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**Diachronic Representational Change
Surrounding Queer Identities
in British Newspapers between 1976 and 2005**

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DPhil in Media and Cultural Studies

University of Sussex

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature

For my grandfather, Thomas Vernon Hood,
who worked hard with his hands
everyday so that I did not have to.

He believed that education would set us free
from poverty. He was right.

Noel Jason Phillips

**Diachronic Representational Change Surrounding Queer Identities
in British Newspapers between 1976 and 2005.**

Summary:

This thesis explores the changing use of language in British newspapers that was used to describe queer people, between 1976 and 2005. It brings together a broad spectrum of sociological, linguistic and media theorists to investigate how such change was driven and describe some of the social consequences.

The discussion is framed through the analysis of different facets of the queer community's experience which are being represented in the press over that time frame such as: the closet, queer protest and normalization. Whilst at the same time, aspects of the researcher's personal biography are woven into the writing to solidify the connections between theory, representation and individual experience. This then is a multi-theoretical study using changing language and representation as a methodology with its heart in media and language studies, sociology, queer studies and history.

The research is focused upon newspaper articles taken from national, regional and queer newspapers and each was focused upon as aspect of the queer experience. The main case studies included comparisons between different papers, *The Gay News* Trial in 1977 and

protests concerning *section 28* in 1988. Later, it explores power and the closet across the period and ends by utilising articles involving queer youth, queer family and queer professionals.

The analysis reveals that we are living in a new Foucaultian episteme; new age with a new spirit this developed out of the protests and campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s which led to a compression upon language driving linguistic change. This compression led the normalization of queer people within society.

Acknowledgements

Many people in various ways have helped me in and without their support I would not have been able to complete this work. I am glad for this opportunity to offer my thanks to them. I would like to thank my supervisors Sharif Mowlabocus and Andy Medhurst. Without their kindness, continuous support and wisdom this project would never have reached its conclusion. I simply don't believe I would have reached this point with different supervisors. They really "saw" me and always had time for me. I would also like to thank my colleagues and staff in the school of Media, Film and Music for their support and companionship along this journey.

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I would like to thank the staff at *The Argus* in Brighton, all the people at Brighton and Llanelli Libraries as well as those at British Library Newspapers Archive in Colindale, London for their invaluable support in helping me navigate the archive.

As a dyslexic I would also again like to extend particular thanks to my supervisors for ploughing through my very random writing with all its mixed homophones and for others who proof read it fully, allowing me to distil my thinking. I am particularly grateful to my proof readers Pam Wadey, Vicky Hughes and Tony Maggs for their feedback and ideas, as well as Kathy Pitt for her loving banter and insight.

I would never have started this project without the emotional and financial support of my grandfather, Thomas Vernon Hood. As a hardworking unschooled man from the Welsh valleys he believed that education was the route out of poverty and he believed, in me.

This type of thesis is always built upon the thinking and work of those other academics who have come before. I am grateful to them because they all inspired my thinking. However, on reflection, I am overwhelmed by the sacrifices of the early queer rights movement. They really did give this work the ability and right to speak, without them queer voices like mine would still be mute.

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N Jason Phillips

1st October, 2014

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Aspects of my personal biography are inserted at the start of each chapter, including this introduction, to highlight the connections between theory, representation and individual experience which are central to my thinking but also to open a small gateway into the ideas that will be presented in each chapter thus, this chapter too starts with a biographical narrative. I am arguing that theory, and representations are never independent of the human experience.

I cried as I sat in the rather expensive manicured front garden of my friend's house in Llanelli, South Wales. Cried may not be the word for it. Maybe two would be better: sobbed hysterically.

"What's the matter" she enquired with great concern. I continued with my tears.

"I have done something wrong" I managed to splutter.

"Why are you so upset?" she paused "Is it illegal?"

I nodded numbly.

At 18 years old in 1988 having sex with other men was most definitely illegal in the UK. Having sex in toilets was even worse. Emma was the first person I ever told I was gay but, I never mentioned the toilets.

As I write this I am 44 and I can look back with the knowledge that comes from life and realise many things. Firstly, those growing up in the forces, going to boarding school and hailing from small mining towns in Wales such as I are bound to develop against hyper-masculine backdrops. These environments juxtapose themselves in the mind with the other messages secretly purchased, such as those of liberation in *Gay Times* or *HIM* magazine or quietly imbibed, such as the antics of Kenny Everett, Boy George and John Inman. They are fundamentally set against other messages that we read in the broader media. Secondly, I know that my life has been an illustration for a part of queer history, a part of queer culture. That crying youth in Llanelli has become a man living in Brighton and along the way has travelled many of the paths of closet, protest and professionalism that are scrutinised in the coming thesis.

1:2

Introduction

This work explores facets of the changing use of language in British newspaper stories to describe queer people between 1976 and 2005 and asks: “what are the drivers of such change?”

When one looks examines the primary material in the archive one see a substantive shift in the words and phrases associated with the “queer actors” in the articles between this dates. For example in ‘Protest Over Children in Stage Workshop’ from *The Times* in 1977 one reads that:

“The Festival of Light [a Christian campaigning organisation led by Mary Whitehouse – more on both later] has called on the Government to halt “the growing exploitation of children by militant homosexuals”, after the recent announcement that school children in London are to take part in a theatre workshop run by The Gay Sweat Shop Company. A report, *Age of Consent* just produced by the festival and submitted to the Home Office, says recent developments on homosexuality were never envisaged by Parliament when the Act of 1967 was passed. The festival calls for a select committee of both Houses to inquire into the spread of homosexual practices and propagation in Britain” (Reporter, 1977,3)

However, within a generation, just twenty-nine years later *The Mail* prints a different representation of queer people; entitled ‘Gay partners make better parents, say adoption chiefs’ one sees completely different language surrounding queer people. It says:

“Gay couples can make better parents than heterosexuals because of their ‘variety of life experience’, Britain’s biggest adoption agency said yesterday [...] the comments appear to pave the way for special status for gay couples who want to adopt. Ian Millar spokesman for BAAF in Scotland said “A lot of gay parents do have good skills, probably Daddy and Daddy have better parenting skills than Mummy and Daddy. Gay couples often have a variety of life experiences that can be put to good use. There is certainly no evidence children bought up by homosexual couples suffer in anyway” (Grant, 2005,8)

How has such noticeable social change occurred over such a short period of time? My work sets out to tackle this question by utilising a wide selection of linguistic, media, Marxist and discourse theories to seek a comprehensive answer. This thesis, then, is a historical survey of the journey that newspaper language surrounding Queer people took between 1976 and 2005 and my search for a comprehensive answer as to why this language changed so quickly.

Before engaging in this search, I want firstly, in this introduction, to lay out the path to my research before examining the research itself. I begin by fully describing what brought me here, which was, in short, the pursuit of a historical study using changing newspaper language as a method; I then define my relationship to the idea of an “essential” queer identity as well as my use of the term “queer” throughout the work. Next, I will justify the exclusion of some subjects from the study. Finally, I will highlight the structures of my argument and what the reader can expect from each of the core chapters how they engage with theories and pre-existing texts. It also defines the research questions I formulated before entering the archive.

1:3 History For Itself

There are many methodologies and approaches to studying social history but I think one of the most over looked is the study of the fluid connections between language and social relations. In essence this is the tool that I brought to my bare on the research questions.

The idea that there is something akin to a linguistic fossil record laid down in newspapers is something that first struck me during my MA, which was in History. For me newspapers produce a stream of words every day. Miles and miles of paper which contains words, phrases... thoughts. They are “laid down” and another layer is produced the next day. The

newspaper archive is, then, very close to the fossil record with layer upon layer of material being deposited upon the next. Much like biological evolution when you study that record you can find subtle changes, mutations. You can also begin to interpret social meanings at the time it was laid down. Newspapers are a small window to the past. They are a great vehicle for exploring past events and especially for social change because each edition comes immediately after the one before. Like stop motion animation, when you flick through them over decades you witness incredible movement and energy. One sees changes in language use, subject and topics and ones “target” is often provided in context with other narratives.

I have always appreciated that some theorists, notably postmodernists (White, 1973), feel that language is too unstable to provide sufficient insight into the past. I, though, intrinsically felt that newspapers and historical study do offer some sort of reflection on social events and attitudes in the past which is greater than those postmodernists allow. These images may be pale, even dark and patchy in places, but they have integrity. By that I mean that the events did occur and they are meaningful and capable of analytical historical study.

I never argue, though, that there are fixed and imputable truths in history or language waiting to be discovered or that a researcher can remove themselves from the subject. Truth, certainly in discourse, is never fixed (Foucault, 1965) and neither is one’s position to it but, I am arguing that history is a worthwhile process which does allow us a view into the past which can inform our present, if the process of investigation is conceived in the correct way.

