphasis], with the potential to "upset" the chemical balance and metabolism - domains of medical knowledge, control and intervention.

Significantly, the advice-seeker / reader is impelled to "confess" her "artificial intrusion" to the family doctor and to her mother. These agencies of jurisdiction and surveillance may effect normalization through

(a) drawing in/on the power-knowledge of medical discourses to underline the life-threatening seriousness of the "ab-normality" and/or threaten professional intervention, e.g. institutionalized incarceration, psychotherapeutic reformation, etc.; and (b) instructing the cultural daughter in the feminine skills of normalizing body-shape through "sensible" [more appropriate] manipulation of diet and exercise. Within a Foucauldian frame, power over her own body is wrested away from the advice-seeker, e.g. her own resistance to "chubbiness", and is vested in numerous panoptic agencies of normalizing control, e.g. doctors, mothers, readers, who might use this medicalized information to monitor, guard against or identify the bulimic-behaviour of self, friends, daughters, etc.

An appeal or reference to particular "norms", particular "abnormalities", then, may be used to usher in a voice of reason and reasonableness, balance and moderation, a regression towards the mean / norm, the average body, the "average" weight. Consider the following advice text.

A If all your friends think that you're not overweight, try to believe them. Girls often think they are overweight when in fact they are the normal weight for their build and height. You need to eat a healthy, balanced diet which includes starch and protein and some fat [] (On weight and career, ED 56, my emphasis)

Significantly, the "voice" / "gaze" of reasonableness, balance and moderation in this advice text is not the advice-seeker's (or reader's) own inner voice/gaze. This introduces a disjunction, some lack of integrity, between "outside" or "surface" [what our bodies look like to others] and "inside" or "deep" [what our bodies look like to us]. Such statements as, "(i)f all your friends think that you're not overweight, try to believe them", instruct women-readers to distrust their own experience of their bodies, their own inner voice(s). Thus, their own voices are rendered "unreasonable": infiltrated and possessed (taken over) by an unattainable cultural ideal of the perfect body; or contradictory to the "objective" voice of medical discourse. Hence, "girls often think they're fat when in fact they are the normal weight for their build and height" [my emphasis].

These "normal" weights are produced by medical discourses as "factual", and therefore, unchallengeable. This sets up several oppositional tensions: "self" (un-reason, subjective) versus "medical discourse" (reason, objective); and/or "cultural ideals" (un-reason, subjective) versus "medical discourse" (reason, objective). These dichotomies are crucial to an understanding of the power that medicalization accrues in advice texts as "moderate", "objective", "neutral", "factual", "value-free"; indeed, the antithesis of "ideology" [in the classical Marxist sense of "false consciousness": see Foster, 1991: 351].

Thus, an imperative is issued to seek out the voice, opinion, or reassurance of some "objective" other, to resist, moderate or augment one's own voice. In the above advice text, "friends" serve this normalizing function. A previous advice text [ED 12] drew in "the family doctor" [e.g. the medical and/or male gaze] and "the mother" [e.g. the feminine cultural-mother, voice of "common-sense" and/or unconditional love: cf. Hollway, 1984a). The over-arching, panoptic voice / gaze of reasonableness and moderation is produced, of course, by the textually embodied advice columnist. Her legitimation by medical discourses reproduces (a) her own position as "moderate", "neutral", "objective", "beyond reproach", etc., and (b) the

distinction between medical discourses / advice column (reason, power, knowledge, truth) and the advice-seeker / reader (un-reason, lack of knowledge or control), perpetuating power-knowledge relations.

Advice texts which mentioned cosmetic surgery - a medicalized technique to reform physical "ab-normality" - were interesting to me because they produced instances of resistance by advice columnists to medical discourses, i.e. advice texts were cautious and/or condemnatory of surgical intervention on grounds of aesthetic improvement. Significantly in this context, psychological discourses were drawn in to explain this disjunction, i.e. [surgery is a radical step, so rather] "accept yourself the way you are". These lengthy analyses have been excluded from this dissertation. However, medicalized information on "norms" of body-shape or body-weight may be used to usher psychological discourses of "self-esteem" and "self-acceptance" into advice texts which do not mention cosmetic surgery, and I turn to examination of such an instance here.

The medicalized constructions of body-weight analyzed thus far have sought, perhaps, to drive a dividing wedge between an inner psychic self, and a physical body, constituted of "inner" physiological and "outer" body-shell components, and severed from emotional or social narratives. Advice texts examined in this section have produced a *range* of "normal weights", appropriate for different ages (ED 12), and for different builds and heights (ED 56), i.e. not one medical norm, but many. Interpretative analysis focuses on the following advice text.

A [] There are broadly three types of people - ectomorphs, mesomorphs and endomorphs. The ectomorph which seems to be your body type - is simply thin, with light bone structure and tapering muscle shapes. One of the most important things in leading a happy and successful life is acceptance of yourself and things about yourself which you cannot change - your basic body shape among them. Most people would like to be physically different from what they are, but only when we accept the attributes which we cannot change can we get on with more important aspects of our lives. Self-acceptance is the magic ingredient in developing self-esteem - people who are happy are those who like themselves and are liked, no matter what their size and shape. I suspect that is you spent more time developing your self-esteem and less worrying about your body, you would have a better chance of living a fuller, happier life, whatever your size or shape. (Too skinny for a mini, JH 20)

The appeal to medical discourses - emphasizing multiplicity of norms - is read as an attempt to expose the folly of slavish pursuit of an "inappropriate" or "unattainable norm". In the above advice text, use of Sheldon's categorization of body-types reproduces incontestable norms regarding women's bodies: *endomorphs*, *ectomorphs* and *mesomorphs* exist as "basic body shapes" (outer body-shell) and configurations of skeletal structure, musculature and metabolic rate (inner, physiological features). Thus, medicalized reassurance is issued via (a) institutionalized legitimation of the physically different appearance of individual women's bodies; and/or (b) the biological fixity of these attributes, i.e. "basic body shape" is one of "the things about yourself which you cannot change". Powerfully, this sets up a moralistic discourse of "nature" and "health", which is counterpoised against the "un-natural" and "inappropriate" cultural ideal: discourses of "beauty" and "work".

Psychological discourses of "self-acceptance" and "self-esteem" reinforce this discursive tension. That medical science has "proven" women's bodies to vary normatively (above) permits this advice text to

produce a (psychologized) moral judgement on the superficiality of those advice-seekers and women-readers who are consumed with cultural ideals of "beauty", physical appearance and body-work, i.e. those who spend *too much* time "worrying about (their) bodies". Through psychologized re-assertion of "an inner life" (emotions, psyche, etc.) and "a social life" (a self embedded in relationships with others / men: see below), this advice text conjures up other "more, important aspects of our lives", and structures a desire for "a fuller, happier life, whatever your size or shape". The moral imperative for "psychic work" is, thus, laid down: self-acceptance and self-esteem are keys to individuality, feeling comfortable with oneself, personal and relational happiness, etc.

The adjective "magic" in association with psychic work ("self acceptance is the *magic* ingredient in [] self-esteem") occupies an uneasy space in this advice text. In many ways it implies that startling effects might be achieved without effort or work by readers themselves, i.e. "by magic" or "a trick" [cf. "work" as "fun" in subsequent section]. However, surrounded by psychologized jargon ("self-acceptance" and "self-esteem"), "magic" serves to reinforce the professionally policed mysteriousness around the workings of/on the psyche. Thus, the power of psychologization is compelling to the reader: secret [and "magical"] techniques or forces are used on the (hidden) inner self; and the process is facilitated by the presence of a "magician" (e.g. a skilled practitioner of "magic" / psychotherapy) to produce empirically visible ["magical"] "results" on a body or in a relationship / life.

It is significant that the discourses of self-acceptance and self-esteem are directed at an "ectomorph" or "simply thin" woman. This interpretation suggests that two standards of physical evaluation draw on different discourses to effect normalization. For example, a "simply fat" woman might be regarded as "unhealthy" and physically malleable in the sense of being targeted with self-transformative, medicalized technologies of normalization in advice texts (e.g. normal diet, normal exercise, etc.). The "simply thin" woman is psychologized because "thinness" (a) is more resistant to medicalized regimes of reformation (e.g. exercises to build muscle bulk, supplementary diets, etc.), and/or (b) is closer to the "ideal" shape for women. Thus, "simply thin" reads as "naturally thin", counter-indicating the need for medicalized concern or work on an already-attractive appearance, and opening up a site for the operation of psychologized knowledges, e.g. 'you are more than your body' or 'attractiveness isn't enough' (see previous section on psychologization).

Psychologization of physical appearance in this advice text re-introduces some notion of an exchange-system, bartering or a market-relationship, i.e. "people who are happy are those who like themselves and are *liked*" (my emphasis). Although liked-by-whom remains implicit (e.g. liked by parents, friends, men, etc.), it is clear that the psychological work involved in liking oneself (fashioning a "likeable" self) precedes social success. In this regard, the confluence between discourses drawn into particular sites of advice and magazine editorial policy is noted. For example, *Janet Harding's Life-Line* (see above advice text) favours psychologization - indeed, is "sponsored" by a non-profitmaking counselling organization (see Chapter 3) - and makes unreflexive [read "un-feminist"] use of metaphors of exchange in emotional and social narratives (e.g. JH 4, JH 90, JH 138, JH 160: in this Chapter). This is counterpoised against *Femina's Beauty Clinic*, where medicalization of physical appearance might seem to "fit" with the liberal feminist profile of individual empowerment in several ways. I return to these ideas at the close of this Chapter.

3. "A good diet and exercise programme should help reduce your problem areas": nutrition and exercise

Psychologization offered "psychological work" which prioritized an "inner self", i.e. 'working through' repressed emotions, filling up an empty self or learning "self-acceptance". In similar ways, medicalization impels the individual to become an "object" to themselves, a body to care for, work on and transform. This work imperative implicates concrete, physical practices (e.g. eating behaviour: what to eat, when, why, how much, and combined with what other foods), ritually repeated on a daily basis until habitualized. Habituality correctly implies that the imperative for these practices of "self-styling" and surveillance (Foucault, 1986) is ongoing, and is deeply embedded in feminine subjectivity, i.e. subjection within medicalized discourses of self-care (e.g. "health") and self-transformation (e.g. "beautification").

Advocacy of these physical practices is carefully founded on/in medical discourses to assert or police professional, institutional credibility. Thus, for example, advocacy of daily exercise may be supported by the integrity, qualifications and expertise of "reputable" fitness-institutions or fitness-professionals. This serves as a voice of reasonable moderateness [see previous section], a shoring up against the non-medical other: disreputable, immoderate, quick-fix, extreme, unprofessional, damaging, inexperienced and unqualified. Consider the following advice texts.

A Certain exercises can help improve muscle bulk. They should be done under the guidance of an expert at a gym where there are weight circuits [] Enquire about gyms - rather than free exercise or aerobic classes - in your area, and discuss your needs and goals with someone qualified. [] (Too skinny for a mini, JH 20)

A A good diet and exercise programme should help reduce your problem areas. Stomach muscles are relatively easy to tone, and results can be seen quite quickly. Speak to a reputable gym or health club and get advice. [] (Of stomach and thighs, ED 48)

Exercise is elevated, here, to the level of institutionalized science, a serious business of skill and knowledge, policed by professionals with qualifications for whose expertise and service one has to pay. That these advice texts powerfully structure the institutionalized specificity of the desired "needs and goals" [cf. "*your* needs and goals": my emphasis] of exercise regimes is noted: skilled exercise is targeted at "problem areas", which readers are impelled to "confess" and "expose" to qualified professionals. For example, "skinny legs" (JH 20) are worked on in the weight circuit of a gymnasium, 'pumping iron' to "improve muscle bulk"; and "a reputable gym or health club" will impart "good" [read "effective", "safe", "moderate"] specialized toning programmes for deviant "stomach muscles" (ED 48). By implication, then, engagement in informal, unfocused, unprofessional, unspecialized exercises - at home, for example, or in "free classes" - invokes images of bodily harm or ab-use of the body in a similar way to laxative-taking, which threatened "the natural functioning of (the) body" [see previous section].

Thus, exercise (as a vital aspect of self-transformative or self-care "work") is removed from women's own jurisdiction, is removed from the domestic or leisure sphere, and is practiced "under the [panoptic]

guidance of an expert at a gym" (JH 20).⁴ The following advice texts extend these panoptic ideas into the home environment, i.e. women may labour at "home-exercise routines" too, but aspects of institutionalized professionalism, legitimation and focus are introduced into these routines. Both these advice texts are taken from *Femina's Beauty Clinic*, and the formal differences of this site (from other, more general advice columns) will be addressed in the concluding section of this Chapter.

[] Most gyms will put together a specific toning programme for problem areas, but here are three excellent exercises devised by a top New York fitness centre:

1. To tone the baggy area above the knee and the inner thigh: Stand with your back against a wall and bend your knees until they are in line with your hips, rather as if you were sitting on an invisible chair. Hold for 30 seconds, then gradually rise again. Repeat three times. [] Complete these exercises three times a week - they take about 10 minutes - and you should see results in a couple of weeks. (How can I tone my thighs?, BC 31)

At this time of the year many women resort to quick-fixes in order to shed unwanted kilos. Carien, from Verwoerdburg, writes to ask whether wearing a plastic suit during her home-exercise routine would help her lose more weight. The answer is no, not really. [] To burn fat requires continuous, rhythmical, aerobic activity for 20-30 minutes. I'm afraid there are no short cuts. (Do Plastic Exercise Suits Work, BC 39)

The specific thigh-toning exercises provided are accorded the professional stamp of credibility, efficacy and hailing power through having been "devised by a top New York fitness centre" [BC 31]. This simultaneously produces (a) "(bagginess) above the knee" as a legitimate "problem", (b) a desire for normalization, e.g. "smooth" or "toned" thighs [where "smooth" and "toned" signify the opposite of "baggy"], and (c) implementable reformative action, e.g. exercises which cure ["within a few weeks"] where other techniques have failed. No technocratic accoutrements are required in the home environment, e.g. exercise machines are superfluous when "sitting on an invisible chair" is effective [BC 31], and "plastic suits" are exposed as fallacious [BC 39]. Dedication to repetitive and time-consuming physical work is produced as the key to success, i.e. "complete these exercises three times a week - they take about 10 minutes" [BC 31], and "to burn fat requires continuous, rhythmical, aerobic activity for 20-30 minutes" [BC 39].

This work, and indeed, these results, decontextualized from any emotional or relational (with men) component in *Beauty Clinic*, appear to be produced in the above texts as rewarding, or as rewards / goals, in themselves. For example, what do "toned thighs" or a "flat stomach" mean, beyond the medicalized physical activities required to produce and maintain them? A Foucauldian approach permits a reading of the complex production and institutionalization of these activities and the structuring of the desire for results, through discourse. In keeping with the liberal feminist profile of *Femina*, then, these activities might be read as empowering in two complementary ways. First, in terms of self-discipline, the assertion of the self over the body's fat cells and muscles, or of the self over the self. In an earlier section, psychologically 'working through' unresolved emotions was perceived to "show" on the body-surface as

4 The architectural and interior design of the gymnasium itself (e.g. open-plan tiers which render exercising individuals visible to one another, windows, mirrors, communal change-rooms and showers, etc.) might be understood as modeled on Bentham's Panopticon (Foucault, 1977: see Chapter 1), i.e. omnipresent professional expertise / authority, constant visibility, surveillance, discipline.

normalization of dis-order (i.e. obesity). Here, hard physical exercise might symbiotically produce "inner feelings of calm assurance and control" (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1987: 220).

Second, these activities might be read as empowering of the self in relation to others, e.g. within an exchange-system, power (as 'attractive goods') over men, or among other women in competition for men. Coward (1984) has noted the merging of "health" and "beauty" in current medicalization (p. 21), e.g. both invoke images of slimness, trim thighs, flat stomachs, etc. Thus, contradictorily, "good health" means (a) moderation and avoidance of rigorous exercising or dieting, but also (b) working at being in control of your life, *and* (c) being "sexually attractive" (ibid). Within a liberal feminist frame, (b) and (c) might serve as an acceptable cover for having no heterosexual relationships, i.e. "convey(ing) the impression that you're without a man *by choice*" (MacCannell and MacCannell, 1987: 227, my emphasis), rather than by not having been able to attract one.

The above interpretative analysis of results and rewards of physical exercise has implied that these are not unitary. Indeed, contradictions abound; an interesting one being, in the above advice texts, the relative speed at which results / rewards of physical exercise become visible on the surface of the body. Thus, optimistic intimations of "results (which) can be seen quite quickly" [stomach muscles: ED 48] or "in a couple of weeks" [baggy thighs: BC 31], are counterpoised against dire warnings of excessive exercise, fads, "quick-fixes" and "short cuts" [BC 39].

"I'm afraid there are no short cuts" functions (a) as a semi-apologetic assertion of ongoing, hard work as the *only* alternative for women [cf. "I'm sorry there are no short cuts"]; and (b) as a warning to and moral condemnation of the "many women (who) resort to quick-fixes". The tone of this statement is commanding and authoritative, issued from a position of unassailable professional knowledge. There is no "magic" here, and no respite from "continuous, rhythmical, aerobic activity" - like mice on treadmill wheels. The imperative to be "other" than the women described in the advice text - 'those lazy women who resort to quick-fixes just before the summer arrives' - produces ongoing work and surveillance because we [as readers] have been led to believe - through medicalization - that these practices produce "health" and "beauty" (Coward, 1984).

To cover the ongoing labour involved in these practices (e.g. gathering knowledge, life-style planning, "clever" exercising for particular target areas, physical effort or developing physical skills, stamina and co-ordination, etc.), women may be advised to turn the labour into leisure, recreation or "fun" (Coward, 1984; Smith, 1988), as is evident in the following advice text.

Regular exercise is the best way to rev up your metabolism and, if you eat sensibly and watch the amount of fat you eat, to lose weight safely and for good. [] Carolynne from Bedfordview writes that she has been swimming at a health club but has heard that this makes the body cling to fat as insulation. According to exercise experts there is no evidence to support the fat-clinging theory and swimming is recommended as an ideal way to exercise aerobically - and burn calories - without risk of injury. Thirty minutes of breaststroke burns about 1260 kilojoules (300 calories). [] (S)wimming is [] an all-over body conditioner and deeply relaxing. It builds muscular strength, co-ordination and flexibility []. Aqua-aerobics classes are a fun way to work out without feeling stiff and sore - they are ideal for overweight or pregnant women. (Will swimming help me slim?, BC 20)

This text articulates the tension between two constructions of physical exercise. First, an elaboration of the scientific bases for exercise structures multiple benefits and motivations for regular swimming. "Weight-loss" is perhaps the most salient of these [e.g. metabolism is "rev(ved) up"; "the fat-clinging theory" is refuted; or a clinically specified number of kilojoules / calories are "burn(ed)"], but other benefits include "all-over body conditioning" (toning?), increased muscular strength, flexibility, etc. The "safety" aspect [it is "without risk of injury" and is advocated for pregnant women] is enhanced by containment within medical discourses and, concretely, within a pool at a health club - overseen by panoptic professionals. The multi-layered imperative, catering for a variety of needs and goals within one exercise regime, draws in *all* women - pregnant women, out-of-shape women, women in need of relaxation - no-one escapes or is excused.

Second is a construction of this work as "fun", i.e. "a fun way to work out". "Fun" reads as the opposite of "work" here, as leisure, as pleasure, particularly when coupled with the "deeply relaxing" benefits touted. Rhetorically, it is significant that "fun" appears in the last sentence of this advice text, i.e. via operation of 'recency effect', it is the adjective which might be most salient in recollections of this form of exercise. As such, it functions ideologically to mask or render invisible (a) the operations of institutionalized control over the body (e.g. the "scientific" information provided), and (b) the hard labour of exercise that women are impelled to perform to "become" healthy / shapely, or "stay" healthy / shapely.

The above advice text also emphasizes the medicalized production of exercise and diet as a binary unit. Thus, achieving the desired effect - "to lose weight safely and for good" - requires a "sensible" balance between these practices. This is a highly skilled operation, fraught with contradictions, where balance might mean the strategic use of exercise to "rev up" metabolism and to "burn" excess calories / kilojoules consumed. That women are impelled to "eat sensibly, and watch the amount of fat (they) eat" sets up normalizing networks of surveillance and knowledge around food and eating practices. This advice text assumes that women-readers *already know* what foods or eating practices are "sensible" (only specifying reduced intake of fat), suggesting that feminine subjectivity is embedded in these indexical knowledges from various other sources (e.g. other magazine features, other advice texts, friends, medical encounters, labels on food items in supermarkets, etc.).

The following advice text provides some of these knowledges about "a healthy, balanced diet" for an adolescent (or un-knowledgeable) audience. By way of conclusion, interpretative analysis draws comparisons between this text [ED 56], and the previous one [BC 20].

A [] You need to eat a healthy, balanced diet which includes starch and protein and some fat. You can send a self addressed envelope to our librarian [] for the special diet for teenagers which has been devised by our award-winning nutritionist, Debbie Collings. Debbie says: "The only way to fresh, natural looks and an abundance of energy is to eat enough of the right foods and to exercise regularly. Teenagers should never diet unless they are grossly overweight - and then only under the guidance of an expert. It's vital at this time of your life that your body gets all the nutrients it needs for your ongoing metamorphosis into womanhood. If you *do* feel you need to lose weight, rather aim to keep your weight constant over a few months and 'grow' into your ideal weight instead." (On weight and career, ED 56)

The professional credentials of Debbie Collings, *Fair Lady's* "award-winning nutritionist" are elaborately established in this advice text, i.e. "nutritionist" signifying professional training, knowledge and status; and "award-winning" reading as "popular", "trust-worthy", "professionally feted" or "highly effective". The shipping-in of this professional expertise - indicated by the use of direct quotation - indicates that this issue is considered "serious enough" to warrant such intervention. Rhetorically, the formality of this authority is under-cut in several ways. For example, the professional is informally and unthreateningly referred to as "Debbie" [i.e. "Debbie says..."], and information shared is passed off as friendly chat. Furthermore, use of the possessive pronoun (plural) "our", as in "our nutritionist", draws the adolescent-reader into a complicity of shared experience with all women; and positions the advice columnist (*Elizabeth Duncan*), nutritionist (Debbie Collings) and librarian (unspecified) within "the *Fair Lady* team", i.e. working together to inform, oversee, assist, entrench, transform, empower. [See analysis of "our psychologist" in a previous section].

These rhetorical features make resistance to the content of the medicalized knowledges about "a healthy, balanced diet" difficult. For example, adolescent readers who might not (for whatever reason) write-in for "the special diet for teenagers" are issued with a potted version of the dietetic principles in the advice text. Also, the *Fair Lady* commitment to a liberal agenda of empowerment of individuals through information [see Chapter 3] renders exposure of the ideological and/or institutionalized bases of these knowledges uneasy for feminists, for, undoubtedly, these knowledges facilitate a sense of control for girls and women, over their own bodies and lives.

Powerfully, these normative medical knowledges about feminine adolescent bodies are couched in cautionary talk of "balance", "health", "expert guidance" and "natural-ness". The advice columnist "speaks" through medical discourses, issuing a message of moderation and reasonableness, e.g. avoidance of excessive dieting or fad exercising. However, the commingling and contradiction between "health" and "beauty", and between "nature" and "work" is significant and I briefly highlight two instances of such tension.

First, adolescent readers are encouraged to "work" - to write-in for the "special diet", to transform daily eating practices, to exercise regularly - and both the proof of their labour and the reward thereof, is a disguise of this very labour, i.e. "fresh, natural looks". MacCannell and MacCannell (1987) offer a psychoanalytic account of this complex construction of "staged authenticity" - a worked-on, inscribed image which is natural-seeming - as a disguise of "hidden ugliness", "lack [of phallus]" or "narcissistic wound" (p. 215) [cf. beauty as masquerade: Riviere (1929)]. Discursively, these inscriptions are read on the body-surface both as care / control of the self (self-discipline, styling and transformation) and as "marks" of feminine subjection, i.e. willingness to objectify themselves to facilitate male desire (cf. Irigaray, 1985).

Second, adolescent readers must "keep weight constant" but not appear to "diet", for dieting might derail or disrupt "ongoing metamorphosis into womanhood". This draws in a discourse of "normal" or "natural" development for girls [see previous section]. "Ongoing metamorphosis" provides a powerful "natural" metaphor of transition and growth, which, ironically, must be controlled, monitored and worked-on to

remain "natural". Thus, "metamorphosis" becomes a grim portent for the ongoing "work" of self-transformation ahead. A previous text offered the following imperative: "if you [exercise regularly,] eat sensibly and watch the amount of fat you eat, [you will] lose weight safely and *for good*" [BC 20, my emphasis]. "Metamorphosis" is counterpoised against and incorporated into "for good" (for-ever or ever-after), where ongoing work to change or transform oneself is perceived as "stability" or a "constant" feature of feminine subjectivity, i.e. work "to keep weight constant" or work to maintain "fresh, natural looks and an abundance of energy" [cf. "youth"].

4. "Choose a dress in a style that best shows off your assets": clothes as camouflage and expressive competence

The above section addressed medicalized work on the physical body, i.e. using rituals and regimes of exercise and nutrition to tone, flatten, freshen, empty fat cells, build up and energize, thereby "marking" the body's surface in particular ways. I concluded by reemphasizing the ongoingness of these rituals, to effect transformation and/or maintain constancy. Elizabeth Grosz (1990) writes that the body is a constant target for surveillance, regulation, normalization, organization and work, because its very "recalcitrance", its resistance, its biology (distinct from, but not unaffected by the inscriptions inscribed on it), "exerts an uncontrollable and unpredictable threat to regular, systematic social order" (p. 64). In a Foucauldian sense, she sees this as productive of "counter-strategic reinscription" or of a marking the self in alternative and resistant ways (ibid).

It is ironic, then, that advice texts participate in producing appropriate alternatives, resistances and 'reinscriptions' (a) for those dis-orderly bodies which have defied traditional, medicalized regimes of discipline, e.g. bodies which take no exercise or eat "wrong" foods, or (b) for those "agentic subjects" whose "docile bodies" are in the process of discipline, regulation and transformation. Thus, in keeping with traditional discursive positionings and practices which support normative standards of physical attractiveness, advice texts draw on a culturally reproduced feminine repertoire of strategies to conceal / disguise / camouflage "problem areas" (as defects, deviations, resistances?) and emphasize our "assets" through clothes and styles of dressing (Haug, 1987).

These are not "medicalized" knowledges per se, but are included here as they are understood to arise out of medicalized discourses of normalization, and are, in themselves, strategies to cover or disguise resistant and recalcitrant bodies, i.e. to make bodies "seem" to be adhering to norms of attractiveness and health. Thus, this reinscription underlines (enhances) or overwrites (masks) marks on the body's surface, and, as such this constitutes an important part of women's work on herself as object, as text. Consider the following advice texts.

A [] Stomach muscles are relatively easy to tone, and results can be seen quite quickly. Speak to a reputable gym or health club for advice. For the dance, you should choose a dress in a style that best shows off your assets and disguises the aspects of your figure that trouble you. Remember that

the most important thing is to have fun and enjoy yourself thoroughly in the company of your friends []. (Of stomach and thighs, ED 48)

[] Exercising won't actually increase the size of your breasts but, if it slims down and tones your lower half, it can make your breasts appear proportionately larger. Clever dressing can also create the illusion of cleavage. (Can exercise make my breasts bigger? BC 35)

"Clever dressing" is read here as the (feminine) skills to camouflage body-flaws, to enhance body-assets, to "create the illusion" of perfection, through the use of clothing styles and dressing practices. I will analyze two features of these texts: the indexicality of knowledges about "clever dressing", and the contiguity of "clever dressing" and "clever exercising". Understanding "clever dressing" as "indexical" implies that these knowledges and strategies are assumed [in these advice texts] to be known by advice-seekers and readers from other sources, e.g. other texts, social relations, discursive practices, institutions, etc. [inter-referentiality of discourses, interdiscursivity, intertextuality: see Parker, 1990a, Chapter 1].

Thus, while a "reputable gym or health club" will provide expert knowledges and strategies of "clever exercising", e.g. to tone "a large, protruding stomach", or to "slim down and tone (the) lower half" of a body to make "(the) breasts look proportionately larger", where might practical guidelines in the form of styles of clothes or modes of dressing be obtained? There is an assumption that these strategies form part of the general competence of being-female.

Frigga Haug (1987) writes that *most* women have some knowledge about "clever dressing", e.g. colours achieve particular effects (black is "slimming"), as do particular patterns (horizontal versus vertical stripes), styles ("baggy" versus "fitting") and types of textiles ("flowing viscose" versus "clinging lycra") (p. 129). A recent "feminist" addition to this repertoire of "clever dressing" skills might be what is referred to as 'power dressing', e.g. the career-woman's clothes [non-casual, non-frivolous, business-like, non-sexy, sombre-coloured, etc.]. Haug refers to these strategies as "expressive competence", i.e. we have managed to attain "competence" in disguising our "non-competence" (ibid). This draws in the idea of women's "work" as "art", "trick" or "wile" to produce 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1987).

The positioning of advice texts in a wider context of beauty knowledges, skills, images, commodities and technologies reproduced in/by women's magazines as a whole, would seem to be crucial in this regard. Dorothy Smith (1988) has argued that women's magazines are a major commercial force in structuring desire within discourses of femininity via the reproduction of (a) an "objective" for ordinary women in textual images of the ideal, and (b) the means and method for working towards that objective in terms of a course of action, skills, advice, information, training, commodities (cosmetics, clothing styles, etc.) (p. 47).⁵ Her formulation implies an agentic subject - a statement against theories of top-down socialization or discursive determinism - positioning women as skilled, acting / working to produce themselves in creative, resistant and powerful ways.

5 Women's magazines are, of course, one possible textually mediated (re)source of knowledges about "clever dressing". Others include film, media, education, literature, etc., and it is understood that women would draw on several of these simultaneously.

This view - issued from a position on discourse theory slightly different from a Foucauldian and/or psychoanalytic one - might be read as formulating similarities with a liberal feminist perspective, where "feminine information" in women's magazines is seen to increase our "expertise" as women - thus, allowing women to act, and according them power. Foucauldian-feminists, however, would recognize the mutuality of discursive construction in practice, enabling and constraining knowledge and instrumental action [see Chapter 1]. Haug (1987), for example, expresses the limitations of "clever dressing" strategies to produce "alternative normalities" for women (p. 130), for skills, action, work and resistance is produced within existing discourses and power structures, e.g. medical discourses of normalization, social and gender relations or capitalist economies.

Although I do not have the space to explore these works in detail here, I deliberately counterpoise Smith's and Haug's views to highlight ambivalence in possible readings of "clever dressing", i.e. as forms of resistance and/or as marks of normalizing discipline.

"Choose a dress in a style that shows off your assets and disguises ["problem areas"]" and "clever dressing can [] create the illusion of cleavage" are indexical, then, in that the specific knowledges and skills of "clever dressing" are absent in these texts. This is interpreted as a useful rhetorical device in the medicalization of beauty / health. Explicit specification of these strategies (e.g. "wear a black dress to make you look slimmer", or "wear a push-up bra to make your breasts look bigger") would lay bare the links between "health" and "beauty", or expose links between medical discourses and ideologically oppressive cultural ideals of women (e.g. patriarchal discrimination against "unattractive" women in terms of the exchange-model). This culture-laden, indexical information is, thus, rendered "neutral", "natural", "normal", "healthy" by contiguity with the medicalized information (e.g. "scientific", "moderate", "factual", "objective", etc) which precedes it.

In a curious textual twist, then, "clever dressing" is itself "dressed up", disguised and reinscribed medicalized information. In both advice texts above, suggestions of "clever dressing" *follow* advocacy of focused exercise on problem-areas, e.g. stomach muscles or breasts. This sets up a textual course of action, a set of priorities, where women are first put to work on remedying "problem areas" via exercise, and, as this transformation is ongoing, thereafter impelled to compensate for their current imperfections via "clever dressing". This process of prioritization returns, in conclusion of this section on medicalization, to the ongoing work-sequence which was set out in the introductory section, i.e. objectification, fragmentation and normalization through medical discourses; taking up discursive positions as agentic subjects [transforming, maintaining, monitoring, "working"] in exercise and dietary practices; and disguising body-flaws (or enhancing body-assets) through clothing styles.

This very labour, and the motivation for the labour, is hidden through a psychologized reminder in one of the advice texts above, i.e. "the *most important thing* is to have fun and enjoy yourself thoroughly in the company of your friends" [ED 48, my emphasis]. This carefully replaces any notion of girls' desire to be 'sexually attractive' to men - normatively inappropriate for adolescent girls (Fine, 1988) - with psychological discourses emphasizing the importance of "fun" or "enjoyable" social interaction with sexually neutral "friends". This might also be read as a warning to female readers of the stigmatic epithets

- e.g. "vain", "selfish", or "superficial" [cf. 'the empty self'] - which are culturally attached to women perceived to be obsessed with the appearance of (and work on) the outer body-shell.

Significantly, the adolescent reader of this advice text [ED 48] is not excused, via psychologization, from ongoing body-surveillance, transformation and/or strategies of camouflage. Hierarchical degrees of importance are established through use of the adverb "most" (e.g. "important", "more important" and "most important"). Thus, invocation of *most important* "fun" and "friends" draws in psychologized notions of 'being more than your looks' (e.g. social relationships, self-esteem and self-acceptance, etc.) - and other kinds of "work" to balance, augment, de-focus and/or disguise *important* concern with the appearance of the body.

Femina's Beauty Clinic

I have, at several points in this Chapter, alluded to the uses of medical discourses within *Beauty Clinic's* (in *Femina*) representations of physical appearance, beauty and health. I have worked towards a reading of the potential for empowerment of these usages, in light of the explicit "liberal feminist" profile of *Femina* suggested by their target-audience statement [see Chapter 3].

Some of these empowering effects for women-readers of *Beauty Clinic* were found to include the following. The medicalization of appearance-of-the-body or physical health issues assumes (or produces) women as agentic subjects, reflexively taking their own bodies as objects, and possessing the resources to work at transforming, maintaining and/or caring for their bodies. The decontextualized focus on *the body* (a) acknowledges women's own experience of their "flawed" bodies; (b) eclipses emotional narratives of the psychologized "inner self" (e.g. depression, despair, underlying needs, identity crises, etc.) which may be disempowering due to their non-rationality, non-accessibility to consciousness, etc.; and (c) obscures social narratives, either at the level of "relational issues" (e.g. becoming physically attractive to "catch" or "keep" a man in terms of an exchange model), or socio-structural power hierarchies (e.g. economic inequalities, gender / age discrimination against women, ideological construction of "the ideal woman", etc.).

Within a liberal approach to knowledge, then, dissemination of this medicalized information in *Beauty Clinic* informs instrumental action and facilitates a sense of self-control and individual power for women. This produces an ideological effect - masking institutionalized normalization within a discursive climate of "power", "choice", "agency", "individualism", "rational decision-making" and "infinite possibility".

I do not imply that the above uses of medicalization or strategies of empowerment are unique to *Beauty Clinic*. These ideas have emerged through close interpretative analysis of the semantic content, and the rhetorical / grammatical texture implicated therein, of selected texts from several sites of advice. *Elizabeth Duncan* advice texts (in *Fair Lady*), for example, may be read as achieving several similar functions in related or distinctive ways. *Beauty Clinic* - as a site of advice - is interesting analytically because (a) it is thematically specialized, i.e. it represents a forum of "expert" information about physical attractiveness [see

content analysis in Chapter 3]; (b) it is situated in a women's magazine which is explicitly founded on a "liberal feminist" profile [*Femina*: see Chapter 3]⁶; (c) it draws extensively on medicalized knowledges and practices [this Chapter]; and (d) it undergoes several modifications of form to achieve particular effects.

My analysis of the distinctive, formal modifications of *Beauty Clinic* recognizes the documented impact of the form (or "traditional format") of advice columns as genre, on content of problems and advice (e.g. editorial intervention, question and answer format, anonymity, 100 words on a single topic, etc.) [see Coward, 1984; Winship, 1987; McRobbie, 1991; Mininni, 1991: Chapter 2]. However, a slightly different (level of) discourse analysis is required in this context: a widened lens takes a site of advice as "a text" (as a whole) rather than focus on single letters / replies as texts, and analysis is interpretative of broader "effects" achieved at this level. I enclose a sample-page of *Beauty Clinic* (overleaf) to illustrate formal and/or lay-out particularities. Analysis consists of a reading of these formal particularities in comparison with "other" (more traditional) advice texts. [See Chapter 2 for a review of writing on "form", Chapter 3 for distinction between "monothematic" and "generally focused" advice columns, and Appendix 3 for advice texts from various sites.]

