
The Subject as Strategist of Discourse: Approaches to the Prohibition of Intergenerational Sex

TERRY LEAHY

Considering Foucault's *History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, Connell makes a point that may be applied to much of Foucault's work. Although Foucault acknowledges resistance abstractly, 'concretely, he repeatedly talks as if the powerful endlessly get away with it, and the masses are endlessly subjugated' (Connell 1987: 143). It may be suspected that this oversight relates to a more general problem with poststructuralism. If, as Foucault claims in one essay, '... it is a matter of depriving the subject (or its substitute) of its role as an originator, and of analysing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse' (Foucault 1984: 118), it becomes difficult to see where resistance might come from (Geras 1990: 102).

As Nilan has pointed out, Foucault was probably speaking here about 'the subject' in quite a narrow sense—as the authorial subject position within written texts (Nilan 1994). However he has often been interpreted as denying that the subject, in any sense, is a point of origin and transformation of discourse. Instead we are offered a rather Althusserian understanding of poststructuralism in which individuals are merely the points at which discourses intersect, the subject is 'constituted' by discourses (Weedon 1988). Such an interpretation creates great difficulties in reconciling poststructuralism with the concept of agency, a project which a number of authors have been motivated to attempt (Silverman 1985, Smith 1988, Weedon 1988, Davies & Harre 1990).

At the most general level such a reconciliation could only be effected by recognising that the concept of agency requires that agents make choices and consequently there must be a *choicemaker* of some kind—even if it is not the free, conscious and unified subject of liberal humanism. The term 'active subject' used by Nilan (1994) seems appropriate in pointing to the role of the subject in taking up and adapting discourse. A concept of agency also implies that choices are at

least *influenced* by conscious mental processes—even if the experience that they are *determined* by consciousness is misleading. In a useful formulation of the poststructuralist position Grosz maintains that the subject is split, being located in both a conscious agency and also in an unconscious agency (Grosz 1989: 19, see also Kristeva 1984).

While this formula may resolve some of the more general problems, the more concrete problem is to specify the ways in which the strategies of resistance, which Foucault adumbrates, are actually generated and new discursive positions created. This research addresses this question by looking at the ways in which the interviewees of this study were able to participate in and validate activities that are socially constructed as transgressions against a major and dominant discourse of age and sexuality in Western society, the discourse concerning intergenerational sex.

The Research Context and Issues of Ethics

The following discussion is based in a study of voluntary and positively experienced intergenerational relationships. A sample of nineteen interviewees who had been younger parties in such relationships was obtained and all were interviewed at length. The term 'intergenerational' is used here to refer to relationships where the younger parties were less than 16 years old and the older parties were more than 16 years old. All interviewees had been involved in relationships in which the age gap was more than five years, usually considerably more. Accordingly within this research, the term 'intergenerational' is defined in reference to age of consent legislation in Australia. As Baker argues (1983), debates surrounding the age of consent reveal and socially construct discourses of age categorisation, with those below the age of consent being seen as 'children' in this context.

To obtain the sample I and the other interviewer made use of our social network, making it known that we were interested in hearing about positive experiences of intergenerational sex. The interviewees ranged in age from ten years to fifty five years at the time of interview, eleven were from working class backgrounds, there were four who had migrated to Australia and three of these interviewees described events that occurred in the UK or South America. There was one Aboriginal

interviewee. This paper cannot go into the relationship between class factors and the strategies by which interviewees negotiated their involvement in intergenerational sex in any detail. Suffice it to say that there was little fit between class and discourse strategies, while gender and sexuality were much more salient. There were ten female interviewees and nine males. The sample cannot claim to be representative and the study must be considered to be a pilot study in view of the paucity of interview studies that deal with positively experienced intergenerational sex (Wilson 1981, Sandfort 1982, Rossman 1985).

Although all the interviewees characterised their experiences as 'positive' this does not mean that they did not identify both positive and negative aspects of their experience. Ultimately, interviewees summarised their experiences positively in reference to a dominant discourse that views intergenerational sex as necessarily an abusive exploitation of the younger party. They were keen to distance their own experiences from this characterisation.

This paper does not attempt to deal directly with the ethical questions that are raised by the dominant discourse—the prohibition—of intergenerational sex. I do not address this ethical position by mounting any kind of philosophical argument for or against it. In cases where the younger parties claim that the ethical objections to intergenerational sex did not apply to their relationships, I have not considered whether these claims are true or false. This is not, then, an evaluation of these claims and subject positions from the ethical perspective of an outsider. At the same time the study reveals a grounded ethics in which interviewees make ethical sense of their lives as part of the program of constructing the self.

It would, however, be disingenuous to pretend that this paper does not constitute an intervention in the ethical debate surrounding intergenerational sex. By reviewing the discursive strategies through which the younger parties defended these relationships I am necessarily presenting a number of possible replies to the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex. As well, since the dominant discourse is usually presented in the context of a set of illustrative narratives it is inevitable

that an alternative set of narratives will have the effect of undermining the obviousness of the dominant discourse.

Discourse Strategies

In this paper I use the term 'strategy' to refer to the discursive position that an interviewee takes up in relation to the prohibition on intergenerational sex. This usage is derived from the frequent references that Foucault makes to the play of discourses as a battle in which various discursive options are developed and represent strategies in relationship to a field of force. Speaking of this he concludes that history 'is intelligible and should be susceptible to analysis down to the smallest detail, but this is in accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies, of tactics' (Foucault 1984: 56, also Foucault 1980).

This is a useful metaphor in the sense that it is possible to examine the 'strategies' used by my interviewees as though they were moves played in a game. On the other hand the metaphor becomes misleading if it is thought to imply that interviewees evolved strategies solely through a process of conscious rational deliberation. Choosing a discursive position is not different from any other action—such as choosing a gesture or an item of clothing. The choices made by an active subject are influenced by a number of elements, and at least some of these are opaque to consciousness at the moment of choice.

De Certeau's concept of 'tactics' is relevant to this analysis. He specifies a tactic as an operation that makes use of available elements provided by a dominant order—as consumer choices make use of products (de Certeau 1988). In this study choices of discursive positions are found to make use of and negotiate available public discourses. De Certeau claims that tactics are necessarily formed on the run without the possibility of a dispassionate overview of options; a tactic '... does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight and self-collection' (de Certeau 1988:37). Despite the 'blindness' of tactical operations, it is possible to discover a 'logic of these practices' (de Certeau 1988:xv). In this study the analogy of the game enables us to begin to specify this logic.