For me, then, only a multi-disciplinary, multi-theoretical approach could really offer a solid historical investigation. If you follow one single theoretical thread, and just that thread to the exclusion of everything else, to its ultimate conclusion, you lose the strength of the whole. Arguments become myopic. The meaning, the purpose even, is in listening to a breadth of the academy. Foucault, Derrida, Barthe and the others, are great thinkers and I draw on some of their work in my thesis but they are often focused on one single idea. As my work is centred on many theorists I hope I produce a broader much more balanced picture. I believe that most theories, even polarized ones have strength in unity, in finding the middle. I wanted to demonstrate this in my research. In taking the “best” from each insight offered. So, throughout my thesis the reader will find that I have drawn on a number of theorists to make my points, often linking them to a particular facet of the gay experience. I expand on this concept further in the methodology.

If postmodernism is concerned with the consumption of signs rather than artefacts and post-structuralism concerned with the emptiness and fluidity of language, then I am both a postmodernist and a poststructuralist. I believe that the world is beginning to retreat from the consumption of signs, having found such consumption meaningless and unfulfilling.

As I mentioned, I wanted to demonstrate my ideas on the newspaper archive as a powerful tool for cultural history by a thorough examination of one topic. Given my personal history it is perhaps axiomatic that I would examine the changing fortunes of queer representations in the

press. As a queer man and a dyslexic I have always been fascinated with the way words are used to describe and define. I have often identified with press representations of queerness and I often have not. Further, I felt that when examining queer people one sees a vivid and dramatic change in their representation in the press over a very short time and was curious as to how such an alteration happened so quickly and why now and not at another point in history.

One final motivator for me in this research is that I have always been interested in how groups reach power or social inclusion and then stay there. Is a progressive society a one-way street? Is it not possible for the pendulum to swing the other way or for more conservative groupings to dictate policy? Further, how do press representations portray these social movements? In my work I am looking at how social dialogue and debate is played out in the press generally. The methodology and technique can therefore be applied to any group or subject not just the queer.

This work then became a very small step towards the application of an inclusionary multi-theorist framework that produces a coherent piece of social cultural history around changing queer representations in the British Press between 1976 and 2005.

Any work of this kind has to at the start address at the start the continued debate on the nature of sexuality and homosexuality in particular, not least because it was a central issue for queer campaigners during the period under study. Has there always been a homosexual essence or is it a modern social construction? This debate is encapsulated by a quote from John Schippers in 1989, around the middle of my study:

“Essentialists say that homosexuality is universal and that it is a fixed and stable characteristic of the person involved. Constructionists claim, on the other hand that homosexuality is a cultural invention, or construct, designed to define and regulate sexual behaviour”(Schippers, 1989,114)

Much like modernist and post-modernist debates above academics have split into the two camps. With constructionists such as David M Halperin arguing:

“One of the most distinctive features of the *current* regime under which we live is the prominence of heterosexuality or homosexuality as central organising categories of thought, behaviour and erotic subjectivity” (Halperin, 2002,3) [my emphasis]

Halperin suggests here that the mere idea of homosexuality is a chimera that is only brought into actualization in around 1890 and has grown since, as did Foucault (Foucault, 1978). On the other hand Rictor Norton asserts:

“In the social constructionist view, knowledge is constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through ideological discourse. In my essentialist view knowledge is discovered, repressed, suppressed and recovered through history and experience” (Norton, 1997,11)

From this perspective, homosexuality always existed; it's our relationship to it that changes. Now might be a worthwhile time for me to disclose that I am in my heart, mainly but not wholly, an essentialist when it comes to the formation of queer identities. Although I appreciate the arguments of social constructionism, I do not believe they negate an essential nature; they may very well facilitate such a nature but they do not create it. However, without social constructionism my ideas would not be as freely formed as they are. This again is precisely my position; it is through the lens of a multi-theoretical and multi-disciplinary project, taking elements of queer essentialism and social constructionism together that one begins to view the truth. They are two sides of the same coin and should not be separated. I believe that this idea is demonstrated in my work. Further in some of the articles these concepts are clearly outlined, such as the queer campaigns or in the idea that queers can be “created” by older queers.

The word “queer” appears a lot in this thesis. For Weeks “queer as a concept referring to sexuality is as fluid and ambiguous as the worlds it addresses.” (Weeks, 2012,524) but for me its meaning and use are quite clear. This work is not a piece of revisionist history. I am not looking to “queer” the past as such authors as Warner (Warner, 1993), Libretti (Libretti, 2004) and Floyd (Floyd, 1998) . I am not wishing to enter the debate concerning constructionist or essentialist arguments. In this way I am not exploring the terrain mapped out by the queer theorists such as Ringer (Ringer(ed), 1994) and Jagose (Jagose, 1996) have. “Queer” for me is shorthand for Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual. I have used it because it allows me to interrogate a text in the way gay, homosexual and LGBT can’t because I will be analysing those very words themselves. Queer is seldom used in newspaper print allowing me a level of differentiation. I appreciate that there are a wealth of subtleties and nuances within the queer experience. My work is then a historical account of the way queer people have been portrayed in the press. It is in many ways very much a “traditional” historical study of the emergence of queer identities in the British Press rather than a “queering” of anything.

Sociologist Steven Seidman has accused queer theorists of hubris and of claiming to have invented social constructionism. He says they have ignored political organizations’, social structures and historical contexts in favour of the examination of texts using a rarefied, abstract theory (Seidman(ed), 1996,157). I would say that I fully agree with Seidman in that he neatly summarises my own feelings. My relationship to queer identity politics is to value its contribution but not to lose myself in its esoteric nature. I want, throughout this thesis, to stay firmly rooted in the historical and social.

Moving on from queer identities and terms, I use the term diachronic to mean change across time but I interchange its use with the terms semantic and representational drift. To me these are aspects of the same process: words that change meaning across the period, that build into representations that do the same thing.

1:5 Some Important Article Exclusions

There are also subjects that I haven't included in the study but are nevertheless present from time to time. One of them is HIV/AIDS which has been broadly covered by other researchers (Watney, 1997, Lupton, 1994, Tulloch and Chapman, 1992) and therefore I refer the reader to these overviews of the AIDS epidemic –and the corresponding media coverage. The other is religious groups outside of the Christian such as Islamic or Jewish, which I also haven't explored beyond the merest hint, in one or two articles, on the intersection between Islamic and queer for example. This is because these intersections draw this study into another realm and away from the research questions towards new ones. They are complex and justify a full investigation in their own right.

After formulating some ideas concerning language and the society and deciding on the changing representation of Queer people as a vehicle, I went to the archive with five key questions:

How did the language used to describe queer people in the British Press change between 1976 and 2005?¹

What was the character of this change? Was it uniform across the country?

What social and theoretical explanations were there for such change?

Was there resistance to change?

Why did change happen so rapidly during this period when it had been resisted for so long?

Why now and not at another point in history?

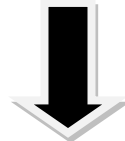
The processes of, and drivers of, change I identified in answering these questions can be summarised in the following diagram. This is a visual representation of the engine drove language change in the British Press concerning queer people across the period.

¹ I chose these dates because they marked the ascension of Margret Thatcher to leader of the Conservative party at the start of the study and the resignation of Tony Blair as leader of the Labour party at the end. I felt both of these figures had been powerful voices in the discourse on queer identities

The greatest engine of change has been the battle over the meaning of words. This led in the 1980s to a huge “compression” upon language brought about by a pluralisation of voices . After, there was an energetic rebound.



These processes are different in nature from traditional linguistic theories of change. The build up of this pressure and its outcomes are identifiable and measurable across the period but, not uniform across the country.



So significant has this change been that it has resulted in a sudden lurch in discourse which equates to a new “episteme” . This can be demonstrated by changing power relations.



This process has led to the normalization of the Queer voice which has further been embedded by PC codes and legislation leading to a new commercial consensus in the press.

My thesis, then, is laid out in four key chapters which seek, overall, to answer the original questions by exploring aspects of the queer experience. They reflect and describe the diagram above. It is fore-grounded, by a literary review (chapter 2) and discussion of methodology (chapter 3) and tied together with a conclusion (chapter 8). The main body of my research is wholly a work of cultural and media history which is centred explaining the process above whilst exploring on what I perceive as four facets of queer identity in the press which emerged from my research. Each chapter and “facet” is further linked to a theoretical school, thus drawing on a multi-theoretical web. These facets of queer experience emerged from my analysis and I will discuss this further in the methodology.

In Chapter 4, *“Voice, Protest and Compression In Language”* I explore who gets to speak in an article and how this changes. I am particularly interested in queer campaigning. This chapter will argue that, over the period, queers have found their own voice and have grown more sophisticated in the variety and meaning of their articulations, leading to a pluralisation of the queer voice. I argue that they have achieved this against a backdrop of negative press stories which have defined them as perverts and worse. I then use elements of Marxism and Hegemonic theory to describe such changes. I highlight my personal theory that central to language change, especially in such a short time, is the process of “compression and release” upon language, a process in which language is compressed by the volume of opposing voices within discourse, leading to a rapid release and a rush to inclusion at a later date, substantially altering the nature of representations in a very short time.