Linkings of formal modifications deployed in *Beauty Clinic* with medical discourses and "liberal feminist" strategies of empowerment (cf. *Femina's* editorial profile) are interpretative of commonly shared intentions and/or recognizable operations and effects of power (Foucault, 1982). I deliberately avoid imputation of these discourses or "strategies" as individually conceived or intentioned by *Femina's* editors, or that they have a "conscious" or "cognitive" existence beyond these particular texts. Also, I acknowledge that "other" sites of advice in *Femina* (e.g. *Susan James*, *Dr David Delvin's Sexpert's Guide* and *Couple Clinic*) draw in "other" discourses - i.e. "other" to medical, e.g. psychological, legal, educational - or employ medical discourses in different, context-specific ways. [See Chapter 3 for outlines of the various sites of advice in *Femina*, and comments on the historical dis/appearance these sites. See previous sections in this Chapter for mention of psychologization of physical appearance in *Femina's Susan James*. And, see Chapter 5 for an analysis of psychological discourses in and formal modifications of *Femina's Couple Clinic*.]

The "splitting" of sites of advice in *Femina* into monothematic realms of "problematic feminine experience" (e.g. "sex problems", "emotional problems", "relationship problems" or "beauty problems": see Chapter 3), each drawing in specialized institutionalized knowledges and advocating particular positions or practices, might be read as a formal representation of the "fragmentation" of women's subjectivities. Pragmatically, this fragmentation might, as Coward (1984) has suggested in another context, "save us from despair" (p. 45) in that it fosters a sense of "focus" (and work) on a unidimensional area of problematic experience at a time. The realms of problematic experience (or fragments) are "unified" into a whole person through recourse to all the sites of advice (and other features) in the magazine as-a-whole. *Femina's* slogan - "The Power of Being a Woman" [see Chapter 3] - attests to the integration of fragments into "being a woman" (singular).

6 See *Femina's* profile, e.g. women who "use (their) free time constructively" and are committed to "improv(ing) (their) appearance" and "a future with a man and/or family in it" [*Femina* Factsheet, March 1992: Chapter 3]. Here, I interpret these specific psychographic features as therapeutic opportunities within medical and psychological discourses, suggestive of feminine malleability to institutionalized normalization within various work-imperatives / discursive practices.

Beauty Clinic

Your beauty queries answered by Sarah Hetherington

HELP! MY HANDS REVEAL MY AGE

A reader from Port Elizabeth writes that, although she doesn't look her age (she's in her late 30s), her hands look as if they belong to her mother. There's a saying that if you want to know how old someone is, look at the hands and neck because that's where time tells. The most important thing about keeping hands youthful is to treat them twice as carefully as you would your face. Exposure to the sun is a prime cause of wrinkled, sun-spotted skin and there is very little that can be done about the latter. Dermatologists can use bleaches and chemical peels to lighten these liver spots but success isn't guaranteed. A total sunblock is essential for the back of the hands. Rubber gloves are a must to protect hands from the drying effects of chemicals and detergents. Exfoliate hands regularly, and apply a good hand cream at least twice daily. Spoil them, too, with a bit of nourishing night cream. Try the Sh'Zen range of specialist hand-care products, Clarins Jeunesse Des Mains or Vaseline Intensive Care Hand and Nail Formula, for smoother, younger-looking hands.



PHOTOGRAPH: WALTER FERRIER

IS A TONER REALLY NECESSARY?

A reader complains that every toner she has used seems to sting on her skin and, since she's economising, couldn't she just drop this step from her skin-care routine? Toners aren't strictly necessary, particularly if you're using a rinse-off cleanser. However, if the water in your area is very hard it can leave a residue on the skin and, in this case, a toner would be preferable. Toners were designed to remove the alkaline residue of soaps and cleansers – and most of them contain mildly acidic ingredients like witch hazel and elderflower. There is also alcohol in many toners which can cause irritation. This reader should look for an alcohol-free product, like Revlon's Pure Skin Care Toner.

Toners were designed to remove the alkaline residue of soaps and cleansers

WILL SWIMMING HELP ME SLIM?

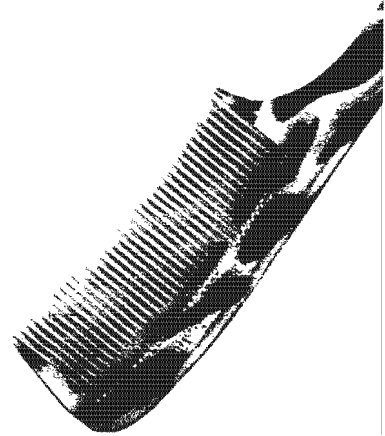
Regular exercise is the best way to rev up your metabolism and, if you eat sensibly and watch the amount of fat you eat, to lose weight safely and for good. But how much and what type? Carolynne from Bedfordview writes she has been swimming at a health club but has heard from a friend that this makes the body cling to fat as insulation. According to exercise experts there is no evidence to support the fat-clinging theory and swimming is recommended as an ideal way to exercise aerobically – and burn calories – without risk of injury. Thirty minutes of breaststroke burns about 1 260 kilojoules (300 calories). On the whole, swimming is an excellent form of exercise as it's an all-over body conditioner and deeply relaxing. It builds muscular strength, coordination and flexibility and, for these benefits alone, it's worth doing. Best benefits come from backstroke and breaststroke, which are good for the upper body. Aquaerobics classes are a fun way to work out without feeling stiff and sore – they are ideal for overweight and pregnant women.



PHOTOGRAPH: NEIL HERMANN

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT MY BRITTLE HAIR?

Since she had a series of chemical treatments, Rhoda from Richard's Bay writes that her hair breaks easily. The remedy is to visit a reputable hairdresser who would recommend professional treatments to strengthen the hair – Redken CAT Protein Network System is an excellent repair product. Here are a few tips for handling brittle hair. Wash it under a shower instead of in the bath to minimise tangling. Apply shampoo to the scalp only and work through to the ends – don't pile hair on top of the head as this overworks fragile ends. Wet hair is vulnerable so pat it dry gently and never rub vigorously with a towel. Comb it out with a wide-toothed comb from the bottom up using small strokes. Avoid using heat appliances where possible.



Write to Beauty Clinic, PO Box 3647, Cape Town, 8000 or fax (021) 21-6684

Within a reading which incorporates the institutionalized filtration of psychological discourses about the "divided self" (e.g. Laing, 1965), it becomes increasingly difficult to make claims about the enduring or inherent types, qualities or experiences of individuals (Giddens, 1991). Thus, it is "fashionable" in current women's magazines - perhaps influenced by feminist discourses too - to call on multiple aspects of experience and multiple feminine identities, e.g. "you have many sides to you" or "you have many types of women within you" (Williamson, 1978: 56). Medicalized discourses in *Beauty Clinic* are understood to (a) institutionally / form-ally address and advocate work on 'one side' of feminine experience: body-work; and (b) constitute one of many forms of work women must perform, e.g. alongside "relationship work", work on the "inner self", work at parenting skills, etc. Thus, the stigmatic effects of exclusive feminine focus on physical appearance are avoided (e.g. "vanity", "selfishness", "superficiality": in previous section).

The title of the advice page - "*Beauty Clinic*" - achieves a powerful form-al merging of (a) "the beauty business", commonly associated, within feminist writing, with cultural-ideal images and "ideology", patriarchal oppression, women as consumers of commodities (e.g. cosmetics, diet foods, etc.) within a capitalist economy, etc. [see Williamson, 1978; Winship, 1980 & 1987; Ferguson, 1983; Coward, 1984; Ballaster et al, 1991]; with (b) a medicalized institution, a "clinic", i.e. "a private hospital or nursing home" or more cogent within this media-context, "an institution for treating outpatients or for diagnosis or giving advice" (Chambers's Dictionary, 1964: 198). This reproduces, by contiguous association, medicalized credibility and an institutionalized basis for the beauty business; and an approach to health and/or beautification based on the commodification of proliferating medicalized services, practices and products.

The achievement of these particular effects is implicated within several unique formal features of *Beauty Clinic*, i.e. features which demonstrate modifications of the traditional format of advice columns. These formal modifications include: (a) the dissolution of question and answer format; (b) the use of names, locales and decade-years; (c) advocacy of particular beauty products; and (d) formal inclusion of posed photographs. I will offer brief interpretative analysis of each of these features, in light of the focus on medicalization of physical attractiveness and empowerment. I sustain, as far as possible, analytic attention to the form of textual representations of body-weight and body-shape in *Beauty Clinic*, for the purposes of cohesive argument in this Chapter. It is noted, however, that this approach consciously departs from an accurate reflection of the diversity of problematic experience of outer body-shell appearance represented in *Beauty Clinic*.

1. Dissolution of question and answer format

The *Beauty Clinic* page consists of 5 or 6 paragraphs - each addressing a problematic issue / topic related to physical appearance - spatially demarcated by titles and enclosing lines / colours. Formal "question" and "answer" sections are not present [e.g. indicated by a large, bold-face "Q" and "A" in traditional advice texts]. The titles serve a summarization function, either as (a) a descriptive statement of the topic, e.g.

"*Make-up tips for older women*" [BC 33], or "*Swimming makes my hair green*" [BC 41]; or (b) as an interrogative statement, requesting informational service, e.g. "*How can I tone my thighs?*" [BC 31], "*Can exercise make my breasts bigger?*" [BC 35], or "*Do plastic exercise suits work?*" [BC 39]. The occasional insertion of personal pronouns in these titles, e.g. "my hair", "my breasts" or "my thighs", personalizes the focus on "objective" information dissemination in this forum, inviting personal identification with (or ownership of) the problematic body-areas.

It is difficult, however, to read these interrogative statements as "authentically" issued from advice-seekers themselves [cf. the autobiographical narratives included in published letters / questions in other advice columns]. This is because, as an overt feature of form, Sarah Hetherington's (*Femina's* "beauty editor") voice is foregrounded as authorial. Thus, "fragments" of advice-seekers' words are selected, interpreted and issued in cryptic quotation form by Hetherington: directly, in the first person, in inverted commas, e.g. "I feel hopeless" [BC 31, below]; and/or indirectly described in the third person, e.g. "Carolynne from Bedfordview [] *heard from a friend that*" [BC 20], or "*a reader from Kimberley writes that*" [BC 31, below]. These fragments are merged into medicalized and informational framing of "a problem" and "the (re)solution" by the beauty editor. Re-consider two advice texts used in earlier sections.

Will swimming help me slim? (BC 20)

Regular exercise is the best way to rev up your metabolism and, if you eat sensibly and watch the amount of fat you eat, to lose weight safely and for good. But how much and what type? Carolynne from Bedfordview writes that she has been swimming at a health club but has heard from a friend that this makes the body cling to fat as insulation [].

How can I tone my thighs? (BC 31)

A reader from Kimberley writes that despite long daily walks and lots of swimming in summer, she remains depressed about her thighs. "With the fashion for shorter skirts and the thought of getting into a swimsuit soon, I feel hopeless". Most gyms will put together a specific toning programme for problem areas, but here are three excellent exercises devised by a top New York fitness centre []. (my emphases)

What do these formal modifications achieve in *Beauty Clinic*? Editorial control is explicitly asserted over the advice-seeker's narrative. For example, historical antecedents of "the problem", or the social / relational meanings thereof (e.g. *why* are "toned thighs" important?), are absent. Grammatical tense labours to hold readers' attention in the present and future. The containment of emotional content is particularly striking. "Confusion", "depression" and "hopelessness" appear, but the fragment-quotations, framed by the authoritative authorial voice, cut short and re-write these emotions within particular knowledges and practices. This works, formally, to enhance the "informational" tone of *Beauty Clinic* - geared towards empowerment of individual women - universalizing these emotions as "normal" and "remediable" responses to "problem thighs".

2. Uses of names, locales and decade-years

The editorial disruption and re-articulation of the advice-seeker's personal confession, and the shift towards a medicalized "informational" approach might be interpreted as formal 'death of the author' techniques (see

Barthes, 1977: Chapter 3). Thus, in order for the fragment-quotations to retain a sufficient degree intimacy to facilitate "authenticity", advice-seekers are "named" using several identity-markers. First names and residential locales for advice-seekers are provided, e.g. "Alison, from Blairgowrie" [BC 2]; "Faeza of Newlands in Durban" [BC 15]; "a reader from Kimberley" [BC 31], etc.

Provision of names and locales is an unusual formal modification from other sampled sites of advice in South African magazines, which police anonymity and confidentiality. Mininni (1991) has noted that anonymity is associated with an "impersonal" and "informational" tone in advice texts in British women's magazines; while Italian advice texts use names and locales, or elaborate pseudonyms, as identity-markers and guarantors of authenticity, and are more "confiding", "intimate" and "confessional". The functions of "naming" in *Beauty Clinic* might draw on both these contradictory findings. I have already mentioned the enhancement of authenticity and the effects this produces. Names and residential locales (*Alison* from Blairgowrie, or *Faeza* from Durban), combined with the nature of the problematic experience (e.g. "fair skins", "pigmentation on dark skins", "frizzy hair", etc.) mark "racial" differences, which were "invisible" in anonymous advice texts.

Any ideological offensiveness associated with such categorizations is "neutralized" within multi-normalization of medicalized beauty and body-care. Thus, different body-types, skins or hair-types require particular kinds of "beauty-work", and products; and/or particular climates (cf. locales) are more harsh than others, producing body-shells which require specialized care and protection. This implicates the "skilled work" of women, i.e. to choose regimes and products which are "appropriate" for their acculturated bodies, lifestyles and geographic situations (cf. Smith, 1988), and forges clear links between medicalization of appearance and feminine consumption of beauty-products (cf. Winship, 1980: see subsequent section).

Advice texts from *Beauty Clinic* in 1991 which focused on body-weight, body-shape, exercise or nutrition did not formally specify ages of advice-seekers. This is suggestive of a reading of these issues as of universal concern to all women. Where ages or decade-years are formally specified in *Beauty Clinic*, these achieve at least two functions: (a) as "reassurance", when "the beauty problem" is considered medically "normal" for that age-group [see BC 1, below]; and (b) as a "warning", when "the beauty problem" is "inappropriate" or "ab-normal" for that age-group [see BC 10, below].

Do eye creams really reduce wrinkles? (BC 1)

[] Fiona, from Durban, is 35 and this is often the time when fine lines [around the eyes] become noticeable [].

What causes bags under eyes? (BC 10)

"Depressing" is how Cindy of Marianhill Park, Pinetown, describes the persistent bags under her eyes. She's only 27 years old and she's tried everything to get rid of them - early nights, later nights and lighter suppers - to no avail []. (my emphasis)

Although the specification of age is ritualistically narrativized as a formal feature of traditional advice texts (Coward, 1984), "age" functions in particular ways in *Beauty Clinic*. First, increasing age is powerfully linked with increasing concern about "attractiveness", and the imperative to engage in more rigorous and/or

sophisticated work practices to maintain youthful beauty (e.g. "wrinkly neck at 40" [BC 12], hands that "reveal age" [BC 17], make-up tips for "older" women [BC 33]). Second, age is used as an informational technique to effect normalization in addressed women-readers, i.e. building up medicalized knowledges of the "appropriateness" of particular problems, when, why, and what resolutions are most suitable.

3. Advocation of particular beauty products

In a *Beauty Clinic* advice text analyzed in a previous section ["Do plastic exercise suits work?": BC 39], the efficacy of a commercial product (a plastic sweat-suit) was refuted, and, it was argued, was no substitute for "continuous, rhythmic, aerobic activity for 20 - 30 minutes". While this may not be an exceptional instance, it is counterpoised against the advocation of specific beauty products in *Beauty Clinic*, which positions "advice" and "information" firmly within the consumer culture of women's magazines (see Winship, 1987; McRobbie, 1991). Coward (1984) makes clear this link between medicalization of appearance and consumerism, i.e. the objectification and fragmentation of the female body into "problem areas" renders it accessible to marketing: specific "products" must be consumed to cure those problems (p. 80). Thus, Winship (1980) dryly notes, that the consumption of these products "appears as a moment of self-production" (p. 217).

An analysis of *Beauty Clinic* as a forum for the advertisement of these products, and how this process operates, would require considerable more space and extended research foci [see Williamson, 1978; Cushman, 1990]. I offer cryptic interpretative commentary on the functions, at the level of *form* of advice columns and in light of the focus on medicalized beauty-work, of the appearance and advocation of the use of particular products in *Beauty Clinic*. Consider the following extracts from advice texts.

Make-up tips for older women (BC 33)

[] Start with a liquid foundation like Elizabeth Arden's Flawless Finish, Lancome's Maquisatin, New Complexion Makeup from Revlon or Estee Lauder's Country Moist Liquid Makeup [].

Can exercise make my breasts bigger? (BC 35)

[] French women have been using Clarins products for years, in particular an appliance similar to a Jacuzzi, for the breasts, which is said to stimulate the tissues and increase firmness and overall size [].

Two functions of these formal modifications are note-worthy. First, the use of "beauty products" is set up as just another feature of the "work" women are impelled to do on their bodies. That this work requires skill is assumed in the formal structure of these advice texts. For example, a list of "age-appropriate" products is issued and women are required to make informed and rational decisions according to available resources and/or shop around for alternatives, before the actual consumption commences. Second, these texts emphasize that cosmetic companies [e.g. Clarins] are built on elaborate scientific / medicalized research institutions. Thus, women purchase and use the professional expertise which went into producing these specialized products as "effective" and/or "appropriate".

The effect of the medicalization of the beauty-business, formally represented through advocacy of beauty products in *Beauty Clinic*, is (a) to position women as agentic subjects, i.e. "skilled workers" who choose, decide and control their own physical appearance; and (b) to set up a situation in which women have "no excuse" for being "unattractive", given the available technological expertise and beauty products.

4. Formal inclusion of posed photographs

The formal presence of photographs in *Beauty Clinic* brings the "appearance" of this advice page (e.g. layout) into line with the rest of *Femina* magazine, i.e. beauty features, advertising, etc. Significantly, however, the photographs do not include reference to specific "beauty products" (cf. previous section), but might be read as advertisements for particular lifestyles (as discursive practices) for women. As such, brief analysis of their functions as texts-within-texts draws together several threads which have been explored elsewhere in this Chapter.

The photographs [one per *Beauty Clinic* page, "related", by contiguity, with representation of a "problematic issue"] detail several variations of a fairly standard formula, i.e. an individual woman - "healthy", "beautiful" and "happy" / "content" - engaged in some aspect of "work" on their bodies, e.g. applying lipstick, swimming, washing their faces, relaxing, eating a salad, drinking water, etc. The photograph, as text, locks this moment of work (and the implied meanings of the work, e.g. emotional state, physical appearance, sense of control over or unity of the self, etc.) in stasis. This is suggestive of the ongoing labour in which women are engaged (i.e. to maintain constancy), and of the power of the static textual image to structure and channel women's desire towards such labour to effect transformation.

For my purposes in this dissertation, and in the concluding throes of this Chapter, I have consciously avoided elaboration of the complex refractions of desire inherent in a Lacanian (psychoanalytic) reading of the functions of photographs - as "mirrors" (cf. Lacan's 'mirror phase')⁷ - in advertising. I acknowledge that this explanatory strand is influential in current "feminist" understandings of advertising (see Williamson, 1978), and indeed, in "feminist" formulations which "re-work" Lacanian ideas (e.g. Smith, 1988), or "resist" them (e.g. McRobbie, 1991). I follow Smith's lead here, through focus on the institutionalized discursive practices, represented in the photographs in *Beauty Clinic*, and which are embedded in feminine subjectivity.

Dorothy Smith (1988) has argued that photographs create a space between "self" [reader] and "ideal-self" [textual image] (cf. Lacan), which invokes, within a discourse of femininity, the practical relation of a woman to herself as object, i.e. reflecting on herself as object in terms of the "ideal" textual image. According to these terms, she is always "im-perfect" - "at the beginning of her project" (p. 49) - with "skilled work" on herself (e.g. exercise, applying or developing skills to apply cosmetics, manipulating and monitoring diet, consuming particular beauty-products, etc.) as the available means of access to or approximation of this [unattainable] textual ideal-image.

⁷ Bowie (1979), Dews (1987), Frosh (1987) and Butler (1990) provide useful exegetical commentaries on Lacanian theory.

Within the *Beauty Clinic* forum, the informational advice-texts serve - form-ally - as medicalized legitimation for the photographic "ideal selves", obscuring the fiction of the ideal, and seamlessly reproducing "health" [medical normalization] and "beauty" [cultural ideals] as a binary desired goal. Through following the institutionalized lifestyles, exercise regimes, techniques of body-styling, by taking herself as the object of her own work, desires for the objects in the photograph are inscribed on women-readers. These desired objects may be "inner" [emotional] and/or "outer" [physical, social, relational] qualities, e.g. "toned thighs", "firm breasts", "happiness", "tranquility", "self-control", "self-confidence", etc.

It is most significant that the *Beauty Clinic* photographs depict *individual* women engaging in various health / beauty practices, i.e. women are not represented with other women, or with men.⁸ This is in keeping with the medicalized framing of the individual body - becoming a body-object to yourself - which marginalizes social or relational narratives. For example, an exchange model [becoming attractive *for* or *to* men] is clearly absent from this forum. Within a Foucauldian framework, and drawing in a model of exchange, Hollway (1984a) might read the desire for possession of idealized qualities [see above paragraph], and the imperative to "work" on the body, as saturated with power.

The photographs also invoke paradoxical identifications which "hide" beauty-work. First, the solitude of the women in the ideal-images is suggestive of "privacy": women must labour alone, in secret, in bathrooms and bedrooms [to hide their incompetence?]. Second, women take auto-erotic (or narcissistic) pleasure in these rituals of care and work - they "smile", "pout", "have fun" and "preen" *for themselves* (Winship, 1980), which reproduces this "work" as leisure.

Concluding comments

This Chapter took as its starting point, the positioning of women as objects within Hollway's MSD. Within sampled advice columns, this positioning was read within the context of articulations of "crises" of powerlessness and desperation around experienced un-attractiveness of bodies. As Widdicombe (1992) suggested in her critique of Hollway, women's bodies [as objects] are embedded in and inscribed by complex networks of discourses and discursive practices, which police and reproduce feminine attractiveness, sexuality and subjectivity. I examined ways in which these crises of un-attractiveness were psychologized [understood as an "inner self" problem] and medicalized [understood as a "outer body-shell" or "inner physiological" problem] in advice texts, disallowing or legitimizing fetishization of "physical appearance" through profferment of institutionalized technologies of the self and body, e.g. techniques of acceptance, care, styling and transformation.

8 The photographer's "eye"/"I" [out of frame] as a containing "male gaze" for these models would require further analysis. Certainly, this gaze is underplayed within liberal feminist formulations, and psychologization and medicalization offer institutionalized ways to replace oppressive objecthood (within patriarchy) with an agentic and self-reflexive subject.

The effects produced by this discursive overdetermination of physical attractiveness were not "symmetrical", and moments of competition and alliance were noted in my analysis. This overdetermination of "physical attractiveness" is understood to embed women in webs of overlapping knowledges and practices, synchronous and implicated in one another, which contributes to the "problem" of resistance [see Chapter 6]. Also significant is the ongoingness of these technologies - requiring continuous work on and surveillance of the self / body - particularly as I turn, in Chapter 5, to an analysis of forms of "relationship work" assumed of women in advice texts.

The explication of an exchange model provided a way to understand the uses of feminine fashioning of an "attractive" self / body (cf. Irigaray, 1981), i.e. as heterosexual relationship-bait or relationship-glue (Hollway, 1984a). First, this highlighted different perspectives on power and empowerment of women. A radical feminist critique might challenge the socio-structural, patriarchal system which accords men rights and powers as exchange partners, and positions women as exchangeable objects, goods or merchandise. A liberal feminist agenda (e.g. *Femina' Beauty Clinic*) disallows oppressive objectification of women within an exchange model by drawing in institutionalized technologies which valorize the individual, i.e. information facilitates an agentic, reflexive and empowered self. A Foucauldian approach resorts to the contradictory functions of discourse: institutionalized technologies of the self / body (a) facilitate knowledge, agency, choice and resistance, and (b) constrain what may be known, acted on or resisted, and how. I pick these issues up again in Chapters 5 and 6.

A second feature which was highlighted through introduction of an exchange model is the competition it sets up between women [as "objects"] for ownership *by* men, or women's rights to ownership *of* men. This is the theme of the following discourse analytic Chapter.

Chapter 5

The psychologization and medicalization of "monogamy" in advice texts

Introduction: Monogamy-rules, Hollway's Have-Hold discourse and "talking about it"

An evocation of an exchange model in the previous Chapter reflected on the transition of women's positioning in Hollway's discourses of sexuality - between Male Sex Drive discourse [MSD] and Have-Hold discourse [HHD] - through institutionalized objectification techniques and practices, e.g. "working" on the self / body as an object, to become an ["attractive"] object worthy of possession by a man. Maintenance of a position within HHD, then, was dependent on persistence of this objectification, for "being attractive" invokes, for women, the powers of 'relationship-bait' and 'relationship-glue'.

In this Chapter, the focus shifts slightly to explore other institutionalized techniques and practices which accord women power as speaking subjects within HHD. Hollway (1984a) explains that, in terms of their hegemonic HHD subject-positioning, women - having procured the (committed) "relationship" [cf. emotional bonding] they need / desire to contextualize sexual experience - are impelled to take responsibility for the policing of that relationship in order to maintain it (p. 232) [see Chapter 1]. This surveillance does not, of course, only apply to monitoring sexual activity, but I explicitly frame institutionalized underpinnings of women's work in enforcing tacit "relationship rules" of monogamy in heterosexual relationship practice, i.e. in representations of sexual infidelity by male partners in advice texts [see theme no. 6 in content analytic study: Chapter 3].

This focus might be briefly explicated through its links with and extensions to the previous Chapter. Where women laboured to "tone" the self or the body according to institutionalized practices [Chapter 4], in this Chapter they labour to "tone" *the relationship* in particular ways. And, where [working at] "being attractive" was perceived as relationship-bait or glue [Chapter 4], in this Chapter, psychologized work on the relationship [e.g. reflexive "objectification" of the relationship, or seeking out / engaging in varieties of psychotherapeutic counselling] is reproduced as relationship-glue in advice texts.

These foci have necessitated selection of a "path" (cf. "position") through a swamp of academic discourse on "the heterosexual] relationship" from various perspectives and paradigms. I do not review this diverse literature here [see Duck (1988) and Brehm (1992) for comprehensive reviews of related fields and approaches], but moments of intertextual reference are marked, where useful during my analysis, as sources of validation [cf. agreement] or resistance, or clarification of my own position [see Chapters 3 & 6 for methodological discussion].

Thus, for example, various academic descriptions of popular understandings of relationships include reference to "monogamy-rules", e.g. in the form "rules" about trust, loyalty, honesty, etc. (Argyle,

Henderson & Furnham, 1985; Baxter, 1986 & 1990); commitment (Sternberg, 1986; Acker & Davis, 1992); and exclusive intimacy of sexual and/or emotional varieties (Safilios-Rothschild, 1981; Davis, 1985; Perlman & Fehr, 1987; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1989; Register & Henley, 1992). It is a particular [Foucauldian] strand of critical writing that reproduces these knowledges as operations and effects of institutionalization, particularly psychologization (e.g. Weeks, 1989; Rose, 1990; Giddens, 1991 & 1992). Drawing on this critical strand, brief analytic comments on the advice texts below are offered to introduce my approach - i.e. informed by Hollway (1984a; 1989; 1991) - to *women's* institutionalized relationship-work with respect to monogamy-rules.

"Rules" about monogamy in relationships may be explicit [e.g. spoken / written / legal / religious contracts, etc.], but even if "implicit" as in the advice texts below, they are "generally understood to exist" [see Bejin 1985a]. This opens a space for the striking euphemism for contravention of those conventionalized rules as "*cheating*" - fraud, dishonesty, deceit, unfairness, etc. "Cheating", in both texts from *Femina* below, is editorially inserted by means of titles. Emphases are mine.

A Yes, I would say that a relationship presupposes a climate of honesty and openness. There are certain "rules" pertaining to an established relationship that are generally understood to exist. Faithfulness is one of the most important of these. I understand your reluctance to light the fuse [to confront the faithless partner], because there's no gentle way of clearing the air. Perhaps it would help to call Lifeline first, to articulate your pain and release some of it. (Live-in boyfriend is *cheating*, SJ 37)

A [] I'm not condoning such behaviour [a husband's affair], simply pointing out that it happens to the best of husbands - and wives. I urge you both to seek marriage-guidance counselling. After eight wonderful years with this man, it would be sad to throw it all away without trying to come to terms with the situation. ("Perfect" husband *cheated*, SJ 21)

Titles in advice texts are understood to provide an interpretative lens through which a "problematic" aspect of experience is perceived, setting it up for institutionalized resolution in particular ways, and thereby transforming it into a normalizing canon [cf. Rose, 1990, and see Chapter 4]. However, readings of these juxtaposed texts highlight the complexities of these canons. For example, on grounds of 'generally understood rules', women are apparently entitled to sexual faithfulness from a partner as a "right". But, "cheating" [by men] is normative [cf. MSD], setting up appropriate feminine imperatives, viz. (a) ongoing policing of the rules [e.g. suspicion / discovery of contravention]; and (b) 'talking about it' [e.g. the confrontation of / forgiveness for contravention: "lighting the fuse" and "clearing the air"].

The uneasiness around 'talking about it' [i.e. "*reluctance* to light the fuse" and "*no gentle way* to clear the air"] finds support in social psychological writing on "talk" in relationships. Baxter and Wilmot (1985), for example, found that "extra-relationship [sexual] activity" was a notable "taboo topic" in romantic relationships, i.e. a topic which was characterized by "closedness" of discussion and avoidance because of anticipation of a negative outcome (p. 254). Baxter and Wilmot do not discuss the implications of gender differences, for it would appear elsewhere (e.g. Burnett, 1987; Acitelli, 1988; Montgomery, 1988; Wolf, 1990) - and in the extensive literature on women and repertoires of self-disclosure [see Hacker, 1981] - that

women are positioned as the "talkers" about emotional lives in/of relationships, even when this is difficult or dangerous [i.e. "light(ing) the fuse" invokes explosiveness, destructiveness, etc.].

Rather than this formal and/or descriptive approach to "relationship talk", however, I take a more discursive, gendered route (e.g. Coward, 1984; Hollway, 1991; Widdicombe, 1992). This involves foregrounding the embeddedness of the [taken-for-granted] monogamy-rules in institutionalized frameworks of knowledges about sexual relationships, notably psychological and/or medical knowledges. This legitimizing embeddedness impels women - as disciplined, psychologized subjects, for example - towards particular, gendered practices in relationships [e.g. "vigilance", "lighting the fuse", "clearing the air", "talking about it", and seeking counselling], and accords them the rights to and powers of relationship-maintenance.

However, it is Foucault's historicizing approach to monogamy which forges my analytics of power in this Chapter, i.e. the patriarchal confluence of gendered subjectivities, institutionalized psychotherapeutics and operations and effects of power [at discursive / social levels] in heterosexual relationship practice. Foucault's (1978) introductory analysis of the "the Malthusian couple"¹ formed part of a genealogical tracking of the development of Christian censure of non-procreative sexuality into the "conjugalization of sexual relations" (Foucault, 1986: 165), i.e. where the state of marriage [or "committed" relationship] coincides with and contains sexual activity, precluding the pursuit of carnal experience elsewhere.

Thus, Foucault (1986) introduces power relations into monogamy by referring to it as "the monopoly on sexual pleasure" (ibid), with "monopoly" connoting a notion of sole privilege, exclusive control or possession. When the incipient requirement of symmetrical fidelity in a relationship breaks down, some kind of "crisis" ensues [e.g. socio-moral outrage, or "shame", as conventionalized rules are flouted, trust is betrayed, etc.], requiring a (re)negotiation of sexual monopoly, and power, in the marriage / relationship.

However, Foucault (1986) wryly notes that a husband's adultery [or male partner's sexual unfaithfulness] - in patriarchal discursive practice - is perceived as "an indiscretion" or "weakness" [cf. Hollway's (1989) MSD]. If this indiscretion becomes publicly known - or, indeed, publicly challenged by a wife - she risks losing her subjective status [as a wife, or partner capable of monopolizing his sexual pleasure]. Thus, Foucault concludes that a wife is obliged to privately concede to, forgive or tolerate her husband's indiscretions because (a) it saves her social [or sexual] honour as a wife, and (b) it proves her continuing love and affection for him (p. 175) [cf. Hollway's (1989) HHD].

Thus, in demarcated textual representations of male sexual infidelity, this Chapter explores the psychologized and medicalized knowledges which inform women's framing of monogamy-rules in heterosexual relationship practice, and make available to them particular positions - agentic strategies for "coping" with contravention of these rules and/or techniques for relationship-reformation - to maintain their subject positioning within Hollway's (1989) HHD [with men as their objects].

1 "The Malthusian couple" refers to the Victorian ideal-couple, whose matrimonial bond legitimated monogamous procreative sexual relations (Foucault, 1978: 3). Foucault argues that this opened sexual practices to economic, political and medical socializations through incitements and restrictions brought to bear on a couple's fertility (p. 105), and their "relationship".

To this end, then, several issues are germane. First, methodological issues. Interpretative analysis focuses on numerically fewer texts - in more "holistic" form - than in the previous Chapter. Thus, rather than an approach which attempted to reflect a range of the idiosyncratic infidelity-crises represented in advice columns [e.g. via "extracts" from several texts], single advice texts were selected to facilitate "focused" and argumentative analysis of the operative processes and effects of institutionalized discursive practices [cf. Hollway's (1989) "process" method: see Chapter 3 for range of different approaches to texts].

This offers an opportunity to reiterate that selection of texts was deductive - intended to critically operationalize theoretical insights; to analyze technologies of normalization and dis/empowerment for women - and was forged within my own subjective positionings. Furthermore, entire sections of completed analysis were ruthlessly excised to meet spatial requirements of this dissertation [e.g. comprehensive analyses of *Dr David Delvin: The Sexpert's Guide (in Femina)*; and women who "cheat" - adulteresses and 'other women']. Of course, my analytic focus on male sexual infidelity reproduces the heterosexist positioning of women [as suffering wives] and men [as compulsive adulterers] within, for example (a) advice columns themselves (see Chapter 2: Coward, 1984; Carter, 1988; McRobbie, 1991); (b) proliferating "pop-psychology" self-help books for wives / women on men's "unfaithful [sexual] natures" (e.g. Farrell, 1986; Botwin, 1989; Kendall, 1992); and (c) various academic literature on "adultery" (e.g. Livingstone, 1987; Lawson & Samson, 1988; Linquist, 1989; Richardson, 1988; Bringle & Boebinger, 1990).

However, following Hollway's (1984a; 1989; 1991) discursive project, I emphasize the critical, resistant and disruptive goals of my analysis; reject any intention of universalization of this realm of experience beyond these advice texts; and acknowledge that other texts might produce varying discursive foci for interpretation.

Second, structural issues. Drawing on theoretical elaboration of hegemonic / competing technologies of normalization in discursively overdetermined objectification of the self, body and relationship [see Chapter 1, and concluding comments to Chapter 4], psychologization and medicalization of monogamy are not understood to produce "symmetrical" effects. Neither are they accorded spatially symmetrical analyses in this Chapter, which devotes three sections to interpretative analysis of the psychologization of monogamy in advice texts, and in a concluding section, examines strategic moments of "alliance" between medicalized and psychologized knowledges of monogamy. I do not imply through this structure, therefore, that psychologization is the "more dominant" technology.

My argument / analysis will proceed as follows. First, a "relationship-crisis" related to a husband's infidelity, and its psychologized resolution, will be examined. Second, continuing the interrogation of *Femina's* liberal feminist editorial agenda [see analysis of *Femina's Beauty Clinic*: Chapter 4], the operations and effects of form and content in *Femina's Couple Clinic* will be explored.² The third section

2 *Femina's Couple Clinic* is a monothematic, specialist site of "relationship" advice [see Chapter 3].

will analyze conditions for women for legitimate exit from relationships in advice texts. Finally, two uses of medicalization within a psychologically normalized monogamy are examined.

"Does the pain ever get better?" and "Will our marriage ever be the same?": a male partner's sexual infidelity

Will I ever get over his affair? (JH 139)

Q I have been happily married for 30 years, having got married at 17. We've had the usual ups and downs, but basically our marriage has been good and my husband and I were considered an ideal couple. However, about four months ago I discovered he was having an affair with a girl of 20 he met at the office. I was devastated. He has begged me not to leave him and says he loves me more now than he ever did before, but I feel betrayed and bitter and my self-confidence is shattered. It is difficult to sleep with him knowing he has slept with her. I feel separated from him and so furious with her and feel the magic has gone out of our marriage. We don't want to go to a marriage counsellor, but I feel the need for outside help. Does the pain ever get better? Can I ever trust him again? And will our marriage ever be the same again?