The Dominant Discourse on Intergenerational Sex

To understand the discursive context in which the interviewees were operating it is useful to indicate the perceptions of intergenerational sex that are most commonly invoked when the topic of intergenerational sex is made explicit. I shall refer to these perceptions as the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex (for feminist and liberal versions see for example, Rush 1980, Finkelhor 1981, Finkelhor 1984, Herman & Hirschman 1981, Russell 1984, Ward 1984; for a typical lay version see Holdstock 1988a, Holdstock 1988b). From the point of view of this paper there are two central tenets to the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex:

1. Intergenerational sex is always harmful to the younger party.
2. There is no essential distinction between cases of sexual assault in which the child is an unwilling participant and those events where the child appears to be willing. This is because a child cannot give 'informed consent' to a sexual relationship with an adult. The power of the adult vis a vis the child means that the child does not have the option of refusing a sexual initiative from an adult.

Characterising the dominant discourse as a whole it can be said that society *prohibits* intergenerational relationships. When they occur, there has been a transgression of the prohibition by the older party and the younger party is perceived as victim. Within the framework of this discourse it would appear that younger parties have no option but to perceive themselves as victims of sexual abuse, and of course many do so with every justification. However the question posed by this research is to consider the discursive positions taken up by younger parties who regard their experiences positively and see themselves as voluntary parties to the sexual contacts. Such people are not likely to find the position of victim and the discourse of prohibition appealing. In fact for them, to be regarded as victims of child sexual abuse would be to be stigmatised as double victims; as people who were not only sexually abused but also unable to admit that they were abused.

Minimising the Difference Between Age Categories

The most common way in which the interviewees negotiated the prohibition on intergenerational sex was to minimise the transgressive

aspect of their intergenerational relationships by denying the existence or significance of a relationship across age categories. Twelve of the nineteen interviewees made remarks that minimise the significance of age differences by claiming that they were essentially adult at the time or were becoming adult. In these responses the interviewees evade the prohibition on intergenerational sex by minimising transgression in terms of one of its major axes—the age category distinction. They effectively deny that the sexual contact was *intergenerational*.

The discourse of prohibition is derived from various elements of the liberal theory of contract (Pateman 1988). Briefly, sexual contact is viewed as a type of contractual arrangement and the younger party is regarded as ineligible to take part in such a contract. The younger party is neither sufficiently independent (of adult control) nor sufficiently rational (mature) to enter into a contract with an adult (Herman & Hirschman 1981, Finkelhor 1981, Finkelhor 1984). Strategies of minimisation in respect of age take note of this context. Typically, they make the claim that the interviewee was mature enough to be a free and independent party and hence capable of entering into a contract—or sexual relationship. It may also be claimed that the relationship itself was characterised by an equality of power and a mutuality of decision making. In making this claim respondents characterise their relationship within the terms of liberal theory—as the kind of social contract that can be engaged in by equal parties and which sustains equality within the relationship that the contract sets up (Pateman 1988).

A theme common to many interviews was the idea that these relationships were part of a transition to adulthood. This strategy was particularly marked and explicit in most of the gay interviews. In these interviews the intergenerational sexual contacts were identified as a means of entry to the gay community and to the establishment of a gay adult identity. I will discuss one example that typifies this approach. Derek describes a sudden transition at the age of fifteen between an a-sexual childhood identity and a gay adult sexual practice. He sees his gayness as a personality trait extending well back into his childhood but its sexual expression as a new development. Once he started to feel sexual desire he saw it as inevitable that he would act upon it.

He explains that sex was available for him through beats where he was one of the few people his own age, most were older. So sex with his age peers was not possible. Also, he argues that he was in fact attracted to older men. Admitting that adult men often manipulate boys he goes on to suggest that relating to adult men is a necessary introduction to gay sexuality:

Umm, I reckon a lot of kids that get involved with older men for the simple reason they've got problems and sometimes if they go out with men like that they can learn all about it and things like that. Get answers for their problems and things like that. But sometimes you get men that really know what they're doing and they know they can put it over young kids to get them in bed for one night stands and things like that. Because they know all about it, you know sort of thing. They could do it their way, they can get you in bed by money—all that stuff, the whole lot. But umm, they do—I reckon kids do find out all what's it about when they jump in with older men than themselves. Oh, 'cause mostly all my friends they've done the same sort of thing as I've done. It's a bit of both. He's conning you up and things like that and well, I do reckon you do have a lot of problems. Like for being gay and things like that. You've just got to figure out what you are and things like that. See he's getting his satisfaction and you're getting your satisfaction.

In an earlier part of the interview he explains that at first he was manipulated in the way described above but that he soon learnt how to deal with situations so that he got what he wanted. He learned to be more assertive at a beat, to reject someone he was not attracted to and insist on condoms being used. So Derek is arguing that experiences with these older men are a school of life in which one learns to take an adult role. He is also more positive about the introduction to adulthood that these relationships provided, claiming that many of these men helped him to accept his gayness and helped him by listening to his problems and giving him genuine emotional support.

In this and other similar accounts, the model of intergenerational sex that is invoked is one in which the younger party is being introduced into adulthood through contacts with adults. It is a necessary first step into adulthood to make contact with adults. As the younger party is new to adulthood it is inevitable that old hands will be able to help this transition through the benefit of their experience. Crucially, the main issue is not the transgression against the discourse of intergenerational sex at all. It is introduction to adulthood. These accounts constitute a

reply to the discourse of contract in the following form. To become an adult is not something that suddenly happens to one as an automatic revelation at a particular chronological age. To become the independent rational citizen of liberal discourse, the kind of person eligible to take part in contracts, one must have practice in asserting oneself as an adult in relationship to other adults. No other kind of experience will suffice and such experience inevitably includes the possibility of making mistakes.

Positions that stressed the unusual maturity of the interviewee were also common. Isobel argues that the age difference between herself and her adult lover was not significant and also that she was an adult in all essential respects at the time:

His name was Martin. When I first met him I think he was 48 and I was fourteen. Which to me was nothing. It didn't matter. It was totally insignificant to me that he was 48, *but* I realise it is quite an age gap. That is the sort of situation that people would term in the paedophilic. Really, but to me I was extreme—I think I was extremely sort of intellectually developed—I used to go to art galleries constantly and my obsessions were in that sort of area.

Later Isobel was asked whether she was able to give informed consent or whether she may have been unduly influenced by Martin's superior status as an adult. She claimed:

Not really. No not really, even though—actually even though we might talk about superior status, because I've been since a young child—always had an intellectual connection with people who are adults and that sort of thing. In my family, the children were never kept separate and were always at social functions with the adults and at dinner parties and things like that. It was always totally umm—it was expected that children would be there. Umm, I don't really think that the status thing was all that important 'cause I think that I was always aware of myself as being quite—I actually told Mary [a close childhood and adult friend] that I was going to do this interview with you and she sort of said 'Oh, you weren't a child at the time', you know. Because she and I both had this idea of ourselves, we were sort of very, we were quite mentally developed at the time. And what do you think about that sort of situation?