In, chapter 5, *“Linguistic Explanations and Differing Rates of Change”* I use the theories of general linguistics to explore differing speeds of language change between different elements of the press, between broadsheets and tabloids; local and national; between Left and Right; queer and straight. Within this discussion I draw out the facet of queer experience that positions the individual within a changing zeitgeist and changing sexual morality. I will argue that language is a product of society and language change and representation, as used by newspapers, is a reflection of changes in differing parts of society. This chapter is centred on proving, rather than assuming, that there has been change and demonstrating that this change is not uniform. It differs depending on constituency. It searches for the drivers of change within linguistic theories but it ultimately suggests that the speed of change surrounding queer people is not sufficiently explained by traditional linguistics alone.

In chapter 6, *“Power, Representation and The Closet”* I use theories of discourse to examine the private/invisible facet of the queer experience as portrayed in the press. I explore how queer people can “pass” as non-queers and explore the changing press representations of the military queer serviceperson. I will draw on articles about the experience of private citizens being forced out or coming out voluntarily, particularly in the area of “cottaging” – or men having sex with men in public toilets. I look at changing responses to these particular narratives in the queer press. I will argue that increasingly queers have become more visible and that sexuality has become less and less a matter of privacy or indeed, shame. Throughout I draw upon discursive theories to explore the movement of power in society and how this changes across the period under study; I argue that such changes in power relations are drivers of language

change in the press. Fundamentally, I reach the conclusion that we are living in a new episteme.

Whilst many non-queers have been involved in arguably, labelling queers as predominantly sexual beings, Chapter 7, "*Normalisation and Professionalization of Queer Identities*", seeks to examine the professionalization of queers and queer subculture, how the queer became every day. It draws closely on specific articles on changing representations of queer professionals such as MPs and celebrities and will explore and examine the rise of Political Correctness (PC) as well as progressive legislation as explanations of change. I blend elements of Chomsky's theories with Habermas to argue that ultimately the media is a commercial machine that has redefined the queer person as a consumer and thus moderated its language

Chapter 8 draws my work together in a conclusion. It summarises the drivers of language alteration in the press by drawing upon and combining the different chapters into one multi-theoretical description of such change. It also reviews that research questions and indeed the motivations for the research and asks if they have been adequately explained.

2:0

Literature Review

2:1

Biography: A Good Book

There have been three major queer books in my life. *How to be a happy homosexual* by Terry Sanderson (Sanderson, 1986) was the first and arrived in 1987. I had ordered it secretly from *Gay Times* and had kept it hidden under the wardrobe in my bedroom in Wales. Nobody would move a wardrobe surely. It lay there full of guilty advice. In order to be a happy homosexual it announced you had to tell everyone. You had to come out to everyone in one go. No exceptions. I was never able to fulfil this. I didn't so much come out, as trickle out, slowly, over a number of years. I was amused and intrigued to find that this work and other early self-help books for queer people were the subject of academic study of reappraisal in 2009 by colleagues at the University of Sussex. I had taken the information as gospel.

The second was *Tales of the City* by Amistead Maupin (Maupin, 1984) which came to me in 1995. It convinced me that I was part of a wider global social revolution. I was fit, I was out and I was happy. Like Mouse, the lead character of the novel, I was in search of the perfect relationship. Casual sex was a necessary part of the socialising process. For me, the book was superficially light and engaging. It reflected my life at the time. Renting a room in London and socializing on the gay scene: young and single and carefree.

I consumed the last book *The Swimming Pool Library* by Alan Hollinghurst (Hollinghurst, 1988) which I read in 2007. It is a recount of queer culture in the early 1970s. To me it spoke of the energy of sexual attractions and of aging as a queer person. It explored the why queer culture can fetish youth and masculine cultures whilst it at the same time such fetishisation produces

disaffection and isolation within its own membership. It was about transgression, deconstruction and reflection. It is a considered novel. When I read this book I had been HIV+ for a number of years and I was disillusioned with the gay scene. I too had been trapped by its shallowness, damaged by my own carefree and superficial experiences.

Too me these three books describe and bind my own queer identity. I read each cover to cover in a single sitting and, although I have never read much “queer fiction” or self-help books their words resonated with me, as does the academic work underneath. In reading the work above I came to a better understanding of my own experience. In reading the works below I came to an understanding of the academic territory within which I traversed.

2:2 Mapping the Territory

I want in this chapter to lay out the academic territory that surrounds my thesis to give the reader a clear idea of where my research sits in relation to other related studies. To my mind it is at the centre of a triangle bounded by social history, queer linguistic studies and cultural studies (specifically those elements relating to sociological and media theories). It is, as I have mentioned in my introduction, a piece of modern social history which uses changing language around and representations of queer in the press and as a theme. It is also a piece of cultural studies because of its multi-theoretical approach and media centre. Firstly, I will begin this review by examining the work that has been in the area of media, such as sociolinguistic studies of the press and in traditional linguistics. It is here that I will start, before moving backwards to queer linguistic studies and finally, into the domain of history to demonstrate the social historical element of my work. As I go through I will make several converging claims to

originality, however the strongest claim is that of a multi-theoretical thesis which blends linguistic study with Queer history; particularly, the way in which local newspapers, and queer history, are juxtapositioned with the national newspapers and queer issues.

I spent considerable time searching for diachronic linguistic studies of any type or era the British Press and can find only one, a 2002 study entitled *Language Change in English Newspaper Editorials* by Ingrid Westin (Westin, 2002). This study differs from my own in a very real manner. Whilst I focus on social explanations of change and on using newspapers as a historical record to build an overarching narrative, Westin's is a grammatical data analysis. Mine is concerned with social history, her study with data. In short, hers is a highly focused structural analysis which sits wholly in the field of traditional linguistics and offers no historical account or explanation of the drivers of such change, whilst such explanations are paramount to my work. I concentrated on articles around queer folk which fell into categories whilst Westin's sole criterion for inclusion was frequency, any subject was viable. On the novelty and originality of her work, and by inference my own, she says:

"The study of newspaper language from a diachronic perspective does not seem to have attracted much attention. Laurie Bauber is an exception. In *Watching English Change*, he devotes a chapter to the diachronic study of three grammatical features: comparative and superlative adjectives, concord with collective nouns and relative clauses, using material mainly from editorials published in *The Times* between 1900 and 1985"(Westin, 2002,3)

Again, Bauber's study is focusing on long-term historical language change, but such change around queer people has not been long term. Bauber is less concerned with representation and discourse. Change around queer folk has been short and rapid and this is what sets my work apart from all of the linguistics, historical linguistic and etymologic studies I could find (Bower, 1994). These studies are grammatical analysis focused on the ebbs and flows of syntax across centuries and millennia. Fundamentally though, none of them looked at changing language and representations of social groups in the press. Neither to they explore social change or contrast regional change.

Chiefly, I wanted to look at how the press has been treated by media theorists and sociologists. There has been a lot of research done on language in the media often from a sociological or ideological point of view. I am thinking here of Bell (Bell, 1961, Bell, 1991), Kress (Kress, 1993), Fowler (Fowler, 1994, Fowler R, 1979, Fowler, 1991) Van Dijk (Kress, 1993, van Dijk, 1992, van Dijk, 1995, Van Dijk, 2001, Van Dijk, 1997) and the Glasgow Media Group (Group, 1982), who all appear in this study along with other notable studies such as Richardson's *Analysing Newspapers* (Richardson, 2007) and Curran's *Press and Popular Culture* (Curran and Sparks, 1991). Whilst Bell and Kress focus upon the audience effects on language choice in papers (Bell, 1991, Kress, 1993), Fowler has discussed gender discrimination (Fowler, 1994). None of these focuses upon queer people and none are diachronic in nature. Neither to have they used regional and national press in a single study. They are not about change but instead about power and ideology, important aspects of my study but not at the centre. They will normally focus upon one article or a series around a particular event, exploring words used and subliminal power plays, whilst mine compares and contrasts articles across eras. For example in

Analysing Newspapers, Richardson works with just one central article, plus a few reactions to it, entitled *Us, loathsome? Shame on them* from *The Daily Express* in 2004 to explore sentiments of “truth” and stereotyping around Muslims (Richardson, 2007,174).

Central to my theme is the comparison between different publications from different constituencies and regions of the UK. Here there has been more work but it is structural in nature, rather than looking at representation. Crystal and Davy (Crystal and Davey, 1969). Again, there is a general retreat in the comparative studies to explore structure and grammar rather than anything historical or cultural.

There is then a dearth of linguistic or media projects which focus upon the changing fortunes of any social group using newspapers as the key record. There are no diachronic studies which compare changing portrayals of social groups. I want now to examine the work which has been undertaken on queer histories and identities.