A The crucial issue is how much you both want your marriage to work, and a lot now depends on how you both handle it. Recognise that along with your marriage facing a crisis, each of you is experiencing your own personal crisis. You probably feel so hurt, shocked and generally unnerved that it's impossible for you to consider forgiving him, letting the affair go and rebuilding a relationship. You're probably also too uncertain to make a reinvestment of trust. No doubt you're very angry, which will further block any positive feelings within your marriage. But try to gain perspective - regard this as a crisis in your marriage rather than an event that is bringing the relationship to an end. Understanding that may give you more equilibrium with which to confront the crisis. Remember that both you and your husband want your marriage to work - and remember too that a crisis can be used as an opportunity to test the commitment and make it work. It is possible with love and determination and as there are people out there who can help you both, why not use them? Talk to your husband about outside guidance - your marriage is worth it. Contact a counsellor at the Family Life Centre on (011) 833-2051 in order to work through your feelings - not to negate them, but to allow other, more constructive feelings and thoughts in as well.

The florid details of this, and other, adulterous affairs in this Chapter - who did what to whom, when, how often, and why? - are not of concern to this analysis. My reading focuses on what "psychologization" [e.g. in **A** above] does to these compelling narrativizations, and some of the effects which are thereby reproduced for women-readers. In this section, I will argue that these effects - empowering and/or disempowering - serve to structure: (1) such an event as "a crisis"; (2) a will to therapy; and (3) an imperative for ongoing relationship "work" and vigilance.

1. "Crisis"

The above advice text presents a woman's account of the effects that the discovery of her partner's infidelity have wrought on their marriage, viz. a cataclasmic shift from "the usual ups and downs", to a state where "the magic has gone out of (the) marriage". The disruption of "the usual" and the loss of magic - to which I will return below - is specified to be associated with "shattered" self-confidence, betrayal, bitterness, pain,

mistrust, anger [with 'the other woman'], and sexual / intimacy derailments [e.g. "it is difficult to sleep with him", and feeling "separated from him"]. The advice columnist, almost parodying humanistic therapeutic techniques to convey acceptance, understanding and non-judgement (see Rogers, 1961), faithfully reflects back the laundry list of symptoms [e.g. "You probably feel so... hurt, shocked, unnerved, uncertain, angry..."], normalizing these emotional responses, and yet, introducing a notion of "crisis" which has to be normalized via psychotherapeutic technologies.

Thus, the emblematic repetition of "crisis" - repeated five times in A - achieves at least three effects. First, it constructs, generates and reproduces this event, and the emotional experience thereof, as a "crisis": a catastrophe, a disaster, with dire and destructive intra-subjective (emotional, psychic) and inter-subjective (relational) consequences.³ The wife's account gains definition through being slotted into a body of institutionalized knowledges and professional experiences of the effects of adulterous affairs on marriages [i.e. similar "cases"], via *Janet Harding's* accredited status within a crisis-counselling psychological organization, *Lifeline* [cf. *Femina's Couple Clinic*, below]. This operates to forge a perceptual grid whereby women / readers are enabled to normatively recognise *and expect* the discovery of adultery, as a "crisis".

Second, the advice columnist achieves a psychologized reformulation of "crisis" - from dangerous node, destructive disaster or condition of uncertainty ["risk", cf. Giddens, 1991: 12], to positive / constructive turning-point or decisive moment (see Parker, 1989b). Thus, the "crisis" is rearticulated in terms of its "therapeutic opportunities" (Rose, 1990: 245): here, as "an opportunity to test commitment and make [the relationship] work", to "work through feelings" and to "allow more constructive feelings and thoughts through". Similar to an instance analyzed in Chapter 4, this shift in perspective is achieved rhetorically by first establishing normalizing agreement, acceptance and common ground through the technique of reflecting-back, and then introducing the contradictory reformatory imperative signified by the adversative conjunction, "but" [i.e. "*But* try to gain perspective - regard this as a crisis in your marriage rather than an event that is bringing your relationship to an end"]. As Mininni (1991) suggests, the initial state of reinforcement and acceptance labours to mask the ideological effects of the psychotherapeutic normalization.

Third, three distinct "crises" are identified by the advice columnist: the wife's personal crisis [emotional devastation], the husband's personal crisis [unelaborated: a moment of weakness? sexual frustration? guilt? fear of losing his wife?], and the marriage's or relationship's crisis [a commitment test].⁴ Psychologization permits anthropomorphic attribution of life to the relationship [cf. a third "body" in a union between individuals: Coward, 1984], and structures an injunction to introspective reflexivity, and talk, about the relationship's "nature", "health" and "crisis". That the husband's personal crisis is not permitted to emerge in the above advice text, sets up the symbiotic duet between the crises of the wife and the relationship, and

3 Stenner (1993) puts forward an identical argument with respect to talk about jealousy in heterosexual relationships.

4 A fourth "crisis" - marginalized in this advice text - might be the crisis of "the other woman" (see Bringle & Boebinger, 1990; Richardson, 1988). I emphasize that the wife's anger towards 'the other woman', in this advice text, reflects the hegemonic perception [cf. HHD] of *women's* responsibility to resist inappropriate male sexual advances, which men cannot control themselves [cf. MSD].

lays a discursive foundation for the positioning of women as willing and malleable subjects of psychotherapeutic techniques for the self and the relationship.

2. Will to therapy

It is the wife in the above advice text - and the female reader addressed by this text - who is positioned as responsible for the normalizing 'emotional housework' of heterosexual relationship practice (cf. Wolf, 1990). She "discovers" the affair, she recognizes relationship-trouble, she confronts and articulates the crisis, she seeks assistance from experts, she confesses her inability to keep her partner sexually faithful [e.g. via writing into an advice column], and, she must now *work* with renewed determination - through her own feelings - to allow "more constructive" feelings through, to forgive her partner, to rebuild the relationship, and to persuade him to enter marriage guidance counselling.

The will to therapy pivots on and is structured by the rearticulation of "crisis". Tension is set up between negative-destructive and positive-constructive poles, and it is revealed to the wife - and women readers - that particular emotions and thoughts [e.g. bitterness, betrayal, anger, etc.], however "normal", will effectively "block" therapeutic resolution of the crisis. The advice columnist's institutionalized expertise enabled profferment of reliable information on the wife's emotional state [e.g. "*You probably feel* (so hurt, shocked, etc.)" and "*No doubt you're* (very angry)"] to establish logical, conscious sequences of cause and effect. Now, resolution and reformative work are set up in similarly informed completions and narrativizations - "*It is possible* [to make the relationship work]" (original emphasis) - *provided* particular perspectives, positions and practices are adopted.

"Making it work", then, is associated with several normalizing prescriptions which reproduce psychotherapeutic technologies as extremely difficult [for women] to resist. First is the invocation of "*love and determination*" in negotiation of this relationship crisis. I draw explicit attention to the similarities between this textual construction and Foucault's (1986) comments [see Introduction, above] about forgiveness / relationship-repair as "proof" of a wife's love and affection [cf. subjection]. This wife's account [in Q above], interestingly, avoids explicit mention of "love" - establishing, via her emotional devastation, a sense of power over her partner who has "begged (her) not to leave" and "loves (her) more than ever". However, her emotional devastation and her desire to "save" her marriage [e.g. via "outside help"] is read - by the advice columnist and by women readers - as "proof" of her love. Of course, this reproduces women as inherently possessing the requisite love and determination to work at saving or maintaining relationships, and structures a will to therapy to prop up [or reveal to women] these normalizing injunctions of feminine subjectivity.

Psychotherapeutics - flowing out of constructive "love and determination" - reproduces a belief that women are empowered through the successful psychologization of [and therapeutic work on] the interiority of their selves and relationships, i.e. through acceptance, forgiveness and articulation of clearer emotions or needs ["talking about it"], a greater sense of control in / over the relationship is negotiated. This institutionalized interpretation marginalizes other readings of empowerment from oppositional perspectives. For example,

"feminists" or "feminist therapies" may challenge the spiralling emotional exposure and inwardly-looking vulnerability for women in these practices, and identify opportunities - for this wife and women readers - for autonomy [e.g. to exit a relationship, to pursue extra-relationship interests and/or a career, to forge emotional and/or financial independence]; or for anger [e.g. collective protest against patriarchal ownership / exchange of women] (see Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1986; Fine & Gordon, 1991; Burman, 1992b).

Similarly, while "normal" emotional devastation [e.g. bitterness, mistrust, anger, betrayal, etc.] is relegated to an-other therapeutic space to be worked through, *other* emotions and options are "ab-normalized" through their absence in this forum. These "inappropriate" responses might offer women modes of resistance to dominant meanings of infidelity, and, an individualizing sense of power. Thus, for example, the discovery of infidelity might be ignored altogether; a sexual partner may be contractually "shared"; there might be relief at a legitimate opportunity to dump a partner; or the desire for / exactment of revenge [e.g. withholding sex, having an affair yourself, divorce, exorbitant alimony, insisting on the resignation of 'the other woman' from a spouse's workplace, etc.]. These issues will be picked up in a discussion of resistance in Chapter 6.

The second normalizing prescription invoked in "making [a relationship] work", then, is a willingness to subject oneself in, and have "the relationship" objectified by, a psychotherapeutic technology, purveyed by particular professionals, practitioners and/or experts. "(A)s there are people out there who can help you both, why not use them?": this rhetorical question disguises itself as a choice or option, but serves as an imperative injunction. The consequences of not following this directive are, of course, to remain in a state of uncertainty, irresolution, and "crisis"; and to suffer ignominious interpretation of one's motives as lack-of-love (for a partner), or lack-of-determination (to save the relationship). Thus, not following the directive puts one's subject-position in HHD - as an "appropriate", "normal", "good" woman - in jeopardy.

Interestingly, the referrals out [to experts] portray the experts as occupying a physical and/or therapeutic space "external" to the relationship itself and "external" to the above advice text [i.e. "people out there" and "outside guidance"]. However, this clearly sets up a symbiosis between knowledges, and modes of knowing and reflection, within the "interiority" of the domestic / sexual relationship, with ["outside"] institutionalized bodies of knowledge about intra- and inter-subjective "interiorities" and professional practitioners who ply their various psychologized trades in consulting rooms country-wide ["out there"]. Thus, Coward (1984) argues - from a feminist perspective - that women's personal or relationship "failings" are subjected to the intensifying introspection of psychologized scrutiny in the privacy of bedrooms, advice columns and therapy rooms, and seldom achieve, outside of academic debate, the political attention which could inform arguments of gendered oppression in everyday, taken-for-granted practices.

However, the exteriorization of the therapeutic space [from the advice text via referrals out] achieves another important function: to keep the nature of the psychotherapeutic "work", done in that other space, invisible, i.e. a secret, professional service [and/or initiation] which must be sought out and paid for. "Work" [repeated three times in A] is set up as the oppositional term for the repetitious "crisis" [see above]: "crisis" needs "work" and "work" will resolve "crisis". Thus, this wife - and women readers - is instructed to "contact a counsellor" and to persuade her husband / partner to enter marriage guidance counselling.

"Work" also stands in opposition to a previously mentioned construction of "magic" in relationships, viz. "the magic has gone out of (the) marriage". "Magic" invokes, in its disappearance, a longing for a lost sense of enchantment, romance, mystery, unpredictability and the non-rational (e.g. aided by forces of nature / cosmology). [See Baxter, (1986; 1992), Kovecses (1988) and Duck (1990) who have addressed "magic" as a metaphor in "talk" about relationships.] Here, psychologized knowledges and "work" - conscious, rational, professional, scientific - are called in to replace this lost state of innocence about the function and dysfunction of relationships, psyche's and emotional needs. Ironically, the silence which surrounds the operations of this reformative work in the advice texts for a general interest media audience, produces a sense of mystery and magic about the effects it advertises. A subsequent section on *Femina's Couple Clinic* shows how this forum - via revisions to question-and-answer form - makes visible a version of psychotherapeutic counselling as "work".

3. Relationship vigilance

That the nature of the professional, psychotherapeutic work is policed out of the above advice text, produces several "other" effects. First, the details and consequences of the "crisis" - as an *avoidable* disaster - are framed, e.g. checklists of symptoms of emotional and relationship wreckage, which are reinforced through professional opinion. Although appropriate routes for reformation are laid down [see above], these symptoms of crisis might be read as serving a pedagogic function via 'shock tactics'. Thus, on the informational agenda are, for example: the "monogamy rule" in marriage [or "meaningful" relationships]; and women's subject positioning in terms of that rule [e.g. policing it, forgiving its contravention, etc.: cf. Hollway's (1989) HHD]. The guilelessness of the 47 year old wife in a 30 year old marriage, thus, serves as a relationship-lesson for women readers. This wife had mistakenly relied on "the usual ups and downs", and on "relationship magic": she was not *vigilant* enough⁵

An invocation of relationship vigilance as women's work in the context of Foucault's earlier comments on [mutually beneficial?] private agreement between spouses, emphasizes the uneasy silences around the negotiation of the "monogamy rule" in relationship practice. Thus, is monogamy explicitly contracted, or just "expected" as part of an unspoken, conventionalized, relationship deal? *Who* speaks, and *when*: after a partner's infidelity has wrought its promised damage, or before this? In anticipating sexual infidelity, how do we avoid the sting of sexist discursive assumptions or double standards [e.g. men "cheat" more than women]?

These questions outline at least several [related] approaches to women's positioning as sexual relationship vigilante's. Following popular media representations of why men have affairs, women are "taught" to avoid or defuse the potential danger by, for example, keeping men domestically "satisfied" [sexually / emotionally / aesthetically], and being watchful for "warning signs of (male) dissatisfaction" as evidence of

5 "Vigilance" is intended to connote a sense of watchful surveillance, and [institutionalized] reflexivity, over "the relationship" as an object. Related emotional states - e.g. "jealousy", "anger" or "mistrust" - are understood to be structured through normalization of monogamy-rules and their contravention.

relationship-trouble, e.g. working long hours, drinking too much, sexual disinterest, etc. (Livingstone, 1987: 263). As the adage claims, prevention is better than cure. I return to "preventative" vigilance / work in a subsequent section [see "A lesson in sex", below]. In the above advice text, perhaps due to the confines of its form ["problem" and "resolution"], contravention of the monogamy-rule offers women active reformative positioning: to "discover" and confront a partner's infidelity, and seek therapy / counselling to defuse the ensuing emotional and/or power conflict between partners.

Second, however, the details of the "crisis" serve to underline this as a normative or *unavoidable* event in the developmental passage of most committed relationships. Thus, as in the above advice text, adultery happens even to apparently "good marriages", in which there would be no manifest "warning signs" [e.g. the wife thought her marriage was "good", and they were considered (by others) to be "an ideal couple"]. This construction of normative infidelity [here, for men] temporarily excuses the wife's lack of vigilance, and re-positions her as the catalyst / manager of reformative, post-adultery, relationship work. The wife's final question [not directly addressed by the advice columnist] muses on the future nature of the relationship: "Will our marriage ever be the same again?" Speculation on this is spurious, but the wife's position in that relationship - and the positioning of women who have witnessed her confession - has shifted inalterably towards vigilance.

These practices of confession and surveillance direct women into what Carter (1988) has termed "the interiority of femininity" (p. 74), i.e. emotionality, insecurity, dependence, and "hurt if men can't or won't reciprocate" (Coward, 1984: 141). However, assuming a psychologized position accords them rights to speak, with powerful institutional support, and to take a positive and proactive stand against a partner's infidelity.

"Avoiding the ultimate break-up": *Femina's Couple Clinic*

Interpretative analysis focuses, here, on the operations and effects of a particular advice text from *Femina's Couple Clinic* - "When infidelity threatens a marriage" [CC 3]. This text is reproduced in original form, overleaf, for reference. This section draws out differences / similarities with other 'generally focused' sites of relationship-advice [e.g. *Janet Harding's Lifeline*, above], and works as an adjunct and extension to an earlier analysis of *Femina's Beauty Clinic* [see Chapter 4]. Methodological guidelines and other features of the analysis of *Beauty Clinic* (e.g. the proliferation of sites of specialist advice in *Femina*, psychologized / medicalized connotations of "clinic", use of photographic images, etc.) will not be repeated here. Analysis will frame effects produced for women-readers of (1) formal features, and (2) the version of relationship-work made visible [i.e. content], in this forum. Finally, comments on the effects of (3) the "marketization of counselling", via advice texts, are offered.

Every week, every year, countless desperate couples are faced with what appear to be insoluble problems – financial, physical, emotional, or all three. By spelling out your feelings honestly and seeking compassionate counselling together, you can put the crisis into perspective and avoid the ultimate break-up

When infidelity threatens a marriage



PHOTOGRAPH: RUSSELL TRAMERS

GLENDA'S STORY

Glenda is 29, and speaks quickly and angrily. "Two months ago I learnt that my husband had been unfaithful to me. He and a few of his colleagues picked up some women at an escort agency and slept with them. I would never have found out if the wife of one of the other men hadn't told me. Mark and his friends apparently did it simply for the hell of it and found the whole thing a huge joke.

"My husband and his friends picked up women at an escort agency"

But I can't put this incident out of my mind and it's ruining my marriage. I've never experienced anything so traumatic. How could he have done something so sleazy and sordid, and also so early on in our marriage? We've only been married for a year. I think about it so much that sometimes I feel I'm going out of my mind.

"Our marriage was as close to perfect as anyone could wish, before Mark went and wrecked it. I

don't understand how he could have come back and made love to me after he'd been with that woman. Afterwards, did he compare me to that call girl? Sex between us used to be special, but now it's out of the question. Sometimes I feel as if I can see right through him. The things I could live with quite comfortably before now irritate me immensely. I'm convinced he's dishonest and devious about a lot of other things, and I see an

ulterior motive behind all he says and does. In short, I feel totally betrayed and humiliated.

"I expect everyone at Mark's work knows about his fling, and I suppose they're all laughing behind my back. I'm also terrified that he may have picked up a venereal disease, even Aids, which he could pass on to me. If he'd ever really cared for me, he would never have shamed me like this and even put my life at risk.

"So my marriage is a sham. Although Mark has said that he's sorry and that he loves me, he can't simply shrug it off. He says it wasn't important, but then what is important to him? How will I ever be able to trust him again?"

MARK'S STORY

Mark is 34, and looks flustered and rather bewildered. "I thought the whole incident would have blown over by now, but I realise that it's become quite a sore point for Glenda. I honestly can't see why she's making such a fuss. It was just a bit of high jinks and nothing else. Most husbands commit an indiscretion at some point in their marriage, so I'm no worse than other men.

"The way it happened was that my company had reached its annual target a month early, so we were all in high spirits. The company director said he'd treat the whole team to dinner. The idea to call in escorts wasn't mine, but I must say that the thought of indulging in something a little forbidden and risqué seemed very exciting at the time. Afterwards I did feel guilty, but I would liken it to sneaking off and having some cake when you're on a diet! Anyway, as I never thought Glenda would get wind of it, I put the whole thing out of my mind. I don't even know the woman's name.

"It was like being hit by a bombshell when I arrived home one evening to find that all my things had been moved into the spare room. Glenda wasn't prepared to hear my side of the story, and now married life has become unbearable. I've said that I'm sorry and feel that I've been punished enough. I've been tested for VD and I'm clear, so Glenda doesn't have anything to worry about. What more can I do? If Glenda can't forgive and

forget what has been my only slip-up, then that's her problem. I'm not prepared to feel miserable for the rest of my life."

THE COUNSELLOR SAYS

"The main problem in this relationship was that Glenda and Mark had different views on sex and marriage – men and women often do. Couples enter into a marriage each with their own set of values. These are instilled in us by our own families and are further moulded through life's experiences. It's not surprising then that partners will often disagree vastly on their interpretation of what is right and wrong.

"We started by focusing on Glenda's reaction to Mark having slept with another woman, even though he'd brushed it off as having been only a one-night stand. Glenda had very serious and idealistic views on the sanctity of marriage. She didn't see the incident as merely a fling, but rather as a cruel betrayal. She also came to question whether their sexual relationship had ever been good enough for Mark, and this made her unsure of her own sexuality.

"Because Mark had tried to keep the incident a secret, Glenda began to wonder what else he was keeping from her. It emerged at this point that Glenda's father had been a womaniser, who'd humiliated and abused her mother. Glenda now felt she was in the same position her mother had been in, and that her trust had been betrayed forever.

"Mark, on the other hand, interpreted the incident as a harmless male prank, to which society generally turns a blind eye. He was able to view it as something totally separate from his marriage. For him it didn't signify that there was anything wrong with his marriage, and he clearly didn't do it to hurt Glenda. It had simply been his way of being 'one of the boys'. He could understand, though, that Glenda felt hurt when she found out, especially as it reminded her of her mother, but throughout counselling Mark kept insisting that he wasn't prepared to feel guilty about it. He kept repeating that Glenda had no right to punish him.

"Men and women often have different views on sex and marriage – Mark saw his fling as something separate from his marriage, while Glenda felt it was a cruel betrayal"

"At this point, we reached a deadlock and Mark discontinued counselling when it became clear that his defensiveness was obstructing a reconciliation. Glenda wished to continue with individual counselling, feeling much freer to express herself. Glenda could see that her husband did feel guilty, despite his protestations to the contrary, but that he was trying to suppress this, because he feared that he'd lose her.

"Glenda next concentrated on separating the feelings she still had about her parents from what she felt towards Mark. She discovered that she still loved Mark dearly, and gradually the pain of his betrayal became less.

"The couple decided to put the past behind them, because the bitterness between them was destroying the love and respect they still had for one another. Glenda found that her anger dissipated and that counselling gave her the strength to work at her marriage. Mark phoned me shortly after that to say that Glenda had become a different person – confident and sure of herself – and that he had promised her that he'd never hurt her like that again. He added that they were thinking of spending a few days up-country on a second honeymoon." □

WHERE TO GET HELP

The Couple Clinic is based on cases from the Family Life Centre, Johannesburg. Names and other details have been changed to conceal identities.

The Family Life Centre is a branch of Famsa – Family and Marriage Society of South Africa – which has branches throughout the country.

Look up your local branch of Famsa in the telephone directory, or contact the society at its National Directorate, PO Box 2800, Kempton Park, 1620, ☎ (011) 975-7106/7. The Couple Clinic is a registered trademark.™

1. Form: from Q & A to case study

The case study form of *Couple Clinic* focuses on one "relationship problem" per *Femina* issue [see Chapter 3], which are introduced by means of summarizing titles, e.g. "coping with an elderly parent", "a death in the family", "when infertility comes between you", etc. This diachronic staging of relationship information - rather than several "problems" simultaneously present in any generally focused site of advice - produces an impression of the cyclical patterning of topics (Mininni, 1991), and implies that a "regular" reader will be more reliably informed about a range of relationship-crises than a "casual" [or one-off] reader.

"The relationship" is immediately foregrounded by the shifts in form of the page, i.e. from questions and answers to case-study. The "case study" form mimics medical or psychiatric practice (Altman, 1984: 118), thus establishing immediate "professional" credibility, authenticity and plausibility in a number of textual ways.

First, a masculine confession or "crisis" is permitted to emerge alongside a feminine one. This powerfully exposes the conflict of crises which produce a "relationship crisis", and lends senses of "balance" and "objectivity" to the forum, i.e. various versions will be heard rather than a single account. This is reinforced by several techniques which establish authenticity: (a) the individuals are named, although readers might recognise these as pseudonyms according to professional conventions of confidentiality; (b) the individuals' own words are used [direct speech in quotation marks]; and (c) staccato sentence structure invokes the emotional, repetitive ways multi-layered problems are articulated in everyday practice. Provision of names and ages simultaneously personalize the relationship (i.e. "Glenda and Mark's" problem), and universalize it (i.e. everyone's / anyone's problem).

Second, the advice text is divided into three demarcated sections - "her story", "his story" and "the counsellor says" - which bring the counselling work-process into visibility: confession, self-examination, confrontation, relationship-reflexivity, conflict-resolution, etc. This clearly resists the didacticism of a professionally produced "answer" - i.e. unassailable information issued by the advice columnist / expert in question and answer format - and implies that an outcome will be "negotiated" or "worked on / through" cooperatively. As I have suggested in an above section, the professional technologies of silence which guard the nature of psychotherapeutic "work" in conventional sites of advice [i.e. "work" is referred out to other therapeutic agencies / spaces: see *Janet Harding's Lifeline*, above] produce a desire to know these mysterious, transformative secrets. *Couple Clinic* appears to lower the veil of secrecy and permits readers to look, like voyeurs, into the counselling room, into Glenda and Mark's relationship, and into the counselling work-process. The effects are compelling and dramatic [cf. soap opera], and powerfully conspiratorial, e.g. entrusting readers with confessions, and drawing them into the operation of these professional psychotherapeutic knowledges and practices.

From feminist / Foucauldian positions, these textual features are read in terms of various productive and reproductive effects of power. For example, the title, and tripartite division of the text into "stories", suggests that "an-other" [e.g. *Famsa*] has already sorted out, digested and interpreted details to produce a

narrativization.⁶ In the body of the text, a psychologized gaze [or authorial voice] marks particular details of emotion and appearance, interpretatively framing the [authentic] "direct speech" that follows, e.g. Glenda "speaks quickly and angrily", Mark "looks flustered and rather bewildered". The photograph - an introspective woman? a woman devastated / abandoned? - labours to reinforce the hailing and positioning of women as protagonists / "workers" in the psychotherapeutic narrative.

This reading challenges the "neutrality" of *Couple Clinic* as a mediatized text produced for an audience of predominantly women-readers [see *Femina* readership profile, Chapter 3]. At the level of an "unusual" formal staging of an advice column, the narrativized case study might be read as serving the interests of *Femina* by impelling readership (cf. Winship, 1987). Thus, when a site of advice is perceived to fail to serve such interests, editorial staff are empowered to discontinue the forum. For example, *Couple Clinic's* discontinuance from *Femina* [since February, 1993: see Chapter 3] is interpreted by the editor of *Femina* as "a change to keep the magazine fresh" [personal communication].

I turn now to interrogation of the interests which are served by the content of the particular "democratization" of psychologized knowledges and practices proffered by *Couple Clinic*.

2. Work made visible: the counselling process

Counselling appears to have been initiated by Glenda, who reported that Mark had "wrecked" a "close to perfect", one-year-old marriage by having sex with a woman from an escort agency. Glenda had "learnt" of the unfaithfulness [via a source other than Mark] two months previous to commencement of counselling. The following "stages" of the represented counselling-process were discernible [to me], and structure nodes for the ensuing analysis from "realist", "Foucauldian" and "feminist" positions [see McRobbie (1991), Chapter 2].

- (1) *"Working through feelings" and identification of the problem.* The main problem was identified as "different views on sex and marriage". Glenda believed in the sanctity of sex in marriage and saw Mark's behaviour as a "cruel betrayal", which precipitated derailment of trust and sexual relations. Mark saw his behaviour as "a male prank" and "separate" from his marriage, i.e. not done for sexual satisfaction or to hurt Glenda.
- (2) *Deadlock.* Mark refused to be made to feel guilty about the event. He left counselling when it became clear that his "defensiveness was obstructing a reconciliation".
- (3) *Individual work.* Glenda continued with individual counselling. She worked on (a) "seeing" (understanding? accepting?) that Mark suppressed his guilt because he feared losing her, and (b) reclaiming projections: "separating" feelings about her "womanizing father" and "humiliated and abused mother" from her feelings for Mark. "Gradually", her anger and "pain of betrayal" lessened.

⁶ The case material for this forum is provided by *Famsa*, a South African counselling organization which specializes in family, marriage and relationship problems [see "Marketization of Counselling", below].

- (4) *Follow-up?* "The couple decided to put past behind them." Bitterness was said to be interfering with the love and respect they had for one another. Glenda found that "counselling gave her the strength to work at her marriage".
- (5) *Happily ever after.* Mark phoned in the outcome: Glenda was "a new person" ["confident and sure of herself"]; he would never hurt her again; and they were going away on "a second honeymoon".

A "realist" gaze finds Glenda represented as personally "empowered" through the counselling reportage: she emerges strong and new and hopeful about herself, Mark and their relationship. As Rose (1990) suggests, her allegiance with the counsellor has reproduced particular procedures and vocabularies for making herself and the relationship "thinkable and manageable" (p. 247), and these psychologized procedures will remain with her as ways of making sense of, and making choices in, her life / relationship, enabling her to think of herself as an autonomous individual [cf. "psychic inscription" (Grosz, 1990): see Chapter 4].

However, a striking feature of this psychologized narrativization is its smooth, predictable transition from "conflict" to "resolution". From a Foucauldian position, critical scrutiny of the "smoothness" exposes, of course, gaps and silences around the intricacies of professional knowledges and practices, held in place by operations of power. Although these "gaps" are interpreted in terms of conventions of mediatization - a text produced for mass "lay" circulation - readers are permitted a particular version / vision of the counselling process in at least two related ways. First, "conflict" is glossed. Mark's departure from counselling, for example, which usefully reflects the discord, non-rationality and emotional strife we have come to expect from such relational negotiations (Coward, 1984: 127), is presented as a *fait accompli*. Furthermore, the time interval is obscured, and readers have no textual means [beyond temporal hints, e.g. "at that point" and "gradually"] of assessing whether this process of conflict-resolution took weeks, months or years to effect.

Second, despite the psychologized authorial voice producing the narrativization, reflexivity about levels of psychotherapeutic mediation / directiveness is absent. For example, how did it become clear that "(Mark's) defensiveness was obstructing a reconciliation"? Was this a "coercive interpretation" from the counsellor (Rose, 1990: 247)? Was Glenda's continued individual counselling negotiated, and why? Where and how was the decision made to "put the past behind them", e.g. did Mark return to counselling? Thus, the institutional jargon colonizes and guards the "work" [which is unelaborated] and the "insights" [which appear "magical"], thereby masking its own operations. This reproduces the personal / relationship "choices" as cooperatively negotiated, autonomous decisions. I relate elaboration of these liberating, democratizing, positive effects to commercial "marketization of counselling" in a subsequent section.

I wish explicitly to avoid invocation of operations of an intentioned apparatus of conspiracy against women [e.g. by *Famsa / Femina*] in an examination of my own "feminist" disquiet around the above advice text. My reading of specific nodes in the reported counselling process - Mark's symbolic "exit" and the soap-operatic resolution - seeks to embed these moments within hegemonic discursive assumptions about men, women and sexual relationships, and expose how operations of psychologization labour to hold these assumptions in place.

Mark's departure - interpreted as due to his defensiveness, suppressed guilt and fear of losing Glenda - indicates his ability, via operations of power, to "exit". For example, he was able, through exercise of patriarchal power, to resist responsibility [guilt] for his infidelity [e.g. a "prank" in terms of hegemonic MSD meaning]; and thus, to side-step the counselling process and avoid psychologized subjectification / inscription [e.g. self-examination, self-reflection, talking about it]. That the counselling didn't collapse, and that the relationship was [dubiously] "saved", was due, oppositionally, to Glenda's *inability* to "exit". The relationship crisis [Mark's "prank"] effectively becomes her crisis, and readers are drawn in to witness her emotional labour in grappling with *his* suppressed significations [i.e. a coercive psychoanalytic interpretation of his motives] and 'working through' her tangled projections onto Mark [i.e. a coercive psychoanalytic interpretation of her motives].

Glenda "stays" and "works" - on her self, on her marriage and on Mark's behalf - and in several discursive / disciplinary ways, this work becomes a source of power. Thus, through the legitimizing knowledges and practices of institutionalized psychotherapeutics, Glenda may act in powerful ways [e.g. control in "the relationship" / over her "self"], or may learn to read / use power in different ways [e.g. the power of insight, emotional articulateness, forgiveness, accommodation, flexibility].⁷ This is made clearer through considering hypothetical implications of Glenda's "exit". For example, her exit - either from counselling or from the marriage - implies that (a) she would be "obstructing reconciliation" [cf. Mark], but this would threaten her appropriate subject positioning in HHD [see previous section]; and (b) she would be shirking her psychic responsibilities *to herself* in not 'working through' a "crisis" [cf. the psychoanalytic Catch-22 whereby all evasive action is interpreted as defensive against or avoidant of an underlying "truth": see Rose, 1990; Parker, 1992].

However, the asymmetrical targeting [or interpellation] of women in psychologized technologies - e.g. Mark was not impelled to own his guilt or "know" himself / Glenda more intimately - perpetuate gendered positions in hegemonic, patriarchal discourses about relationships and sexuality. Thus, gendered power relations are played out textually via "absence" and "presence" in positions made available in "public" and "private" spheres. Thus, while Mark's physical presence "obstructed reconciliation", his "exit" [absence] facilitates and structures Glenda's psychologized work "inwards" [i.e. she feels "freer to express herself" after he leaves]. However, while she is "very present" [via psychologized subjection] in the private self- and relationship-work of the represented counselling process, Glenda's voice is notably "absent" in the reported outcome. Here, Mark's presence publicizes, to counsellor and readers, (a) his resignation from MSD positioning [i.e. reconciliation is based on the non-repetition of his "prank"], (b) Glenda's psychologized "progress" [e.g. she is "confident" and "a new person"], and (c) the success of counselling [e.g. the "second honeymoon"].

7 This formulation draws on Carter's (1988) analysis of the contradictory effects achieved by normalizing discourses in women's narratives - wracked with the "ambiguities" of feminine subjectivity - in advice columns (p. 70) [see Chapter 2]. Effects produced by expert advice might include, for example, "closing" options available to them, but re-reading women's capacity for flexibility and adaptation as sources of power, hope and strength.

Glenda's disturbingly mute public voice is evocative of Foucault's (1986) insights into feminine compromise and acquiescence to hegemonic assumptions about male sexuality in patriarchal discourse [see Introduction, above]. Her subject position in HHD [e.g. belief in "the sanctity of (sex in) marriage"] produces "normal" responses of anger, emotional devastation and "embarrassment" [i.e. "they're all laughing behind my back"] around a partner's infidelity, and institutionalized psychotherapeutic techniques are deployed to defuse *her* crisis, and effect a truce within, rather than challenge or transformation of, patriarchal discursive confines. This critique of the social decontextualization and individualism inherent in psychotherapeutic technologies, is documented in various political and/or feminist writings (e.g. Coward, 1984; Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1986; Pilgrim, 1991; Burman, 1992b), and I return to consider these, and other issues related to resistance of psychologized knowledges and practices in Chapter 6.

I have argued in this section that through an institutionalized production of male sexual infidelity as a "resolvable relationship-crisis", gender differences with respect to sex and relationships are normalized, as is women's [private] emotional and relational labour to "compensate" for, or "accommodate", those differences. The counselling process made visible to readers in the above *Couple Clinic* advice text was found to be forged within these discursive contours, enabling women to speak privately and labour invisibly, with institutional affirmation, as subjects of HHD. Readings of dis/empowerment of women [and contradictory effects produced] display tension between models of power - e.g. "sovereign" versus "disciplinary" power - used by "realist", "feminist" and Foucauldian positions [see Chapters 1 & 2]. This tension is picked up in subsequent sections.

3. Marketization of counselling

Both texts analyzed thus far in this Chapter are taken from sites of advice which are "sponsored" by professional counselling organizations, i.e. forums of expertise bought in, as regular features, by magazines (Winship, 1987). For example, *Janet Harding's Lifeline*, in *You* magazine, is staffed and produced by *Lifeline*, a crisis-counselling organization; and *Femina's Couple Clinic* reproduces case study material from *Famsa's Family Life Centre*.⁸ This section sustains the focus on form and content of *Couple Clinic* [mostly], and addresses the "marketization" effects produced through the insertion of this professional "window" into psychotherapeutic technologies in a magazine for women.

I have showed how, in an advice text from *Janet Harding's Lifeline* and in *Couple Clinic* [above], through a psychologized rearticulation of "crisis", a partner's sexual infidelity might be re-interpreted as a "dangerous node with therapeutic opportunities" (Rose, 1990: 245). The "danger" referred to the normalized status of non-monogamy as a "crisis", which accorded it the power to wreck relationships and elicit emotional damage / destructiveness, i.e. "normal pathology" (ibid). "Therapeutic opportunities" referred to the possibilities of personal growth, self-esteem, clarity on relationship issues, freer lines of communication, etc., i.e. "the healing potentials hidden within each normal person" (ibid). [cf. Foucault's (1978)

8 *Lifeline*, a non-profitmaking organization, offers a 24-hour phone-in, crisis-counselling service, for which no fee is charged. Individuals are referred out to specialist agencies if necessary. *Famsa* calculates payment for counselling services on a sliding scale according to socio-economic status.