In these comments Isobel argues that adulthood is not a matter of age *per se* but is a learned culture and consequently accessible to a person of *any age* given the right conditions. Her exposure to adult treatment in her own family and her familiarity with the adult pursuits of her milieu

effectively made her an adult. She uses this claim to argue that she was sufficiently mature to make a reasonable choice in initiating her relationship with Martin. Making use of the dominant discourse of childhood and adulthood she implies that childhood is a period in which the emotions or passions dominate but that as an adult one develops reasonable control over impulses. As a fourteen year old her connections with adults were 'intellectual' and hence 'adult' connections. She also makes use of the dominant discourse of age categories in separating herself and Mary off from other people of the same age to whom the category 'child' could have been appropriately applied.

In taking up this position Isobel links the assertion that she was in fact an adult to the issues of power and consent that feature in the prohibitive discourse on intergenerational sex. She was not a child. She was a mature and intellectual person who did not have a childlike respect for adult status. Consequently she was free to make choices about her relationship with Martin without being unduly influenced by his status as an adult. By implication she is arguing that she was capable of informed consent. This defence of her position is given extra force by her current unproblematic status as an adult (Baker 1984). Both she and her friend at the time (who are now indubitably adult) believe that she was not a child when these events occurred.

Such an approach conserves aspects of the dominant discourse on intergenerational relationships. Isobel, and the other interviewees with a similar position exempt their own relationship from the terms of this discourse. There are two elements to this. The first may be called the 'refusal' of a subject position from within the dominant discourse. (Weedon 1988: 10, Davies & Harre 1990: 9) The interviewees refuse the subject position 'child' or 'non-adult' within the dominant discourse of intergenerational sex. They also take up a *different* position from within the same field of discourse, the position 'adult'. Accordingly the second element of these strategies is that they confirm the terms of the dominant discourse by validating these relationships within the framework of that discourse. The dominant discourse proscribes sexual relationships between children and adults because children are not informed, rational or independent parties. In validating these

relationships the strategy of minimisation with respect to age makes the claim that the younger parties were informed, rational and independent, at least in connection with these relationships.

Minimising the Sexual Aspect of Contacts

The strategy of minimisation is employed not only in relation to age but also in connection with the sexual aspects of these relationships. Since the dominant discourse prohibits *sexual* contacts between adults and children it can be evaded by minimising the 'sexual' aspect of the relationship. Like the minimisation of age difference this was a common response in the interviews and I will review two types of this strategy.

1. The sexual activities are constituted as a type of masculine boyhood obscenity (Jackson 1982, Davies 1982, Wood 1984). In relationships between young adolescent boys and men this construction of events is particularly common. The relationships imply a link between the boys, who are engaging in a 'naughty' game regarded as typical of boys, and the men, who are re-entering the cultural space of male childhood.
2. The younger party within the relationship ensures that certain types of sexual contact that are widely perceived as constituting 'real sex' do not occur. Penetration and orgasm are typical but other types of contact may also be avoided. In this study this strategy was particularly likely in the case of adolescent girls involved with adults—although it was by no means universal within this category of interviewees.

In the little research that has been done on voluntary intergenerational relationships both Wilson (1981) and Rossman (1985) provide evidence that boys in early adolescence may find a sexual contact with a man acceptable if it is presented as something other than 'sexual' (see also Leahy 1992). This analysis is strongly supported by some of the interviews in this study. The construction of sexual episodes as horseplay or as a game provides an alibi against the treatment of such events as a sign of homosexuality. At the same time it also minimises the perception of these events in terms of the discourse of intergenerational sex. Within these interviews such a discursive

positioning was usually presented as a first stage in what later became acknowledged as a sexual relationship.

When Michael was eleven he began his relationship with Toby when he was in his late twenties. Interviewed a year later, he described the opening phase of his relationship with Toby and reveals the construction of sexuality within the context of obscene games:

Oh, like Toby was friends with my brothers and when I first met him he was at the movies. We went to see Ghostbusters —Aiiiee! And his eyes went that big when he saw me, because he was gay. Haa! Me and my brothers were competing for Toby later on, and I came out best. Toby was loving it when we were competing, because then he came in the other room and sort of said, like, 'What are you going to do?' He told me that Andrew pissed in his mouth and I let him suck me off. No I didn't let him suck me off. I just put it in his mouth and that's when he started being my friend and I knew that I had won the battle. And when Andrew wasn't hanging around and me and Toby were walking down in the park going to the movies or something, I think it was the pinball parlour, I said, 'This is the first time that we've ever gone out together alone'. And then he goes, 'I hope there's many more to come', and things just went along.

Like many of the other interviews from this study that describe man/boy relationships, this passage indicates a pattern of intergenerational relationships in which sexual contacts began as games and later came to signify a sexual relationship. Like the others it describes a relationship that takes the form of a friendship. The man and the boy are involved together in various leisure pursuits typical of male adolescence. This also contextualises the sexual contact as play and the part of the adult is to re-enter the cultural space of male childhood and adolescence (Goode 1986).

Another context in which a form of minimisation of sexual contact was common was in man/girl relationships. Intergenerational man/girl sex can be viewed as a transgression against girlhood purity (Hudson 1984, see also Leahy 1994; on the discourse of girlhood purity see Lees 1986). The adult man is seen as corrupting the naturally feminine innocence of the young adolescent girl, and as undermining the smooth passage from a childhood sexuality to the sexual modesty thought to be appropriate in adult women. A common strategy that had the effect of minimising transgression was the reduction of sexual contact in man/girl relationships. Forms of contact that are seen as paradigmatically

'sexual'—penetration, hand-genital contact and orgasm—were avoided. Instead sexual contacts were restricted to cuddling and petting.

In four interviews the limitation of the sexual contact became a topic within the interview. It appears that both parties were involved in this with the younger party indicating directly or indirectly that they did not want things to go past a certain point and the older party being sensitive to the signs or accepting the refusals easily. These four interviews were with women whose intergenerational sexual experiences were romantic involvements with an adult male over twenty-five that began when they were between the ages of eleven and fourteen. In all of these cases the younger party was aware at the time that they were transgressing the social norm prohibiting intergenerational sex. They could not represent these relationships to themselves as merely 'having an older boyfriend'. Accordingly the sense of transgression was minimised by limiting sexual contact.