There are a number of studies on queer history and a number of queer historians, notably amongst them are Weeks (Weeks, 1990a, Weeks, 2000, Weeks, 1989), Jeffery-Poulter, Boswell and D’Emilio (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991, Boswell, 1980, D’Emilio, 1984). In *queer(y)ing the “Modern Homosexual”*, Jeffery Weeks, perhaps the most productive British queer historian, lays out the trends within this discipline since 1970 in Britain (Weeks, 2012). What is clear from this contribution and from the archive is that no studies however complete, have used the media, or more specifically newspaper language, to chart queer history and emancipation in the way I have. Weeks says that “British queer history now has long roots and flourishing blossoms but is still often regarded as an exotic plant.” (Weeks, 2012,524). For me this highlights the narrow

nature any queer study. My own which blends newspaper language change with queer cultural history with its focus on different aspects of queer identity in this way is also novel. As is the way it explores regional variations in the queer experience. All of these historians provided incredible insight into the theories of queer sexuality. I am not seeking to do this. I am exploring the engines of social change. Not how can these queer identities be formed, policed or discovered but how did society come to accept them and how can this be seen in the newspaper record.

Ultimately, my work will focus on the changing representation of queer people in newspapers.

Barak suggests that:

“Understanding the construction of news making requires the examination of the conscious and unconscious processes involved in the mass dissemination of symbolic consumer goods. Commonly referred to as information or ideas [and that] stories produced by the news media reveal as much about [society] as they inform ”(Barak, 2011,3)

Social construction assumes that the world is not just there but is constructed by a whole range of different social arrangements and practices (Potter, 1996) and that the media is part of this process. I agree but I suggest what drives changes in these constructions for they are not static, as is often represented. *Mediawatch* by Terry Sanderson (Sanderson, 1995c) is an account of how queer people are constructed in the press, but it is not a historical or sociological account, although it may be a source of data. It is, instead, a diatribe on the misrepresentation of queer people in the British

media between 1982 and 1994. It doesn't draw on any academic theories to explore the reasons or methods of change. However it does challenge contemporary constructions.

Straight News by Alwood (Alwood, 1996) is a history of queer folk in the American media between 1943 and 1994 and is of the same ilk as *Mediawatch*. Neither of these studies has at its core the concept of language change, and certainly not diachronic semantic drift. They do not seek to demonstrate the drivers of change within society, nor do they compare or analyse the differences between contributors or geographic regions. Neither of these studies brings into it a concept of the queer or local press. My study adds to the literature around queer history, extending as it does between 1977 and 2005 and looking for change, change both a national and regional level.

My work is also organised in that unusual fashion of focusing on facets of queerness, on change, silence, protest and professionalism. It is not organised around a single event or a linear progression such as the oral history *No Bath but Plenty of Bubbles* (Power, 1995). In this way this thesis character and scope is different from previous work dealing with traditional linear narratives of queer history.

Within the area of queer linguistic studies there have been several texts which have influenced my work here. *Queerly Phrased*, from 1997, is the main study (Hall and Livia, 1997). It is global in its reach, covering aspects of queer linguistics as far away as Japan (and including essays focused on the early 16th Century (Hall and Livia, 1997). It does not focus on diachronic change nor on newspaper representations, rather as they say themselves "The volume editors have commissioned essays that are mostly anthropological-linguistic or sociolinguistic but also literary critical [...] and are of principle interest to these groups" (Hall and Livia, 1997). *Taking*

Queer Linguistics Further: Sociolinguistics and Critical Heteronormativity a research paper by Motschenbacher from 2011 (Motschenbacher, 2011), clearly identifies queer linguistics as a reaction to earlier essentialist approaches in the field of language and sexuality.

Motschenbacher asserts:

“Queer Linguistics is not to be equaled with a “gay and lesbian” approach to language. It rather transfers ideas from queer theory to linguistic research, building on the integration of work by poststructuralist scholars such as Foucault, Butler and Derrida in order to provide a critical investigation of the discursive formation of heteronormativity” (Motschenbacher, 2011,152)

Thus for me, much of that which is queer linguistic is excluded from my study although I draw on both Foucault and Butler at different times. In this regard my work is set apart from queer studies and I cannot find any queer studies that draw on language and newspaper language to explore queer history in the way I do here. All of these theories of queerness do not explore the engines of social change across time nor compare different geographical regions. They define the queer self and fluid identities in relationship to the outside world.

Next, I turn to the final element of my work, that of cultural and media history. There are a number of longitudinal studies surrounding queer folk of many different types most notably in the areas of HIV/AIDS and medicine in general. Some looked at the acquisition of language and some at personal ads. None explored the facets of queer identity and history in the way mine

does. None used newspapers, certainly British newspapers as a vehicle. Longitudinal studies do explore change overtime by coming back to the same very specific variables. I have used diachronic to suggest something broader and wider. I am trying to capture the process of change around a community over a period rather than a person or one aspect of that community and underpin that investigation with a broad theoretical framework. There are also parallel studies in race and disability which have informed my work. Again though I couldn't find any that dealt with changing press representations across time

Whilst there is considerable attention paid to the "linguistic turn" in history which has made post-structuralism a significant challenge to the modern historian, nowhere, can I find a use of this fluidity in language as a methodology in itself and, therefore, none that see diachronics as a way forward. I think this can be explained by Bingham's article from 2012 entitled *Reading Newspapers: Cultural Histories of the Popular Press in Modern Britain* (Bingham, 2012) and it is towards this understanding of newspapers as a record of social history that I want to turn to next. Bingham asserts that

"because popular newspapers are less valued than the quality press few libraries kept copies of them... the British Library in Colindale was often the only place for scholars to consult past copies of popular newspapers. In this regard, it is perhaps not surprising that the vast bulk of research on popular press was conducted by a relatively small field of specialist newspaper historians."

(Bingham, 2012,142)

However, Bingham goes on to describe how in recent years “newspapers are increasingly seen as an invaluable window onto popular culture” (Bingham, 2012,145). In this regard, I am riding this “cultural turn” in history in this thesis. I am also using newspapers as a vehicle for exploring the changing fortunes of queer folk, gazing through that very window that Bingham is describing. I have pursued Bingham’s work and that of others such as Conboy (Conboy, 2007)and what is missing is that sense of change over time. Perhaps one of the closest studies to my own has been *Constructing ‘suspect’ communities and Britishness: Mapping British Press Coverage of Irish and Muslim Communities,1974–2007*, again from 2012 (Nickels et al., 2012). It is another piece of work which is using newspapers to gaze into the past. It differs from my own as it is not actually focused on changing language but a comparison between two different alienated groups, two “others” in society. It does not compare different rates of change in different geographic areas. It does not look for engines of change but is rather focused on the production of identities by the press. It is similar in that it is diachronic study and explores words associated with these groups.

Taken overall, it can be seen that my study sits in a gap bound by the linguistics, queer linguistics studies and cultural history projects I have described above. Outside of that triangle swirl the broad currents of sociology, history, media, identity politics and cultural studies which all press against and define the void that I am working to fill. As Bingham asserts this is a new field (Bingham, 2012). Its true originality lies in blending a linguistic study with queer history; of

comparing changing language in different parts of the UK and using non-linear structures to report these changes.

3:0

Methodology

3:1

Biography: Old Closets and Old Archives

There is nothing in the world like being young, beautiful and accepted. Except maybe for being all these things after you have been troubled, obese and ostracized. In the 1990s I was the former and the “scene” photographers regularly took my photo, for a period of three years of so I appeared almost weekly, in different guises, in the various dominant gay publications of the time. Not only did I associate with the story, but often I was the story. I became part of the record “laid down” in print week after week. Pre-internet part of my regular routine on a Saturday was to gather all the queer press together and avidly read it in the evening with my partner. We followed the stories, the pictures, the clubs and the fashion, avidly people spotting. By the early to mid-2000s I had stopped reading the queer press at all.

In the 1990s I also worked on a queer magazine called *Axiom*, later to be rebranded as *AXM*. I was part of the process which saw vast acres of words and discourse added to the record. We decided what was newsworthy, in response to an inner sixth sense, a insight into our own queer culture. We “knew” what queers wanted to read about and cared about and it wasn’t politics. It was health, decor and fashion. We were part of the new cutting edge of queer news which almost unilaterally dumped the politics of 1980s in favour of a party.

I had always read the national press though. This was a gift from my grandfather who was an ardent *Mirror* reader and my mother who loved the *Daily Mail*. Newspapers were everywhere growing up but what there wasn’t any conversation about the events recorded both constitutes

simple accepted what had been written as gospel. Stories were quietly imbibed as truth not reflected upon.

So it was then that I approached the Newspaper Archive in Colindale with considerable anticipation not just academic but also personal. I was flushed with desire to revisit the past to explore the record of both queer and personal discourses, to revisit past triumphs and re-examine long past narrative both publically and privately consumed. On arrival this anticipation was made even more vivid by the juxtapositioning of the very dry museum like atmosphere of the archive with the intensely alive and relevant material of that queer discourse. A reflection, perhaps, of all the other times I had read queer discourse whilst in a studious non-queer environment.