"therapeutics of finitude" (p. 104-5); and Giddens' (1991) characterization of modern personal relationships as tension between "risk" and "opportunity" (p. 12).]

But "therapeutic opportunities" also refer to possibilities for intervention by professional psychotherapeutic technologies, and colonization of domains of "problematic experience". Thus, the sexual infidelity of a male partner is a "crisis" which is colonized by counselling technologies: readers are referred out to another agency for counselling and marriage-guidance counselling (e.g. *Janet Harding's Lifeline*, above), or drawn in to witness the operations and effects of such a counselling process (e.g. *Couple Clinic*, above). An earlier analysis showed operations of a hierarchy of psychologized referrals, e.g. "serious psychological problems" were referred out to clinical psychologists / psychiatrists, while "less serious" issues were directed to counsellors [see Chapter 4].

Abbott (1988) might argue, then, that advice columns lay down signposted paths of professional referral for current and future use, i.e. sorting out (a) what constitutes a "problem" [e.g. eating disorders, male sexual infidelity], and (b) what "problem" should be taken to which "expert" [e.g. eating disorders to doctors / clinical psychologists, infidelity-crises to a counsellor, etc.]. Fairclough (1992) has addressed this process - the "problematization" of realms of experience in particular ways, and the creation of a market / demand for particular professional interventions - with respect to the aggressive proliferation of counselling technologies / domains, as "the marketization of counselling" (p. 99) [cf. G. Rosen, 1987; Cushman, 1990; Rose, 1990; Giddens, 1991 & 1992].

This finds support in Weinberg's (1989) reportage of increased numbers of 'referrals out' in advice columns in South African women's magazines in the 1980's [from the 1950's]. Related to this is the documented replacement of the tacit wisdoms of a 'kindly agony aunty' in advice columns, by the "information-based" knowledges of institutionalized experts and qualified practitioners [e.g. gynaecologists, clinical psychologists, counsellors, etc.] (see Brunt, 1982; Brinkgreve & Korzec, 1979; McRobbie, 1991: Chapter 2).

Within *Couple Clinic*, the metacommunicative captions / statements which ritually - at the level of form - frame this site of advice, clearly function as advertisements of / discursive injunctions to *Famsa's* counselling services. Mininni (1991) explains that such assertions - through emphasizing the power of psychotherapeutics - "lead readers to acknowledge the gap between their problems and the solutions they can only find outside themselves" (p. 78). In this advice text, then, first, the "countless desperate couples" [my emphasis] who face relationship-crises are explicitly addressed, establishing the pervasiveness of this domain of 'normal pathology'. Second, the adoption of particular psychologized positions (e.g. confession) and engagement in a particular psychotherapeutic technology (i.e. couple-counselling), are set up as pre-conditions for and/or injunctions to reconciliation [i.e. "By spelling out your feelings honestly and seeking compassionate counselling together, *you can* put the crisis in perspective and avoid the ultimate break-up": my emphases]. Third, telephone numbers and addresses of national *Famsa* centres are provided.

That the *Couple Clinic* case study presents a "positive" or "successful" outcome - a reconciled couple, and the resolution of a particular "relationship crisis", viz. male sexual infidelity - advertises [and reproduces]

counselling as an appropriate [read imperative] psychotherapeutic intervention in such instances; and warns against the dire consequences, particularly for women, of neglecting to [or resisting] this institutionally prescribed "work", e.g. *failing* to "avoid the ultimate break-up", or worse still, *desiring* break-up. Thus, psychologized criteria are set up which police women's options, motives and resistances [see subsequent section]. Altman (1984) captures my own feminist misgivings to the touted success of the outcome by claiming that mediatization of "case studies" which use heterosexual couples as "units for counselling", labour as "propaganda for psychiatry, marriage and female dependence on men" (p. 118).

As a point of accuracy - not intended to "discredit" my feminist scepticism [above] - it is noted that *Couple Clinic* does document counselling processes which *do not* effect reconciliations. In the 1991-sample, for example, three case studies out of 12 [25%] ended in separation, divorce or relationship termination. Analyses of patterns / contradictions in these "failures" of psychotherapeutics, while interesting, are beyond the scope of this study.

A feminist reading begs a question about the absence, in this forum, of psychotherapeutic technologies "other" than counselling, e.g. behaviour modification, feminist therapies, etc. Thus, what interests might be served by an alliance between the "counselling" technologies advertised in *Couple Clinic*, and the "liberal feminist" profile of *Femina* [see Chapter 3]?

Historically, "counselling" - though not a unitary technique - is thought to have developed out of "humanist" psychological theory and therapeutic practice [cf. a Rogerian model], and is associated with focus on conscious, short-term, crisis-intervention, or life-skills training, to improve current functioning, e.g. communication skills, focussed listening, sex therapy, etc. (Weinberg, 1989; Cushman, 1990; Rose, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Fairclough, 1992). It is also understood to be oppositional [or resistant] to psychodynamic / psychoanalytic approaches which advocate longer term, "intra-psychic" work, e.g. exploration of past / unconscious determinants in present functioning, and "transferential" issues (Bejin, 1985b).

I have suggested in my analysis of *Couple Clinic* [above] that "opposition" between counselling goals and psychoanalytic insights does not produce mutually exclusive psychologizations, i.e. both are implicated. However, within this site of advice, counselling is easily marketed due to its accessibility: routes of referral are clearly set out [e.g. via *Famsa*]; and the visible counselling process is democratically intelligible to a "lay" audience (see Weinberg, 1989: Chapter 2). Furthermore, the focus on the individual - and the interior dynamics of private sexual relationships - is politically unthreatening (cf. Coward, 1984). The humanistic promises of choices, freedoms, opportunities for agentic "work", optimization of potential and improved current functioning, and thus, personal fulfillment and happiness in heterosexual relationships, effectively obscures (a) any "socio-structural" readings of gendered oppression [and options for social transformation], and (b) any directive / ideological operations of power-knowledge in psychotherapeutic counselling technologies.

Kristeva's delineation of "liberal feminism" (1986, in Davies, 1990: 502) intimates that powers are accorded [individual] women in conventionalized "feminine" positions *within* a patriarchal order [see

Chapter 2]. Thus, in similar ways to the production of empowerment effects via medicalized work on their bodies as "objects" in *Femina's Beauty Clinic* [see Chapter 4], women-readers of *Couple Clinic* may be empowered through engagement with psychotherapeutic counselling technologies, or through "working" in/on relationships in similarly psychologized ways. This view valorizes access, for women-in-relationships, to more indirect operations and effects of power - e.g. insight, feminine flexibility, etc. - and equips women-readers who are "single", in keeping with *Femina's* profile, "for a future with a man in it" [Femina Factsheet, March 1993: see Chapter 3].

"You haven't faced up to your problems" or "Leave this man": the psychologized conditions for "exit" from relationships

Several structural similarities are discernible in the normative constructions of male sexual infidelity, and of resolutions to ensuing "crisis", in the advice texts analyzed thus far in this Chapter. For example:

- (1) Infidelity was discovered / confronted by a wife, who initiated the psychologized relationship-work process to repair emotional and relational damage.
- (2) The state of the [marital] relationship, prior to the discovery of infidelity, was represented as "good", "strong" or "near perfect". Thus, it was implied that the husband's infidelity was a first and last offence, and he indicated re-commitment to the relationship and intended sexual exclusivity.
- (3) A reconciliatory imperative of relationship-repair was issued through advocacy of operations and effects of counselling technologies.

Thus, that readers are drawn in to witness the apparent successes achieved through engagement in psychotherapeutic work - via representations of "saving" / "saved" relationships - might be read as effectively limiting the options available to women-readers. For example, a "male prank" does not count as an institutionally legitimate reason to terminate an otherwise / previously "good" relationship, *provided* the "prank" does not happen again. Interpretation of the wives' / women's intentions - did they "really" want to stay in / work at these relationships? did the advice columnist "change their minds" for them? - is spurious within an approach which recognizes the productive effects of institutionalized knowledges in relationship practice. These normative, psychotherapeutic knowledges are understood to structure discursive practices in several ways.

First, a hierarchy of different types of extra-relationship male infidelities is set up, e.g. "lapses", "pranks" or "secret" affairs [seen as "separate" from the existing relationship]; ritual infidelities [seen as evidence of relationship-trouble]; or "terminal" affairs [where a male partner leaves the existing relationship]. Second, a hierarchy of different types of relationships is implied, e.g. "near perfect", "good", "the usual ups and downs", "distant", "abusive", etc. This requires women [in terms of HHD] (a) to be knowledgeable about

the criteria for the constitution of a "good" relationship;⁹ and (b) to be responsible for the psychologized objectification and surveillance of her own relationship (Coward, 1984: see 'relationship vigilance' in earlier section). Third, assuming women's ongoing relationship-work [above], a network of causal relations and predictable outcomes between these hierarchies is structured through the reproduction, via advice texts, of the operations and effects of psychotherapeutics.

Thus, while Rusbult (1987) mentions "exit" [of a relationship] as a valid, and often individually empowering, response to feminine dissatisfaction with a relationship, the appearance of this option is carefully policed in advice texts. This section will examine ways in which options available to women, in instances of male sexual infidelity, are prescribed by psychologization, e.g. (1) to expose for scrutiny, and reproduce, women's motives for wanting to terminate [work-able] relationships as "irresponsible", and (2) to set up particular criteria which legitimate "exit" as a "responsible" option, or which signify the failure of psychotherapeutics in irrevocable relationship break-down.

1. Chiding feminine irresponsibility

The lengthy Q-section of the advice text below is included to convey a representation of emotional confusion, conflict and subjective ambiguity of a wife who has exercised the "exit" option. Analysis focuses on the opportunities for psychologized "censure" and "closure" produced by this narrative (cf. Carter, 1988). Emphases are mine.

To divorce - or forgive again? (JH 97)

Q Last year I finally decided to leave my husband because he was having an affair with a neighbour. It was the third time he had been unfaithful during our 10-year marriage and I just couldn't take the betrayal any more. I've started [divorce] proceedings [] but now I'm not sure that's what I really want because I still love him. But what if I took him back and he had another affair? Every time he's unfaithful the whole neighbourhood talks about it and it's so humiliating for me. I'm also under pressure from my parents to divorce him because they think he's rubbish. They have always helped me a lot - I'm staying with them and so are my three young children. My husband often comes to see me and we like chatting to one another. He says his latest affair wasn't sexual and I really think he's changed now. Yet I'm afraid of getting hurt.

A The most important thing at this traumatic time is your feelings as well as those of your husband. And of course you must consider what is best for the children. However, it seems to me that *you haven't really faced up to your problems at all*. For instance, why did you decide finally to divorce him after a non-sexual relationship when the others, which were presumably full-on affairs, didn't have that effect on you? And has he really changed? [] Try to have a serious discussion with him when he arrives for a chat. You could contact Famsa for advice and perhaps persuade him to see a counsellor with you. But before you decide either way, you need to establish what you really want - *a family breakdown is a very serious matter*.

⁹ Several authors have investigated the *sources* [and contents] of popular knowledges about relationships, e.g. electronic media (Livingstone, 1987; Shapiro & Kroeger, 1991), motion pictures (Denzin, 1991), romantic fiction (Radway, 1987) or own past experience of failed relationships (Baxter, 1986; Carnelley & Janoff-Bulman, 1992). I do not imply, through focus on the psychologized knowledges in advice texts, that "other" sources [possibly similarly institutionalized] are not influential.

The complex chiding of this wife sets up "her motives" [e.g. to leave / return to her husband] as a warning for women-readers, and structures an imperative for psychologized self-examination and relationship-work, in several ways. First, the introduction of children into this representation of "relationship-crisis" morally transforms it into a "family-crisis". Drawing in hegemonic familial discourses permits presentation of "family breakdown (as) a very serious matter" - i.e. more serious than [childless] relationship breakdown - invoking (a) disruption of a nuclear unit in a patriarchal social system, or the alleged emotional damages to children wreaked by divorce, etc. [cf. Foucault's (1978) 'Malthusian couple': see Introduction, above][see also Donzelot, 1979], and (b) the women-readers' positioning in relation to this destructiveness.

Thus, in terms of HHD, women are accorded social responsibilities for custodial protection of family values and maintenance of the family unit [see Hollway, 1989: 54]. Related to this, in terms of psychotherapeutic work, women become responsible for the alleviation of potential damages to the family unit through psychologized self-knowledge, introspection and 'talking about it' with husband / counsellors. "Family breakdown is a very serious matter" - as 'the last word' on this wife's desertion in the above advice text - produces a pervasive sense of foreboding and caution which might be carried away as a summarizing interpretation by readers. It is an interpretation which sets up the "seriousness of family breakdown" against the whimsy of this wife's emotionality, fearfulness, unreflexive selfishness and impulsive change of heart, and emphasizes her shirked social responsibility, and un-psychologized unreasonableness.

Furthermore, the introduction of children - and feminine responsibility for their well-being - highlights, from a "feminist" position, socio-structural proscriptions of autonomous options for women-*with-children*. In this instance, thus, exercise of the exit-option has involved swopping nuclear dependence on a husband [e.g. financial, a home, stable living conditions, etc.], with nuclear dependence on parental support. Although this option might be read as agentic [i.e. taking a stand against unacceptable behaviour and further emotional damage to herself], it is not an option equally available to all women dissatisfied with / embarrassed by faithless partners, due to material conditions of disempowerment [e.g. poverty, threats of domestic violence, paucity of support networks / structures, etc.]. This reading highlights the marketization of psychotherapeutics as an appropriate, effective and democratically available technology, to enable women to privately effect relationship-repair, or to negotiate more powerfully [with institutional support] for a "better deal" within relationships. Other options, e.g. remunerative work [by a wife], day-care facilities for children, the support of woman friends, or injunctions to financial and emotional autonomy, are textually absent.

Second, the institutionalized chiding of this wife's socially and psychologically irresponsible "motives" labours to censure every possible option, i.e. staying with, leaving or returning to an unfaithful partner. This scrutinizing gaze is reproduced by the rhetorical questions issued by the advice columnist [in A above], which impel the wife and women-readers to adopt the introspective / self-reflexive practices of psychologized subjectification. For example, why has a partner's [alleged] "non-sexual relationship" invoked a knee-jerk divorce-reaction, when previous, "presumably full-on affairs" did not? This chides this wife's lack of constancy and self-knowledge [i.e. *not knowing* "what she really wants"], and her lack of tenacious, ongoing psychologized work in/on the relationship [e.g. *not* "lighting the fuse" and "clearing the air" *sooner or more persistently*].

Thus, irresponsible non-response to a partner's *historically previous* "full-on affairs" appears to have undermined this wife's right to respond to *this* [allegedly] "non-sexual relationship". This chides the incipient pattern of relationship-neglect, warns women-readers of the consequences of this [e.g. loss of control in/over a relationship, disempowerment, public humiliation, divorce, etc.], and impels them towards ongoing psychologized vigilance and timeous assertiveness. However, read according to a hierarchy of male infidelities [see above], this wife is chided for 'making a fuss' about an [allegedly] "non-sexual" affair [perceived as "harmless" or "non-threatening" to a marriage, or "illegitimate" grounds for divorce?], falsely accusing her partner, and, needlessly causing "family breakdown". This dubious behaviour, then, is attributable to her lack of self-reflexivity, or irresponsibility towards *her own* problems, viz. "you haven't really faced up to your problems at all".

A second rhetorical question [in A above] - "(H)as he really changed?" - paradoxically, is censorious of impulsive forgiveness / reunion, reproduces a tone of suspicion about *his* motives, and cautions against feminine gullibility. A meticulous laying down of textual clues lends power to this popular reading (cf. soap opera) of a faithless husband's "character" and "intentions" [e.g. her parents think "he's rubbish", he has a history of infidelities, he could be lying about the latest "non-sexual" affair, etc.]. Thus, it befalls women to investigate and establish what a male partner's "motives" are, to transform [casual] "chat" into "serious discussion" [about the relationship], and to enlist institutionalized support, advice and counselling to resist un-worked-through [or emotional] decisions about the relationship.

Third, in the cacophony of voices and demands in this advice text [e.g. husband, neighbours, parents, children, advice columnist, counsellor], this wife is instructed to locate her own feelings and "what (she) really wants". Indeed, it may be argued that this text deploys stabilizing positions in hegemonic discourses to produce [as an effect of power] a more confident, consistent, reasonable and reflexive wife / woman / self / subject [cf. "shoring up splintered subjectivities": Carter, 1988: 72, see Chapter 2]. Thus, in the institutionalized context of a warning against the seriousness of family-breakdown, consideration of "what's best for the children" serves as a powerful interpellation into psychologized subjectivity. This posits feminine self- and relationship-reflexivity as important *pre-conditions* to an exit-option [i.e. as a last resort], and reunion. That this wife confesses to still love her estranged husband cements her subject position within HHD, and structures a positively energized, emotional space in which psychotherapeutic technologies [e.g. counselling] may take root and work their palliative reformation.

2. Establishing the conditions for exit

I have, in the above section, worked toward analysis of the "textual loopholes" (cf. "criteria") produced in advice texts - e.g. introduction of children [or familial discourses], lack of self- or relationship-reflexivity, confession of "love", establishment of male contrition for past misdemeanours, etc. - which mitigate against, and police, exercise of the exit-option for women. Thus, the presence of any combination of these criteria, rather like a checklist, might indicate an opportunity for successful intervention by psychotherapeutics, i.e. the structuring of a will to "save" the relationship. This means that unequivocal

institutionalized advocacy of "exit" [for women, from relationships where a male partner is unfaithful] is reserved for particular textual circumstances, in some ways antithetical to the above-mentioned criteria, which are perceived to typify failure of psychotherapeutics.

Consider the following advice text.

He beats and blames me (ED 58)

Q I've been seeing my boyfriend for seven years and last year he became violent for the first time. He broke things, pushed me around and threatened my life. Later he apologised but I couldn't help thinking it would happen again. It did, last week []. I'm 25 and don't feel the need to marry which, he says, drives him crazy as he loves me and I don't return that love; nor do I feel I can love or respect him as I did before. He had an affair last year for which he blames me []. I don't want to lose out on seven years and have the hassle of building a new relationship, but I also don't want to waste any more time [].

A Leave this man. Whatever his problems, his way of dealing with stress is to be violent and this is unlikely to change. It's a textbook situation of a man being unfaithful, battering you and trying to convince you that all this is your fault []. Give yourself the chance to meet other men and be willing to be lonely for a while if necessary. This man is no good for you.

Addressing the criteria for legitimate relationship termination in advice columns, Belling (1992) comments on the requisite, hyperbolic derogation of relationships and men to "sub-human" levels (p. 20). Within "realist" or [some] "feminist" positions - where advice texts are assumed to describe or account for "real" experience - Belling's observation might be criticized as insensitive, or, indeed, 'politically incorrect', for it implies that women "exaggerate" the conditions of their oppression in heterosexual relationships, e.g. battery, insecurity, financial dependence, sexual exploitation, etc. These "realities" are understood to continue 'when text stops' (Parker & Burman, 1993).

However, to take a productive [Foucauldian] view of representations of "sub-human men / relationships" in advice texts is to situate these representations within women's subjectification in psychologized knowledges and practices of relationship-maintenance [cf. HHD], or, perhaps within inscribed feminine knowledges about the conventions of advice columns, e.g. operations and effects of psychotherapeutic criteria for relationship-repair [see above]. Thus, in order to legitimate exercise of the exit-option, male behaviour must transcend what is perceived as "normal" or "acceptable" [cf. 'sub-human'], and all "loopholes" - which open women's "motives" or emotional shortcomings for scrutiny and chiding - must be systematically sealed off.

Significantly, then, in the above advice text, (a) due to a male partner's battery, an abusive relationship is set up to constitute an environment which is both life-threatening and emotionally damaging; (b) the male partner displays no remorse for his infidelity [i.e. he blames his partner]; and (c) a woman's emotional bond has changed / died [i.e. "(I don't feel) I can love or respect him as I did before"], but she is presented as ambivalent about leaving. These criteria reproduce a complex interweaving of the legitimacy of women's "exit", women's rights, and affirmation of women's subject positioning in HHD and relationship-work.

Criteria (a) and (b) labour as diagnostic information for, and warning against, "the textbook situation": a "bad" or "dangerous" relationship, impervious to psychotherapeutic intervention due to a male partner's "unchangeable problems" [e.g. he is violent / abusive, unfaithful, possessive, domineering, insecure, etc.]. "The textbook" alludes to formal sources of institutional knowledges about such abusive behaviour, and documented failures of psychotherapeutic practices in abusive relationships.¹⁰

Access to this "textbook" information in the above advice text structures imperatives to different audiences of women-readers. First, to women-readers embroiled in abusive-unfaithful relationships [cf. the girlfriend, above], the imperative is towards unequivocal and immediate "exit" [i.e. "Leave this man."]. Through the final summarizing statement - "This man is no good for you" - grounds for exit are based on an assertion that "this man is *no good*" [violent, etc.], and an appeal to responsibility for 'care of the self' [i.e. "no good for you"]. Thus, reassurance that no mitigating or transformative factor has been overlooked [i.e. establishment of feminine blamelessness] excuses these particular women from further work in/on this relationship, and their labour is re-directed into instrumental action to guarantee their own physical safety, emotional well-being and, indeed, "chances to meet other men".

The maintenance of an appropriate subject position within HHD - despite the advocated exit-option - appears as another imperative in the above advice text. Here, although the abused girlfriend reportedly "(doesn't) feel the need to marry" and no longer loves / respects her partner, her apparent reluctance to leave the relationship may be interpreted in HHD terms, i.e. not wishing to "lose" a seven year investment in the "hassle of building" a relationship. Furthermore, leaving this troublesome man / relationship on grounds of "(not wanting) to waste any more time" implicates ideas about women's 'ticking biological clocks' (Coward, 1984; Wolf, 1990)¹¹, and invokes willingness to engage in and establish a more worthwhile relationship-project as soon as possible.

In this regard, it is notable that the period between relationships is represented as being "lonely for a while". Thus, "for a while" indicates the temporariness of this unhappy, single status, and "loneliness" suggests an opportunity for psychotherapeutic intervention [cf. 'therapeutics of finitude', Foucault (1978): see earlier section], rather than for independence.

Second, then, the warning injunction to women-readers involved in relationships which *do not* meet these dire criteria [e.g. male infidelity without the abusive dimension], is towards more persistent psychologized labour to *circumvent* such deterioration or break-down in relationship-dynamics. Women who have exit-ed from irrevocably damaged / damaging relationships are addressed and re-inscribed within this HHD injunction.

10 My inclusion of battery / domestic violence here is intended to convey "a mitigating criterion" for exit [by women] from unfaithful relationships. The focus on infidelity is, thus, paramount, and I do not imply comprehensivity of analysis of issues relating to "battery".

11 The notion of women's 'ticking biological clock' draws in two issues related to my focus on the imperative positioning of women within HHD: powers of physical attractiveness [to men] are believed to "fade" as age increases, making it more difficult to "catch" a relationship-partner [see Chapter 4]; and female biological capacity for reproduction is limited beyond a particular age [cf. the procreative fertility of Foucault's (1978) 'Malthusian couple'].

It is assumed, of course, that women-readers - "trapped" in "bad" relationships through operations and effects of various forms of disempowerment [e.g. poverty, ignorance, apathy, poor self-esteem, etc.] - will gain access, through advice texts, to resources / powers which will enable them to put such exit and self-care imperatives into practice. These powers are read, in this section, as sources of institutionalized legitimacy, and "rights", which draw in/on legal discourses. Garfinkel (1967) has commented on an "actuarial audience" of psychiatric case files, i.e. addressing how case files might be read / used legally, or by lawyers (p. 197). Here, the criteria for legitimate exit are understood to be produced in the context of a similarly implied "actuarial audience". Criteria for exit must withstand legal scrutiny in courts of law, and thus, operate to educate women-readers about their legal rights should they exercise the exit-option [e.g. divorce proceedings and settlements, child custody suits, p/alimony claims, etc.].

The assumption of a legal audience / function permits interpretation of the conservatism inherent in the policing, within advice texts, of "irresponsible" or "illegitimate" advocacy of the exit-option for women / wives [see previous section]. Instead, as I have shown, psychotherapeutic work on the interior of the self / relationship - to sustain appropriate feminine subject positioning within HHD - is the prioritized imperative. Legally, this might be read as protection of magazine editorial staff or advice columnists from litigation [e.g. being sued for 'alienation of affection'] by irate, "wrongfully deserted" male partners. Certainly, however, more "revolutionary" [e.g. feminist] approaches to women's empowerment would read these overlapping institutionalized knowledges, practices and positions as reproductive of discursive and/or socio-structural feminine dependence on men.

"What is the risk of the wife getting AIDS?" and "Is my vagina too loose to satisfy him?": technologies of medicalization, women's work and monogamy-rules

Each section within this Chapter has examined aspects of the concordance between women's subject positioning in HHD, and the appropriateness of psychologized work in/on "her" relationship to maintain its emotional life, and the exclusivity of its sexual bond. This analysis has been edging, inexorably, towards an understanding of how difficult it is for women to resist these institutionalized "truths" about subjectivity [e.g. who she is, what her emotional needs are, what her "role" in the relationship involves, etc.] and intersubjectivity [e.g. what a relationship is, the requirement of monogamy, etc.].

Thus, contravention - i.e. neglect of, or resistance to, the perspectives and practices she is required, as a disciplined ["docile"] and appropriate ["good"] feminine subject, to adopt - promises and reproduces predictable risks and damages. For example, instead of confronting a male partner's infidelity and engaging in a normalizing psychotherapeutic re-negotiation of sexual exclusivity [see *Janet Harding's Lifeline* and *Couple Clinic*, above], resistant options might include ignoring his behaviour, contractually "sharing" him with an-other woman / man, or having an (own) affair to exact revenge on him. It would be possible, drawing on various institutionalized discourses, to expose each of these points of individual resistance as "inappropriate", "silly", "ill-advised", "immature", or "risky" / "dangerous", i.e. with dire consequences.

Consider the following brief extract from an advice text which uses psychologized imperatives of emotional damage in such an expository way [e.g. see constructions of "you *will*", below]. Here, women-readers are impelled to take responsibility for caring for their own emotional needs in relationships, by enforcing monogamy-rules. [The needs are, of course, structured by this very institutionalization of monogamy-rules.] Contravention is, thus, accorded silly-status, ruled out, and replaced with a normalizing imperative.

A [] Even if you think you love [your husband] so much that you [would be prepared to] condone his affair, you *will* find yourself becoming utterly miserable and you *will* lose your self-esteem. [] I advise you [both] to get help to work through this difficult time. Speak to Famsa - they provide professional couple-counselling at a small fee. [] (A Family Affair, ED 10: my emphases)

However, psychological discourses are but several of the overlapping knowledges - often entwined with, or implicated in, one another - which overdetermine "monogamy-rules" in relationships, facilitate the imperative force and truth-status of these rules, and accord responsibility to particular, gendered positions [through operations of power] to oversee their reproduction. In the previous section, I introduced familial and legal discourses which operated with psychologization to facilitate / limit women's use of the exit-option from faithless relationships. In this concluding section, then, I highlight two strategic moments of alliance, in advice texts, between medicalizations of monogamy and appropriately psychologized, feminine subject positioning in HHD, viz. (1) women's relationship-work in the context of discourses of HIV-prevention; and (2) provision of medicalized sex information / skills [cf. "sexology": Bejin, 1985b] to enable women to keep their partners sexually satisfied, and therefore, monogamous.

First, a disclaimer. Women-and-AIDS and "sex advice" are (related) fields which have generated pervasive academic and popular / media discourse around a range of issues - medical, social, psychological, economic, political - from varieties of perspectives. The inclusion of analysis of two advice texts here - culled from more detailed sections which were excluded from this dissertation due to confines of space - draws in/on these knowledges and debates, but is not intended to be comprehensive of all issues in either fields. Focus on the institutionalization of monogamy-rules is sustained through consideration of the varieties of discursive practices women [are impelled to] take up in relationships to bolster these rules, and their subject positions in HHD.

1. A lesson in AIDS: the medical risks of a husband's infidelity

In critical vein, Patton (1993) has argued that AIDS discourse has either represented women as transmitters of HIV to hapless male partners and children, or as innocent victims of morally degenerate men. Both representations are apparent in advice texts, although examination of the latter is more relevant to my argument here. Thus, in an earlier advice text, Glenda mentioned that her husband's sexual unfaithfulness - with a female sex-worker - had put her "life at risk" through possible exposure to HIV, or other sexually transmitted diseases [see *Femina's Couple Clinic*, above]. The following advice text picks up these medicalized consequences of non-monogamy in ways which are analytically interesting within women's subject position in HHD.

AIDS: fathers' bad example (JH 10)

Q How does a mother teach teenage children about AIDS if the father provides [] a bad example? These men go to work and get caught up with single women who can't seem to find a single man to mess around with but prefer married men. What about the wife and children sitting at home? Where does one draw the line here? And what is the risk of the wife getting AIDS? Spare the innocent wife a little thought.

A While your letter contains perfectly valid statements with which I am sure many readers will would agree, the tone reveals that you are actually saying much more. [] Somehow you feel that if your husband were [] concerned about AIDS it would modify his sexual activity [] [with] other women and yourself - if he cannot be faithful for any other reason, you feel, he should at least respond [] to the actual risk of AIDS which he might impose on you []. You need to talk with your husband about all your feelings, including your anger, and might also wish to use the help of a counsellor at a Lifeline centre. Either way, your general remarks about [the overall problem of AIDS in our society] need to be dealt with specifically in the context of your own personal life and your husband's behaviour.

This advice text strategically draws in medicalized consequences of a wife's inability to keep her husband monogamous, as exposure to "the *actual risk* of AIDS" [my emphasis]. Seidel (1993) has argued that medical discourses of HIV/AIDS offer monocausal theories of viral contagion, which permit the epidemiological calculation of those at "risk" in terms of "risk groups" or, more currently, "risk behaviours" [i.e. estimation of the probability of / vulnerability to HIV infection]. However, despite an apparent request for such information - "what is the risk of the wife getting AIDS?" [see **Q** above] - the "actual risks", in medical terms, of a wife's HIV-infection through sexual activity with a non-monogamous and/or seropositive husband are not elaborated in this advice text. I return to this point below.

Thus, the *partial* deployment of medical discourses [e.g. inexplicated notions of "risk" and "the AIDS threat", no safer-sex strategies, etc.] permits implication of all the popular panic about AIDS, e.g. "innocence" versus blame, promiscuity, erosion of family values, stigmatization, prejudice and death (see Clift, Stears, Legg, Mermon & Ryan, 1990). The consequences of a non-monogamous husband are set up as punitive, lethal and incontrovertible for women, as opposed to the promise of apparently less serious psychologized consequences [e.g. "becoming utterly miserable" or "(losing) self-esteem", see above]. This labours to shock and scare, and thus, impel women-readers towards greater labour on/in monogamy-rules in their sexual relationships.

However, while the appropriateness of feminine subject positioning in HHD remains paramount throughout, various modes of policing the sexual boundaries of relationships [by women] are discernible in the above advice text. First, the wife's narrative [in **Q** above] does not represent a conventional psychologized exercise in introspective self- or relationship-reflexivity. Indeed, the use of interrogative and powerfully discursive statements - i.e. "perfectly valid statements with which [] many readers would agree" - addresses an audience of women-readers in ways which impel anger, sympathy and moral responsibility [cf. Lee & Ungar (1989) who have examined the emotional effects produced through deployment of "facts-with-feeling"]. Second, psychologized normalization impels a redirection of feminine labour "inwards" [in **A** above]. I will deal with each of these modes in turn.

The insertion of AIDS into a narrative of a male partner's infidelity invokes sympathy for a wife's "innocence" [cf. battery, above]. That she is positioned as "the innocent wife [] sitting at home [with the children]", focuses attention on the infringements of her domestic "rights" and "powers". Thus, through emotive recourse to naturalized familial discourses, she is permitted to appear as being *denied* rights to perform her appropriate 'wifely duties' in several ways. First, as I have argued in an earlier section, the terms of HHD accord women social responsibilities for custodial protection of cultural / family values. Here, this work as a mother involves the inscription of monogamy-rules on teenage children, e.g. via imparting knowledges about HIV, or via the exemplar of the parental marriage and her relationship-work within it. The shirking of this duty invokes notions of an unravelling social fabric and the lack of protection of the "rights" and "innocence" of children. This is understood to impel outrage in readers, and re-new engagement in relationship-practices which affirm, police and reproduce traditional values.

Second, the inability to "draw the line" with respect to her husband's infidelities, further highlights a representation of feminine disempowerment. This wife's rights to monogamous and "safe" sex - in terms of HHD - have been violated, but, as Strebel (1992) has argued, many women (e.g. African, rural or working class women in South Africa) lack the autonomy and the status to enforce either monogamy-rules or safer sex practices within established heterosexual relationships.¹² It is implied [in A above], within a psychologized view, that the wife [inappropriately and passively] relied on the sting of "the AIDS threat" to effect curtailment of her husband's non-monogamy, but this begs the question: what other practical options for her own health-care - *without recourse to psychologization* [below] - might be available to this wife?

For example, the enforcement of a conditional "sex-free" or "safer-sex" domestic zone [e.g. withholding sex until affairs stop, insisting on condom-usage until HIV-tests are conducted, etc.] could precipitate further risk: violence, rape, a male partner seeking sex elsewhere [see subsequent section], and/or desertion. Thus, as several feminists have argued, while AIDS-awareness campaigns have reproduced monogamy-rules as a cause celebre, it is often uncritically assumed that it is women's work to enforce these rules [cf. HHD], within existing power relations / structures (Coward, 1987; Segal, 1987).

Third, "single women" are identified as an obstacle to appropriate wifely duties. Thus, the wife's narrative [in Q above] labours as an interrogative, angry chiding of this audience of women-readers, and serves, powerfully, to publicize and police the sexual boundaries of formal / established relationships. The construction of the intentioned permissiveness of "single women" - i.e. using the workplace to inveigle "married men" into affairs - as the oppositional term to the "innocence" of the-angel-in-the-house [cf. HHD], is striking. Single women are censured for "messing around" [e.g. references to sexual promiscuity, interference, etc.], HIV-transmission, and lacking in appropriate feminine responsibility to curb / resist the illegitimate sexual attentions of men who "belong" [as objects of HHD] to other women [see Footnote 4].

12 In contrast with women in "established" relationships - or in traditionally feminine subject positions in discourses about sexual relationships [e.g. HHD] - several authors have suggested that more independent / resistant women are able to negotiate safer sexual practices more effectively, and with greater power, e.g. in initiating "new" sexual relationships or "casual" sexual encounters [see Holland, Ramazanoglu & Scott, 1990; Kippax, Crawford, Waldby & Benton, 1990].

Of course, this chiding of single women - through recourse to familial, medical and permissive discourses - exonerates the faithless husband from responsibility for his non-monogamy. In terms of hegemonic MSD assumptions, he is represented as being "found" [i.e. sought out] and "caught up" [i.e. trapped] by these 'other' women, who are positioned either as objects precipitating the strong male sex drive; or as subjects within Hollway's (1989) "permissive" discourse [PD]. The competitive antagonism between "married" and "single" women [over ownership of/by men] has received considerable attention in analyses of the objectification of women within an exchange system (e.g. Ehrenreich & English, 1979; Irigaray, 1981; Haug, 1987: see Chapter 4), and draws in the complex interstices between gendered positionings in Hollway's (1989) MSD and HHD.

However, the construction of public blame of "single women" and concomitant exoneration of the husband's guilt or sexual responsibility for his infidelities [in terms of MSD], might be read as producing a surprising twist of power [cf. resistance], a kind of absolution for passivity, for the wife in the above advice text. Thus, if "single women" would refrain from poaching spoken-for husbands, relationships would, by implication, be monogamous and unthreatened by HIV-infection. And, since her husband is not-guilty, this wife is relieved of the onerous responsibility for private [and "risky"] confrontation with him or his motives.

While psychologization issues firm institutionalized support for, and normalizing technologies to hold in place, the appropriateness of feminine HHD positioning [in A above], it, crudely stated, doesn't buy this last resistant "twist", viz. absolution of feminine responsibility, agency and influence. Thus, through the institutionalized chiding of several of the "valid statements" [in the wife's narrative], this feminine responsibility, agency and influence is re-inscribed, structured, and channelled "inwards", i.e. into the interiority of a flawed / troubled relationship and personal feelings / failings. For example, other / single women disappear in the A-section of this advice text, as does the textual presence of children. "(G)eneral remarks about AIDS" and protestations of wifely "innocence" do not count as adequate substitutes for the *specific* relationship-work which is lacking in the context of this wife's "own personal life" and "husband's behaviour".