I will consider one example in detail. Wendy was twelve when she became involved with Paul who was in his twenties. The following extracts convey much of the sense of this strategy:

We used to cuddle a lot and kiss and things. It got vaguely sexual for a while. Tongue kissing—a great wet beard. He was really really really gentle. More gentle than I think anyone else I've known as far as that goes. He was obviously being really careful. That was Paul too, because he was that sort of person anyway, it wasn't just because I was young. We had a few vaguely sort of sexual experiences like, we were in the shower once together and it was just after we got back from the beach and we had our swimmers on back at Rusty and Johnno's place and we just jumped into the shower and he whipped my bikini top off and started sucking my tits. He was kneeling down on the floor and I was standing in the shower. Yeah, that was really funny because there was a really strange—I felt, I don't know. I felt really detached from it. Like I felt like I was trying to detach myself so I didn't have to say 'no', didn't have to say 'yes' and I could just be there ... And there was another night too that he—oh we used to lie down next to one another and cuddle all the time, and lie in beds and things. But I remember one night we were all out in the back garage at Rusty and Johnno's place which had about eight bunk beds all around and Paul and I were lying on the top one together and there were other people around, sort of playing music, singing songs and things and he just asked me if he could lay between my legs and I said, sure, fine—that same air of detachment. I don't really know what you mean! That sort of attitude. And umm, we just sort of

stayed there for a while, just talking. He just laid on top of me while we talked. I mean there wasn't anything. There wasn't a dry fuck or anything like that.

It is clear that Wendy imposed limits on the relationship herself and that Paul accepted them readily. For a start she points out that at other times before this relationship she had much more genitally specific sexual contacts with peers whom she describes as groping her in cinemas 'fingers in vaginas, grasping tits and things'. Such genitally direct contacts were not part of her relationship with Paul. She also mentions the fact that Paul made a comment to the effect that it would be nice to be inside her, when they were lying together. She ignored this suggestion.

It becomes apparent that she was concerned by the way society at large interpreted the relationship she was having as one in which a young innocent girl was being corrupted. A good example of the contrast between what people thought and what she knew to be the case is her story of the surfclub party:

People who saw us like the clubbies and stuff, the old clubbies and their wives and families and the people who lived around the area, when they saw us together, they used to sort of—umm, you know, point and 'That's a bit weird', and whisper whisper. But I can remember there was a party at the surfclub and they had music on and had switched the lights off and they were all, sort of getting really drunk and swearing and being coarse and groping at one another and they were the ones who were really sordid and Paul and I were sitting in the bunkroom, playing guitar and drinking glasses of Port and just singing really nice songs and just really enjoying ourselves, you know. And it was just—Outside was really sordid and they thought we were the ones that were really that sort of thing.

These comments are situated within the discourse of romance, the double standard and conventional views of male sexuality. According to these views men's sexuality is animalistic. If a woman allows herself to respond to this animal sexuality she is soiled. Ideally, a man shows his respect for femininity by reigning in this sexual appetite (Greer 1972). Wendy acknowledges the power of this discourse at the time. The limitation of sexual contact and Paul's obvious romanticism made it easier for Wendy to cope with her transgression against childhood asexuality and girlhood purity. A similar analysis is apt for the restrictions of sexual contact that are described in the other three

interviews of this type. These were strategies that involved both certain actions and a certain interpretive framework.

Ambivalence, Denial and Reversal

The strategies of minimisation reviewed above were by far the most common ways in which interviewees dealt with the discourse of prohibition. There were three other strategies that also conserved elements from the discourse of prohibition. Each was taken up by two of the interviewees, though in no case were these positions the sole response of the interviewee to the prohibition.

In the strategy of *ambivalence* interviewees entertained the possibility that they had been victims of sexual abuse, while rejecting that possibility at other times. Maria, who had had a relationship with her uncle when she was eight, spoke of occasions in her life when she had viewed it as sexual abuse but made it quite clear that she did not believe that at the present time. In David's interview the ambivalence was less resolved. In some statements he suggests that he was trapped in a relationship with his female teacher by her adult charisma—'they mesmerise you, you know like they shine a light at a rabbit before they're going to shoot it, kind of thing'. Mostly however, the interview is very positive about their relationship and at other points he explicitly rejects the discourse of child abuse—'They'd say "Ahh, she corrupted me" and she's only using me for sex, but it hasn't been like that, it's been a really good, like friendly relationship'. The strategy of ambivalence conserves the dominant discourse by oscillating between the position of victim and another position that denies the applicability of the discourse of prohibition. This strategy of ambivalence illustrates very clearly the poststructuralist tenet that 'subjectivity ... is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak' (Weedon 1988: 33).

In denying the relevance of the dominant discourse two interviewees argued that the events in question were not regarded as transgressive when they took place. Like the strategy of minimisation this strategy preserves the dominant discourse by not confronting it directly. While *minimisation* exempts the events as a special case, *denial* indicates that the events were not considered to fall within the provenance of the dominant discourse at the time. The two interviewees who argued in

this way were Angela and Denise. They both reported that they were members of working class adolescent subcultures in which it was expected that girls of under sixteen would have boyfriends over that age—as Denise remarked, ‘All the *dags* had boyfriends their own age’. They make it quite clear that such relationships were not regarded as intergenerational. For example when I asked Angela if she had affairs with adults because of the status of adult males she said:

Ohh, mmm, (Long pause) I don’t know. I never really thought about it. I think it’s more to do with that was sort of accepted, type of. I suppose I didn’t really see boys of the same age as sexual. They were more into thumping around the head or (Laughs) you know, pulling your hair and the most they ever did was want to look at your knickers. I think the thing is about older men or boys, or young men—they were usually working. I mean you couldn’t go out with a boy your own age because they didn’t have any money and you didn’t have any money. See, when I was at school people who had boyfriends usually had boyfriends that were working. They’d generally be in their late teens, early twenties maybe.

In this strategy of denial it may be suggested that discourses which are in fact extremely powerful and dominant do not necessarily ‘appellate’ (Althusser 1971: 162-163) their intended subjects and, as some poststructuralist approaches argue, individuals construct their subjectivity in reference to a multiplicity of discursive possibilities. In this case a whole subculture of adolescent girlhood nominates these events within the discourse of ‘having a boyfriend’ and largely ignores the applicability of the discourse of intergenerational sex to these activities.

A useful concept in a poststructuralist analysis of discourse is that of *reversal*. As explained in Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* a discourse can be preserved in some respects while changing its role within power conflicts. A dominant discourse may be partially appropriated and ‘reversed’ by being used in an oppositional strategy (Foucault 1980: 101-102, Weedon 1988: 110). The term ‘reverse’ discourse is appropriate to describe the strategy through which some of the interviewees (especially Denise and Christopher) negotiated the prohibition on intergenerational sex. I shall firstly review the way in which Denise elaborates this position.