3:1 Analytical Method

Much of this thesis's methodological framework which is essentially developed from the school of Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA (Fairclough, 1989, Fairclough, 1995a, Fairclough, 2010, Fairclough, 1995b, Fairclough, 1994) however, it does not slavishly follow this method but blends in other methodological strategies both personal and academic.

There is in the in my work a high degree of self-reflection and one can see it most at work here in the methodology. I want, then, to pause to consider this. For me as an academic self-reflectivity means constantly review and updating my work and my methods. It means looking at the methodology and asking: "is this working?" Looking at the work and asking "is my analysis neutral or reflective of my own internal dialogue?" "Am I considering sufficiently the work that has proceeded me?" Throughout the reader will find that I have continually adapted

CDA to enable me to focus on the research questions. To have simply adopted it wholesale would not have been effective. Indeed, I choose CDA because of its malleability. Another form of reflectivity is that I hope at the end of the thesis the reader will be able to deconstruct it and explore the techniques used in the development of the arguments. This thesis, this project is not as it was at conception, at draft at pre-viva; it has morphed and developed at each stage. It's been both painful and beneficial to lose ideas and gain new ones at different points but it is stronger because of it. It is also self-aware through the inclusion of the large amount of autobiography. It admits the reader to the private world of the researcher who both formed as was formed by the thesis of the period of 4 years of so and the narratives studies over much longer.

This section does though explore the nature of CDA, as it is the major influence for the methodology behind my research. After, it will introduce the newspapers that are used in the thesis as well as discussing how articles were included for study.

Researchers in CDA:

“are concerned with a critical theory of the social world, the relationship of language and discourse in the construction and representation of the social world, and a methodology that allows them to describe, interpret and explain such relationships” (Paltridge, 2006,185)

CDA is an approach that unlike other drier linguistic methodologies places representations of individuals at its heart. It is “critical” because it is “associated with studying power relations. This concept of critical is rooted in the Frankfurt School of critical theory” (Rogers, 2004,1, Jay,

1973). This is useful because much of my work is conceptualised around ideas of power in society. “The aim of CDA is to shed light on the linguistic discursive dimension of social and cultural phenomena and process of *change* in late modernity ”(Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002,61)[emphasis added].

As Partridge asserts:

“CDA explores the connections between the use of language and the social and political contexts in which it occurs [...] it investigates ways in which language constructs and is constructed by social relationships”(Paleridge, 2006,178).

Fairclough goes further, stating that CDA is “critical social research [which] aims to contribute to addressing social ‘wrongs’ of the day by analysing their sources and causes, resistance to them and possibilities of overcoming them” (Fairclough, 2009,82).

Fairclough sees language as “perhaps the primary medium of social control”(Fairclough, 1989,2), a social space where ideas and ideologies of power are reproduced and this has an obvious relevance for my study of how language has played a part in the politics of sexuality. In CDA Fairclough believes there is a “theory and method for studying language in its relation to power and ideology”(Fairclough, 1995a,1). CDA is concerned with analysis, how language creates and is created by dialectical power relationships within the social sphere. In the Fairclough model of CDA it achieves this through an analysis of text within context(Fairclough, 1989,91) because “the relationship between texts and social structures is a mediated one”(Fairclough, 1989,117). Texts do not exist on their own, in isolation. The choice of CDA over other discourse analysis methodologies recognises the unrestricted nature of this vehicle for

analysis and argues by implication that other forms of analysis do not bring enough understanding to the research question. “CDA starts with the assumption that language use is always inevitably constructing and constructed by social, cultural, political and economic contexts”(Rogers, 2004,10) thus, it places language and discourse at the centre of any social study. For me this strengthens and acknowledges my own arguments that newspaper language reflects the real social world in which language itself is a central player.

CDA was a suitable methodological choice for this research because of its blending of text and context. It has a philosophical premise that “CDA sees itself not as dispassionate and objective social science but as engaged and committed. It is a form of intervention in social practice and social relationships” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997,258). Richardson concurs, asserting that “CDA takes an overt moral and political position with regard to the social problem analysed”(Richardson, 2007,2). It is very well suited to a research project which is polemic in nature focusing on social discourse. Fairclough argues that “CDA oscillates between a focus on structures [...] and on a focus on strategies for social agents.”(Fairclough, 2009,233).

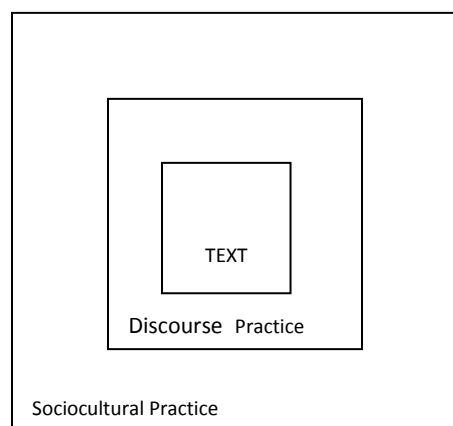
In blending linguistic study with the narrative of queer history, a history where the meanings of texts were so contested, this oscillation enables the researcher to examine changing texts in context, to place changes within the forces that enabled them. CDA is unashamedly cross-disciplinary and multi-theoretical in its approach. Fairclough and Wodak believe that “CDA is by nature inter-disciplinary”(Fairclough and Wodak, 1997,271)and, in fact, “emphasizes the need for inter-disciplinary work”(Wodak and Meyer, 2009). This characteristic blends perfectly with the approach of my thesis towards a multi-theoretical engagement with the research question. Further “CDA has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific

theory. Neither is one specific methodology characteristic of CDA”(Wodak and Meyer, 2009,5).

The researcher in CDA is relatively free to construct a framework that is best suited to the project.

There are approaches to CDA from French discourse analysis, critical linguistics, social semiotics and socio-cognitive studies (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). However, the specific approach that is dissolved in this thesis is that espoused by Norman Fairclough. This is because in particular, his approach has a central focus on the “investigation of change” (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002,7). Changes and theories of language change are the bedrock of this research and the methodology therefore needs to reflect this. Further “Fairclough’s approach is a text-orientated form of discourse analysis”(Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002,65) which enables a tight focus on the research question which is centred on newspapers. He asserts “text analysis is not sufficient for discourse analysis as it does not shed light on the links between texts and societal and cultural processes and structures, an interdisciplinary approach is needed”(Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002,66). He has also focused his research on the media, producing several studies of newspapers (Fairclough, 2003a, Fairclough, 1995b). This puts his approach at the heart of this research.

Fairclough’s specific methodology is focused on the exploration of texts through the following model:



He suggests that the text is investigated across these three basic areas. The textual analysis is centred upon the “experiential values” (Fairclough, 1989,92) of words, whether they are ideologically contested and the “relational values”(Fairclough, 1989,92) between them. Further, as both Fairclough and Richardson argue, the next step, and the heart of the analysis, is the examination of “structuring presuppositions”(Richardson, 2007,47), those hidden presuppositions in the text that combine to form textual cohesiveness across the piece (Fairclough, 1992,176). How these values, presuppositions and textual cohesiveness change is central to my thesis and I use them to explore articles.

Next, both Fairclough and Richardson suggest that the text needs to be placed within the “discursive practice dimension of the communicative event [which] involves various aspects of the processes of text production and text consumption”(Richardson, 2007, Fairclough, 1995b,58). In queer history the consumption and representations of texts is a highly contested area central to the theme of this thesis. For example I explore the Gay Liberation Front’s demands for accurate portrayals during the 1970s in chapter 6. I very much explore the representation of an event, one reflection of the event, rather than the event itself.

Finally, Richardson says that the text should be considered in light of “socio-cultural practice” (Richardson, 2007,42). What does this text say about the society that produced it? I use this technique throughout my work but particularly in the conclusions and overall summary.

3:2 The portrayal of Queer Identities and the Selection of Articles

Firstly, and most importantly, I reiterate my solid belief that no single approach can provide a complete explanation of why the language around queer people changed so dramatically during the period under question. It is not the function of my thesis to explore changes in the theoretical currents of the academy, to describe the rise of Foucault or the fall of Marx. It is its function to take the best explanations from across the academy and combine them into a single vision, an explanation of language change and the altering portrayal of queer people in the press. This does not amount to a unified theory of sociology or of history. I am asserting that in this research, on this question, that these perspectives have value. Further, in taking a multi-theoretical position I reject the abstract and often overly heated debates between different schools within the social sciences in favour of a more calm, considered and balanced appraisal of all the most productive theories. Not every theory that could be in the thesis has been offered space and many deserving theories have been excluded, particularly the psycho-analytic. In general this has been to facilitate a broad and productive dialogue between those that remain. The psycho-analytic have been excluded because this paper deals with communities rather than individuals and press portrayal of queer folk rather than the individual reactions to them. Clearly communities are made up of individuals who come together but this is not sufficient to include this perspective. To be clear, it is not so much individual theorists that have been chosen but schools of philosophy often named after an individual. I draw not just upon Marx in the chapter on protest but also many other left leaning commentators as I dissolve Foucault into the section on power into the broader view, so I do the same to all the

theorists. What I do to the theories as a whole in searching for a multi-theoretical approach, I also do to each theoretical approach in looking for a broad range of adherents.