In the arena of monogamy-rules, then, competing and/or allied institutionalizations are played off against and set up alongside one another: an "AIDS-crisis" (medical) might be rearticulated as a "relationship-crisis" (psychological), and vice versa. In this advice text, the alliance is uneasy. Paucity of explicit medicalized knowledges and strategies maintain the status of HIV/AIDS as a shadowy, punitive and fatal consequence of unresolved relationship-trouble. Furthermore, it is implied that modifications to "sexual escapades" [by a husband], due to "the actual risk of AIDS" (i.e. medical reasons), is *not enough* to ensure establishment of a "good" / "mature" / "reflexive" relationship which valorizes monogamy for *other* reasons, e.g. love, respect, trust, commitment (i.e. emotional, psychological reasons).

These psychologizations clearly target, and accord responsibilities to, women as subjects of HHD. Women-readers are impelled to resuscitate the emotional life of the relationship [e.g. through confession of

her feelings, and talking about (the relationship) to husband / counsellors], and this imperative is underwritten by the new urgency of powerful medicalized consequences: HIV-transmission and "AIDS".

I do not imply, of course, that all / other advice texts use similar strategies of psychologization. A further discourse analytic study would be required to unpick the complex contradictions, institutionalizations and operations of power in these texts. However, two brief points about the intersection of form and content of advice texts are relevant by way of conclusion. First, HIV/AIDS, as a 'realm of problematic experience', was not accorded a high profile in the sample of South African advice columns perused for this study. For example, of the 554 letters content analyzed, 14 letters (or 2.5%) mentioned HIV/AIDS [see Chapter 3]. This invites speculation about [and future interrogation of] the editorial positioning of various information and/or debate about the issues related to HIV/AIDS for women, elsewhere in women's magazines.

Second, notwithstanding the circumscription of content by form in advice texts [e.g. upbeat, expert resolution of a single "problem" in 50 words, etc.: see Chapter 2], a focus on power and empowerment asks what "feminist advice" on HIV/AIDS and monogamy-rules would look like? Melanie McFadyean, feminist advice columnist in *Just Seventeen*, has emphasized the importance of an informational approach that combines routes of individual relief / resolution with openings for debate about the 'social causes of problems' [see McFadyean, 1988: Chapter 2]. Thus, medical knowledges about HIV-transmission / prevention might serve to defuse the moralistic tone "AIDS" sets up in the above advice text. Particular issues related to women [e.g. negotiating safer sex practices, explication of risk, rights, pregnancy: see Mays & Cochran, 1988; Elmslie, 1989; Richardson, 1990] might be used to address power issues, i.e. to critically scrutinize gender relations, taken-for-granted assumptions and responsibilities for relationship-work (see Coward, 1987; Segal, 1987). Finally, a de-pathologization of resistance might usefully direct women-readers' "anger" into collective agencies involved in social transformative work, e.g. AIDS education organizations, or women's groups and workshops.

2. A lesson in sex: sexual satisfaction and monogamy

Hollway (1984a) has argued that the focus of HHD is not sexuality per se, but the ideals, values, responsibilities and practices associated with "relationship", "monogamy", "procreation" and "family". In analyses of women's relationship-work with respect to non-monogamy, I have formulated their responsibility as in/direct forms of "sexual management" (Christian-Smith, 1988). Thus far, management has mostly been *recuperative* - i.e. after the "crisis" of male sexual infidelity has occurred - where feminine positioning in HHD engaged with psychologized imperatives to confess, confront, demand, re-negotiate, reinforce and police the boundaries of sexual exclusivity in relationships. Neglect of, resistance to, or failure in these recuperative, managerial duties was revealed to produce dire subjective and inter-subjective consequences for women, e.g. lost self-esteem, HIV-infection and AIDS, and irrevocable relationship breakdown.

However, this final section on feminine responsibilities for *preventative* sexual management re-visits earlier comments on the ways in which women labour to keep men domestically "satisfied" to circumvent their

sexual straying [see "Relationship vigilance", above]. Livingstone (1987), in a semiotic analysis of a soap opera narrative, outlines several "popular beliefs" about the nature of, and reasons for, male adultery, e.g. all men do it, "lust" is uncontrollable, it recaptures the "virility" of youth, and it is indicative of sexual frustration and/or relationship-trouble at home (p. 263). It is the last-mentioned "belief" - that men's infidelity is precipitated or precluded by the quality of the relationship-bond and level of emotional / sexual "satisfaction" women are able to procure - which is focal here.

The advice text below was selected from *Dr David Delvin's Sexpert's Guide*, a site of specialist sexological / gynaecological advice, in *Femina* [see Chapter 3]. Analysis will sustain a critical focus on operations and effects of medicalization and psychologization in women's relationship-work in HHD, and, due to space constraints, will marginalize comprehensive commentary on formal and other interesting features of this forum.

Not Woman Enough? (DD 41)

Q I feel embarrassed asking you about this, but I'm convinced that since we had our second baby last year, I haven't been [sexually] satisfying my husband. I haven't dared talk to him about this, but I'm sure he's not satisfied, because after we make love, he usually squeezes a little more fluid out of himself. Could he be doing this because [my vagina is] "too loose"? I am doing the exercises.

A I'm sure you are [doing the exercises]. But you have no need to worry at all. This is just a personal habit of your husband's, and doesn't indicate any lack of satisfaction. A trick to try is to put your legs together (i.e. between his) during lovemaking. This "squeezes" him very slightly and should help to increase the friction. What bothers me, however, is that you and your husband clearly have very little communication about sex. And that can lead to near-disastrous misunderstandings. So why don't you just show him this question and answer, and say to him, "It's time we talked a bit more about sex, isn't it?"

Feminist objections to "sex advice" focus on the assumption of a female audience, i.e. it is women who need to know, talk / ask, read, are "told", and presumably, put this information into sexual practice. Brunt (1982), in an analysis of "permissive sex advice" offered by the proliferating sex manuals of the 1970's, believes that gendering the reader reproduces femininity in terms of "sexual availability to men" (p. 144), and "confusion", i.e. women need expert knowledge to help / teach them to 'be female', and constant reassurance (p. 159) [see also Altman, 1984; Williamson, 1986]. Bejin (1985b) takes a more institutionalized view and argues that advice-seeking about sex is produced, not by *lack* of knowledge [e.g. ignorance, confusion], but by the anxieties generated through the sophisticated level of public awareness about matters sexual. Bejin's "public", "readers" and "individuals-in-relationships" are ungendered [cf. Foucault, 1978], but he posits that "we" have already been educated: we are aware of medical norms; we are ambitious about sexual performance and intolerant of "dysfunction"; and we know when / where to seek assistance by an expert (p. 210).

My reading of the above advice text - drawing in Hollway's (1989) subject positioning of women in HHD - "genders" the operations and effects of institutionalized knowledges about sexual practice, and sexual management practices in relationships. Thus, the wife's narrative [in Q above] is understood as embedded in a range of related, institutionalized knowledges - from varieties of sources - about relationships [e.g.

what is a "good" relationship? how can this be achieved / maintained, and a male partner made to "stay"? [see above sections], and sexuality [e.g. what is "good" sex? what is sexual "satisfaction"? what do men like / need?]. Furthermore, psychologized subjection of this wife in HHD reproduces the imperatives for evaluative reflexivity on "the relationship" and his / her / their "sexual performance" [as "objects"], which facilitate the identification of "a problem", and confession of anxiety or failure to an expert, even though this is "embarrassing". I return to "embarrassment" below.

In this advice text, a husband's post-coital masturbatory behaviour (?) is read / interpreted by this wife as a warning sign of the poor quality of the "sexual satisfaction" she is able to provide. Other warning signs of male sexual performance that women might recognize include, e.g. impotence, sexual disinterest, change in sexual habits, etc. Feminine vigilance over and responsibility for male sexual satisfaction, in terms of HHD, is set up for women-readers who witness this wife's confession, i.e. "I haven't been (sexually) satisfying my husband". Implications are neatly captured in the editorially inserted title of this advice text - "Not woman enough" - i.e. not sexually good enough for this man. Un-satisfied, such a husband may require, or be tempted to seek, more satisfying sex with other women, and/or to replace her with another. Powerfully, thus, this sets up "good sex", or indeed, *women giving men "good sex"*, as relationship-glue [cf. an idea of contractual relational exchange, Christian-Smith, 1988: see Chapter 4].

Striking in this regard is the physical location of the wife's reported anxiety about providing male sexual satisfaction, in her inadequate, "too loose" vagina. This echoes earlier anxieties about, for example, 'flabby thighs' [see Chapter 4], for, despite ongoing and invisible labour at "exercises" - read here as medicalized, ante-natal, pubococcygineal [pelvic-floor] muscle-tone exercises - the anxiety is that a vagina will not be good enough to "keep" a man monogamous, or "hold" a relationship / family together. In this advice text, a wife's vagina is represented as not able to provide the normatively desired / desirable "friction" to, or "squeezing" of, her husband's penis to facilitate the penetrative and ejaculatory release believed to typify male sexual pleasure, climax and satiation (see Williamson, 1986).

Medicalized expertise and technician knowledges [in A above] produce contradictory effects. First, reassurance. While paternalistic recognition is issued for engagement in persistent "exercises", this wife's interpretation of her husband's sexual behaviour is exposed as erroneous, i.e. a corrective normalization is indicated by an adversative conjunction, in "(b)ut you have no need to worry at all". Thus, medicalization transforms a husband's behaviour from "warning sign" - laden with HHD meanings and responsibilities - into "just a personal habit", i.e. harmless, idiosyncratic, neutral. This powerfully absolves this wife / vagina from guilt and produces her / it as medically [gynaecologically] and sexually "normal".

Second, despite assurance of "normality" [above], a medicalized technique is advocated as compensatory work for an inadequate or "loose" vagina. Medicalized articulation of this sex-position mimics the wife's report of her husband's behaviour, e.g. the new position [with her legs between his] "squeezes him slightly" [in A above, my emphasis], where he had previously "squeezed [] himself" [in Q above, my emphasis]. Engagement in this advocated discursive practice - as "a trick to try" - invites and impels wives / women / vaginas to imitate, control and "colonize" the pleasure served by this husband's masturbatory activity.

Such sexological technologies are read as producing ideological effects. For example, as Williamson (1986) has suggested, ideological valorization of vaginal penetration is reproduced through the masking of alternative sexual / erotic practices (p. 44). Furthermore, the reproduction of a medicalized sex-technique as a "trick" sets up the complex positioning of women with regard to sexual management in HHD. Oppositional perspectives / practices are implied, i.e. (a) sex as "work",¹³ i.e. "turning tricks", conscious planning to acquire skills, knowledges, experience, etc.; and (b) sex as "magic", i.e. a magic-trick, without effort, artifice, spontaneity, mischief, an entertaining or inexplicable performance, etc. Here, "magic" labours ideologically to mask the operations and effects of medicalized power-knowledge, and the "sex-work" which is required of women to enforce monogamy through sexual satisfaction [cf. "fun" masking the imperative for the goal-directed, persistent, disciplined work of aerobic exercise: Chapter 4]. In this regard, Bejin (1985b) has suggested an imperative for "programmed spontaneity" in liberal sexual practice, and this might capture the tone of women's managerial "tricks" as, e.g. staged satisfaction, planned impulsivity, acquired knowledge which appears "intuitive", etc.

Third, "good sex" is revealed to require *more* than particular medicalized techniques "to increase the friction", i.e. open, candid communication about sex [e.g. see Dr Ruth - Westheimer (1981); Olivier (1991)]. This draws in a range of medical, sexological and psychological knowledges and technologies - introspection, confession, surveillance, reflexivity, examination, etc. - which are forged within "liberal" approaches to sex [see "liberal" versus "productive" views of sexual knowledges: Chapter 1]. Thus, transparent, direct talk - about "the problem", sex, the relationship - with sexual partners and experts - is set up in the above advice text as a technique to liberate individuals, reveal the "truth" [i.e. prevent "near-disastrous misunderstandings"], lubricate sexual practices and produce "good" relationships.

That this communication is reproduced as women's work has been repeatedly mentioned in this Chapter, here: women are impelled to confess although this might be "embarrassing", and to "*dare* to talk" even if this is difficult / risky. This wife's reported "embarrassment" serves to sustain the euphemistic [or metonymic] tone throughout the advice text - e.g. "I haven't been *satisfying* my husband", "*I'm* too loose", "he squeezes *himself*". This is paradoxical within an imperative for candid communication. Indeed, this mediatized text conducts its medicalized normalization without explicit naming of female or male genitalia [e.g. terms "vagina" and "penis", or equivalents, are absent]. This might be read within the conventions of mediatization: to save women-readers from similar forms of embarrassment, or indeed, to mask the 'eroticism' that such a sexual register invokes, even at informational levels (see Gallop, 1988).

However, the text sets itself up in powerfully imperative ways to insinuate its normalizing knowledges into public and private discourse about sex. As a first "sex advice column" to appear in a South African women's magazine, *Dr David Delvin's Sexpert's Guide's* touted "expertise", "explicitness" and "humour" reproduce its public status as a source of information, entertainment and discussion [cf. "liberal" approach to sexual knowledge / practice; also see Newton (1990), and Chapter 3]. Furthermore, the directive to the wife / women-readers to show the advice text to a partner (i.e. "so why don't you show him this question

13 In the jargonized discourse of sexual commerce, South African sex-workers / prostitutes reportedly refer to clients as "tricks", and to the practice of sex-work as "turning tricks" (Miller, 1992).

and answer []?") - and, indeed, to quote the expert's imperative / interrogative to a partner to impel relationship-talk about sex (i.e. "say to him, 'It's time we talked a bit more about sex, isn't it?'"¹⁴ - reproduce these institutionalized discourses of expert knowledges about sex within private parlance and sexual practice between lovers.

Drawing in psychologized *and* medicalized knowledges and technologies about relationships / sex, then, "talking-about-sex" is reproduced as constitutive of "good sex" and "good relationships". Appropriate feminine positioning within HHD requires the adoption of particular kinds of discursive practices (e.g. surveillance, confession, sex-positions, relationship- or sex-talk, etc.) - as institutionally embedded forms of 'relationship-glue' - to indirectly enforce monogamy-rules.

Concluding comments

This Chapter explored the institutionalized forms of emotional-work and sexual management women are impelled to adopt as subjects of Hollway's HHD, to police / enforce monogamy-rules in heterosexual relationship practice. Analysis sustained attention to the operations and effects of power, empowerment and possibilities for resistance for women within these perspectives and practices. By way of "conclusion", I draw out two related points which revisit the tensions, with regard to power, between McRobbie's (1991) "realist", "feminist" and "Foucauldian" approaches to advice texts.

First is the concordance between feminine subjection in/by HHD and embeddedness in networks of competing and/or allied institutionalized knowledges and practices which overdetermine monogamy-rules. Here, for example, "managing" male monogamy implicated (a) knowledges of various psychologized norms and interventions, and persistent self- and relationship-work according to these dicta [e.g. surveillance, confession, engagement in psychotherapeutic technologies, etc.]; and (b) various medicalized / sexological knowledges and sex-work practices [e.g. awareness of AIDS, reflexivity of sexual "performance", using particular "tricks", etc.]. For the disciplined and docile female subject, this sets up responsibilities for constant relationship / sexual surveillance, with psychologization and medicalization reproducing the technological "tools" to facilitate vigilance [e.g. confession, norms, "objectification", etc.], and the material or "objects" over which she must be vigilant [e.g. her body / psyche, her partner's body / psyche, "the relationship", "the sex life", etc.].

This was shown to produce complex and contradictory empowering effects for women. For example, adopting these practices accords women rights to speak as subjects of HHD - with the powerful legitimization of institutionalized discourses - and to police sexual boundaries in relationship practice. Within "realist" and/or "Foucauldian" gazes, this permits a reading of feminine power through instrumental, agentic care-of-the-self [e.g. emotional care, own sexual gratification, protection from life-

14 This imperative / interrogative is reproduced in ready-made, non-threatening "feminine form" through the tag question [i.e. "isn't it?"]. This is read as impelling 'talk about it' through facilitating the drawing in of an-other into discourse and encouraging one response rather than another [see Rosenblum, 1986; Holmes, 1990; Dixon, 1992].

threatening physical risks, etc.], and care-of-the-other. However, as Young (1987) has suggested, this limits options for action [e.g. "exit" from relationships, pursuit of interests "other" to men, heterosex and emotionality, social protest / transformation, etc.]. The maze of dire consequences of contravention / failure produced by the discursive overdetermination of monogamy-rules, anticipates and exposes points of resistance as "ill-advised" or "inappropriate" in terms of emotional / health risks or jeopardization of feminine subject positioning in HHD. I return to discussion of resistance in the next Chapter.

Second, particularly alarming for feminists, is the concordance between the institutionalization of HHD [above] and wider patriarchal discursive / structural systems. Rather than assertion of any devious editorial or institutionalized conspiracy against women per se [or collusion in apparatuses of oppression], this concordance is interpreted as a function of the focus of this Chapter, i.e. on women's relationship- and sex-work [cf. HHD] to curb or contain male sexual desire [cf. MSD] (Hollway, 1984a; 1989). This focus marginalized analyses of "other" advice texts - e.g. representations of women's "sex problems", women's affairs, etc. - which might bring other aspects of feminine subjectivity into visibility and introduce possibilities for other positions, imperatives, interventions, practices and resistances. The silence around *women's* sexual subjectivities in this Chapter is an issue to point [e.g. women knowing / negotiating their own sexual needs, or women positioned within liberal (medicalized) discourses which impel female orgasm in particular ways : see Gallop's (1988) critique of Hite (1987)].

Furthermore, this focus also sets up psychotherapeutics in a particular way, i.e. mediatized couple-counselling. It is noted that engagement with psychotherapeutic technologies might provide the space for individual women to explore contradictions of power between "personal" and "political" levels of experience, and to resist / reject taken-for-granted assumptions about feminine positions (see Hare-Martin & Maracek, 1986; Levett, 1988; Burman, 1992b).

Significantly, the Foucauldian-feminist reading I have produced in this Chapter is resistant to various other readings of "feminine [sexual] passivity" in heterosexual relationship practice [e.g. discourse analytic studies: Gavey, 1992; Gilfoyle, Wilson & Brown, 1992]. Within the terms of Hollway's HHD, passivity is a practice, position or resistant option that is risky and ill-advised at an individual / personal level. This reading has sought to critically interpret the power of women's relationship / sexual knowledges and practices - as sexual management skills, as relationship-glue - *within* patriarchal contours. This sets up an understanding of an agentic subject within a seemingly intractable landscape of discursive determinism and structural dependence / oppression. It is to these issues - and others - that I now turn.

Chapter 6

Concluding discussion

Contributions of this study

This study began with an awareness of my own ambivalence towards the operations and effects of advice columns and it concludes on a similar note. Within a project which sought to put Foucauldian insights to work - to expose the operations and effects of processes of subjection and subjectivity - reportage of conclusive "findings" or "solutions" is anathematical. Instead, a discourse analyst's reflexive engagement with theoretical and methodological issues, dilemmas at the level of everyday practice, and further questions. There are elements of triumph and irony in this persistent condition of interrogation and ambivalence. Triumph in my apparent resistance to the formulaic recipes of "escape" or "upbeat resolution" reproduced in advice texts themselves; and irony as I acknowledge my embeddedness in the very practices of institutionalization and power I seek to expose.

Thus, this concluding discussion will draw together several threads which run through this study, and critically consider the reading(s) of advice texts it produces. Theory and method are, of course, implicated in one another in productive ways, but for the sake of clarity [or sanity], commentary will be structured into four sections. First, the scope of the study - in terms of its aims - will be reviewed. Second, I highlight several issues related to power and possibilities of resistance. Third, my discourse analytic "method" [as an "object"] will be examined. And fourth, accountability and future directions of research will be considered. Significantly, this critical gaze has not simply been "switched-on" in this Chapter: critical reflexivity has been an integral feature of my analytic endeavour, and concluding commentary amplifies and continues ongoing debates / issues.

This study on advice columns was driven by two theoretically derivative aims: to examine the operations of institutionalization in advice texts; and to read the effects of power produced by these operations from several perspectives.

The first aim took as its starting point Widdicombe's (1992) Foucauldian critique of Hollway's (1989) unreflexive assumptions about the nature of intra- and inter-subjective experience in heterosexual relationship practices. Widdicombe's critique emphasized the status of psychoanalysis as a productive social / institutionalized technology of the self. Uniquely, then, my study exposed several overlapping networks of institutionalized knowledges and practices which forge and police women's subjection within particular positions in Hollway's MSD and HHD - in advice texts in women's magazines. This involved a Foucauldian reading of advice texts (a) as 'sites of emergence' for technologies of confession and normalizing surveillance by experts and expert knowledges (Coward, 1984; LaFountain, 1989; McRobbie, 1991), and/or (b) as 'addressors' of an audience of women-readers which reproduced particular

perspectives, positions and practices as imperative / legitimate on grounds of institutional appropriateness (cf. Rose, 1990; Parker, 1992).

My focus on "texts", "positions in discourses" and the structuring / subjectifying effects of discursive practices [i.e. a stronger "discursive" approach] was resistant to Hollway's (1984a) focus on 'relations between people'. Furthermore, Hollway's identification of conventionalized object- and subject-positions in discourses [i.e. her "grammatical metaphor": men as subjects of MSD with women as their objects], and her notion of "investment" which stabilized these positions [see Chapter 1], assumed a sense of stasis or fixity. My analyses, through exposing several institutionalized ways in which women are impelled to persistently and synchronously work on themselves and their relationships-with-men, showed how fixity is maintained [cf. subjectivity], but also how movement between positionings is produced, e.g. between objectification in MSD and subjectification in HHD.

This was the focus of Chapter 4, then, which examined the institutionalized knowledges and practices which inscribe and normalize women's "crises" around experienced un-attractiveness of their bodies, in/through advice texts. These crises were read in terms of an exchange model (cf. Irigaray, 1985), i.e. to be un-attractive is to be *powerless* [in relation to male positions] and *passive*; and imperative institutionalized labour permitted strategic, intentioned and agentic uses of attractiveness to achieve / maintain appropriate feminine status in HHD [i.e. attractiveness as relationship-bait or relationship-glue]. Of course, in keeping with my deconstruction of individual intentionality, this agency was read as the psychologized and/or medicalized structuring of intention, i.e. facilitating thought about action in particular ways and reproducing desirable selves / subjects which are agentic, uniformly intentioned and, therefore, manageable.

"Un-attractiveness" was institutionally targeted in competing / complementary ways in advice texts [i.e. discursive overdetermination], impelling different forms of work on the self and/or body by women, and permitting their worked-upon appearance to "speak" for them [as "objects"]. This drew in attention to self-esteem or inner emotional needs through engagement in psychotherapeutic technologies; and attention to the 'outer body shell' or 'physiology' through medicalized forms of exercise and nutritional monitoring. The institutionalized dictum of *self-objectification*, *self-styling* and *self-transformation* - implicit in imperative "care of the self" (Foucault, 1986) - powerfully disallowed the interpretation of the uses of feminine fashioning of an "attractive" self / body as relationship-bait or glue, in particular sites of thematically specialized, expert advice, e.g. *Femina's Beauty Clinic*.

This was interpreted in terms of concordance with the explicit "liberal feminist" profile of *Femina*, which was exposed as contradictory. Thus, for example, working at "being attractive" styles a self who cares for herself, but also reads as preparation "for a future with a man in it" (Femina Factsheet, 1993: 2), or as conveying the impression that a woman is "single" *by choice*, rather than unable to attract a man or not having been "chosen" by a man (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1987).

Chapter 5 extended the interrogation of women's discursive practices to those which held their subject positioning in HHD in place. Here, the institutionalized ways in which women are impelled to labour at the sexual / emotional "management" of relationships - with respect to monogamy-rules - were examined.

Analyses unpicked textual constructions of relationship reparative work in the event of the "crisis" of the sexual infidelity of a male partner [e.g. confrontation and talking about it, psychologized work on the self, engagement in counselling technologies, etc.]; and constructions of imperatives towards relationship vigilance to prevent such "crises" from happening [e.g. monitoring "the relationship", reading "warning signs", ensuring male sexual satisfaction, etc.]. Discursive overdetermination was again noteworthy, and familial and legal discourses, and medical knowledges and practices [e.g. about HIV/AIDS, or sexological expertise], were drawn on to reproduce both the unassailable legitimacy of monogamy-rules, and the appropriateness of women's labour - in terms of HHD - to enforce them.

Particularly striking within the readings produced in Chapters 4 and 5 was the labour of advice texts to "marketize", through the structuring of procedures of motivation / intention and domains of "problematic" experience, particular institutionalized technologies of self- and relationship-inscription, e.g. medically approved diets or forms of exercise, psychotherapeutic technologies, particular "sex-positions", referral to various experts, etc. This institutionalization was, of course, concordant with modes of staging "specialist" advice columns, e.g. *Femina's Couple / Beauty Clinic* or *Dr David Delvin's Sexpert's Guide* (cf. McRobbie, 1991; Mininni, 1991). My interpretation of these processes of "marketization" was linked to a Foucauldian appreciation of subjectivity, and I draw in three key metaphors to briefly clarify the operation of this subjection, i.e. "emptiness", "permeability" and "inscription".

Cushman (1991) has argued that marketization of institutionalized technologies sets the self / relationship up as "empty", i.e. waiting to be filled up with consumables [e.g. therapy, counselling, etc.], and commodities [e.g. appropriate selves, "good" sex / relationships, etc.]. While this consumerist metaphor is engaging, it produces an essentially passive subject, i.e. as a "receptacle". Young (1987) has alluded to the workings of power-knowledge - e.g. the establishment of "truth" via scientificity and/or expert systems in advice texts - as a process of rendering the body, the self and the relationship "permeable" to the structuring and normalizing effects of institutionalized practices. This metaphor captures the internal scaffolding which is set up to facilitate [the illusions of] intention, agency and individual choice. In this way, while the subject is institutionally *impelled* to "fill up" the self / relationship in particular ways, she/he appears to seek or choose these things as forms of self-care.

Butler (1990) and Grosz (1990) [following Foucault (1977)], for example, have argued that the structuring of the interior space of selves / relationships has no concrete reality except through "inscription" on the body's surface, which is "marked" with the attributes of subjectivity. The body is, thus, an ongoing project of inscription by institutionalized technologies which operate on it [e.g. a body which is "attractive", "monogamous", "agentic", "docile", "reflexive", etc.]. The formulation of "the relationship" as a "third body" in a union between individuals (Coward, 1984) opens up new corporeal surfaces for scrutiny and signification. That bodies / selves / relationships are recalcitrant, or, indeed, resistant to these technologies of inscription, means that the work to re-inscribe them - via marketization of technologies in advice texts - is ongoing. I return to issues related to resistance below.

While Chapters 4 and 5 were argumentatively illustrative of procedures of institutionalization [above], the second aim of this study addressed the *effects* of such power-knowledge operations. Thus, a critical

approach to advice texts was adopted which attempted to expound meanings, assumptions, contradictions and implications "beneath or beyond what a text is saying" (Figueroa & Lopez, 1991, in Burman & Parker, 1993: 12).¹ Tensions between different readings of empowering effects were analyzed following McRobbie's (1991) classification of "realist", "feminist" and "Foucauldian" perspectives of power-knowledge operations in advice columns.

My Foucauldian approach has emphasized, throughout this dissertation, the dual effects produced by power-knowledge operations [see Foucault, 1978 & 1982; Young, 1987; Rose, 1990; Parker, 1992; and Table 1 in Chapter 1]. In analyses of advice texts in Chapters 4 and 5, this involved, on the one hand, repeated interpretation of the facilitation of informed choice / action through provision of particular imperative knowledges / practices in advice texts [e.g. diets, therapies, exercises, "sex-positions", 'talking about it', etc.]. Within a Foucauldian reading, these practices were revealed to be productive of subjectivity and powerfully, accorded women (a) rights to "speak" - with legitimate institutional support - against abuse / exploitation, and (b) responsibilities to 'care for (them)selves' [e.g. meeting emotional needs, ensuring physical well-being, building self-esteem, working through "crises", etc.].

Within "humanist" [cf. McRobbie's "realist" position] and "liberal feminist" readings of advice texts - both valorizing individualism - this production of an empowered, en-abled, agentic individual [i.e. focus on "micro" power at individual levels, or in the relationships between individuals] eclipses any pessimism wrought through introduction of socio-political structures of constraint, or politicization of "women's problems" [i.e. focus on a "macro" level of structural oppression or ideology]. Thus, control over one's own body [e.g. via diet, exercise, 'clever dressing', etc.], over one's self [e.g. via discipline], over a male partner's body [e.g. via visiting new forms of sexual pleasure upon it, etc.], or over a relationship [e.g. via surveillance according to expert knowledges, emotional articulateness, willingness to engage in psychotherapeutic technologies, etc.] might be read as empowering effects within these frameworks.

However, the 'other hand' of the dual effects of institutionalized power-knowledge operations - within a Foucauldian framework - invokes the inevitable constraints that such instrumental knowledges and action [above] reproduce (cf. Young, 1987). This involved, in my analyses of advice texts in Chapter 5, for example, exposing moments where resistant forms of action had either been rendered invisible [e.g. desire for revenge on a non-monogamous partner], or rendered inappropriate / illegitimate through implicature of the dire consequences of such resistance. This constraint / determinism, this narrowing of appropriateness, this particular inscription on the surface of the body / relationship, is itself productive, argues Foucault (1978), of resistance, to which I turn in the subsequent section.

This constraint is articulated less kindly within "ruder", more "politicized" readings [e.g. within a "radical feminist" framework], set against a landscape of oppressive patriarchal discourse, ideology and structural

1 Parker and Burman (1993) have noted the uneasiness of discourse analysts around explication of connections to psychoanalysis (p. 159). I recognize my own ambivalence here for, while taking a stronger "discursive" line to situate Hollway's (1989) unreflexive psychoanalytic borrowings, I am advocating an approach which is suspicious of manifest textual content (cf. psychoanalysis). I interpret this intention institutionally [e.g. my own embeddedness within psychologized "detective narratives": Squire 1990a], and following Parker (1990b), in terms of "exposing" the forces that discourses [outside, beyond texts] exercise on/in/through texts.

systems. In analyses of advice texts in Chapters 4 and 5, the concordance between institutionalized knowledges and practices [e.g. psychologized and medicalized technologies to normalize "crises"], conventionalized positions within Hollway's MSD and HHD [e.g. taken-for-granted assumptions about women / men / relationships, etc.], and conservation of patriarchal or macro-structural power relations, was noted with particular disquiet. Institutionalized technologies were seen to offer palliative, individualized resolutions to women, and access to "other" readings of "women's problems" [e.g. exposing social causes], or "other" forms of action [e.g. collective protest, social transformation, etc.], were obscured (McRobbie, 1981; Winship, 1987).

This draws on the tensions between "sovereign" and "disciplinary" models of power, which have laboured as analytic sub-text in this dissertation [see Table 1, Chapter 1]. Feminist-Foucauldians (e.g. Coward, 1984; Fraser, 1989; Probyn, 1990; Burman, 1991b; Marks, 1993) are concerned that the seductiveness of a Foucauldian model of power [e.g. the agentic, enabling, empowering effects produced in local relations, see above], might obscure the ineptitude of a theoretical notion of resistance with regard to interrogating and/or transforming structural or ideological forms of women's oppression.

Resistance

Is it possible, then, within the technologies of power I have unpicked in this dissertation - the confessional examination and disciplinary surveillance of psychologized and medicalized knowledges of "attractive selves / bodies" or "monogamous relationships" - to conceptualize the resistance which, Foucault (1978) claims, is inscribed as "an underside" or "an irreducible opposite" in all power relations (p. 96)? [See Chapter 1 for theoretical definitions of resistance.] And if such conceptualization is possible in/through advice texts, what effects might be achieved through a Foucauldian notion of resistance?

1. "Locating" versus "producing" resistance

Trying to analytically "locate" moments of resistance by individuals [themselves] in advice texts, proves to be fruitless. The rigorous formal dynamics of advice columns operate to suppress resistance in several ways. First, for example, "pre-selection bias" frames experience deemed "problematic", "dysfunctional" or "abnormal" - rather than "resistant" - and which is, therefore, desirous of normalization. This might have less to do with the physical editing practices demonized by feminist critics (e.g. Winship, 1987) than with the normalization of the audience produced, in the longer term, by these editing practices. Thus, "problems" are forged within an audience of regular readers, steeped in the ideological content [and form] of advice columns and/or magazines (Gieber, 1960). Women for whom the rituals of body-work or monogamy-rules are "un-problematic", are invisible; either as conventionalized, disciplined / docile subjects, or as producers of resistance in varieties of individually creative ways [e.g. active non-participation in advice columns or above-mentioned rituals, negotiating "unconventional" relationship-rules, writing "fake" letters to advice columns as a form of ridicule, etc.].

Second, the question and answer form reinforces power-knowledge relations and professional hierarchies, e.g. between knowledge-seeker and knower / expert. Within confessional practices, Foucault (1978) has drawn attention to "the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, forgive, console, reconcile" (p. 61) [see Chapter 1], and here, to "normalize". The question and answer form, like the "sequential implicature" of an adjacency pair in conversation analysis (cf. Fairclough, 1993: 18), permits the authoritative expert the "last word" according to privileged access to institutionalized bodies of knowledge. No response, counter-response or debate is visible in published form (e.g. contestation, other opinions, refusal, rejection of advice, ridicule, practices of non-compliance, etc.).

However, such an approach - locating instances of resistance in individuals - moves dangerously near to the identification of a reality beyond discourse, i.e. individuals, or original authors, whose "real" experience [and resistance] is textually distorted or obscured by the devious intentions of editors in advice columns.

In a similar way, I have absorbed Widdicombe's (1992) objection to the "possessive individualism" of Hollway's (1984a) notion of "investment", coined to explain why *individuals* are agentic and resistant to change, i.e. because of the [promised] pay-off of personal power (see Chapter 1). Such a focus would require analytic interpretation of motives / desires of individuals beyond advice texts [e.g. original advice-seekers], and was regarded to be contrary to goals of exposition of institutionalized subjectivity in this study [cf. 'social individuality': Shotter, 1990].

Thus, "advice texts", rather than "real" individual advice-seekers, are the objects of study here. Advice texts, as addressors, "are given *another* reality through discourse", and in addressing an audience of readers in particular ways, produce meanings, positions and resistances (Parker, 1992: 9-10). Analytic attention shifts to how the meanings of texts are put to work, how texts are used. As Fairclough (1993) argues in his discourse analytic guidelines [see Chapter 3], texts are "products", effects of power, but it is crucial to attend to the practices of their consumption / interpretation too (p. 35).

Therefore, a fruitful future direction for discourse analytic research on advice columns might focus on accessing how advice texts are read by various audiences of individuals, e.g. setting up interviews / discussions about advice columns, and analyzing this "talk" as text. What a discourse analyst would hope to glean from such an exercise is insight into the variability of meanings and practices produced by advice texts, with particular attention to production of individualizing nodes / moments of inflammation or resistance. How are advice columns talked about? How are expert technologies resisted, and is such contestation desirable? Young (1987), for example, raises questions about the variable "permeability" of human subjects with respect to vulnerability / accessibility to institutional technologies, discrepant levels of faith in experts, or elements of discourse [or non-discursive practices] which undermine normalization (p. 118).

Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer and Hebron (1991) and McRobbie (1991), for example, have added such forms of analysis to their critical work on girls' and women's magazines, to challenge the ideological model of readers as "victims" of texts, incapable of resistance. These analyses are refreshingly filled with "non-

feminist" (sic), "non-academic", working-class, young British women's reflexive awareness of, and resistance towards, the "stereotyped feminine roles" and "limited horizons for women" touted in magazines. I return to the problematics of resistance to institutionalized knowledges and practices [see subsequent section], and other directions for future research on advice columns [below].

However, this study is understood as constituting my reading, my interpretation, and *my* production of [individualized] resistance to the operations and effects of advice columns. It has a critical agenda, and my resistance seeks to disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions about advice texts and indict modern subjectivity. This understanding follows Parker (1989b & 1992), who posits deconstruction / discourse analysis as an opportunity to expose ideological operations and effects of discipline and confession, and unravel the discourses and texts which hold these technologies of power in place.