Denise's interview shows an acceptance of the categories of the dominant discourse combined with an attack on its moral conclusions:

I had my first fuck, so to speak, when I was 13 at high school. I had this marvellous *boyfriend* and that managed to give me all manner of power and status. All the *dags* had boyfriends their own age. But it was much better, especially when you lived in the outer suburbs somewhere and transport was so appalling and bad ... it was much better to have a boyfriend who was at least 18 and had a car. That was a real status symbol. And I had one who was 18, had a car, a nice gold Kingswood [a large 6 cylinder holden of a kind favoured by young working class men at the time] and a job. I suppose looking back on it I was a cynical little manipulator really because it wasn't love or anything like that. I didn't see it in those terms at all. It was just handy.

The way this strategy proceeds is to accept it as a *fact* that adults have more power than children/adolescents and then to enumerate the advantages to the younger party of a freely chosen relationship with such a person; namely access to adult power and status. So whereas the dominant discourse looks at the same difference in power and declares that the younger party must be disadvantaged by the power relationship this restructuring of the discourse looks at the advantages involved.

Denise elaborates this discursive position by using a metaphor of exchange and contract to discuss her experience of sex in these relationships:

I didn't do it for the sex after the first time because I actually found it quite mundane, quite dull and boring really. I did it for—I don't know why I did it, I liked the cuddling and kissing. It certainly wasn't an unpleasant activity but it wasn't exciting—just ho hum really. I just found that once you'd done it then you may as well keep on doing it. They wanted to do it, it made them happy. It didn't make me unhappy.

The same issue surfaces again in answer to a question about whether she was prostituting herself to gain access to the privileges which adult power could confer:

I often look back and think about that. I think I was maybe prostituting myself. And I think well OK. That's fair enough. It was my choice to do that really. Hmm I mean in some respects you could say that. They tended to be sort of I-used-them, they-used-me type

relationships. It was kind of a mutual, whatever, and all parties were involved in this ... something mutually pleasant and convenient to both people involved and something that's working.

Denise presents her relationships with adult men as characterised by a balanced exchange in which both parties influence the conduct of the other to the eventual benefit of both. In a paradoxical assault on the dominant discourse, the adult's power and status is earmarked as one of the *advantages* from the perspective of the younger party, since what the relationship does is to give the younger party access to that power and status.

A similar analysis is presented in Christopher's interview. Christopher began a long relationship with a gay man, George, when he was about nine years old. In response to a question about George's economic power in the relationship he jokingly remarked 'Yeah, oh yeah—he bought me!' and proceeded to describe some of the gifts and entertainments that his adult friend had provided. He made the comment that George's power over money 'was handy'. Following these opening remarks he addressed the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex more thoughtfully:

Sure, you know. I mean I—he did all the things that people complain about, you know. He had adult power, he had economic power, he had a great brain, he was, you know, he could wrap me round his little finger as far as all those things go, but he chose not to abuse it. I mean that's where his strength was, I suppose. Not only strength but where—I mean he was a good bloke I suppose, if you want to call him that, you know?

This statement is a summing up of Christopher's attack on the dominant discourse. It is possible to fit his experiences directly into the categories provided by the dominant discourse. Adults have more power than children and inevitably this becomes manifest in intergenerational sexual relationships. While the dominant discourse concludes that such a power difference harms children, Christopher refuses this conclusion. Whether this power difference is bad for the younger party or not depends on the way the adult uses this power. The causal model of the dominant discourse is retained while its ethical conclusions are rejected. It is in this sense that it is possible to say that the dominant discourse is *reversed*. Central elements of the dominant discourse and its field of

terms are retained while other, evaluative, aspects of that discourse are refused.

As in Denise's interview Christopher makes use of the discourse of contract and exchange to consider the sexual aspect of his relationship. At various points in the interview he indicates that he was quite a keen participant in his sexual contacts with George. However he also reveals that George almost always initiated the sexual contacts and sometimes would persuade him despite his initial unwillingness. Commenting on these incidents he says:

I would say 'no' but would generally as a rule acquiesce in that I would agree and go ahead and enjoy it—not, I don't mean in any sort of rape sense, I just mean he would be persisting and I'd be saying 'no' but I would mean yes ... He never, never forced me, but more, yeah, I was emotionally forced but not, not in a sense that's left me feeling angry or regretting it or anything like that. In that umm, I suppose I could say to be really simplistic about it, that what he wanted from me was sex but what he gave me back was plenty. It wasn't a one way relationship. I got as much—it was as much as—if you want to see sex in terms of normal interpersonal relationship contracts—someone asking for sex in some terms is no more different than someone giving you something and wanting something back. I mean within those terms it was reasonable for him to ask for his sex. It is quite complicated and I don't want to fall into the risk of painting a rosy picture of what wasn't always a rosy situation.

This passage could be read as a perfect illustration of Nava's critique of child/adult relationships, that 'consent merges imperceptibly into coercion' (Nava 1984: 102). However in fact Christopher presents a position which is ambivalent in relationship to this critique. He says firstly that he was 'never never forced', at least not 'in any rape sense'—implying that he was *not* coerced. However he also goes on to admit that he was 'emotionally forced'—implying that he was coerced in *some* sense. Together these statements indicate that he is making a distinction between rape and the kind of emotional force he experienced. The meaning of his distinction is further specified in the statement that the relationship was a 'contract'. By this he means that it was an agreement, ongoingly contracted, which he felt quite free to leave at any time.

Consequently he argues that the significance of these incidents of sexual pressure cannot be understood outside of the ethical implications of the relationship as a whole. He presents the relationship as an exchange.

George wanted and asked for sex. What Christopher received in return were the other benefits of the relationship that he describes at length in other parts of the interview—an introduction to the world of culture ‘with a capital C’, affection, important discussions about morality and politics that helped him to attain his current perspective and so forth.

Elucidating the positions constructed by these interviewees, they begin by conceding that there are inequalities of power in intergenerational relationships. The adult has more power than the child. As with Weber, ‘power’ is conceived as a generalised capacity to make things happen in society (Weber 1967: 180). In a *conflict* with a more powerful person the less powerful person is at a *disadvantage*. It is this disadvantage which is stressed in the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex. However these respondents argue that such a power, *if it is working to the interest of the younger party*, can provide benefits. The argument works on the common sense understanding that it is good to have powerful friends.

An associated change in discourse goes with this argument. Denise and Christopher focus on a model of inequality as *exploitation* and equity as *fair exchange*. Exploitation is not a mere difference in social power such as that which exists between adults and children but refers to a situation of unequal exchange. There is an exchange in which one party receives more benefits than the other, an ‘appropriation without compensation’ (Mandel 1970: 9). So Denise and Christopher deny that they suffered from exploitation while at the same time conceding that there was an inequality of social weight.