The theoretical approaches used were selected through via secondary research before going to the archive. In short I built a methodological toolbox. Firstly, I allowed myself a number of weeks just too physically touch many of the books in the University library. I allowed my intellect to wander unfettered across the infinite ideas and connections that reading indexes, introductions and summaries of hundreds of books offered me. I touched them and bounced between them. Occasionally, I would delve a little deeper but I didn't let myself be drawn in too far. Through this I surveyed all the possible approaches that I could take to my work but some simply began to resonate more fully. It was into those that I delved more deeply over the next year or so. I constantly wrote, right from the start, just short theoretical surveyors of thinkers such as Marx and Foucault and presented these for feedback. In this way the thinkers came alive for me. I felt like the secondary archive spoke to me, informed my question, rather than the other way around.

Whilst the chapters centre on facets of the queer historical experience, I used a framework for the inclusion of articles which was not organised around these facets instead I developed four broad "threads" which I intuitively considered to cover the breadth of the queer experience. This was to enable a neutral and arm's length discovery process that was separated later analysis from selection. Much like the library, it ensured that the archive was mined for what was there, rather than to sanction a predetermined argument. The "facets" that I use to centre each chapter around emerged later after analysis of the core articles. I developed the "threads" simply as a method of ensuring that the research was balanced and balanced in every year. This

framework, or net, allowed me to sift the archive without an over reliance on anyone one type of article in anyone one year. It would be all too easy, for example, in 1988 just to explore articles around campaigns and suggest that was all there was. It ensured, therefore, that I left the archive with a broad base of articles. It also pushed me into ensuring that each area was covered and I was exploring as fully as possible the reporting of the queer experience.

It was not possible to include every national paper and certainly not every local paper. The papers selected offered a wide and full range of opinions. Whilst the dates centred on periods of activity within the queer experience, that activity is often driven by external factors. The newspapers and dates were chosen before going to the archive and have remained fixed ever since. I selected those dates by simply looking at a timeline of modern queer history and identifying key events which were temporally spread.

Articles were spread consistently across the period. One piece for each of the four “threads” was sought, in each of the years and for each publication, 128 articles in all. Again, the threads were selected to provide the widest possible aspects of the queer experience and the language in use at the time. It was only after going to the archive and retrieving the articles that the core chapter headings evolved.

The “threads” were: the “Judicial Process” thread included any articles that pertained to crime, courts or tribunals where the defendant or victim was queer. “Legislative campaigns” included all articles that involved queer people in protests, campaigns, or other visualizations – such as performing arts - that were designed to change the image of queer people in the press or the law. In the “Christianity” section we place all articles concerning either queer priests or the

attitude of different congregations towards queerness. “In/Out” dealt with issues of coming out whether that was forced, for example, through arrest, scandal or voluntarily.

The threads, years and newspapers are:

4 threads X 4 years X 8 publications

1)JUDICIAL PROCESS		SUN
2)LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGNS	1977	MIRROR
3)CHRISTIANITY	1987	GUARDIAN
4)IN/OUT	1994	TIMES
	2005	MAIL
		BRIGHTON ARGOS
		LLANELLI STAR
		QUEER PRESS

The next part of the process was to actually visit “the archive”. There were in fact a number of destinations, which made up this “archive”, so it may be proper to talk about archives. These were:

- The British Newspaper Archive at Colindale, London – from which I gleaned a large number of articles, including those from the queer press.
- Llanelli Local Library - here I explored issues of *The Llanelli Star* that weren’t available to me at Colindale.
- Brighton Library – again, I explored issues of *The Brighton Argus* that weren’t available to me at Colindale.
- Argos Newspaper Archive - this is where I started my journey. Although none of the articles were used in this thesis it was an incredibly productive couple of days.
- *The Mirror* archive online, *The Times* Digital Archive and Nexus are all digital archives which I used for researching later stories from, particularly, 2005.

From the outset my drive has been to avoid bias, to produce an independent study without a predetermined selection of articles. I didn’t go to the archive with the intention of exploring any one story arc or narrative. Yes, I went with my “net” of threads but my intention was to sift through the articles and let them “speak” to me. There is, I think, something extremely productive about going to an archive, whether it local or national, and sifting through the material. The advantages of the tactile archive

over the digital are massive. As you flick through the newspapers looking for articles you inevitable pick up the context in which our target articles were written. For example *The Sun* in 1977 was running over a “four page pull out”, entitled ‘Too Young For Love’ which promotes the substantial lowering of the age of consent for heterosexual sex or indeed abolishing it. The article asserts:

“Almost daily, the courts are setting free men convicted of an offense which used to mean certain jail. The law says 16 is the age at which a girl is old enough to make love. But even the judges disagree”(Sandford, 1977)

Taken together with many of articles outside my remit, we see that there is a large drive towards social rebalancing of attitudes to sex, a dialogue on sexuality in which the articles of which my study are a part. If one merely searches a digital archive one may well miss these contexts. Many contexts stretch in other directions not immediately obviously relevant to by work, such as the Cold War ending, but informing the debate. In this case that around queer military service personnel which we will encounter later. For me, a digital archive is too rigid and suggests that the researcher has already a preconceived idea of what they are intending to find. Let me give another example. This thesis is about language and language change. If I used a digital archive and only searched for the words “queer” or “gay” I might miss a number of other terms which would be obvious to me if I read them in context, such as “pansy” or indeed “limp wristed”. This would be particularly true of euphemisms such as “live in lover”.

I would argue that there is much to be said for visiting the towns and places that are talked about in the thesis. To go to Llanelli and to explore the archive there brought a sense of place to

my writing, as did visiting Colendale. When one visits Colendale one is aware of the great weight of history that is present there. It's the smell and the huge reading benches. Your mind starts to explore the other possibilities and is reactive. I ordered up from the archive numerous copies of newspapers such as "*Boyz*" (a queer clubbing and lifestyle magazine from the 1990s) which I knew I properly wouldn't use but wanted to check anyway. These minor publications are not available on line.

The digital archive did have its place. It allowed me to sift a huge amount of data in 2005. This is an issue I will explore later in the thesis. Essentially though, in 1977 there was very little text produced on queer identities but this increases exponentially across the period so by 2005 it is almost unmanageable without a digital aid. It did allow me to "check" my findings post-analysis when I was writing up my work thus, ensuring that the research base on which I based my ideas was not too narrow. So at this point I went back to the digital archive to look for stories that surrounded the one I had just analysed to ensure my findings were a valid description of the time but without the need to leave my writing to go back to Colindale.

Whether the article came from a physical archive or a digital archive in all cases I used a printed copy during my analysis. For me, there is much to be said for handling a document. I was able to systematically order a large number of them in a file and move them around in different ways exploring the connections between them.

Often, especially in the early years, there were few articles to choose from in any category or main stream publication. This speaks to the invisibility of the queer experience at that time. In this case the silence or void has been included in the analysis. Where many articles were

available the one which was most representative of the narrative at the time was chosen. In some cases, as this study is focused on the broadest of experiences, articles were chosen that allowed for a spread of views.

It is not the function of this thesis to explore in complete and utter detail every article because this is about language change across *the whole* period. Many of these articles are deserving of a significant study of their own, for example article, 127, *Gay Wedding First for Llanelli Couple*(Williams, 2005b) from *The Argus* on the 6th December 2005 discussed the very first civil partnership. Most articles within any given year are part of a narrow group of discourse or socio-cultural practices but the same questions have been asked of each:

Which words and phrases have been used to describe the queer?

What experiential and ideological values do these display?

What relational value do these words have?

What metaphors are used?

What nominalizations are used?

Who were the main actors?

Data analysis was undertaken before the application of the theoretical models for each chapter. I examined the words associated with the queer actors and the words associated with the non-queer. I counted the number of times different terms such as “gay”, “lesbian” or “LGBTQ” were used to describe the queer subject in every year and for every paper. After the data analysis I

looked for broader trends within the press, this often necessitated going outside the core articles I had used for the primary data analysis to include a broader picture of discourse in the press at these times.

I am going to be making some arguments later about the use of the term “homosexual” v “gay” in articles. I wish to point out that at the outset even the most “supportive” papers on queer issues use the word “homosexual”, particularly in long narratives. This is often what I would term a “thesaurus-al” use. It is being used solely to make the writing more varied. These types of uses do not negate the overall trends that I am discussing nor the cultural positions behind them.