I acknowledge that my reading - and indeed, my resistance - comes from a position of implicature [e.g. "white", middle-class, academic psychologist, (mostly) heterosexual etc.], and, as Stenner (1993) affirms, this "is therefore always-already incomplete" (p. 130). Reflexive awareness of my own embeddedness in the operations of power-knowledge I seek to uncover has generated a sense of frustration, within a feminist focus on women's empowerment, at the "inadequacy" or "triviality" of the resistances I have been able to produce. I will briefly highlight some of the "constraints" on resistance here.

2. Discursive determinism and constraints of resistance

At its most "optimistic", a Foucauldian reading might posit advice texts as epitomizing the operation and effects of resistance. Thus, "crises" and "problems" are read as nodes or knots of resistance, 'inflammation of certain moments in life' or particular body parts [cf. Foucault, 1978: see Chapter 1] - e.g. a "big" stomach, "flabby" thighs, a body the size of a bus, low self-esteem, an incident of non-monogamy in an otherwise "good" ["docile"] relationship, a "loose" vagina, etc. - within existing frameworks of institutionalized knowledges and practices. The repetitiousness of these "problems", i.e. the 'same' problems, 'cyclically patterned', year in / out [see Chapter 2: Kent, 1979; Coward, 1984; McRobbie, 1991; Mininni, 1991; and also Chapter 3: thematic content analysis], and the repeated marketization of technological resolutions to these "problems" [see above], might be read, at a globalizing level, as a sign of the ongoing recalcitrance of women-readers' bodies / relationships, and as a sign of the persistent need for institutionalized re-inscription [cf. Foucault, 1977; Butler, 1990; Grosz, 1990].

However, Foucault (1978) has explained, with great meticulousness, the individualizing scale of these resistances. Thus, rather than involving the sustained or directed critique [i.e. "a single locus of great Refusal" (p. 96)] that would produce radical rupture or transformative change at discursive / socio-structural levels, 'swarms' of shifting and spontaneous resistances are diffused in moments of experience or body parts [see Burman, 1991b, below].

But, my resistant [Foucauldian] reading of advice texts has also sought to expose the coercive operations of institutionalized imperatives with respect to resistance, i.e. the 'conditions of impossibility' which police

exercise of those resistances for women in daily practice. This analytic goal has laboured to interrogate the ways in which the need for resistance is obviated at subjective and/or political levels, and it ultimately returns to frustrated contemplation of discursive determinism, i.e. the inescapable effects of power-knowledge and normalized subjectivities.

First, for example, is the ability of disciplinary power to mask its operations and effects, and thus, suppress resistance (Parker, 1989b). The seductive "rewards" of subjection - as I have suggested above - are read as producing an agentic, intentioned, informed, optimally functioning, self-aware individual, who is accorded rights to speak / act in particular ways through collusionary [and consensual] alliances with varieties of institutionalized forces [cf. Gramsci's (1971) "hegemony, and Foucault's (1977) "governmentality": see Chapter 1].

The most powerful of these is the institutionally mediated dictum requiring 'care of the self' (cf. Foucault, 1986). "Responsibility" is associated with the adoption of advocated self-objectification techniques and practices at physical and psychological levels [e.g. via correct nutrition, adequate exercise, enforcing monogamy in relationships to meet 'emotional needs', etc.]. Thus, constructions of "irresponsibility" and "immaturity" - or indeed, cutting off your nose to spite your face - haunt resistances. For example, Brunt (1982) and Haug (1987) write that to resist institutional advice is to risk being "non-standard" [or having a "non-standard" relationship], which denies rights of future access to available institutionalized resources. Furthermore, in the age of the 'entrepreneurial self', to resist the touted self-reflexive emotional / sexual / personal fulfillment in heterosexual relationship practice, or via psychotherapeutic technologies, is to have no "individuality" at all (Rose, 1990).

Second, institutionalized overdeterminism reinforces "ill-advisement" of contravention through reproduction of overlapping webs of causes and effects. Thus, resistances, recalcitrances, or "alternative" forms of action, are systematically anticipated from a range of institutionalized perspectives, setting up networks of risks and damages [due to resistances] as predictable consequences, as punitive effects. Thus, for example, the "truth" of monogamy-rules was structured at intra- and inter-subjective levels of discursive practice through implication of psychologized knowledges of the effects of contravention [e.g. loss of self-esteem, depression, wreckage of intimacy / trust, etc.: see Chapter 5]. However, condoning a partner's infidelity or having an affair to exact revenge - as forms of resistance - drew in additional risks to women's physical well-being [e.g. HIV-infection, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and exposure to sexual violence] (cf. forms of 'anti-sex rhetoric': Fine, 1988).

Third, the ease with which my analytic production of resistance slipped into polarized opposition to, or "simple reversal" of, institutionalized knowledges / practices - without any possibility of gradated positioning between either/or poles - was a disquieting indictment of determinism (cf. Hollway, 1989). This articulates the containment of resistance within existing institutionalized frameworks of incremental meanings and knowledges about subjectivity [e.g. psychological and physical well-being], and the technologies which support these. Thus, resistance to the medicalized / psychologized technologies of self-styling or transformation meant "being / remaining fat" [see Chapter 4]. Resistance was thereby reduced to

rejecting normalizing advice [e.g. refusing to diet / exercise], which was rewarded through perpetuation of "crisis", "dysfunction", "ill-health", "unhappiness" or perceived "abnormality".

Similarly, my resistance to the stifling, conventionalized positioning of women as custodians of monogamy in HHD has featured two possible nodes of individualizing opposition: condoning a partner's affair(s), or exacting revenge through own contravention of monogamy-rules [see above, and Chapter 5]. Both resistances "reverse" the dicta of psychologization, thereby reinforcing these dicta as absent terms or anti-logi. Also, both nodes of resistance produce contradictory liberatory effects for women: the former reproduces the taken-for-granted premises of MSD; while the latter slips into "permissiveness" or "promiscuity" [by women] as monogamy's opposite term. Indeed, Hollway (1989) has warned of the effects for women of adopting positions in permissive discourses of sexuality [as resistance to HHD], e.g. enhancing men's patriarchal power and "rights" to sex without emotional bonds; attempting to advance an argument that women's sex drives are "equal" to men's fictive ones; or making women feel guilty about having relationship-needs (p. 56).

I imply, of course, that these 'reversals of conventions' are institutionally / discursively reproduced rather than mirroring "realities" outside discourse, or, indeed, due to my own "intuition". Furthermore, I acknowledge, as a note of reflexivity, the productive effects that a Foucauldian theoretical / analytic approach has on the normative identification of contradictions, differences or contrapuntal resistances (cf. Parker & Burman, 1993: 167). This is particularly pertinent in my deployment of deconstructionist techniques [see Parker, 1988: Chapter 3], which valorize construction of opposition at levels of theory and analysis. Thus, as Danziger (1985) has suggested, a methodological imperative is set up which symbiotically "finds" theoretically salient concepts, and appraises itself on these "findings" [cf. 'academic masturbation']. In a subsequent section, I follow Burman's (1991b) and Parker and Burman's (1993) strategies to "politicize" such metaphysical oppositions through consideration of the *appropriation* [usage, application] of discourse analytic research.

Fourth and finally, if resistance is contained within institutionalized / discursive frameworks of knowledges and practices [above], then socio-structural conditions and systems which police access to those "truths" and technologies might also be read as constraining the forms of resistance that are thinkable or possible. Silence in advice texts around class- or "race"-based access to medicalization / psychologization in a South African context is an issue to point, e.g. a legacy of apartheid health care structures; culturally variable practices of assessing well-being or establishing the expertise of health-care professionals; material conditions of extreme economic hardship, dislocation of communities and political violence, etc.

3. Resistance to determinism and avoiding "ways out"

Within a critical analytic framework, then, the above determinism produces inevitable questions about how we retreat from, reject or resist knowledges and practices of subjectivity, i.e. "how do we escape discourse?" (Parker, 1992: 20). Would it be beneficial [for women], for example, to challenge the oppressive power-knowledge relations at work in our emotional needs, or in the risks and dangers which

police our obedient, disciplined labour on ourselves or our relationships? Furthermore, how is challenge / transformation possible within the "micro" spontaneities of Foucault's individualizing moments of inflammation, and the containment of resistance within the contours of existing power-knowledge relations and socio-structural / ideological frameworks? Does this, as Burman (1991b) has argued, "usher in an exhausted and passive fatalism and surrender of political vision" (p. 131), which betrays and undermines feminist and/or critical endeavour?

Responses from within Foucauldian and/or "critical" writing on institutionalized forms of subjectivity and discourse analysis speak unanimously of theories of "escape" [from discourse] as theoretically, practically or politically un-useful options (e.g. Rose, 1988, 1989 & 1990; Parker, 1989b & 1992; Giddens, 1991 & 1992). Rather, critical engagement with these very questions of determinism is advocated to expose and understand the forms of identification and practices of agentic individualization by which we are governed and through which we govern ourselves as disciplined subjects. As I will argue [below], following Burman and Parker (1993) and Parker and Burman (1993), this critical engagement might be used as a form of political intervention / practice using discourse analytic methods.

Foucault (1982) has commented that the goal of his work is to produce a history of "the modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (p. 777). A genealogical examination of his writings reveals ambivalence around analytics of power, and tension between dual operations and effects of discourse (cf. Davidson, 1986; Fairclough, 1992). Thus, for example, "discipline" [via panoptic surveillance] (Foucault, 1977) and "confession" (Foucault, 1978 & 1982) are outlined as deterministic technologies of normalization of subjects. But his later writing has emphasized - within a discursive landscape of discipline / confession - active care of the self / body as techniques for self-styling and transformation (Foucault, 1986 & 1988). The determinism of Foucault's accounts labours to interrogate and challenge humanist or liberal assumptions about individuals.

Thus, the danger in importing an-other "agentic" theory of the individual / subject - as a form of resistance to [or escape from] determinism, i.e. implying that Foucauldian theory doesn't work or isn't useful - involves slippage into a swamp of other, equally reductionist, "isms": voluntarism, cognitivism, and rational functionalism or intentionality [see Bowers' (1988) critique of Potter & Wetherell (1987); and Parker & Burman (1993)]. Within the focus of this dissertation - the discursive reproduction of forms of feminine subjectivity - Dorothy Smith's (1988) work is worthy of [brief] mention in this regard, particularly through its affinities with capitalist / patriarchal models of exchange I used, interpretatively of women's physical appearance, in Chapter 4.

Smith's (1988) leaning on post-structuralist ideas is vaguely specified, and she produces fairly idiosyncratic definitions of and distinctions between "discourse", "text" and "practice" which are not central to my argument here. However, her Marxist / materialist theorization of the activity in women's experience - i.e. rejecting feminine passivity / victimhood through skilled beauty-work, competence and resistance - serves as a powerful indictment of the stasis of determinism in an early Foucauldian model. Smith's emphasis of the feminine 'subject-at-work' [e.g. using skills to improve appearance, to produce effects (on men)], at the expense of the 'subject-in-discourse' [e.g. waiting, within patriarchal confines, for approval / attraction by a

man] (p. 39), permits an almost "liberal" valorization of conscious agency and instrumental strategizing. This is set against a textually mediated structuring of desire [e.g. for "attractiveness"] or intentionality [e.g. towards particular commodities or discursive practices], but feminine "work" - what women *do* - is reproduced as active, resistant [to standardization], skilled self-creation.

I set Smith's (1988) ideas up here - unjustly perhaps - to highlight divergences from my "political" address of Foucauldian determinism. Thus, rather than "escape" from discourse, my reading of institutionalized modes of feminine subjection in advice texts has sought to resist, disrupt or fracture assumptions of "truth" and structurings of the legitimacy / appropriateness of discursive practice [cf. Rose, 1988 & 1990; Parker, 1989b & 1992; Giddens, 1991 & 1992, above]. Of a disruptive reading, Parker (1989b) warns of the dangers of idealism inherent in an analysis which claims to expose the "lies" of ideology (p. 66). Thus, my analysis has sought to address my own implicature both in those "lies", and in the production of an interpretation of the lies [i.e. this dissertation] as a 'useful fiction that might induce truthful effects' (LaFontaine, 1989).

But Parker and Burman (1993) warn of the political impotence of analyses which attend to language at the expense of macro-structural power relations which endure "when text stops" (p. 158).² This politicization is germane to previously mentioned feminist critiques of the intractability of discursive determinism, and inability of Foucauldian resistance to interrogate or transform structural or ideological dependence / oppression of women (e.g. Coward, 1984; Burman, 1991b). Thus, following Burman's (1991b) imperative for politicized appropriation of discourse analytic research, I have attempted, within my analytic procedure to critically comment on political / material effects of (a) institutionalized discursive positions, perspectives and practices, (b) moments of alliance and/or competition or conflict between discourses / practices, and (c) readings of knots of resistance or inflammation (cf. Parker & Burman, 1993: 170).

As Hollway (1989) has argued, it is awareness of contradictions, or contradictory empowering effects and political consequences produced by particular discourses, that serves as a first step towards directed resistance and/or discursive and social transformation. I have avoided advocacy of one particular or finite route of "empowerment" for women, preferring to elaborate the tensions between several possible positional readings of effects of power-knowledge operations. This hopefully enables "open(ness) to the possibilities and issues arising from a [complex and] changing context" (Burman, 1990a: 189). However, paradoxically, this means that the "political value" [in feminist terms] of my discourse analytic endeavour begins when this text / dissertation stops.

Thus, it is through publication and further action-research that wider-scale awareness of the political consequences of advice columns is generated, contrary readings are produced, and a space for collectivization of resistance, challenge and bargaining is opened up. This might be read as the political rationale, the guiding impulse as to "why [this] discourse analysis is necessary" (Burman & Parker, 1993: 10). I return, in the final section [below], to questions of accountability, future directions of research, and

2 Gayatri Spivak (1987, in Arnott, 1991) has commented that discourse analysis or deconstruction "does not disallow the reality of women's material oppression, but admits the possibility of representing that reality in a way unmediated by ideology" (p. 123).

difficulties in upholding such politicized agendas in interpretations of advice columns [e.g. delegitimization of individual despair and resolution].

Reflexivity

The review of literature on advice columns and advice-giving [see Chapter 2] revealed that several studies have situated these phenomena within Foucauldian ideas about technologies of confession and surveillance, power-knowledge relations and subjectivity (e.g. Coward, 1984; LaFontaine, 1989; McRobbie, 1991). A noted feature of these 'discourse analyses' was their level of "abstraction", e.g. theoretically deductive focus on advice columns as a "genre", with scant critical attention to the technologies, operations and effects of subjection practices in advice texts themselves. The analytic contribution of my work is, thus, meticulous attention to selected advice texts where, through the refracting lenses of Hollway's HHD and MSD subject positions, these institutionalized practices are unpicked.

The innovative mix in this study of close textual analysis, interpretation of the advice column genre / form, and commentary on subjectivity and power within "institutional" and "political" frames, has been produced through following Parker's (1992) invaluable discourse analytic guidelines [see Chapters 1 & 3]. These guidelines effectively structured ways of approaching advice texts and discourses analytically - within a Foucauldian framework (cf. Young, 1987; Rose, 1990; Giddens, 1991) - and I highlight, in this section, moments of "navigation" of particular methodological issues in my appropriations of these guidelines. Exposure of these navigations is intended to emphasize the productive implicature of theory, my own subjective positions [and agendas], and a complexly layered body of 'advice discourse', within analytic procedure. Hopefully, this will serve to unmask any implicit intuitivism in analytic procedure (see Figueroa & Lopez, 1991, in Parker & Burman, 1993: 169); and deconstruct any notion of discourse analysis as a theory-free "tool" (Burman, 1991b), or "recipe" to be applied to any form of discourse.

The 'turned inward', objectifying, reflexive gaze is informed by the avowal of this as a crucial step in a discourse analytic endeavour (Wilkinson, 1988; Hollway, 1989; Bhavnani, 1990; Parker, 1992; Burman & Parker, 1993); and is augmented with an 'outward' gaze towards active political appropriation and accountability in the final section.

In previous sections, I have outlined a critical impulse which framed this analytic study as a form of resistance towards modern subjectivity and/or discursive determinism, i.e. at the level of "meaning" or "power". However, this discourse analytic research project is also resistant towards positivist [psychological] discourses, i.e. at the level of "method". Although this study is forged within a firm Foucauldian theoretical framework, and within increasingly sophisticated frameworks of methodological criteria which constitute "good" or "bad" discourse analytic research [e.g. Hollway, 1989; Burman, 1991b; Fairclough, 1992; Parker, 1992], it has still, on occasion, felt precariously poised in relation to positivism, or more 'mainstream' qualitative approaches. Parker and Burman (1993) have argued that this is due to the location of discourse analysis within traditional academic institutions (p. 164).

Most significantly, my inscription by those traditional academic norms [e.g. for Master's dissertations] produced anxiety about institutional audiences, for, as Hollway (1989) explained with regard to her Ph.D. dissertation, professional careers and academic reputations are invested in the production of favourable institutionalized readings of these texts. Did this mean that I should anticipate the anti-logos of my logos? Should methodological reflexivity include positivist criteria for the evaluation of discourse analytic research (e.g. Abrams & Hogg, 1990)? Even if I was able to theoretically deconstruct positivist concepts of "validity" and "reliability" [see Chapter 3], should commentary on these features not be added to demonstrate competence or comprehensivity? Or, at least, should the various transmutations of validity and reliability for qualitative / ethnographic research be cited (e.g. Reason & Rowan, 1981; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984; Kirk & Miller, 1986)?

The point at which I was able to say "no" to the above questions marked a lengthy passage of reinscription within a discourse analytic framework. Indeed, that this dissertation was written over an extended time interval produced other effects due to historical development of ideas and accumulating knowledges and analytic experience. Thus, for example, the thematic content analysis [see Chapter 3], and analyses of "attractiveness" and "monogamy-rules" in advice texts [see Chapters 4 & 5], were generated at disparate moments, which might account for the distinctive "tone" of each. I return to reflexion on these Chapters below.

However, positivist anxiety about making unqualified or unsupported statements lingered in awareness of the gaps in the academic literature cited / reviewed. This articulates the need, in traditional academic discourse, to provide "empirical evidence" for analytic claims (Parker & Burman, 1993), and to assert the "epistemological status" of objects under analysis [Parker, 1992: see Chapter 2]. Thus, Foucauldian technologies of confession, surveillance and subjectivity [Chapter 1], writings on advice columns [Chapter 2], and relevant discourse analytic methods [Chapter 3] were fairly rigorously set up, but vast fields of research constitutive of "attractive selves / bodies" or "monogamous relationships" were left out [e.g. the politics of women's physical appearance, sexuality, "relationships", "identity", psychotherapeutic technologies other than "counselling", media criticism, etc.].

Much of this diverse literature - from positivist to constructionist - was found to be "irrelevant" to my aims / argument [i.e. too specific, too vague, too un-theorized, too critically unreflexive, etc.]. Thus, within a study which sought to operationalize Foucauldian ideas about the operations and effects of institutionalized power-knowledge in advice texts, particular authors were influential (e.g. Foucault, Rose, Parker, Young, etc.). Furthermore, following Hollway (e.g. 1984a; 1989 & 1991) provided a "structural" focus which obviated other bulky foci.

Certainly, this served to "unclog" analytic Chapters. While fields of research were briefly "flagged", the insinuation of selected texts and other interpretations became "functional" *within* analyses, i.e. useful as sources of agreement / validation, clarification of my own position, and locating points of resistance. Powerfully, however, this 'intertextuality' [see Chapter 1] laboured to avoid the closing off of textual meaning through amplification of complexity, through establishing resonances with other interpretations.

Three brief points are germane here. First, the "footnote" formatting function within computerized word-processing technologies invites interpretation in terms of the production of [or structuring desire for] intertextuality! In my dissertation, footnotes laboured to amplify moments of contradiction, difference or agreement through reflexive metacommentary on analysis, or adding "other" voices / gazes to a discourse on discourse.

Second, this approach was clearly resistant to the assertion of firm boundaries around texts in more "inductive" forms of discourse analysis [cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987: see Chapter 3, and below]. And third, uses of intertextuality echoed [*not* equalled] the analytic attention devoted to the competitive, consensual and overdetermined ways in which psychological and medical discourses were implicated in one another, i.e. "inter-referentiality" of discourses (Parker, 1992: see Chapter 1) [cf. Fairclough's (1992) "interdiscursivity"].

However, to sustain the "tension" between (a) Potter & Wetherell's analytic facilitation of the emergence of repertoires from discourse [e.g. psychologization / medicalization might emerge as "strategies" in talk about women's physical appearance in advice texts], and (b) an analytic intention - structured by Parker (1990b & 1992) - to relate bits of discourses realized *in texts* to wider 'tissues of meaning' and operations of power *beyond them* [e.g. psychologization / medicalization as technologies of the self which reproduce institutionalized power-knowledge relations], is to become embroiled within "the reification debate".

Potter et al's (1990) critique of Parker's (1990b) theoretical definitions of discourses and guidelines for analysis, focuses on the alleged appearance of discourses as reified "things" which float above discourse and construct social practice and subjectivity in mysteriously deterministic ways [see Chapter 3]. In my study, psychologization, medicalization, and Hollway's discourses of sexuality / relationships [MSD, HHD & PD] might be read - by a "Potterian" - as "things", with an assumed existence outside the advice texts under analysis. Of course, mimicking Ian Parker, I have firmly contested this reading of my analytic procedure in at least two related ways.

First, theoretical / analytic distinctions are carefully made between "discourse" [all-pervasive language], "discourses" ['tissues of meaning' in discourse] and "texts" [demarcated areas of discourse in which operations and effects of discourses might be interpreted] (see Parker, 1990a, 1990b & 1992: Chapter 1). Thus, at no point is it implied in my analyses that psychological and medical discourses, or MSD and HHD, are conspiratorial systems / structures outside discourse. Their operations in, on and through advice texts - as 'surfaces of emergence' - are interpreted.

Second, Parker (1990b) interprets the reification debate as a form of anxiety about the attribution of "real" / "ontological" status to the "objects" that discourses construct (p. 228) [see Chapter 2]. Thus, I have carefully set "attractive selves / bodies" and "monogamous relationships" up as moral-political objects - taken *as if* they were real things (Parker, 1992) - within an explicit ideology-critique agenda, i.e. to expose / examine the ways in which the power-knowledge operations within discourses, institutionalized technologies and discursive practices [e.g. psychologization, medicalization, HHD and MSD] produce and constrain what may emerge in advice texts. To this end, Hollway's discourses were deployed

"functionally", i.e. to structure a focus, a way of approaching subjectification in / through advice texts - although as I have mentioned [above], there are points of theoretical difference between Hollway's and my own approach.

However, as with Hollway's (1989) delineation of "process" versus "functional" approaches to discourse analytic work [see Chapter 3], division between "Potterian inductiveness" [i.e. repertoires emergent from discourse] and "Parkerian deductiveness" [i.e. argumentative extrapolation from theoretical ideas about institutionalized technologies and power operations to texts, and vice versa] blur in analytic practice and produce useless, circular, "chicken-versus-egg" debates.³ A fairly simple example might be my repeated marking and unpicking of "magic" as a metaphor for "work", or as a replacement for particular kinds of institutionalized practice, on selves / bodies / relationships [see Chapters 4 & 5]. Did this metaphor emerge as "interesting" from advice texts, or was analytic interest structured through the inscription of my "eye/I" by prior, similarly or differentially focused interpretations of "magic" [e.g. Coward, 1984; Baxter, 1986 & 1992; Haug, 1987; Shotter, 1987; Kovecses, 1988; Duck, 1990]?

This had implications at a level which concerned the structuring of a "Foucauldian argument" in this dissertation, i.e. as a nexus between other "Foucauldian" interpretations of advice columns and/or advice-giving [cf. Coward, 1984; Carter, 1988; LaFontaine, 1989; McRobbie, 1991], "Foucauldian" writings on institutionalized technologies of subjectivity [e.g. psychologization / medicalization: Young, 1987; Rose, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Parker, 1992], "Foucauldian" discourse analytic methodologies [e.g. Hollway, 1989; Parker, 1990a, 1990b & 1992], and advice texts themselves [as "data"]. The mutuality between these frameworks - i.e. endless sifting through and selection of advice texts, and striving towards some sort of "meaning" [argumentatively, analytically] which would hold all the bits together without reducing their layered complexity - is noteworthy. There can be no neutral point of entry, thus, into texts or theoretical / analytic frameworks.

Paradoxically, this labour is easily overlooked in the completed version of a text. In this dissertation, the "argument" appears as if it was 'always-already there' from Chapter 1, proceeds through focused review of literature on advice columns [Chapter 2], sets up "aims" to be realized through an appropriate methodological framework and appropriately selected advice texts [Chapter 3], and then produces analyses in these terms [Chapters 4 & 5]. This "argument" is produced according to institutional norms regulating structure [e.g. background, theory, method, analysis, results, references, etc.] and space [i.e. length of dissertations]. This does not imply, necessarily, that there is a "true" discourse analytic form [i.e. what a discourse analysis *should* look like: see Parker, 1992] which is suppressed / subverted by these institutionalized norms, but certainly that, without reflexivity upon the constraints it produces, resistance is not thinkable or possible.

Thus, I have sought, at moments during Chapters 4 and 5, to render the striving-for-structure, the struggle-for-meaning, visible through mention of the disjunctive analytic sections which were "axed" or "pruned" during the course of numerous drafts to facilitate a "logical", "flowing" and (relatively) "concise"

3

What came first, the chicken or the egg?

argument. Early drafts were read by interested others who offered critical insights and supportive commentary. Furthermore, the traffic of ideas between Chapters was ongoing, sometimes exciting / enriching and often fraught with conflict, e.g. "doing" pieces of analysis and returning to concretize procedural guidelines of analysis; repeatedly revisiting analytic interpretations, and "aims", as Foucauldian knowledges deepened; selecting "other" advice texts which might, through focused interpretation, serve more "functional" interests, etc. Through exposing these processes, the distinctions between 'inductive' and 'deductive' analytic approaches are deconstructed, and analysis is posited as resistant to formulaic recipes. Indeed, as John Bowers (1988) has commented in an afterword to one of his papers, "what goes into writing a text and what comes out are different things" (p. 191).

The time interval during which this dissertation has been produced contributes to the above-mentioned process, and I direct brief reflexive commentary to three particular historical moments of analysis, i.e. the thematic content analysis [Chapter 3], and discourse analyses of "attractiveness" in Chapter 4, and "monogamy-rules" in Chapter 5.

The content analytic study was conducted at an exploratory phase of this project. With incremental knowledges and experiences within a Foucauldian framework, and the benefit of reflexive hindsight, I have become increasingly uncomfortable by its presence in this "discourse analytic" dissertation. However, rather than absencing the entire section, it is rather rudely "squeezed" into discussion of sample selection [in Chapter 3 on "methodology"] to facilitate exposition of my discomfort, the historical development of my theoretical and analytic ideas, and, its uses.

The intention of the content analytic "phase" was to facilitate the description and summarization of [e.g. via identification of recurrent themes, production of distribution graphs, etc.], and/or familiarization with, a large and unruly body of discourse ["advice columns in women's magazines"]. Positively, this forged links with previous studies done on advice columns [see Chapter 2], and laboured to set up the "difference" of my own analytic approach, i.e. the shift from "description", to "productive" and/or "critical" approaches to discourse and power-knowledge relations. This phase - and the "results" produced which are accessible within McRobbie's (1991) "realist" [or "humanist"] position - has sustained an invaluable node for ongoing debate between myself and magazine editors / advice columnists, which has implications for future research and "political" applications of discourse analysis. I return to this point in the concluding section.

Methodologically, the inclusion of content analytic "summarization" [cf. the "coding" phase in Potter & Wetherell's (1987) discourse analytic guidelines] found support in other studies on advice columns which had combined content and discourse analytic methods (e.g. Lueck, 1989; Mininni, 1991), and discourse analytic frameworks which encouraged functional eclecticism (e.g. Lee & Ungar, 1989; Fairclough, 1992; Lea, 1994). But, Parker (in press) has warned of the effects of such processes of "ordering" disorderly discourse: the complexity of the discourse is rendered "logical", and the context may disappear. Thus, my discomfort at the textual presence of this "early" phase of the research was defended in efforts to "restore" or "amplify" complexity in subsequent Chapters, and in navigation of text-context issues.

Figueroa and Lopez (1991, in Parker & Burman, 1993) have noted the variability in how far discourse analysts will go 'beyond the text' to produce interpretations, e.g. to history, discursive practices, "the social", "the Symbolic", etc. (p. 11) [see Chapter 2]. To expose operations and effects of power, Parker (1992) has advocated the examination of how discourses facilitate / constrain what may be articulated in demarcated texts, and the perspectives, positions and practices those addressed by texts are impelled to adopt. Furthermore, within a "feminist" agenda of challenging / transforming material conditions, analytic work should be intentioned towards "political" application or intervention (see Burman, 1991b).

These guidelines usefully deconstruct empiricist distinctions between text ["not-real"] and context ["real"] (cf. Abrams & Hogg, 1990) through the advocacy of variable demarcations of "texts" for interpretation, and levels of contextualizing embeddedness of those texts. Thus, during the course of analysis in Chapters 4 and 5, the "size" of the demarcated text under analysis was flexibly negotiated according to produced effects for particular theoretical arguments. "Texts" analyzed include, for example, "titles" of published letters; extracted "statements" [from questions / answers]; a "single advice text" [Q & A unit]; the "form" of a particular advice column; and/or more generally, the advice "genre". Furthermore, the operations and effects of ever-widening contextualizations on texts, audiences or resistances, may be examined, e.g. advice texts within the advice genre, within women's magazines, within everyday discursive practices, within material conditions of macro-structural oppression, etc.

Analyses in Chapter 4, for example, used [numerically more] "extracts" from published questions and answers as texts - as sets of "statements" (cf. Levett, 1988) - and this produced a "descriptive" tone which was concerned with revealing a range of "physical appearance crises". My reading of the processes of subjection was revealed through the *organization* of these statements into seemingly logical sequences of institutionally prioritized imperatives [i.e. (1) objectification of bodies / selves, (2) forms of institutionalized normalization via provision of expert knowledges, (3) engagement in technologies of reformation, etc.]. The process of this analysis was extremely labour-intensive, e.g. endless sifting through advice texts, selecting, sorting, ordering, shifting sections around, etc.

Reflexively, this arduousness was possibly due to the pervasive "ordinariness" of these self-care practices [e.g. uncomfortable recognition of my own embeddedness in knowledges / practices around "flabby thighs", and feminist resistance to these objectifying knowledges / practices]; and an assumption of responsibility, as a discourse analyst, for uncovering / producing "orderly" and "coherent" meaning out of dislocated and diverse statements.

The analyses which constituted Chapter 5 were written historically subsequent to the above, and subsequent to attendance at a Discourse Analysis Conference.⁴ The conference was significant through provision of an affirmative 'non-traditional' academic audience, and critical discussion which served to impel the honing of my ideas / intentions. Freed from the concerns of representativeness [i.e. all aspects of an 'object' should be represented], and "coherent organization" [i.e. a structure which 'makes sense'] which haunted Chapter

4 The analysis of *Will I ever get over his affair?* (JH 139) [in Chapter 5] was presented as an academic paper at this conference - at the University of Cape Town in January, 1994. A longer version of this paper is currently under review for publication.

4, single texts were selected for analyses in Chapter 5 [see Hollway, 1989; Parker, 1992; Stenner, 1993: Chapter 3]. Thus, rather than "abstraction" of a sequence of ground-rules and practices from a miscellany of statements, the complex, contradictory, overdetermined ways these ground-rules are set up in a single text, became the locus of analytic interpretation.

This attended to the processes of subjection - the discursive practices beyond the text's ground-rules - in a more sustained, critical way which explored meaning rather than "ordering" it. For example, Chapter 5 examined practices of psychologization, and located moments of confluence or rupture with "other" discourses / technologies where this was useful. Furthermore, demarcation of a single text from a site of advice - *Femina's Couple Clinic* - facilitated a focused analytic approach, which, innovatively, addressed interstices between formal dynamics of the site ["form"], monogamy-rules in an event of male sexual infidelity ["meaning" and "discursive practice"], marketization of counselling technologies ["institutionalization"], and contradictions within "liberal feminist" editorial practices ["empowerment"]. The narrow textual orientation and argumentative interpretation contrasts tellingly with a broader, less focused [and "less successful"] analysis of *Femina's Beauty Clinic* in Chapter 4.

Thus, although discourse analytic approaches differed qualitatively in Chapters 4 and 5, texts were selected, overall, on a "functional" basis, i.e. to operationalize theoretical insights, technologies of the self / relationship and operations of power. These selections were forged within my own subjective positionings. Furthermore, choice of particular magazines brought particular sites of advice into the analytic gaze [see Chapter 3], and an-other analyst might deploy other discourses [i.e. other than psychological and medical discourses, or MSD and HHD], and other "objects" [i.e. other than "attractive selves / bodies" or "monogamous relationships"], to unravel practices of signification, structuring and subjection.

It is retrospectively noted, however, that comparative analysis of *Janet Harding's Lifeline* [in *You*, a 'general interest' tabloid: see Chapter 3] and *Beauty / Couple Clinic* [in *Femina*, an up-market magazine for women, with a liberal feminist editorial agenda: see Chapter 3] - although comparison was not intended to produce systematic "differences" between sites of advice - usefully generated nodes for an analytics of the operations and effects of power from various perspectives.

One feature that has remained fairly constant in this dissertation is its turgid style, i.e. long sentences, heavily parenthesized with inverted commas, varieties of bracketed qualifications, footnotes, quotations and author citations, etc. Interpretations of the "intentioned opacity" of the discourse of various post-structuralist theorists who address the operations and effects of discourse - Lacan, Derrida, Foucault - are legion, i.e. [e.g. Sturrock, 1979; Sheridan, 1980; Dews, 1987; Butler, 1990]. This deliberate lack of reader-friendliness is said to disrupt traditional ideas about transparency of meaning and to enforce grappling with texts, and a focus on subjective meaning-production. Within more recent discourses on discourse, several "critics" have responded with irritation to the mimicry between abstruse concepts and obfuscated style [e.g. Ginsburg (1985) on Shotter (1984); Hollway (1989) on Henriques et al (1984); Smyth (1992) on the style of post-modern women's studies].

Perhaps this sets up the "serenity" which surrounds the clear, controlled articulations of other notable writings on discourse and/or meaning [e.g. Sless, 1986; Levett, 1988; Rose, 1990; Parker, 1992] as desirable forms of resistance to the more tortuous varieties. However, while I have often been alarmed by my own powerlessness within the forms of discourse I reflect upon - as if the words speak me - I have avoided removal, from my account, of the traces of struggle and difficulty which attend the making of meaning. Within the institutional conventions of the M.A. dissertation, this seeks to expose the search for methodological clarity, but it is understood that, within conventions for "other" audiences [e.g. publication in academic journals or popular magazines], this style would have to be refined, toned down, or indeed, rendered more 'serene'.

Accountability and directions for future research / action

The uses of advice texts in this study as 'surfaces of emergence', as 'phantom texts', has asserted a strong 'death of the author' position [see Chapter 3]. This has implied, of course, the death of all authors [e.g. individual letter-writers, editors or advice columnists] other than myself, for my analysis powerfully colonizes operations and effects of advice texts through the imperialism of my own interpretation [cf. Parker & Burman's (1993) "academic imperialism": putting your stamp on an area (p. 165)]. This implication has been carefully negotiated within theoretical and analytic aims, i.e. to produce a reading which was disruptive of taken-for-granted assumptions about advice texts, institutionalized knowledges and practices, "femininity" and power. But, the bottom-line, the value of this discourse theoretical / analytic project [in terms of "empowerment"], lies ahead, i.e. in the appropriation of these analyses into forms of "political usefulness" to/for women.

This brief concluding section explores issues around usefulness of my analyses - e.g. what uses, to whom, how and why? - and forms of resistance. Potter (1988) has suggested that "accountability" refers to the availability of analyses for evaluative interpretation by the public. Here, in the absence of any research participants, this supposedly refers to a "public" of generic women. Within a feminist research endeavour, Ribbens (1989) has unequivocally linked accountability with empowerment of women. Two problems are immediately salient in these formulations, i.e. the heterogeneity of a public of women, an audience of women-readers; and the assumption that exposure to the "truth" of 'high theory / analyses' will necessarily empower all women in socio-structurally meaningful, or similar / equal ways. Thus, as Brunt (1982) argues, 'the rude voices of feminism' reject advice and normalization, point out contradictions and expand a range of alternatives; but, ultimately, feminist debates "show possibilities for out-talking patriarchal discourse", without visible action / effect (p. 170) [cf. McRobbie, 1982].