Accordingly their discursive strategy consists of two elements. The first is in reference to the dominant discourse, in this case, a reversal of that discourse. The second element is the grounding of this reversal in another available discourse—that of fair exchange—which is taken up to construct a subjectivity other than that of the victim of child sexual abuse.

Claiming the Transgression

In the preceding analysis I have presented discursive strategies that conserve aspects of the dominant discourse and nevertheless validate the transgression that occurred. At the same time, and often in the same interviews, there were acknowledgments and direct validations of

transgression. When this occurred there were two discourses that were most likely to be invoked. One was the discourse of individual sexual rights and self expression. The other was a carnivalesque discourse of transgression as adventure.

The Liberal Discourse of Sexual Rights

In validating their transgression through the discourse of sexual rights, interviewees maintained that the prohibition on voluntary intergenerational relationships was an illegitimate interference in the individual's right to sexual expression. This discursive strategy was particularly common among male interviewees although not exclusively so. A very explicit instance of the liberal defence of transgression is the following statement of Tristan's:

Can you imagine, if I was forced to have sex with people my own age I wouldn't be happy, I wouldn't be who I am. And that's ridiculous, people should be who they are. When I'm at home which is very rarely and I very rarely see my parents anymore, but when I'm at home and with them I'm not me and I'm really unhappy because I'm not me. I'm someone else, like till I move out I've still got two separate lives and, you know, mum might say, 'You should've come down to this party, there were beautiful girls there,' I mean and I just say, 'big deal', sort of, but I mean I'm two separate people and I don't like that other person and I'm really miserable whenever I'm at home. And I mean people should realise that if they are asking me to be like that all my life that they're asking me to be unhappy and why should I be unhappy. Just because they're straight and they're not interested in people older than them that they've got the right to be happy. I mean it's ridiculous.

Tristan starts by speaking of his sexuality as a central aspect of his essential self; who he is. To deny expression of this sexuality is virtually forcing him into a sexuality that is not really his, namely heterosexuality. It is 'people' in general who are responsible for this oppression and later and more particularly, people who are straight and not attracted to older people. In other words the dominant hegemonic majority of straight people and adults are restricting the sexual rights of children and those with a different sexual orientation.

These comments are framed within the liberal discourse of democracy and freedom. It is no accident that Tristan uses the phrase 'the right to be happy'. This is an example of what Dorothy E. Smith refers to as a 'textually mediated discourse' (Smith 1988: 41-43). Smith suggests that a

discourse is instanced when people take up subject positions within that discourse. On the other hand the discourse which links these separated events and people is mediated by texts as artefacts. Canonic written 'texts' such as *The Rights of Man* or *The Declaration of Independence* with its reference to rights to 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness' have become mediators for a liberal political discourse that is available for Tristan's use. He takes up a subject position within this discourse; as the citizen deprived of his right to happiness. He is also deprived of the right to equality with other citizens. They are free to express their sexuality; why isn't he? This deprivation applies to him both as a person under the age of consent and also as a gay person.

These comments also illustrate what Foucault takes to be key aspects of dominant discourses on sexuality in the West at the present time. On the one hand there is the analysis of sexuality as something oppressed and needing to be freed. Secondly there is the identification of sexuality and sexual preference with one's essential self (Foucault 1980).

In this strategy the validation of transgression operates within the same discursive field as the prohibition itself. The prohibition on intergenerational sex takes entry into a sexual relationship as a type of contract and postulates that children are too young to give informed consent or are not independent agents free to make decisions on their own behalf. The liberal discourse of contracts has it that contracts are to be made between rational, independent and equal individuals and make no sense when one party is a minor, a slave or mad. The replying discourse that informs Tristan's comments, along with those of a number of other interviewees, works with elements of this dominant discourse by demanding equality and by seeking entry to civil society as free citizens. Again this is an occasion in which a subject position is constructed by refusing the position offered by the dominant discourse of intergenerational sex and taking up a position from within another popular and available discourse. In this case there is some irony in the fact that both discourses derive from the same overarching discursive field of liberalism.

The Discourse of Transgression as Carnival

The second discursive strategy used to validate transgression was rarely present as an argument or a position. It was manifested in tone, sense of humour and narrative strategy. It is the discourse of transgression as carnival that is described by Kristeva, following Bakhtin (Kristeva 1986). Transgression is produced in this discourse as an adventure; a situation in which a less powerful person confronts or evades social control by established authority. There is a humorous overturning of dominant social conventions. The dominant order is mocked and derided. This becomes a central feature of some interviews and there are none in which it is not present to some degree. Kristeva's notion of a semiotic chora, a disorderly insurgence, bubbling up from the pre-oedipal and challenging the symbolic order is a good metaphor for this discursive strategy (Kristeva 1984).

The defence of transgression through the discourse of carnival was unusual in its explicit and wholesale rejection of dominant moral discourses. In interviews it coexisted alongside more sober and carefully articulated moral positions of the kind already described in this article. To a degree it contradicted these other strategies. For example in a number of interviews a claim to be considered as an adult making independent rational decisions lay alongside an obvious delight in the narrative unfolding of the subversion of adult power. As an instance of this strategy I shall take Louise's interview, an interview which was very thoroughly imbued with the carnivalesque.

Louise is the daughter of a lesbian mother who is part of a feminist lesbian social network. During her early adolescence Louise had romantic crushes on several women in her mother's social circle. On the first occasion she declared her love to a woman who was just about to become her mother's girlfriend. Later, at about fourteen she stopped having crushes and had a small affair with a 24 year old woman from the same circle. When other members of the network discovered this liaison they were shocked and the actions of the older party were widely regarded as morally indefensible.

Louise's reactions to all this were mixed. On the one hand she felt that her older friends were merely being protective, that although she didn't need their concern in this particular case, their behaviour was part of a

generalised care for her welfare that she appreciated. On the other hand she was annoyed by the gossip and interference in her life. In this context of moral supervision, Louise's accounts of her sexual activities often position her as the adventurer getting round disapproving adults. She gives the impression that in taking the sexual initiative she is challenging the power of these adults quite intentionally:

And then one night I was at a party and this friend of mine who I'd known for ages and ages and ages, about a year and a half. Well that's ages to me, umm, we were out in the back alley and we were talking about fucking each other and she's twenty-four and umm. (Laughs) So we decided that we wanted to spend the night together so Jan, who doesn't believe in any of this kind of stuff, like having affairs with older women for me and stuff like this—She, umm, went, they arranged for me to stay at Roslyn's but they didn't know that her and I had discussed this totally and decided that we wanted to get off with each other. And Jan was originally trying to fend me off from this other woman, who she didn't want me to sleep with, but she sort of threw me into the fire anyway, know what I mean. But I ended up having a bit of both worlds, anyway. (Both laugh) Being me I just couldn't help it and decided that I didn't—if I couldn't—I wanted both, so I had both. I mean I didn't get off with one of them but we had this long passionate kiss before I left. And then I went home with Roslyn, and umm, it was really good.