In producing the chapters within the thesis certain dominant trends emerged from the analysis. At this point I dropped the net of threads I had used to capture the articles and the data in favour of the facets of the queer experience which I described in the introduction. On reflection, it may have been true that I expected to explore issues concerning queer protest in 1988 at the start of my research, as I do in chapter 4, it was a dominant discourse but, I never expected to be considering the changing distribution of power as I do in chapter 6 or normalization as I do in chapter 7. All of these themes and facets emerged from the archive. The articles and representations that I have used throughout my work “grouped themselves” as did the arguments that came from them. I have sort to explain and provide a perspective using theoretical models from media, sociology and linguistics. Occasionally the reader will note that strong themes emerge and are dealt with in different ways in different chapters, a clear

example is queer youth which resurfaces in many guises in almost every chapter. This is not intentional but a function of analysis. It was simply there.

Once I had completed the selection and data analysis I did in the end move outside the initial 128 articles. This was to ensure rigour in my findings and to avoid repetition and over reliance on one article in establishing a trend.

3:4 An Article on Newspaper History

I am going to introduce the two local papers, *The Brighton Argos* and *The Llanelli Star* separately at the start of the next chapter where I also discuss the towns in Britain that they represent, but here I want to briefly highlight the character of the other newspapers in the study and give a flavour of a changing press. Temple says that “by the 1970s, the loss of left-wing newspapers in the post war years had created a daily press which was overwhelmingly conservative in outlook and committed to supporting the Conservative party”(Temple, 2008,64). This left only *The Mirror* supporting Labour, throughout most of the period under study although this does change towards the end. The success of *The Sun* under Rupert Murdoch lead to “new type of tabloid appearing featuring more entertainment [...]and an increasing concentration on tales from television land and more features on personal matters (with sex at the forefront)(Temple, 2008,65) during the period of my analysis. “The *Daily Mail* went tabloid too in 1978”(Williams, 2010,203) just after I began my study but continued to “speak for middle England”(Temple, 2008,64). In terms of the broadsheets under study Williams

asserts that “*The Times* was not like other newspapers; it became part of the Establishment and could be seen to be institutionalised” (Williams, 2010,204). *The Times* was bought by Rupert Murdoch in 1981 “one of the conditions of the buyout was he would retain its special character – he didn’t” (Williams, 2010, 205). *The Guardian* market is somewhat differentiated from *The Times* in that “it developed a strong middle market of left of centre professionals and the youngest readership profile of all the quality broadsheet papers” (Williams, 2010,206).

The queer press are more fragmented across the period, mainly because they are an emerging force from the 1970s. Certainly in the early years they are campaigning in nature but become more commercial as the study unfolds. However, Pullen says of this time that “The 1970s marked a turning point that would see the emergence of new narratives surrounding gay identity”(Pullen, 2007,6). For me it the queer press is one of the main vehicles for delivering these narratives but they are reflected, challenges and celebrated in different ways in all the media. These discourses are, of course, a central part of my work. Streitmatter asserts that:

“Although sex had been the bedrock element in the visual and editorial content of gay publications of the 1960s, the increasing specialization during the 1970s expanded coverage to discussing sexual activities as political statements [...] the gay press covered the breadth of culture it sought to reflect and serve from swaggering leather men to swishing drag queens”(Streitmatter, 1995,193)

I am using *Gay News* which was founded in 1972 as a function of the Gay Liberation Movement or GLF with a distribution of 20,000 copies (Power, 1995) and closed in April 1983; *Capital Gay* which first went to print in June 1981 and closed in June 1995 and was mainly, but not wholly distributed in London; *The Pink Paper* which was founded in 1987, went to internet only distribution in June 2009 and closed in June 2012. Finally, I am using *G-Scene* which was established in 1998 and continues to publish 30,000 copies a week. This is distributed in Brighton, Bournemouth and Southampton (Ledward, 2012). There are other publications around from the early 1980s onwards such as *HIM Magazine*, *Gay Times*, *Boyz*, *AXM*, *Attitude* however the ones chosen tend to be more news orientated whilst those excluded have a tendency towards entertainment.

This work then, explores facets of the changing use of language in press stories to describe queer people between 1976 and 2005 and asks what the drivers of such change are. It seeks to examine why change was so rapid and whether there has been resistance to change. I want next to start by analysis by exploring one of the key engines of change, ideological attrition and compression in language.

4:0 Voice, Protest and Compression In Language

4:1 Biography: Learning to Shout Out Loud

I was overawed by the raw emotion of my first Pride march in London in 1992. I took the tube train and by the time it got to Brixton Station, the event was happening in Brockwell Park, it was packed with poofers -all screaming and blowing whistles. We dominated the carriage. We surged up the stairs of Brixton underground station. It felt like we ruled the world. It was incredibly liberating. I remember on the walk to the park the police formed a staggered line to keep us in the road and protect us from the groups of young Afro-Caribbean men who muttered insults at us. We blew whistles in return. Despite the political importance of the event, to me this was simply wildly liberating. To be part of such an exciting, colourful and energetic crowd was hugely affirming. I felt as if we were unstoppable. I felt the power and safety of the crowd.

Much later during 2006, in my late-30s I became a trustee of Pride in Brighton and Hove. This time the crowds were very different to those I found myself part of in Brixton all those years ago. It was a very hot sunny day and I rode the Mayor's bus at the end of the parade, my function being to collect the donation buckets from the volunteers. Standing at street level at the door to the bus in order to grab the buckets and dispense water, we passed crowds of people 20 or 30 deep and were able to interact with them. People were hanging off buildings, lamp posts and bus stops, straight and gay alike. They were laughing, waving, pointing and generally making the parade a carnival. One woman held her baby and shouted at us "it's his

first Pride!” Another lady rushed past the security guys and gave me a bunch of plastic flowers. “These are for you” she affirmed “I think you gays are fabulous, well done!” As I was dressed simply in jeans and a t-shirt I have no idea in what way I was fabulous but I am going to assume that she meant I was fabulous just for being me.

4:2 Introduction

In this first chapter of the thesis I explore how queer campaigners helped to motivate language change in the press’ reporting of the queer community. In part this was the result of activism that sought to move the community from a position of oppression to one of empowerment, through voice and protest. In order to undertake this exploration I will frame my analysis of news discourse using Marxist theories that explain linguistic change. In particular, this chapter describes my hypothesis that there are moments of great “compression” and then “release” within discourse which produce the great linguistic change. I argue that these are historical points where news discourse is filled with conflicting voices on a singular subject. In these moments of “compression”, when all sides are relatively well represented, visible and organised, including those who hold historically marginal positions in society, then language is under enormous pressure to change. Significantly, “compression” describes moments in history when this pressure is being applied on meaning and semantics from all sides, for example, in the struggle over accurate queer representations in 1988. I assert that the more pressure there is applied on semantics the greater the spring back at a later date, which produces rapid social and linguistic change. I am using semantics here to describe the meaning of words and groups

of words. I argue that pressure on semantics is a force produced by debate and discussion. It is the fight for the right – to invest words and groups of words, including articles and representations, with meaning. As I have just mentioned, at times when this fight is at it's greatest, I argue, this process becomes dialectical in nature. It is a process of strife and struggle with different groups asserting often polarized meanings;- it is therefore an engine of linguistic and social change produced by the "grinding" and attrition of oppositional voices within discourse.

I will also highlight that, during periods when only one side is properly represented (such as in 1977 and before) or when such "compression" has dissipated (for example, into broad acceptance or tolerance, as in 2005) there will be little semantic change because the engine of that change: attrition and "compression" within discourse is absent. Once one side has won there is a flood, a release, of linguistic change, which is carried through on the pressure that is built up in the compression stage, dissipating the dialectical attrition and leading to the acceptance of new linguistics terms, and in terms of my thesis, social norms.

These social trends and linguistic mechanisms are best illustrated through reference to specific key articles and events from the archive. These circulated around the prosecution of *Gay News* for blasphemy in 1977, the protests around *Clause 28* in 1988, the debate around an equal age of consent in 1994 and, the inclusionary discourse of New Labour by 2005. In addition to the theory of compression and release, this chapter will also explore how the queer community found its voice in the British Press. This, for me, is based on a pluralisation of queer voices across the press and it is a concept I describe more fully later, particularly in relation to events in 1994. However my work here is not a history of the queer community or queer activism in

itself but, rather it, examines their treatment by the mainstream British Press at certain points.

In doing so, it searches for queer strategies of semantic change.

In order to demonstrate these ideas I will firstly layout the work of key Marxist thinkers, including queer activists and theorists. Then, I will explore four periods from the archive to illuminate the discussion drawing on these thinkers, describing “compression” in discourse and highlighting the pluralisation of the rights movement. I will start by exploring the prosecution of *Gay News* for blasphemy in 1977, as well as other associated stories from this period. Next I will explore Press representations of *Section 28* in 1988 before moving on to discuss the age of consent debates in 1994. Finally, I will draw more broadly on articles in 2005 to demonstrate the dissipation of an engine of change.