Thus, through careful consideration of the audiences of research, and future directions for action and further research, I highlight three areas which might be regarded as fruitful sites / modes of politicized intervention arising out of my discourse analytic study. These are not "new" ideas to this dissertation; I draw together threads which have been mentioned elsewhere and elaborate possibilities rather than advocating finite "resolutions".

First, I am eager to facilitate through publication of my readings of advice texts - in academic and popular sites [e.g. academic journals, books, women's magazines, newspapers, etc.] - other interpretations, resistances from other positions [e.g. more "politicized" viewpoints, Marxist readings, etc.], and further research. This is pertinent in the light of the paucity of published writing on South African advice columns, and the diverse material conditions and cultural practices in which South African women are embedded. This is not to say that such "politicization" of South African advice texts will transform forms of structural, ideological or discursive oppressions through collectivized protest, but it would labour to open a space for theoretical / analytic and popular debate; and would articulate nodes of resistance against the hegemony of the "realist", "liberal and/or "humanist" assumptions about the operations and effects of advice texts which have, hitherto, been unchallenged outside of academic discourse.

As a future direction for published research, the need for a genealogy of South African advice columns is clearly indicated. This would require - *not* a sensationally descriptive account of "early" peculiarities / inhibitions as opposed to "later" peccadilloes / exhibitions (e.g. Ratcliff, 1969; Hendley, 1977; Kent, 1979; Hays, 1984; Jordan, 1988) - but an account which is cognisant of productive power-knowledge operations, critical of ideological effects generated, and aware of the macro-structural power relations and most recent political shifts. Ehrenreich and English's (1979) incisive report on the historical, social and political effects of experts' advice to women - although this work covers an American context, does not feature advice columns per se, and is not on amicable terms with Foucauldian ideas - serves as a healthier, critical model to emulate.

This genealogy would need to interrogate the association between advice columns and women's magazines in South Africa: when did advice columns move from daily / weekly newspapers into the domain of women's magazines, and why?; are advice columns a "white", "middle-class", "feminine" genre?; are practices of psychologization and medicalization operative in advice columns for "other" audiences [e.g. Afrikaans, African, etc.]?; and what is the relationship between the advice column and the rest of the magazine [e.g. coverage of HIV/AIDS, appearance and discontinuance of specialist advice columns, etc.]?

This introduces a second direction for future action which would involve - as I have mentioned in an earlier section - extension of this study to facilitate and formalize "other" readings of advice texts, e.g. through interviews, group discussions, etc., and analysis of this "talk" as text. This is clearly a very different exercise to a descriptive 'readership survey' [i.e. "who reads advice columns?": see Gieber, 1960: Chapter 2]. The aim would be to access how advice texts are read?; how they are talked about?; with what degree of attention, respect, belief, and resistance?; and how are they used in daily practice? This direction follows Ballaster et al (1991) and McRobbie (1991) [see above], and would serve a similarly critical agenda, for, through publication of these alternative readings of advice texts, individualizing or collectivizing possibilities for resistance are opened up.

The third front on which this discourse analytic study might be put to political use is in ongoing interaction with editors and advice columnists of women's magazines. Having entered the domain of editorial offices of magazines to obtain access to archival advice discourse [see Chapter 2], informal dialogues and mutual

interests were set up (e.g. around women's issues, empowerment, operations and effects of advice texts, etc), and accountabilities established. This has been a source of some "feminist" / "Foucauldian" conflict for me, for the positioning of editors and advice columnists within "realist", "humanist" or "liberal" approaches to advice-giving is intractable [cf. Winship, 1987; McRobbie, 1991]. This has meant, therefore, that any "productive" approach to discourse or power-knowledge, or "politicization" of "women's problems" [e.g. ideological / social causes, etc.] is rendered unthinkable, and therefore, non-negotiable.

The "liberal", "humanist", etc. perspective introduces the difficulties of upholding a finite, radicalizing, political agenda - e.g. an injunction to resistance, collectivity and transformation - in publicized / mediatized interpretations of advice texts. Although "problems" [e.g. around the physical appearance of our bodies, emotional needs and monogamy-rules in heterosexual relationship practice] may, indeed, be socially, politically, institutionally or discursively produced, it does not mean that we experience these things as such (McRobbie, 1991). Ussher (1989), for example, has warned that social constructionism delegitimizes the private despair we might experience about our bodies / relationships; and labours to deny women rights / powers to seek individualizing relief and resolution through institutionalized reformative technologies. Thus, as feminist discourse analysts, we should ask [ourselves] whether the unilateral politicization of institutionalized knowledges and practices necessarily empower individual women with "personal problems", or labour to produce shame for having such "problems".

However, that my analysis has directly engaged tensions between different positional readings of power and empowerment - and maintains a critically ambivalent stance - has meant that aspects of my work which are appreciative of feminine agency [e.g. Foucault's "agentic subject", or the "indirectness" of women's power in heterosexual relationship practice, etc.] have found enthusiastic audiences amongst editors and advice columnists. This informal feedback [by me] to editors and advice columnists - as a form of accountability - has produced contradictory effects: "liberal" assumptions are confirmed, which, as a feminist, are disquieting, but, unexpectedly, other interventive opportunities for debate appeared.

Paradoxically, these opportunities were generated around the thematic content analytic study and distribution graphs [see Chapter 3] - the source of my earlier discomfort! Within a paradigm perceived as non-threatening to "liberals" or "humanists", colonization of realms of problematic experience by institutionalized experts was clearly visible, supported by empirical evidence, reliability coefficients, etc. to establish "truth" [as opposed to the "non-truth" of my analytic interpretations]. *Fair Lady* produced a canny response to my "findings" in a recent issue, viz. a full-length feature in which "advice columnists" / "experts" were "given the day off", and four "ordinary people" [photographs and brief biographies provided; two women and two men; two "white" and two "black"] addressed several "problem-letters", i.e. an abortion, a husband's affair and a difficult sibling (see Dardagan, 1994: 125).

Of course, this alleged "democratization" of expertise impels analysis of discourses at work in these cultural texts. Within a Foucauldian reading, for example, the "ordinary advice" is riven with normalizing expert knowledges, the "ordinary people" always-already inscribed. Similarly impelling of analytic interpretation

are the almost 200 letters that *Fair Lady* has received from magazine-readers in appreciation of this feature [personal communication].⁵ These analyses, and concomitant debates, await future attention.

Thus, I end with a beginning. To acknowledge that advice texts and my expository readings of them - as a text - are embedded in the very same practices of power at subjective and political levels is to facilitate a useful, critically ambivalent and resistant gaze. Thus, the value of "politicized" and/or "feminist" scrutiny of Foucauldian insights - e.g. the contradictory effects reproduced by disciplinary power and resistance - is sustained thought, talk and research action on issues of women's empowerment and social transformation. At best, this means that, in a politicized approach to advice texts and the practices beyond them, "everything matters, everything is real and everything is... interpretable" (Gallop, 1988: 90). Above all else, we should resist - with all means possible - the last word on advice texts being spoken.

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5 The original letters have been archived by *Fair Lady* for my perusal.

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**Appendix 1 Raw data of Thematic content analysis.
[See Chapter 3]**

- (a) Overall tallies tabulated by "gender of letter-writer".**
- (b) Overall tallies tabulated by "site of advice" and "gender of letter-writer".**
- (c) Thematic frequencies tabulated by "site of advice" and "gender of letter-writer".**

**Appendix 1 (a): Overall tallies tabulated by "gender of letter-writer".
(n=554)**

Female	449	81.05%
Male	57	10.29%
Unspecified	48	8.66%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	554	100%

Appendix 1 (c): Thematic frequencies tabulated by "site of advice" and "gender of letter-writer".

KEY: f = female letter-writers
 m = male letter-writers
 x = gender of letter-writer unspecified

Themes	YOU	FEMINA				FAIR LADY		
	JH n=241	BC n=42	CC n=12	SJ n=38	DD n=65	ED n=73	RR n=16	FF n=67
1. Family/ Friendship problems	46 19.09 %	0	0	8 21.05 %	0	13 17.81 %	0	12 17.9 %
	f=29 m=11 x=6			f=8		f=11 m=2		f=10 x=2
2. Commit- ment confusion	69 28.63 %	0	8 66.67 %	8 21.05 %	3 4.62 %	23 31.51 %	2 12.5 %	0
	f=57 m=12		f=5 m=3	f=8	f=3	f=20 m=3	f=2	
3. Relation- ship disatis- faction	38 15.77 %	0	5 41.67 %	16 42.11 %	7 10.77 %	11 15.07 %	1 6.25 %	2 2.96 %
	f=34 m=4		f=4 m=1	f=15 m=1	f=5 m=2	f=10 m=1	m=1	f=2
4. Sexual Problems	34 14.11 %	0	6 50 %	2 5.26 %	21 32.3 %	11 15.07 %	11 68.75 %	4 5.97 %
	f=25 m=9		f=6	f=2	f=19 m=2	f=9 m=2	f=9 m=2	f=4
5. Jealousy	18 7.47 %	0	2 16.67 %	3 7.89 %	1 1.54 %	8 10.96 %	1 6.25 %	0
	f=17 m=1		f=2	f=3	m=1	f=8	f=1	
6. Infidelity/ desertion by partner	22 9.13 %	0	1 8.33 %	7 18.42 %	0	6 8.22 %	0	0
	f=22		f=1	f=7		f=6		
7. Own Infidelity	17 7.05 %	0	1 8.33 %	1 2.63 %	3 4.62 %	4 5.48 %	1 6.25 %	0
	f=16 m=1		f=1	f=1	f=2 m=1	f=4	f=1	
8. Partner's abuse/ addictions	32 13.28 %	0	2 16.67 %	3 7.89 %	1 1.54 %	6 8.22 %	1 6.25 %	1 1.49 %
	f=28 m=1 x=3		f=2	f=2 m=1	f=1	f=6	f=1	f=1

	YOU	FEMINA				FAIR LADY		
Themes	JH n=241	BC n=42	CC n=12	SJ n=38	DD n=65	ED n=73	RR n=16	FF n=67
9. External Pressure	37 15.35%	0	8 66.67%	9 23.68%	1 1.54%	15 20.55%	0	4 5.97%
	f=28 m=5 x=4		f=5 m=3	f=9	f=1	f=14 m=1		f=4
10. Financial Problems	19 7.88%	2 4.79%	2 16.67%	4 10.53%	0	9 12.33%	0	3 4.48%
	f=16 m=2 x=1	f=2	f=2	f=4		f=7 x=2		f=3
11. Homo-sexuality	17 7.05%	0	1 2.33%	0	0	1 1.37%	1 6.25%	1 1.49%
	f=12 m=5		f=1			f=1	f=1	f=1
12. Rape/Child Sexual Abuse	23 9.54%	0	1 2.33%	0	1 1.54%	3 4.11%	0	0
	f=19 m=4		f=1		f=1	f=3		
13. Psychological Problems	86 35.68%	2 4.76%	4 33.33%	11 28.95%	3 4.62%	28 38.36%	2 12.5%	4 5.97%
	f=56 m=15 x=15	f=2	f=3 m=1	f=11	f=3	f=23 m=3 x=2	f=2	f=4
14. Physical Attractiveness	27 11.2%	41 97.62%	2 16.67%	2 5.26%	6 9.23%	6 8.22%	0	6 8.96%
	f=22 m=5	f=41	f=2	f=2	f=6	f=5 m=1		f=6
15. Medical Info	42 17.43%	12 28.57%	4 33.33%	12 31.5%	60 92.3%	12 16.44%	14 87.5%	67 100%
	f=34 m=8	f=12	f=4	f=9 m=1 x=2	f=51 m=3 x=6	f=9 m=1 x=2	f=10 m=3 x=1	f=57 m=2 x=8
16. "Values"	21 8.71%	1 2.38%	3 25%	1 2.63%	0	7 9.59%	6 37.5%	2 2.96%
	f=13 m=5 x=3	f=1	f=2 m=1	f=1		f=6 m=1	f=4 m=1 x=1	f=2

	YOU	FEMINA				FAIR LADY		
Themes	JH n=241	BC n=42	CC n=12	SJ n=38	DD n=65	ED n=73	RR n=16	FF n=67
17. Legal Advice	24 9.96%	1 2.38%	2 16.67%	5 16.67%	1 1.54%	9 12.33%	0	0
	f=13 m=10 x=1	f=1	f=2	f=5	f=1	f=6 x=3		
18. Career/ Education	44 18.26%	1 2.38%	6 50%	14 36.84%	0	21 28.77%	0	4 5.97%
	f=27 m=8 x=9	f=1	f=3 m=3	f=13 x=1	0	f=15 m=1 x=5		f=4

University of Cape Town

Appendix 2 Percentages of inter-coder agreement by "theme": reliability. [See Chapter 3]

Gender	83.67%
Commitment Confusion	85.71%
Dissatisfaction with Relationship	77.55%
Sexual Problems	93.88%
Jealousy	93.88%
Infidelity (partner)	97.96%
Infidelity (own)	100%
Partner's abuse/addictions	95.92%
Own addictions	97.96%
External pressure	87.76%
Financial Problems	95.92%
Homosexuality	100%
Rape/CSA	100%
Psychological Problems	95.92%
Physical Attractiveness	95.92%
Medical Information	89.80%
Values	85.71%
Legal Advice	93.88%
Career Educational	87.96%
OVERALL	91.84%

Appendix 3 (a): YOU

*Janet Harding's Lifeline [JH 3]
You, 10 January, 1991 (p. 96)*

OK for sex but too ugly to love

3

Q I am 18 years old and feel unwanted by guys because I have acne and my teeth stick out.

I am friendly with a guy, but we are just using each other to have a good time. I asked him if we could have a long-term relationship but he said he would prefer things as they are.

I sometimes think that no guy will ever want me – except for sex, because I am ugly and won't get any guy to love me.

A It really doesn't seem fair that it is at the most self-conscious age that acne strikes. However, acne can be treated and your doctor or a dermatologist would be able to help you. Orthodontics sorts out teeth alignment. A dental hospital associated with a medical school would be cheaper than seeing a private practitioner.

That said, it is also important to know that self-worth has a lot to do with self-acceptance – that is, acceptance of yourself as you are and in spite of your looks.

People are attracted to people who like themselves in spite of the pressures and the models set by advertising and the media. Trying to accept yourself as you are would be infinitely more effective and long-lasting than an investment in outward appearance. It would help you form relationships in which people like you as you are and for what you are, rather than what they might get out of you.

*Janet Harding's Lifeline [JH 4]
You, 10 January, 1991 (p. 96-7)*

20 – with no real boyfriends

4

Q I am 20 years old and have never had a real boyfriend. I've been told that I am pretty and have a good figure. I've got a very ordinary job and my life is so boring.

I did meet a great girl friend at work but she is moving and I am so miserable – now I won't even have a girl friend. What is wrong with me?

Do I feel like this because I so badly want somebody to love me? When will the right guy come along?

A Feeling as you do, I wouldn't be surprised if the right guy came along and you didn't even notice each other! You see, you are operating from a position of need.

Your need consumes you, dampens your spirit and your qualities and is a big switch-off for people with whom you come into contact. If you are bored with your job, your life and yourself, it is very difficult for someone to become interested in you. But where do you start to change?

Develop an interest in yourself and for yourself. Your job is boring – is this because you are capable of more? If that case do more, either within or outside your job. Think of something you like doing, and pursue it: anything from a sport to a course of study. This will energise you to discover more interesting things about yourself and around yourself.

If you work harder at developing interests you become an interesting person – and so attract people to you. As you sit around thinking how boring it all is, you wait for people to become interested in you. But if you take control of your own life, people will react to this.

*Janet Harding's Lifeline [JH 10]
You, 24 January, 1991 (p. 96)*

Aids: fathers' bad example

10

Q How does a mother teach teenage children about Aids if the father provides no example or a bad example? These men go to work and get caught up with single women who can't seem to find a single man to mess around with but prefer married men.

What about the wife and children sitting at home? Where does one draw the line here? And what is the risk of the wife getting Aids? Spare the innocent wife a little thought.

A While your letter contains perfectly valid statements with which I am sure many readers would agree, the tone reveals that you are actually saying much more.

You sign off as "Very Angry Wife" and this anger is coming from your feelings about your husband's attitude and behaviour, rather than concern for the overall problem of Aids in our society.

Somehow you feel that if your husband were aware of and concerned about Aids it would modify his sexual activity and behaviour towards other women and yourself – if he cannot be faithful for any other reason, you feel, at least he should respond to the Aids threat.

With your husband's social and sexual escapades you feel understandably hurt, let down and rejected. After that you see the actual risk of Aids which he might impose on you, and this gives you an obvious focus for anger.

You need to talk to your husband yourself about all your feelings, including your anger, and might also wish to use the help of a counsellor at your local Life Line centre. Either way, your general remarks about Aids need to be dealt with specifically in the context of your own personal life and your husband's behaviour.

Too skinny for a mini 20

Q I am too thin. At school everyone teased me and now that I'm 17, it's a big problem. I just can't put on weight. My mother says I should exercise to improve my muscles. What exercises can I do to make my legs in particular look better? I always wear trousers because I am so ashamed of my legs and I would so like to wear a mini or a bathing costume. I hope you can help me.

A Certain exercises can help improve your muscle bulk. They should be done under the guidance of an expert at a gym where there are weight circuits. Aerobic exercise, on the other hand, tends to make you fit without building much muscle bulk.

Enquire about gyms – rather than free exercise or aerobic classes – in your area, and discuss your needs and goals with someone qualified.

However, it is important for you to know that your size and shape will only change within the context of the physical type of person you are.

There are broadly three types of people – ectomorphs, mesomorphs and endomorphs. The ectomorph – which seems to be your body type – is simply thin, with light bone structure and tapering muscle shapes.

One of the most important things in leading a happy and successful life is the acceptance of yourself and things about yourself which you cannot change – your basic body shape among them.

Most people would like to be physically different from what they are, but only when we accept the attributes which we cannot change can we get on with more important aspects of our lives. Self-acceptance is the magic ingredient in developing self-esteem – people who are happy are those who like themselves and are liked, no matter what their size or shape.

I suspect that if you spent more time developing your self-esteem and less worrying about your body, you would have a better chance of living a fuller, happier life, whatever your size or shape.

I spend and eat compulsively

Q I cannot stop spending money, can you please help me? We really cannot afford it as by the time the accounts which I have run up have been paid, there is no money left for anything else.

I simply cannot stop myself, and when I get home after a spending spree I feel so bad when I realise what I have done that I start eating. I'm now the size of a bus.

My husband works hard and does not see the money he has worked for. I cannot stop running up debts and eating. A Now that you have recognised your problem and reached out for help in writing to me, I urge you to use this same courage and insight to seek treatment.

People who over-eat often have reasons other than merely liking food or needing sustenance, and in order to deal with your compulsion to eat it is necessary to find and deal with the underlying needs which are the actual cause of the behaviour.

You have identified the fact that you eat to comfort yourself when you feel so bad after compulsive spending. You are using one form of behaviour to try to compensate yourself for another which you are ashamed of and yet feel you can't help. Instead of helping you, this is compounding your problem – when you feel bad about both over-eating and the over-spending, the one problem is "feeding" the other.

In the same way your spending habits arise out of some deeper need which you are as yet unable to recognise, understand or deal with. Hence the frightening helplessness you feel when you say you cannot stop yourself in the compulsion to behave in this way, which needs attention in terms of getting to the underlying needs.

For this you really do need the help of a clinical psychologist. Your two forms of compulsive behaviour not only make you feel worse about yourself, but also affect your husband who is financing them. ☐

Should I tell her? 51

Q My best friend has been going c with her boyfriend for about two yea They have a very close relationship a she told me that they sleep together.

Recently another friend of mine t me that she had gone out with my be friend's boyfriend and that he tried have sex with her. I was shocked at t disloyalty and I know that my be friend would be deeply hurt to kn about this.

I am torn between telling my be friend - from whom I keep no secret and just leaving it all alone, in whi case I will also feel bad and she mig be even more hurt later. What shoul do?

A This is a tricky situation: you've be given information and you don't know wh to do with it. Even doing nothing about puts stress on an otherwise open frien ship because you'll be withholding infc mation from your friend. You probably wis you'd never had the information in the fir place.

You need to look very carefully at whe your loyalties lie. You don't want to hu your friend by revealing the disloyalty her boyfriend, but that conflicts with a nee to protect her against further hurt if sh remains unaware of his behaviour.

I suspect that you are reluctant to t seen interfering in what is an otherwis close relationship.

The key to dealing with this might be i your genuine concern and a non-judg mental approach. Perhaps you shoul talk to your friend, indicating your concer and your reluctance to interfere, and let he know what you have heard about he boyfriend in a non-judgmental way. I other words, tell her the facts as yo heard them but allow for his version o the story (you weren't there, and he is n there now to defend himself).

She might know about it and might hav dealt with it already; or she might urgent need to deal with it. Allow her to take either way and allow her to judge th information.

With this in mind you will best be able t share the information with your friend an convey your genuine support and concern

Eating to escape abuse by boys

Q When I was nine, staying over at my brother's friend's house, his brother and three friends sexually abused me. They told me at the time that it was a game and I believed them – I also thought I loved them.

I subsequently felt terrible and stupid and had a feeling it was wrong. At night I would have nightmares about this experience and wake up crying.

By the time I was in Std 4 I realised what had happened and started making myself fat so that boys would not like me. I am now 15 and desperately trying to get my weight down, but I am still afraid of boys.

I have not told anybody else about this as I don't know how my family or best friend would react. Please help me.

A Although you understand what has happened to you, you still need the help and support you can get in complete confidence from Child Line (011) 484-3044. You can talk to a skilled counsellor, working through the feelings you have been left with as a result of the experience.

This will help you to regain self-esteem, pride in your body and the ability to relate more happily and confidently to boys, your family and friends.

Your letter demonstrates very clearly how early sexual abuse can affect the victim through childhood years and later in life. It shows how secondary problems can occur – such as your weight increase, and the social and emotional problem of being frightened of boys at the age of 15.

What was perceived as a childhood game has had a devastating effect on you, and has left you feeling bad about yourself. That makes it difficult for you to talk to anyone about it and you're left feeling that you have a dark secret.

Boys do sometimes use young girls to experiment with sex without realising how deeply the girl is affected. They need to know this when they become involved in these "games". Thank you for bravely helping to get the subject into the open.

To divorce – or forgive again?

Q Last year I finally decided to leave my husband because he was having an affair with a neighbour. It was the third time he'd been unfaithful during our 10-year marriage and I just couldn't take the betrayal any more.

I've started proceedings and the divorce should be final in about two months, but now I'm not sure that's what I really want because I still love him. But what if I took him back and he had another affair?

Every time he's unfaithful the whole neighbourhood talks about it and it's so humiliating for me. I'm also under pressure from my parents to divorce him because they think he's rubbish. They have always helped me a lot – I'm staying with them and so are my three young children.

My husband often comes to see me and we like chatting to each other. He says his latest affair wasn't sexual and I really think he's changed now. Yet I'm afraid of getting hurt.

A The most important thing at this traumatic time is your feelings as well as those of your husband. And of course you must consider what's best for the children.

However, it seems to me that you and he haven't really faced up to your problems at all. For instance, why did you decide finally to divorce him after a non-sexual relationship when the others, which were presumably full-on affairs, didn't have that effect on you?

And has he really changed? The only way to find out is from him. Try to have a serious discussion with him when he arrives for a chat.

You could contact Famsa for advice and perhaps persuade him to see a counsellor with you.

But before you decide either way you need to establish what you really want – a family breakdown is a very serious matter.

I'm too fat for boys

Q I have an overweight problem. I have tried many weight-reducing programmes and nothing helps. My parents try to encourage me by promising to buy me new clothes if I lose weight, but I still can't stop myself from eating.

No guy wants to ask me out because I'm so fat – and I would so like to have a boyfriend as all my friends do.

A Some people find that phoning a group such as Overeaters Anonymous at (011) 88 8138 secures the support they need to change their eating habits. Others who need to go more deeply into the underlying reasons for their compulsive eating ask the doctor for a referral to a clinical psychologist.

Many ask for help in losing weight but like you, they're caught in a vicious circle

Because you're overweight you have a low self-image and when you try to do something about it you start by not feeling good about yourself. So you eat to console yourself, the results in even more weight, which make you feel worse. And so it goes on . . .

You have to take control and break the cycle, and it's important from the start to understand why you overeat.

Very often eating compensates for other needs which you're possibly unaware of and don't recognise. If you can identify and deal with those needs you'll find you're better able to cope with your eating problem – but you'll need the skilled help and support of a professional.

Will I ever get over his affair?

Q I have been happily married for 30 years, having got married at 17. We've had the usual ups and downs, but basically our marriage has been good and my husband and I were considered an ideal couple.

However, about four months ago I discovered he was having an affair with a girl of 20 he met at the office. I was devastated. He has begged me not to leave him and says he loves me more now than he ever did before, but I feel betrayed and bitter and my self-confidence is shattered. It is difficult to sleep with him knowing he has slept with her.

I feel separated from him and so furious with her and feel the magic has gone out of our marriage. We don't want to go to a marriage counsellor, but I feel the need for outside help.

Does the pain ever get better? Can I ever trust him again? And will our marriage ever be the same again?

A The crucial issue is how much you both want your marriage to work, and a lot now depends on how you both handle it.

Recognise that along with your marriage facing a crisis, each of you is experiencing your own personal crisis. You probably feel so hurt, shocked and generally unnerved that it's impossible for you to consider forgiving him, letting the affair go and rebuilding a relationship. You're probably also too uncertain to make a reinvestment of trust. No doubt you're very angry, which will further block any positive feelings within your marriage.

But try to gain perspective – regard this as a crisis in your marriage rather than an event that is bringing the relationship to an end.

Understanding that may give you more equilibrium with which to confront the crisis.

Remember that both you and your husband want your marriage to work – and remember too that a crisis can be used as an opportunity to test the commitment and make it work. It is possible with love and determination and as there are people out there who can help you both, why not use them? Talk to your husband about outside guidance – your marriage is worth it.

Contact a counsellor at the Family Life Centre on (011) 833-2051 in order to work through your feelings – not to negate them, but to allow other, more constructive feelings and thoughts in as well.

Fat, ugly and used by lovers

Q I am a 16-year-old girl, fat and ugly and madly in love with a neighbour. He visits me almost daily and we have sex. He told me not to tell anyone about this but won't say why not.

I had a crush on him long before the relationship started and I really don't know where I stand with him. Perhaps I am just a standby for him. Maybe he doesn't want his friends to know about us because they might tell him that he could have got a better girl than me. I know his previous girlfriends are far prettier than I am.

He has never once told me how he feels about me. I feel such a failure with boys and I know I have been just a standby with other boyfriends. Why do I always land up with the wrong guys?

A You're blunt about how you feel about yourself – "fat and ugly" – and you obviously have very low self-esteem. Freely bestowing your favours with no return on the "investment" only reinforces your diminished view of yourself, and so you become trapped in that image.

You have to set a higher value on yourself.

You can't suddenly switch from seeing yourself as fat and ugly to seeing yourself as slim and beautiful, but you can acknowledge that there is more to you than your looks. You could do something about your weight, but you need to consider the whole you, the good parts and the not-so-good parts.

You acknowledge the things you don't like about yourself, but it's more important to find and acknowledge the things you do like about yourself, and then accept and learn to like the whole you. We all need to do this to a greater or lesser extent, and few of us are potential Miss South Africas.

Setting a higher value on yourself will enable you to refuse to allow yourself to be used, and to expect and demand and get a better deal for yourself. People who like themselves are inevitably likeable and so attract more suitable people.

If self-esteem remains a problem with you, phone your nearest Life Line Centre and talk to a counsellor. If necessary you could be referred to an organisation that would help you build up your self-esteem.

At war with my 3-year-old

Q I am 26, happily married with two beautiful children and a good part-time job. I am not pretty but have a good figure. I have a mother and stepfather who love me and would do anything for me. I don't know why I am so unhappy. I think I am just ungrateful. I know there are many people in the world who are less fortunate than I.

I suppose I just don't believe hard enough as I have asked the Lord to help me with my problems, but still don't know how to solve them. One of my problems is that I seem to be fighting with my three-year-old. I just don't seem to be doing good job at being a mother for him.

I feel stupid and can't do anything right. Sometimes I think my children would be better off without me (not that I would kill myself or anything). At least my mother would look after them.

A Often when we encounter normal human sadness we make ourselves feel worse by thinking, "I shouldn't feel this way". This adds an element of inadequacy to the sadness which then leads to depression. And we feel bad about that – and so the condition feeds on itself.

Rather than dwelling on thoughts of how you should feel, try to acknowledge that you're unhappy without attaching a value judgment to it. How you feel is not good or bad. It's simply how you are and can best be dealt with as a fact, rather than suppressing it or trying to ignore it. Accept that you are

unhappy and talk to someone who you respect and trust in order to examine the problem and deal with it.

It might be wise to talk to a Life Line counsellor, or a professional person. You indicate in your letter that you do not value yourself and that you are depressed. It's likely that with some outside help you could come to value yourself more and deal with the unhappiness. You would also begin to recognize that three-year-olds can make any mother despair – the issue lies with the nature of three-year-olds rather than with the mother's adequacy.

However, you do need to talk to others in order to get your feelings and problems into perspective. Maybe this is why God provided other people.



Janet Harding

We're emotionally close troopies

Q We are two guys in the army and we think we have a problem. As we do not have any girlfriends we confide in one another. We have become very close emotionally and we masturbate together. Although we have not had a sexual relationship yet, we would like to do so.

We are both scared, feeling that we don't know who we really are. We are 19 years old. Could you help us?

A In the army with no female company, the usual or normal sexual interaction is curtailed and this often leads to men turning to each other for both emotional and physical fulfillment.

At your age, and in the circumstances provided by exclusively male company, you are also having to deal with many of the issues lingering from adolescence - such as your sexual identity, the strong sexual urges and the emotional needs and demands. Remember that at your age it is likely that you could still be struggling with the teenager's need for love and acceptance, while dealing with a strong need to be an individual. At the same time it is expected of you to "behave like a man".

These are some of the stresses which you could be experiencing. With stress it is very natural and understandable to turn to whoever can offer you warmth and understanding - even someone of your own sex. This, coupled with the lack of opportunity to be with girls, will often and understandably lead to the type of relationship you describe.

Understanding how it came about might make it easier for you to deal with the fear and confusion you are experiencing. It could also help you see that the feelings and behaviour you are enjoying now do not necessarily mean you have actually established a sexual preference which is going to stay with you.

With regard to intentions of a physical sexual relationship, you need to be aware of the emotional risks involved, and it is vital to be aware of the risk of Aids. This is an urgent reality which must dominate your choice of behaviour.

My husband may fancy neighbours

Q I have been married for seven years

and have two lovely daughters. Recently my neighbour came and told me that my husband wanted to have an affair with her. I was shattered.

I confronted my husband about it and he denied it, but since then I have been unable to trust him and we are for ever arguing.

The neighbour has moved out and two nurses now live next door. My instinct tells me that my husband is trying the same with them.

When I am in the garden they seem to avoid me and this makes me even more suspicious. I know my husband likes looking at other women and I am afraid of what is to come. I would not like to end my marriage.

A Whether your suspicions are unfounded or not it is important to look at what your suspiciousness is doing to you and your relationships.

Not only is it preventing your forming friendships with other women, it is destroying your relationship with your husband.

While you are not necessarily expected to become great friends with the nurses next door, it seems that it is your suspicions rather than anything else which blocks any easy communication. It may be your suspicious "vibes" which put the nurses off - and so they tend to avoid you.

Similarly it is now your suspicion rather than actual facts known to you which is leading to the constant conflict with your husband.

Both you and he need to acknowledge this and work through it together. This is probably best done in the presence of a skilled third party. In the interests of your marriage, which you evidently value, get in touch with a counsellor through the Family Life Centre at (011) 833-2051.

I realise that this involves some risk for you - the possibility of discovering that your suspicions might be well founded. However, dealing with that will be much more helpful than trying to live with suspicion.

Shall I buy more education?

Q My son has passed matric, but not well enough to be accepted at a univer-

sity. This comes as a tremendous blow to me as I feel I have done absolutely all I can to enable him to get an adequate matric.

Two years ago he begged to go to a private college which has a good academic record and where he said he would have a better chance of doing well and would stop "messing around" as he was doing at school.

At considerable cost I sent him there, but in spite of all his assurances that he was working well enough I felt he really wasn't applying himself. Now, with the results out, my fears have been confirmed and I don't know what to do.

How much more must I invest in my son's education? He tells me he will really settle down and work.

A One of the hardest things for a parent to do is to withhold the support children ask for and allow them to take the consequences of their actions.

The temptation to rescue yet again is considerable, and yet refusal to do so sometimes teaches someone who is unable to learn otherwise that you don't get anything for nothing. Perhaps this is as important a lesson in life as any education.

A matric certificate can be improved upon and upgraded to university entrance qualification. Tuition and study for this can no doubt be arranged on a part-time basis.

The best way you can invest in his education at this point can be to allow him to find a job with the matric certificate he has. If he really wants to go to university he can demonstrate how serious he is by paying for his education for this year at least.

At the end of the year, when he has had an opportunity to take responsibility and demonstrate his determination to work, you might consider again how much more you are prepared to invest in his education.

LIFE LINE telephone numbers: Southern Transvaal (011) 728-1347; East Rand (011) 54-0084; West Rand (011) 853-4111; Northern Transvaal (012) 343-8888; Vaal Triangle (018) 33-7333; Eastern Cape (041) 52-3684; OFS (017) 22212; Natal Coastal Region in Durban (031) 23-2323; Carletonville (01481) 3232; Pietermaritzburg (0331) 94-4444; Border (0431) 22-900; Namibia (061) 32221; Zululand (0351) 92-2222; Western Transvaal (018) 21234; Western Cape (021) 481-1111; Umtata (0471) 25891; Grahamstown (0481) 2-8888.

If I went straight I'd still be gay

Q I recently met a very nice man who is kind and affectionate. The problem is I am gay and have recently broken up with a girlfriend whom I still love.

In a way I would really like to find a man whom I could marry and settle down with and have children with as I think the gay way of life is very fickle and shallow. Yet if I do become straight, I know, women will always be in the back of my mind.

My family have threatened to disown me if I break up with this man and go back to my old way of life. I do like him very much and enjoy his company, but I am not attracted to him in the same way as I am to women.

I am so confused. I don't want to hurt this man and displease my family. I can't help being gay. Nobody in their right mind would choose this hard way

of life.

A From your letter I can see that while you would like to please your family, you are pretty hurt by their attitude to your being gay and feel tremendously pressurised by their attitude.

You also come across in your letter as being an honest and pragmatic person who sees the disadvantages of the gay way of life, and yet you cannot help how you feel.

The temptation to settle down with a man to a way of life which could offer you security and social acceptance is countered by your sexual preference and emotional needs. You need to find a way to be

happy within the context of all these conflicts. You would benefit from the support of a counsellor or a clinical psychologist who could help you come to terms with your sexuality and the choice of your way of life.

You need understanding and acceptance right now - and support in the loss you are suffering over your previous gay relationship.

This is not the time for you to be choosing a partner, but rather for accepting and coming to terms with yourself and all the things you could offer to a friendship. With the honesty you reveal in your letter, I am sure you could aim at a lasting friendship with someone of either sex.

This at present is the most you could commit yourself to, and would be infinitely more rewarding than any commitment arising solely from social and family needs or just sexual preference. ☐

Write to Janet Harding
LIFE LINE P O Box 95135
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Appendix 3 (b): FAIR LADY

Elizabeth Duncan [ED 10]
Fair Lady, 14 February, 1991 (p. 24)

A FAMILY AFFAIR ... 10

Q My husband and I married after knowing each other for three years. As my father was dead, my husband took the place of a father in my family. I began to notice how close he and my younger sister were. I questioned him about their relationship, but he said I had a dirty mind. After that we fought about it, until I could no longer take it and I left him. I later returned because of my son, but the next day he told me the affair had been going on for three years. They had tried to stop, but they couldn't help themselves. He still spends every day with her and they're very close. Now that I know, how can I stop it? He says he still loves and wants me, but the affair has gone too far and - this hurts the most - part of him doesn't want to stop, yet he says he doesn't love her. But I can see that he cares for her and that she loves him. He has never said he's sorry, or tried to make amends, only that he regrets the day it started. It is I who assure him of my love and touch him and show him that I can't help being jealous because I love him so much. I hurt so much, but the love I have for him makes me forgive him and still want him, even if he carries on. Part of me wants to punish him by having an affair, but I can't. What should I do?