In this story Jan, a friend of Louise's mother is standing in *loco parentis* and her aim is to protect Louise from premature sexual contacts. Louise tricks her and of course this is partly because Roslyn, a friend of Jan's, is secretly arranging a sexual tryst. Louise positions herself as the adventurer who undermines the prohibitive moral facade of the adult community. The lesbian network as a social institution disapproves of intergenerational contacts but individuals can be seduced. She further evades Jan's control by kissing the other woman that Jan is protecting her from. Other events described in the interview fall within a similar narrative structure. She mentions a subsequent occasion on which she attended a lesbian disco and flirted with Roslyn's friend and co-householder:

And Lucy and I decided we liked each other, so we went up the back and started touching each other up and stuff and her girlfriend came around the corner. And I mean they were just around the corner. And it was really—Ohh. Like she's into S&M, bondage and all that kind of stuff. And it just really—She wanted to ask me to go home with her—this girl who saw Lucy and I touching each other up—this

girl blew up these inflatable tits and threw them at me on the dance floor. (Laughs) It was really—I just stood there and went—Uhhhh! I mean they didn't know about it, like that, they knew that Roslyn and this other woman didn't know about it.

The comment 'being me I just couldn't help it' sums up Louise's account of herself in these passages. Her narrative strategy fits Kristeva's concept of the carnivalesque in more ways than one. She presents herself as someone who likes drama, excitement and adventure. Transgression—in terms of intergenerational sex, lesbianism, underage appearances at night clubs, flirtations with S&M, provoking jealousy, and getting around attempts to control her actions—provides her with an ideal field of action. The speech she uses to tell her narrative is also transgressive in its sexual frankness. Phrases such as 'touching each other up and stuff' defy the discourse of girlhood purity and suggest a lack of respect for the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex. Louise's narrative also celebrates spaces of transgression; her adventures take place in dark alleys, at lesbian discos and behind pillars.

The carnivalesque strategy operates through presentation as much as content. The position is invoked in the choice of narrative structure, the sense of humour and the choice of language within the interview. Within this discourse opposition to hegemonic discourses of intergenerational sex is not formal and articulate. Louise's interview is a very clear example of this strategy and many other interviews from the study were similar. This carnivalesque element in the interviews indicates very clearly that it is impossible to conceive of the selection of discourse strategies as a process of conscious and self transparent rational choice.

The Conservation of Dominant Discourse Within Transgression

This paper has been concerned with the strategies that interviewees adopted to negotiate the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex; the prohibition of intergenerational sex. This discourse creates the subject position 'victim of abuse' as the appropriate subject position for the younger party in an intergenerational sexual contact. In negotiating this prohibition all the interviewees begin from the point at which they

refuse this subject position and define their own experiences positively. Yet at the same time, I have indicated that all the interviewees also took up a subject position *in reference to this dominant discourse*.

This paper indicates that there were a variety of different positionings in reference to the discourse of prohibition. The concept that can most effectively summarise the greatest number of these strategies is *the conservation of dominant discourse within transgression*. Most interviewees, as I have indicated, *minimised* the extent of their transgression against the dominant discourse of intergenerational sex. The dominant discourse was conserved by suggesting that transgressions against it were relatively minor.

In addition there were three other strategies. The strategy of *ambivalence* conserved dominant discourse by creating a subject position that was partially derived from the discourse of prohibition. In the strategy of *denial* the dominant discourse was evaded rather than being directly confronted. In the strategy of *reversal* the interviewees retained some elements of the dominant discourse, conserving these aspects of that discourse while refusing other aspects.

The conservation of dominant discourses is subject to one major exception in the material considered in this paper. This is the use of the discourse of carnival to celebrate transgression. Yet this celebration does not take on the dominant discourse on the same terrain. The carnivalesque was not articulated as an explicit value position, but was manifested in the form and structure of the narrative.

This research confirms Foucault's view that a 'discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy' (Foucault 1980: 101). Interviewees made use of the dominant discourse but refused the subject position that this discourse suggests, adapting the dominant discourse in developing an alternative subjectivity.

The conservation of dominant discourse in these interviews may be understood in terms of an analogy between discourses and language. Grosz describes Kristeva's view as follows:

Radical subversion is essentially reformist: as the order of language, the symbolic can only accommodate so much change at any given time ... Neologisms too far removed from the existing structure are not accepted by it (Grosz 1989: 60).

The meanings of terms within available dominant discourses are tied in to each other. As with a language, neologisms that are radically outside the norms of these discourses are just misunderstood and ineffective. Instead social change occurs by a more partial revision of discourse.

Applying these considerations to the topic at hand, it is quite correct to regard voluntary transgression of the prohibition on intergenerational sex as a radical challenge to social norms. However it is unrealistic to expect that this challenge will be dramatic and thorough going or that it will be seen by the participants *as* a challenge to dominant discourse. *They* are much more likely to regard their actions in ways which stress their conformity to prohibitions on intergenerational sex—'I wasn't a child', 'It wasn't sex'—or validate their actions within another dominant discourse—'I am claiming my right to sexual expression'. So what occurs is a reformist revision of the dominant discourse of sexuality and age categorisation rather than an attempt to demolish it.

de Certeau also provides an analysis of this conservation of discourses. He suggests that such phenomena relate to the power difference between tactical operations and the dominant discourses that they make use of, negotiate and resist. A tactic does not itself form up a separate new discourse but adapts and negotiates the discourses that already dominate:

The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organised by the law of a foreign power (de Certeau 1988: 37).

Despite this restriction a tactic can be quite effective in escaping the control of a dominant discourse:

... the trajectories [of tactics] trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop (de Certeau 1988: xviii).

This analysis can also help to make sense of the way interviewees made use of other dominant public discourses to negotiate their relationship to the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex. As I have shown the interviewees confirmed the centrality of liberal political discourse to the

treatment of sexual issues in current Western society, as Foucault (1980) suggests. Their strategies negotiated the use of the liberal theory of social contract within the prohibitive discourse on intergenerational sex. Typically, interviewees validated their transgression by constituting themselves as the adult individuals of liberal theory—claiming independence and rationality—and accordingly civil and sexual rights. They often demanded this sexual freedom in terms of a view which identified their sexuality with their essential personhood. As I have shown, even when interviewees rejected the dominant discourse of intergenerational sex more definitively they still constituted their sexual relationships in terms of some version of liberal theory—seeing these sexual contacts as aspects of an exchange, although a ‘fair exchange’.