A When your husband married you he made a commitment to be faithful to you. Your sister also has a commitment to you because you are sisters. For these reasons alone they should end the relationship. Your sister must be told this in your presence and she should no longer come to your house until she is truly able to respect your marriage. If they cannot agree to do this, you will have to face up to the heartache that your husband no longer loves you as he once did. Even if you think you love him so much that you will condone their affair, you will find yourself becoming utterly miserable and you will lose your self-esteem. If you both decide that your marriage and your child are important to you, I advise you to get help to work through this difficult time. Speak to FAMSA - they provide professional counselling at a small fee. Their number is ☎ (021) 461-7360.

CAN'T GET OVER LOSS 11

Q I lost my fiancé last September. I'm permanently depressed and feel as if the world has come to an end for me. In November I met a man who loves me very much but he can't understand the way I feel after losing the most important part of my life. I know four months have passed, but I can't forget him and the new man is pressuring me to have a sexual relationship with him. The problem is I don't feel ready to start another relationship. I am overweight and find it difficult to find nice men to date. There are some men I'd like to have as platonic friends, but they don't understand when I tell them this and the story of my loss. I take my frustration out on my family and have often thought of suicide and it seems that it is the only solution.

A I am terribly sorry about your loss. I think that you are still in a state of grieving, and four months is not long at all when it is measured against the time you and your fiancé had loved each other. Furthermore, it's not just how long you knew each other, but all the plans you made together for the future which have come to nothing, and for which you are also entitled to grieve. Grieving is an individual process and there is no time limit to how long it should last. The time scale is different for each person. If, after some years, a person can still not let go of the grief, then that person needs help. Another thing which is common to people who lose a loved one is a sense of guilt - feelings that 'if only I had done this or that', feelings of regret for every argument or of things left undone. It is also normal to have strong feelings of anger at what has happened to you because of this death. You could phone Lifeline in Johannesburg at ☎ (011) 720-1331 and speak to a counsellor. You could also speak to your minister. He will have experience in helping people to work through bereavement. Don't force yourself into any relationships until you feel really ready, it's not fair to yourself or the man involved. Tell your parents you are sorry about your anger and assure them that it is not their fault that you feel so bad. Being active is usually helpful when dealing with depression, so keep yourself busy with sport and hobbies, or even studies. In time you will begin to feel better and able to accept your loss. When this happens, you will be really free to love again. ♣

Elizabeth Duncan [ED 11]
Fair Lady, 14 February, 1991 (p. 24)

Elizabeth Duncan [ED 12]
Fair Lady, 27 February, 1991 (p. 22)

TEEN PUPPY FAT 12

Q I'm 14 years old and I recently started taking laxatives. I'm concerned about the effect they may have on my health and body, if any. Am I ruining my digestive system and kidneys? I can't ask my doctor as I'm afraid my mother will find out. She is understanding but she'd be upset about what I'm doing to myself. I am taking laxatives to lose weight. I'm not overweight but I feel I should lose a few kilos and I can't stick to a diet. I sometimes overdo the dosage - despite that, I'm still the same weight; probably because I eat as much as I like. Am I bulimic?

A At 14 most girls carry quite a lot of chubbiness. Leading a normal active life and eating a normal varied diet usually takes care of this chubbiness in time. It is indeed unhealthy to make such artificial intrusions into the natural functioning of your body. Taking unnecessary laxatives will upset the chemical balance of your body and your metabolism. It is definitely harmful to you. Discuss this with your family doctor and also tell your mother how concerned you are about your weight. It would be far better for her to be a bit upset now than for both of you to be in a lifelong anxiety about your health.

Elizabeth Duncan [ED 48]
Fair Lady, 17 July, 1991 (pp. 26-7)

Of stomach and thighs (49)

I'm 17 and in matric. I'm not overweight but I have a large, protruding stomach and fairly big thighs. I need advice on how to reduce them before my matric dance in October.

A good diet and exercise programme should help reduce your problem areas.

Stomach muscles are relatively easy to tone, and results can be seen quite quickly. Speak to a reputable gym or health club and get advice. For the dance, you should choose a dress in a style that best shows off your assets and disguises the aspects of your figure that trouble you. Remember that the most important thing is to have fun and enjoy yourself thoroughly in the company of your friends and classmates.

He beats me and blames me (58)

I've been seeing my boyfriend for seven years and last year he became violent for the first time. He broke things, pushed me around and threatened my life. Later he apologised but I couldn't help thinking it would happen again. It did, last week. This time it was worse and afterwards he said I drove him to it – I was only defending my case when we were arguing. He denies hitting me. I'm 25 and don't feel the need to marry which, he says, drives him crazy as he loves me and I don't return that love; nor do I feel I can love or respect him as I did before. He had an affair last year for which he blames me. I have my own business and earn more than he does; I'm more ambitious and have been told that we're not on the same level of intelligence. I can't talk to people about our problem as they either tell me to leave him or say that they don't believe it. I don't want to lose out on seven years and have the hassle of building a new relationship, but I also don't want to waste more time. I have no family in South Africa and few friends. I'm afraid of being lonely if I leave him.

Leave this man. Whatever his problems, his way of dealing with stress is to be violent and this is unlikely to change. It's a textbook situation of a man being unfaithful, battering you and trying to convince you that all this is your fault. Speak to any branch of Rape Crisis or any organisation which helps battered women and you'll find that a common thread runs through every unhappy story. You aren't dependent on this man socially or financially. Never mind what his friends say – most batterers are charming in company and brutal in private. Give yourself the chance to meet other men and be willing to be lonely for a while if necessary. This man is no good for you.

Elizabeth Duncan [ED 58]
Fair Lady, 25 September, 1991 (p. 24)

Elizabeth Duncan [ED 56]
Fair Lady, 11 September, 1991 (p. 25)

On weight and career (56)

I'm 16 years old and I'm embarrassed about my body. I'm not fat but my thighs are large and I can't get them slim. Last year I went on a diet and lost weight but everyone told me to stop because I didn't need to lose weight. But I know I do and they don't understand that. I now try to eat very little. The other thing that is worrying me is that I don't know what I want to do when I leave school. I change n.y mind all the time. My friends think I should become a social worker because I'm good at solving others' problems. I like the idea but I'm scared I will change my mind again. What subjects do I need and where do I have to study?

If all your friends think that you're not overweight, try to believe them. Girls often think they are fat when in fact they are the normal weight for their build and height. You need to eat a healthy, balanced diet which includes starch and protein and some fat. You can send a stamped self-addressed envelope to our librarian, Elize Hurwitz, for the special diet for teenagers which has been devised by our award-winning nutritionist, Debbie Collings. Debbie says, 'The only way to fresh, natural looks and an abundance of energy is to eat enough of the right foods and to exercise regularly. Teenagers should never diet unless they are grossly overweight – and then only under the guidance of an expert. It's vital at this time of your life that your body gets all the nutrients it needs for your ongoing metamorphosis into womanhood. If you *do* feel you need to lose weight, rather aim to keep your weight constant over a few months and "grow" into your ideal weight instead.' It is also understandable that you aren't sure about your future career. By the time you're in matric you'll probably have a clearer idea about what you want. If that turns out to be social work you'll need to go to university. To qualify for university you need a matric exemption and three subjects on the higher grade. One of those must be a science subject – maths, physical science, biology, zoology and so on. You could write to the Social Welfare Department, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, Cape, and ask them to send you the prospectus for social work.

Elizabeth

DUNCAN answers your problems about emotional hatred and family discord

I feel hatred **(63)**

I'm 18 years old and I have a lot of inexplicable hatred building up inside me. My father was killed when I was seven. I was sexually molested as a young girl and I've had two disastrous relationships. I went out with the second boy for six months and he dominated me. By the time we broke up I had no friends. Then I met John. He has helped me to rebuild my life. We're very much in love and want to get married. But I still have all this hatred welling up inside. I lie to myself. I'm getting more impatient and I'm mean to my family. I want to stop hurting the people I love, but how?

Often people find it easier to be angry and filled with hate than to grieve and cry. Growing up without a father is not easy, and sexual abuse leaves scars for many years. The one way of dealing with all this is to be able to talk about it to a counsellor who will help you to sort out your feelings and deal with them. If you don't have access to a counsellor through your mother, family doctor or school, speak to Lifeline at ☎ (021) 461-1111. I agree that you need help so I hope you will try these avenues.

My parents don't like my fiancé **(64)**

I'm 20 years old and my fiancé is 19. We're marrying in December but my

mother and stepfather don't approve of him and don't want us to marry. My mother has thrown me out of the house and she threatens to cause a scene at our wedding. We've tried to speak to her and bring her round but she refuses to see us. I love my mother and don't want to hurt her but I'm in love with my fiancé and want to marry him. I wish she would give us her blessing. But if she won't, do I have to get permission from a court to marry?

As you live away from home and support yourself, you are what is known as an emancipated minor. You could apply to the court to marry and you shouldn't have difficulty in obtaining permission from them if you explain your circumstances. Your fiancé would also need written consent from his parents. Having said that, think very carefully before marrying at so young an age. You are making a lifelong commitment to your partner. Regarding your mother, if she will not see you, write to her now and then to keep communication open. Time will show her how serious your relationship is and that you do care about her. She will probably accept your choice eventually.

Fighting for my brother **(65)**

I'm a 21-year-old Muslim girl and have a problem with my mother and stepfather. He doesn't like me and

says I interfere. My mother takes his side. She has just had a baby and he is going to be circumcised. My brother, who is 15, has not yet been circumcised (a religious requirement) and finds this especially embarrassing. We have both asked my mother when she is going to arrange it but she just mumbles excuses. My brother has now asked me to make an appointment for him to have it done. I don't want to be accused of interfering but I want to help my brother.

As circumcision is a necessary requirement of your religion, and as your brother himself is anxious to be circumcised, I agree that something has to be done about it. However, I'm not sure that you are the best person to make the arrangements. Can you not speak to an uncle or your imam? I feel sure that they would be able to persuade your mother to go ahead and have the circumcision done. And if it can be done in this way it would not involve what your mother and stepfather regard as interference. If this fails, then you are entitled to take up your brother's request and help him.

If you have a problem, write to Elizabeth Duncan, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope. She regrets she may not be able to reply personally. Medical queries should be referred to a doctor. Anonymous letters are not accepted for publication.



RENÉ RAFF on teenage masturbation **(12)**

I'm a 16-year-old girl and I've been masturbating ever since I can remember. I'm too shy to tell anyone about this as I feel it's very personal and I also feel embarrassed about it. I've tried to read about the subject but there are still so many unanswered questions. Is it normal for me to have masturbated for so long and, if so, what causes me to feel the need to do so? I find myself feeling guilty about it and wonder if I should. Do many girls my age masturbate? I have read that it is a sign of loneliness but I come from a loving family and have many friends. Please help me.

Many young people feel guilty about masturbation but there is no reason whatsoever to feel like this about something considered a normal part of human behaviour. It is not a

perversion and it certainly doesn't result from loneliness. Both males and females of all ages - from preschool years right through adulthood - masturbate, and it should in no way impair sexual relationships. As you're an adolescent, there is an increase in the hormonal activity of your body and masturbation is a good way of relieving sexual tensions and of exploring the changes happening to you. You are quite right about its being a private matter; respect for your own and other people's privacy is essential. There are times when some people masturbate compulsively for non-sexual reasons, like boredom, poor self-image and when they are going through inner conflicts. In this case it would be important to deal with the causes of these feelings and the problems of which masturbation is actually a symptom. But don't worry, the situation you describe sounds like normal teenage self-discovery.

René Raff is a sex educationist who works with both adults and children. She is a graduate of UCT.

PHOTOGRAPH: JUAN ESPÍ



Family FORUM

Share your medical and parenting problems with the experts

● Not coping after birth (53)

I'm worried about my friend. She was a vivacious, bubbly woman who has become tense, depressed and overweight since the difficult birth of her son. He's now 18 months old and she is too protective of him. She seldom allows him to play with other children and he rarely goes out as she's afraid he'll catch something. She's worried that there may be something wrong with him even though he's a healthy child. He doesn't sleep through and she hardly ever has a good night's sleep as she never allows him to nuzzle without getting up to cater to his needs. Her nerves are frayed by morning. She is even afraid to let her husband or mother care for the baby, and as a result she hardly ever leaves the house. The child is not disciplined at all and gets his own way every time he throws a tantrum. If anyone tries to make a helpful suggestion she either breaks down and cries or becomes aggressive and isolates herself. Her moods and reactions are extreme. What should I do? I'm concerned about her mental and physical health.

Our psychologist says:

I share your concern for your friend. It seems to me that she's suffering from postnatal depression (PND). Anxiety is often the predominant feature of this depression and usually takes the form of excessive worrying about the baby's health and safety even though there's no obvious or real cause for concern. Feeling out of control and tense, mood swings, aggressive outbursts, social withdrawal and depression also fit the broad picture of PND. It's often difficult for a mother to admit to not coping, particularly if she is trying so hard to be a 'good' and available mother to her child, knowing that society tends to frown on 'emotional' women. It may be that she herself is not fully aware of the level of her distress. While PND is fairly common, it's a serious and debilitating condition. The extent to which your friend is manipulated by her son and the degree to which she feels forced to control his environment will, in the long term, act against his ability to cope effectively within his world. We

know too that some mothers can, in an uncontrolled moment, hurt their babies. The best help you can give her now is to be a truly non-judgmental friend who can listen to her and accept her as she is. Once she feels she can trust you she may be willing to share her fears and problems with you. Give her some useful information about PND which you will find in books and popular women's magazines. Once she accepts that she needs help, suggest that she confide in her doctor so that he can either prescribe the required medication or refer her to a therapist with whom she can work out unresolved emotional issues.

● Alive and kicking (54)

I'm pregnant and my baby gets her feet under my ribcage and kicks strongly. Is it possible that she could crack a rib in this way?

Our gynaecologist says:

Your complaint is common in women who are about 36 weeks pregnant, when the uterus presses up against the

breastbone. Although it may feel that your baby kicks hard enough to cause damage, you have nothing to worry about. Your baby 'floats' in about 600 - 1 000 ml of amniotic fluid and is also protected by the thick muscular uterine wall which protects you as well. Try to lie on your side for a while when this happens as this may help your baby to move or roll to a different position. Also remember that strong foetal movements are a sign of a healthy baby.

● Baby's hair won't grow (55)

My baby's seven months old and his hair is fluffy and doesn't seem to be growing. I've been feeding him healthy food but there is no change. What's wrong with him?

Our paediatrician says:

Slow growing and fluffy hair in babies may be due to various conditions, including deficient protein intake in the diet; inherited hair abnormalities, sometimes associated with skin disorders; or a normal familial pattern. It's essential to exclude a protein and vitamin deficiency in the diet as a cause of your baby's hair condition. The sister at your local clinic will be able to determine this. She will advise you on the need for adequate protein, like milk, egg, chicken, fish and meat in your son's diet and she may prescribe a multivitamin preparation. If a protein deficiency has been excluded it may be necessary for the clinic to refer you to your doctor or local hospital. It's important to realise that not all babies have the same rate of hair growth and this may be hereditary. ♣

Our panel of experts will answer your questions on general health, gynaecology, paediatrics and parenting. Write to Family Forum, Box 1802, Cape Town 8000. If you need help urgently, contact your doctor, local Lifeline or emergency service. The writer of each letter published will receive a hamper containing products from Mentadent, Timotei, Vaseline, Pond's and Shield worth R75.

Appendix 3 (c): FEMINA

*Susan James [SJ 21]
Femina, July, 1991 (p. 140)*

"PERFECT" HUSBAND CHEATED

Q I've been married to a wonderful man for eight years, and was absolutely devastated when I recently discovered that he had an affair last year when he was away on a business trip. I happened to come across a letter that the woman had written to him. I'm so hurt that I see divorce as the only way out. He's very sorry and wants to make amends, but I just know I would always imagine him making love to another woman, and I'd never be able to forgive and forget. Why do men have to behave like this?

A Many happily married men – and women – have brief affairs. Very often the spouse never finds out, and the fling is soon forgotten. I'm not condoning such behaviour, simply pointing out that it happens to the best of husbands – and wives. I urge you both to seek marriage-guidance counselling. After eight wonderful years with this man, it would be sad to throw it all away without trying to come to terms with the situation. □

*Susan James [SJ 23]
Femina, August, 1991 (p. 142)*

LIVING BEHIND A MASK

Q I have a great job as a PRO and I'm in my 20s. Until now, I haven't worried too much about steady relationships, but just recently I've been getting fed up with men who just love and leave. Looking back over the years I guess this has been a pattern in my life. Less attractive friends seem to be able to keep relationships together, so why can't I? I'm wondering if there's anything in my behaviour which turns men off me in the long term. Please tell me what you think, because I'm starting to get very depressed about this. I can't discuss this with any of my friends because they all think I'm happy and well adjusted.

A We all present an image to the world, but true closeness requires a dropping of this social mask, at least in private. In a way you've been too successful in creating a public image – and in carrying this image through to your private life too. You need to learn to feel comfortable in relaxing this too-happy face when the occasion warrants it. And you need help to do so, because at present dropping your guard will feel threatening. You'd benefit from counselling or from a course such as the one offered by Life Line.

*Susan James [SJ 37]
Femina, December, 1991 (p. 148)*

LIVE-IN BOYFRIEND IS CHEATING

Q My boyfriend and I have lived together for over two years. Although we aren't legally married, we have an unwritten agreement that we are a committed partnership in all respects. We share everything financially and emotionally – or so I thought until I came across a letter from my boyfriend's lover. It seems he's been seeing this woman once a month while on business trips. I'm stunned, because I had no idea this was going on and I truly thought I could trust him. This other woman is married and doesn't seem to want more from my boyfriend than a regular fling. I've nursed this pain for several weeks, because I just don't know how to speak to him. Do I have the right to demand total commitment from this man? How should I approach him on the matter?

A Yes, I would say that your relationship presupposes a climate of honesty and openness. There are certain "rules" pertaining to an established relationship that are generally understood to exist. Faithfulness is one of the most important of these. I understand your reluctance to light the fuse, because there's no gentle way of clearing the air. Perhaps it would help to call Life Line first, to articulate your pain and release some of it.

Beauty Clinic [BC 1]
Femina, January, 1991 (p. 88)

DO EYE CREAMS REALLY REDUCE WRINKLES?

Modern skin-care products are the stuff of science and not of miracles, unfortunately. But it does make sense to do the best you can to delay the ageing process by using creams for special problem areas like the eyes. Fiona, from Durban, is 35 and this is often the time when fine lines become noticeable. I would certainly advise her to use an eye cream, not only to replace lost moisture and to prevent further loss, but also to offer protection from the elements. Tests done by companies such as Clinique, with their Daily Eye Benefits (R70 for 15ml), and Clarins, with Eye Contour Balm (R79,50 for 20ml) do show that skin is smoother and firmer and cells are "plumped up", reducing the depth of lines. And because skin tissue is constantly regenerating, wrinkling can be reversed to a degree. Protecting this vulnerable area with a special sun-filter product – like Clinique's tinted Eye-Zone Sun Block (R42) – is also advisable, as is wearing good sunglasses to prevent screwing up the eyes against the light.

Beauty Clinic [BC 20]
Femina, June, 1991 (p. 77)

WILL SWIMMING HELP ME SLIM?

Regular exercise is the best way to rev up your metabolism and, if you eat sensibly and watch the amount of fat you eat, to lose weight safely and for good. But how much and what type? Carolynne from Bedfordview writes she has been swimming at a health club but has heard from a friend that this makes the body cling to fat as insulation. According to exercise experts there is no evidence to support the fat-clinging theory and swimming is recommended as an ideal way to exercise aerobically – and burn calories – without risk of injury. Thirty minutes of breaststroke burns about 1 260 kilojoules (300 calories). On the whole, swimming is an excellent form of exercise as it's an all-over body conditioner and deeply relaxing. It builds muscular strength, coordination and flexibility and, for these benefits alone, it's worth doing. Best benefits come from backstroke and breaststroke, which are good for the upper body. Aqua-aerobics classes are a fun way to work out without feeling stiff and sore – they are ideal for overweight and pregnant women.

Beauty Clinic [BC 33]
Femina, October, 1991 (p. 182)

MAKE-UP TIP FOR OLDER WOMEN

The golden rule for older women is that less is more. A heavy layer of make-up settles in the tiny lines and accentuates the creases on the face. Start with a liquid foundation like Elizabeth Arden's Flawless Finish, Lancôme's Magique satin, New Complexion Makeup from Revlon or Estée Lauder's Country Moist Liquid Makeup. Then dab a creamy concealer on the under-eye area and on pigmentation marks. The secret lies in a light hand and proper blending. Finish with a light layer of loose powder to provide an even look. Creamy rather than powder blush flatters older skin. Avoid the temple and outer-eye area to downplay wrinkles. Make-up artists recommend that older women, who're prone to puffiness around the eyes, avoid eye shadow and eyeliner until lunch time. A sweep of mascara and a rich-toned lipstick are fine until then. At night, keep eye make-up matte and subtle with a bold red-toned lipstick that counteracts the yellowing effects of artificial light.

Beauty Clinic [BC 10]
Femina, March, 1991 (p. 109)

WHAT CAUSES BAGS UNDER EYES?

"DEPRESSING" IS HOW Cindy of Marianhill Park, Pinetown, describes the persistent bags under her eyes. She's only 27 years old and she's tried everything to get rid of them – early nights, later nights and lighter suppers – to no avail. Three beauty therapists have told her that the bagginess could be caused by her putting moisturiser too near her eyes, but she says this isn't so. She wants to know too whether the Pill could be a factor. This is a tricky one, since the under-eye area often reflects what is happening with the fluid levels in the body. Water retention and even kidney problems could be responsible. To flush excess water from the system, the answer is to drink more water, not less. Cindy should try to drink up to two litres of water a day for a few weeks and see whether this helps. She should also consider her make-up carefully, as the possibility of an allergy exists. Meanwhile, there are quite a few under-eye gels on the market which help to reduce puffiness and decongest the area. Here are some of them: Gallia Eye Gel, Payot Soins Cernes Under-Eye Treatment and Clarins Gel Des Yeux.

Beauty Clinic [BC 31]
Femina, October, 1991 (p. 182)

HOW CAN I TONE MY THIGHS?

A reader from Kimberley writes that despite long daily walks and lots of swimming in summer, she remains depressed about her thighs. "With the fashion for shorter skirts and the thought of getting into a swimsuit soon, I feel hopeless." Most gyms will put together a specific toning programme for problem areas, but here are three excellent exercises devised by a top New York fitness centre.

1. To tone the baggy area above the knee and the inner thigh: Stand with your back against a wall and bend your knees until they are in line with your hips, rather as if you were sitting on an invisible chair. Hold for 30 seconds, then gradually rise again. Repeat three times.
2. For the front of the thighs and buttocks: Stand with a straight back, feet slightly turned out and just more than shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees, keeping a straight back until knees are aligned over toes. Squeeze buttocks tightly and return to starting point. Repeat in sets of eight, up to 24 times.
3. To firm buttocks and tone outer thighs: Kneel on all fours on the floor with weight on elbows and knees. Extend and lift one leg up behind, bending at the knees so that your heel faces the ceiling. Squeeze buttocks and tummy, raising the leg and heel upwards, then lower. Do two sets of eight and then repeat with the other leg. Complete these exercises three times a week – they take about 10 minutes – and you should see results within a few weeks.

Beauty CLINIC

If you have a problem, write to Beauty Clinic, PO Box 3647, Cape Town, 8000 or fax (021) 21-6684

CAN EXERCISE MAKE MY BREASTS BIGGER?

Remember the days when women pressed the palms of their hands together and chanted, "I must, I must, increase my bust"? Nowadays women work out with machines in the gym, but the effect is the same: toning the pectoral muscles that lie between the breasts and the rib cage. But while these muscles can provide more bulk above the breasts, they can't actually affect the size. The breasts are suspended in an envelope of skin, which is why they are so prone to sagging. The only way to increase the size is to have surgical implants - a major operation that causes scarring and some incidence of complications. French women have been using Clarins products for years, in particular an appliance similar to a Jacuzzi, for the breasts, which is said to stimulate the tissues and increase the overall size. Exercising won't actually increase the size of your breasts but, if it slims down and tones your lower half, it can make your breasts appear proportionately larger. Clever dressing can also create the illusion of cleavage.



PHOTOGRAPH: NEIL HERMANN

Exercise that slims and tones your lower half can make your breasts appear proportionately larger



PHOTOGRAPH: WALTER FERRIER

HOW CAN I MAKE MY EYES SEEM BIGGER?

Some things can be changed, but increasing the size of eyes isn't one of them. A young reader from Kensington, Johannesburg, writes that her eyes are very small and deep-set. The skilled use of make-up can create the illusion of larger eyes. Here are a few tips from a make-up expert. Start by using a light concealer - like Lancôme's Anti-Cerne Concealer or one of the new ones from Woolworths - around the entire eye, including the under-eye and the lid. This immediately gives a luminosity to the skin around the eye. Use a light shadow from the lash to the brow and blend well. Avoid dark colours altogether, particularly in the crease of the lid, as they create shadows. Another tip is to use a thin line of liquid eyeliner along the top lashes only. Ringing the eye with liner or pencil simply makes the eye look smaller. Curl the lashes with an eyelash curler (available from pharmacies) and use a lash-lengthening mascara formula for maximum effect.

Use a light eye shadow from the lash to the brow and blend well. Avoid dark colours altogether, as they create shadows

Your beauty queries answered by
Sarah Hetherington

WHICH COMES FIRST?

There seems to be a great deal of confusion concerning the daily wear of sun screens under make-up. Some moisturisers and foundations contain SPF protection but, unless this is a high factor containing UVA and UVB filters, it isn't sufficient for exposure of more than about 40 minutes daily. If you are exposed for longer periods, a specific sun screen for the face should be applied. There are many nongreasy ones on the beauty counters and sun-care specialists like Ambre Solaire have them too. The difficulty comes in deciding whether your sun screen goes on over or under moisturiser and the advice from skin-care houses is conflicting, so the decision is up to you. Clarins suggests applying moisturiser first, then foundation and then the sun screen, to give the face a matte, protective finish.

HOW CAN I TREAT SCALY LEGS?

A reader from Cape Town complains that, in spite of the liberal use of bath oil, her legs look scaly and feel rough. The reason for this is probably that bath oil tends to coat the limbs rather than penetrate the skin. A build-up of dry, dead cells would hamper any moisturising effect too. It's just as likely that her skin is dehydrated (lacking in water), as well as dry (lacking in oil), and long, hot baths encourage water loss from the skin tissue, leaving it even more parched. The best remedy is still a cotton or hemp loofah or mitt - Clicks has a great selection - used every other day under the shower or in a tepid bath. This strips the dead skin cells from the surface and leaves the skin more receptive to moisturisers. After bathing apply a rich body moisturiser to still-damp skin to trap water on the surface, and scalliness should be eliminated. □

the sexpert's guide

■ BY DR DAVID DELVIN

Dr David Delvin [DD 41]
Femina, August, 1991 (p. 144)



TELL HIM ABOUT HERPES

I'm faithful to my boyfriend and he's been faithful to me, but four months ago I developed small blisters at the opening of my vagina. The people at the clinic were very nice, but told me it was herpes.

I felt so ashamed that I didn't mention it to anyone, not even my boyfriend. As the attack of herpes was really very mild, is there a chance it won't come back?

Yes, this is possible. But you may get further attacks. If so, let's hope they're mild ones again.

What worries me is that you haven't told your boyfriend! Presumably you acquired the herpes virus from him – or perhaps you got it from a previous lover. If the latter is true, then you may have infected your boyfriend too. The most honest thing to do would be to tell him.

Note that herpes is passed on through sexual intercourse, but some people worry that it might be transmitted through oral sex when you have a cold sore on your mouth. This is just speculation, however – no research has been done to confirm this suspicion – but it might be wise to refrain from oral sex when you have a cold sore.

LOVE TOY

I don't have a partner, am highly sexed, and so rely on masturbation. Can you suggest any technique which would be safe, yet make it more satisfying for me?

Well, you could treat yourself to a purpose-built vibrator. They're not too expensive, they're quite harmless, and they've helped many women.

NOT WOMAN ENOUGH?

I feel embarrassed asking you about this, but I'm convinced that since we had our second baby last year, I haven't been satisfying my husband. I haven't dared talk to him about this, but I'm sure he's not satisfied, because after we make love, he usually squeezes a little more fluid out of himself.

Could he be doing this because I'm "too loose"? I am doing the exercises.

I'm sure you are. But in fact, you have no need to worry at all. This is just a personal habit of your husband's, and doesn't indicate any lack of satisfaction. What bothers me is that you and your husband clearly have very little communication about sex. And that can lead to near-disastrous misunderstandings.

So why don't you just show him this question and answer – and say to him, "It's time we talked a bit more about sex, isn't it?"

SAPPHIC FANTASIES

I wonder if you can answer a very difficult question for me. Why is my husband admitting

that he occasionally gets turned on by the idea of lesbianism?

Can't tell you for certain, but there's no doubt that vast numbers of men seem to be intrigued by the idea of women caressing each other. Studies of men's secret fantasies have shown this quite clearly.

It's really all quite baffling, isn't it? After all, you don't find women going around proclaiming to be turned on by the idea of guys going in for homosexual lovemaking. (At least, I don't think so anyway.)

If readers have any bright ideas as to why their menfolk may find the idea of Sapphic sex thrilling, I'd be very interested to hear.

WHOSE TUBES TO TIE?

My husband and I are both 28 and we know we definitely don't want any children.

Which is the safer: sterilisation for me or a vasectomy for him?

Vasectomy is a more minor operation, so the risks to the patient are smaller (though they're pretty small with sterilisation too). Both operations are very nearly 100 per cent effective. But it's important to realise that occasionally pregnancies do occur after either op.

ROWDY WHOOPEE

I'm a nurse, aged 23, and I share a house with my sister. She is constantly complaining that on the nights when I have an orgasm, my shrieks of joy wake her up. Is there any remedy for this?

Yes. Buy your sister a box of ear-plugs at the chemist.

BLEEDING AGAIN

My wife had her menopause four years ago, but has suddenly started to bleed again. Is this all right?

No! Bleeding after menopause is abnormal and *must* be investigated right away. This symptom can have many causes, the most important one being cancer of the womb. So arrange for an immediate gynaecological checkup for your wife. □

DR DELVIN'S DIARY

What's the worst social gaffe you could commit in bed? The most embarrassing one I've heard of recently is this. A young woman who had matrimonial designs on a man, decided to try to encourage him by giving him a spot of oral love-play.

She had no experience of this whatsoever, and (in her nervousness) did it very ineptly. But worst of all, after she'd finished, she glanced lovingly downwards – and realised, to her absolute horror, that she had somehow left a large piece of chewing gum stuck in his pubic hair...

Dr Delvin regrets that he cannot enter into private correspondence or consultation with readers

Every week, every year, countless desperate couples are faced with what appear to be insoluble problems – financial, physical, emotional, or all three. By spelling out your feelings honestly and seeking compassionate counselling together, you can put the crisis into perspective and avoid the ultimate break-up

When infidelity threatens a marriage



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSELEI BAVIERE

GLEENDA'S STORY

Glenda is 29, and speaks quickly and angrily. Two months ago I learnt that my husband had been unfaithful to me. He and a few of his colleagues picked up some women at an escort agency and slept with them. I would never have found out if the wife of one of the other men hadn't told me. Mark and his friends apparently did it simply for the hell of it and found the whole thing a huge joke.

"My husband and his friends picked up women at an escort agency"

But I can't put this incident out of my mind and it's ruining my marriage. I've never experienced anything so traumatic. How could he have done something so sleazy and sordid, and also so early on in our marriage? We've only been married for a year. I think about it so much that sometimes I feel I'm going out of my mind.

"Our marriage was as close to perfect as anyone could wish, before Mark went and wrecked it. I

don't understand how he could have come back and made love to me after he'd been with that woman. Afterwards, did he compare me to that call girl? Sex between us used to be special, but now it's out of the question. Sometimes I feel as if I can see right through him. The things I could live with quite comfortably before now irritate me immensely. I'm convinced he's dishonest and devious about a lot of other things, and I see an

ulterior motive behind all he says and does. In short, I feel totally betrayed and humiliated.

I expect everyone at Mark's work knows about his fling, and I suppose they're all laughing behind my back. I'm also terrified that he may have picked up a venereal disease, even Aids, which he could pass on to me. If he'd ever really cared for me, he would never have shamed me like this and even put my life at risk.

"So my marriage is a sham. Although Mark has said that he's sorry and that he loves me, he can't simply shrug it off. He says it wasn't important, but then what is important to him? How will I ever be able to trust him again?"

MARK'S STORY

Mark is 31, and looks flustered and rather bewildered. "I thought the whole incident would have blown over by now, but I realise that it's become quite a sore point for Glenda. I honestly can't see why she's making such a fuss. It was just a bit of high jinks and nothing else. Most husbands commit an indiscretion at some point in their marriage, so I'm no worse than other men.

"The way it happened was that my company had reached its annual target a month early, so we were all in high spirits. The company director said he'd treat the whole team to dinner. The idea to call in escorts wasn't mine, but I must say that the thought of indulging in something a little forbidden and risqué seemed very exciting at the time. Afterwards I did feel guilty, but I would liken it to sneaking off and having some cake when you're on a diet! Any way, as I never thought Glenda would get wind of it, I put the whole thing out of my mind. I don't even know the woman's name.

It was like being hit by a bombshell when I arrived home one evening to find that all my things had been moved into the spare room. Glenda wasn't prepared to hear my side of the story, and now married life has become unbearable. I've said that I'm sorry and feel that I've been punished enough. I've been tested for VD and I'm clear, so Glenda doesn't have anything to worry about. What more can I do? If Glenda can't forgive and

forget what has been my only slip-up, then that's her problem. I'm not prepared to feel miserable for the rest of my life."

THE COUNSELLOR SAYS

"The main problem in this relationship was that Glenda and Mark had different views on sex and marriage – men and women often do. Couples enter into a marriage each with their own set of values. These are instilled in us by our own families and are further moulded through life's experiences. It's not surprising then that partners will often disagree vastly on their interpretation of what is right and wrong.

"We started by focusing on Glenda's reaction to Mark having slept with another woman, even though he'd brushed it off as having been only a one-night stand. Glenda had very serious and idealistic views on the sanctity of marriage. She didn't see the incident as merely a fling, but rather as a cruel betrayal. She also came to question whether their sexual relationship had ever been good enough for Mark, and this made her unsure of her own sexuality.

"Because Mark had tried to keep the incident a secret, Glenda began to wonder what else he was keeping from her. It emerged at this point that Glenda's father had been a womaniser, who'd humiliated and abused her mother. Glenda now felt she was in the same position her mother had been in, and that her trust had been betrayed forever.

"Mark, on the other hand, interpreted the incident as a harmless male prank, to which society generally turns a blind eye. He was able to view it as something totally separate from his marriage. For him it didn't signify that there was anything wrong with his marriage, and he clearly didn't do it to hurt Glenda. It had simply been his way of being one of the boys. He could understand, though, that Glenda felt hurt when she found out, especially as it reminded her of her mother, but throughout counselling Mark kept insisting that he wasn't prepared to feel guilty about it. He kept repeating that Glenda had no right to punish him."

"Men and women often have different views on sex and marriage – Mark saw his fling as something separate from his marriage, while Glenda felt it was a cruel betrayal"

"At this point, we reached a deadlock and Mark discontinued counselling when it became clear that his defensiveness was obstructing a reconciliation. Glenda wished to continue with individual counselling, feeling much freer to express herself. Glenda could see that her husband did feel guilty, despite his protestations to the contrary, but that he was trying to suppress this, because he feared that he'd lose her.

"Glenda next concentrated on separating the feelings she still had about her parents from what she felt towards Mark. She discovered that she still loved Mark dearly, and gradually the pain of his betrayal became less.

"The couple decided to put the past behind them, because the bitterness between them was destroying the love and respect they still had for one another. Glenda found that her anger dissipated and that counselling gave her the strength to work at her marriage. Mark phoned me shortly after that to say that Glenda had become a different person – confident and sure of herself – and that he had promised her that he'd never hurt her like that again. He added that they were thinking of spending a few days up-country on a second honeymoon." □

WHERE TO GET HELP

The Couple Clinic is based on cases from the Family Life Centre, Johannesburg. Names and other details have been changed to conceal identities.

The Family Life Centre is a branch of Famsa – Family and Marriage Society of South Africa – which has branches throughout the country.

Look up your local branch of Famsa in the telephone directory, or contact the society at its National Directorate, PO Box 2800, Kempton Park, 1620, ☎ (011) 975-7106/7.

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