The Strategic Analysis of Transgressive Discourse

The research supports the use of the strategic metaphor in analysing interview narratives and uncovering discursive positions. From the point of view of the researcher it makes sense to see the interviewees as taking up various discursive options in reference to the dominant discourse on intergenerational sex, making moves in the light of the discursive positions available to them.

A mapping of these moves suggests three stages in the strategies of the interviewees. The first is the *refusal* of the subject position nominated within the dominant discourse; that of victim of child sexual abuse. This is common to all the interviewees and is brought to the interview as part of its framing context.

The second move is the *approach* which is taken to the prohibition. The research reveals the following approaches: minimisation of transgression; ambivalence; denial; reversal; claiming the transgression. These approaches are not exclusive. As poststructuralism suggests, people take up a shifting and contradictory variety of subject positions. For example Denise employs the approach of *denial* when she claims that the events were not viewed as intergenerational sex in the social context in which they occurred. She employs the approach of *reversal* when she agrees with the dominant discourse that she traded sexual favours for the benefits of a relationship with an adult; but rejects the evaluative position of the dominant discourse. She also *claims* the

transgression through a carnivalesque discourse in which she presents her experiences as amusing and subversive adventures.

The third move in the strategies of the interviewees is the adoption of *alternative* discourses in which to validate their experiences. Although this has not been the main focus of this paper, various examples have been noted. In the strategy of denial Denise describes her experiences in terms of the discourse of 'having a boyfriend' and sees her activities in terms of a discourse of adolescence that she claims was generally accepted in her school peer groups. When Denise reverses the dominant discourse she employs an alternative discourse of exploitation and fair exchange to morally validate her actions. When she claims her transgression she makes use of an available discourse of the carnivalesque and also references this to a discourse of rebellious and adventurous adolescence.

It is these three basic moves—refusal, approach and taking up an alternative—which can best sum up the strategic practices of the interviewees in relationship to the dominant discourse. This formal approach to strategies of resistance may prove useful in dealing with issues of social change and resistance; in seeing the ways in which the concept of agency can in practice be reconciled with the view that discourses are socially constructed and define subject positions which people are enabled to adopt.

University of Newcastle (Australia)

References

- Althusser L 1971 *Louis Althusser: Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* Trans B Brewster, New Left Books London
- Baker C D 1983 'The Age of Consent Controversy: Age and Gender as Social Practice' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 19: 96-112
- 1984 'The Search for Adulthood: Membership Work in Adolescent-Adult Talk' *Human Studies* 7: 301-323
- Connell R W 1987 'Scheherazade's Children: Critical Reflections on Michel Foucault's History of Sexuality' *Arena* 78/1: 139-145
- Davies B 1982 *Life in the Classroom and Playground: The Accounts of Primary School Children* Routledge & Kegan Paul London
- & Harre R 1990 'Positioning, Conversation and the Production of Selves' *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20: 43-63
- de Certeau M 1988 *The Practice of Everyday Life* Trans S Rendall, University of California Berkeley

The Subject as Strategist of Discourse

- Finkelhor D 1981 *Sexually Victimized Children* Free Press New York
— 1984 *Child Sexual Abuse New Theory and Research* Free Press New York
- Foucault M 1980 *The History of Sexuality — Volume 1 An Introduction* Trans R Hurley, Vintage Books New York
— 1984 *The Foucault Reader* ed Paul Rabinow Pantheon New York
- Geras N 1990 *Discourses of Extremity Radical Ethics and Post-Marxist Extravagances* Verso London
- Goode D A 1986 'Kids, Culture and Innocents' *Human Studies* 9: 83-106
- Greer G 1972 *The Female Eunuch* Grenada London
- Grosz E 1989 *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* Allen & Unwin Sydney
- Herman J L with L Hirschman 1981 *Father-Daughter Incest* Harvard University Press Cambridge MA
- Holdstock G 1988a 'Special Investigation, Part One: Suffer Little Children' *People* June 28: 18-22
—1988b 'Wipe Em off the Earth' *People* July 12: 18-20
- Hudson B 1984 'Femininity and Adolescence' in McRobbie & Nava eds 1984: 31-53
- Jackson S 1982 *Childhood and Sexuality* Basil Blackwell Oxford
- Kristeva J 1984 *The Revolution in Poetic Language* Trans M Waller, Columbia University Press New York
—1986 *The Kristeva Reader* ed Toril Moi Columbia University Press New York
- Leahy T 1992 'Positively Experienced Man/Boy Sex: The Discourse of Seduction and the Social Construction of Masculinity' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 28: 71-88
—1994 'Taking Up a Position: Discourses of Femininity and Adolescence in the Context of Man/Girl Relationships' *Gender & Society* 8/1: 48-72
- Lees S 1986 *Losing Out: Sexuality and Adolescent Girls* Hutchinson London
- Mandel E 1970 *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory* Pathfinder Press New York
- McRobbie A & M Nava eds 1984 *Gender and Generation* Macmillan London
- Nava M 1984 'Drawing the Line: A Feminist Response to Adult-Child Sexual Relations' in McRobbie & Nava eds 1984: 85-111
- Nilan P M 1994 *At The Interface of Talk and Text: The Social Construction of Gender in Classroom Interaction* Newcastle University unpublished PhD Thesis
- Pateman C 1988 *The Sexual Contract* Polity Press Cambridge
- Roman L G & L K Christian-Smith eds 1988 *Becoming Feminine: The Politics of Popular Culture* The Falmer Press London
- Rossmann P 1985 *Sexual Experience Between Men and Boys* Maurice Temple Smith Hounslow
- Rush F 1980 *The Best Kept Secret Sexual Abuse of Children* Prentice-Hall New Jersey
- Russell D E H 1984 *Sexual Exploitation Rape Child Sexual Abuse and Workplace Harrassment* Sage Beverley Hills
- Sandfort T 1982 *The Sexual Aspect of Paedophile Relationships The Experience of Twenty-Five Boys* Pan/Spartacus Amsterdam

TERRY LEAHY

- Silverman D 1985 *Qualitative Method and Sociology: Describing the Social World* Gower Aldershot**
- Smith D E 1988 'Femininity as Discourse' in Roman & Smith 1988: 37-59**
- Ward E 1984 *Father-Daughter Rape* Women's Press London**
- Weber M 1967 *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* Trans H H Gerth & C Wright Mills, Routledge & Kegan Paul New York**
- Weedon C 1988 *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* Basil Blackwell Oxford**
- Wilson P 1981 *The Man They Called a Monster: Sexual Experiences Between Men and Boys* Cassell North Ryde**
- Wood J 1984 'Groping Towards Sexism: Boys' Sex Talk' in McRobbie & Nava 1984: 54-84**