4:3 Marxist Linguistics and Social Change

This chapter deals with language change surrounding queer people through the prism of Marxist linguistics, I therefore want to set out some of the theoretical ideas I will be using to explore the archive. Marx and Engels themselves made few comments on the subject of language, one of those they did is this taken from *The German Ideology*:

“As regards the individual, it is clear he relates even to language itself only as the natural member of a human community. Language as the product of an individual is an impossibility. But the same holds the property. Language itself is

the product of a community, just as it is in another respect itself the presence of the community, a presence which goes without saying” (Marx, 1965,156)

Marxist philosophy and Marxist linguistic analysis however continued to develop as an important part of an overall Marxist critique coming together into two broad areas. Firstly, in the continued perception of language as part of a speech community, viewing language as an essential process of co-operation and therefore, production. Secondly, Marxist theorists viewed language as an arena of a class struggle through the control of the ideology in words and domination of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie through linguistics (Williams, 1977, Volosinov, 1973, Adler, 1980, Chandler, 2008, Lecercle, 2006). This second area very much underpinned the campaigns and thinking of some early queer rights groups such as the GLF (GLF, 1995) and indeed more modern queer Marxists (Meghani, 2011, Floyd, 1998, Sears, 2005)

Marxist linguists Lecercle’s asserted in 2006 that the:

“spectacular defeats of the Workers’ Movement on a worldwide scale have in no small measure been due to the fact that the class enemy has always won the battle of language and the Workers’ Movement has neglected the terrain”(Lecercle, 2006,13)

broadly summarises how important language became for many Marxist linguists, including the queer Marxist theorists (Floyd, 1998). It illustrates the view that language is a point of struggle between groups and also that it is the dominant group that controls language production and, therefore, the circulation of ideas in the society (Chandler, 2008). The contest over language is then an essential battleground for any movement seeking to fulfil broader social goals.

Language is important because we think, communicate and cooperate through it. For Marxists language is a unifying characteristic of a “speech community”, language is not owned or created by the individual, rather “language is the product of society” (Adler, 1980,2). To say that language is a production of society rather than the individual is a common position in linguistics which was brought to prominence by numerous theorists (Lecerle, 2006,91) which I will explore in chapter 5.

Soviet theorists argued linguistic research itself should be orientated only as a sociological science because of its inherent nature, that it is the social approach to language which is absolute (Tickanov, 2000). Volosinov, in his work *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* asserted that “the individual acquires the system of language from his speech community completely ready-made” (Volosinov, 1973,53). That is to say, the individual does not create language for himself nor does he receive it from another. Instead the “speech community” which exists outside of all individuals offers and receives language in an endless series of links and evolutions. Language, therefore, exists outside of and has a separate but symbiotic existence and identity from both the speaker and the listener. The tropes and narratives used in the press can only come from the speech community and must, therefore, reflect it. This is the

fight in language, to find voice and to exist within the speech community. To become part of the cultural fabric, to be visible, and this can only be done in language.

Volosinov went on to argue that “The immediate social situation and the broader social milieu wholly determine and determine from within [...] the structure of an utterance” (Volosinov, 1973,86). So, man is not free to say anything he wishes, his speech is always directed towards another and is always in context. As I will show later this means that queer activists had to broaden the context of the utterances on identity in order to find liberation. In a living society such as ours the Soviet psychologist, Vygotsky, believed that “words are dynamic rather than static formulations [...] the relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and word to thought” (Lecercle, 2006,140). So change the meaning and the connotation of the word changes the thought.

What then is the first formulation of the speech community in Marxism? The first utterance is a formulation of the need to co-operate to procure immediate needs (Adler, 1980). Therefore, the next defining characteristic of Marxist linguistics is its focus on production. Marxist, Lecercle, comments “the most plausible myth of the origins [of language is] that language is generated out of labour in common – that is, the most primitive forms or relations of production” (Lecercle, 2006,146). Adler asserts that “only language allows the division of labour among several individuals [...] therefore the development of language is insolubly connected with the formation of the process of production” (Adler, 1980,15). Without language man is

unable to co-operate to fulfil his material needs. This sense of human sociality and co-operation in the search for material satisfaction is a central conception within Marxist doctrine.

Volosninov extends this link between language and the social:

“In order for any item, from whatever domain of reality it may come, to enter into the social purview of the group and elicit ideological semiotic reactions, [including the linguistic] it must be associated with the vital socioeconomic prerequisites of the particular group’s existence” (Volosinov, 1973,22)

The Marxist view is to underscore this social nature of language as part of a wider critique of society, “a definition of language is always implicitly or explicitly a definition of human beings in the world” (Williams, 1977,21) and, thus for them, materialist forces.

I want to leave the idea of a speech community and the development of language to aid production to explore the idea of language as an arena of oppression. Marxists argue that oppression is actualised through language and semiotics (Adler, 1980, Alpatov, 2000, Volosinov, 1973). It is again Volosninov’s work which serves to illuminate this concept. For Volosninov “everything ideological produces meaning: it is a sign” (Volosinov, 1973,9) but it is the struggle over the meaning of signs which becomes the class struggle “. Various different classes will use one and the same language. As a result, different orientated accents intersect in every ideological sign. Signs become the arena of class struggle” (Volosinov, 1973,23). In this view, the ideology and the struggle for meaning within language come together as class struggle

but this has broader implications for none class groups including the queer but also others such as those involved in race relations, who also saw it as point of contested ground (Solomos, 2003, Ferguson, 1998)

This struggle over meaning in Marxist linguistic theory is concerned with power and attrition, not co-operation. Adler suggests that, “the ruling thoughts are nothing else but the ideal expression of the ruling material relationships [...] thoughts are reflected onto language as an objective consciousness. One can change language only by changing power relations” (Adler, 1980,112) by challenging the status quo. Alpatov argued “the dynamic, historical changeable system of language is subject to the fundamental law of dialectics, the law of the unity of opposites”(Alpatov, 2000,189) . Thus the struggle over the meaning of words is a dialectical struggle. From these two assertions it is clear that change does not come easily. It must be fought for. It suggests that a period of change will be preceded by a period of conflict over the meaning of the signs.

In *Language and the News*, Fowler defines a theory that he calls the “ideology of consensus” within the press; it is based on the press’s assertion that “everyone believes that...” (Fowler, 1991,48). He continues: “articulating the ideology of consensus is a crucial practice in the press’s management of its relations with government and capital, on the one hand, and with individual readers, on the other. And this is a linguistic practice” (Fowler, 1991,49). Further to this, in *The Language of Newspapers*, Reah says “it could be argued that language is the key factor in the establishment and maintenance of social groups”(Reah, 1998,41) whilst Fairclough

argues “the media has the power to influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, social identities, a signifying power [...] which is largely down to the language used.” (Fairclough, 1995b,2). For example “the wording of immigration as an “influx” or “flood” as opposed to a quest for a new life” (Fairclough, 1992,191). “Language contributes to the domination of some people by others [and ...] language has become the primary means of social control” (Fairclough, 2001,2). In the press this is achieved through the ideological use of language to pursue commercial and political aims.

I will be coming back to these ideas and exploring them fully in the context of the articles from the archive but I want to explore another concept that is central to my thesis and indeed underpins much of the thinking around New Social Movements (NSMs) such as the queer (Scott, 1990). That would be the concept of hegemony.

The development of the idea of hegemony by Marxist theorist Gramsci was a key aspect of his work and has attracted many Marxist and post-Marxist thinkers (Holub, 1992, Ives, 2004, Pozzolini, 1970). Hegemony is the process by which dominant groups come to and hold on to, power within society. It is a process which is fundamental in understanding language change. It is based on a system of consent by subordinate groups to the social thinking and ideas of the ruling class. It is this consent which has protected the “ruling class” from revolution. Hegemony is not a linear goal; rather it is a point of constant negotiation between classes where the dominant classes seek to retain its hegemonic position. It imposes its values by convincing the rest of the community of the natural, common sense nature of its position, thereby projecting cultural and moral leadership (Simon, 1991, Moufee's(ed), 1979). British Prime Minister in the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher herself “developed a genius for presenting her own attitudes, values

and beliefs as if they were beacons of common sense”(Evans, 1992). Part of hegemony is the ability of a ruling group in society to lead using cultural, religious and social artifacts as tools. Although force is occasionally present it is more concerned with the idea of persuasion (Jones, 2006).

Within Gramsci’s thinking on hegemony there are several ideas which I will be applying to my own thesis. Firstly, the idea that a ruling group uses a combination of force and consent to govern and this can be identified in press reporting. Gramsci himself says:

“The intellectuals are the dominant group’s “deputies” exercising the subaltern function of social hegemony and political government. They comprise:

1. The “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function inside the world of production.
 2. The apparatus of state coercive power which “legally” enforces discipline on the groups who do not consent either actively or passively.
- This apparatus is however, constructed for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crises of command and direction when spontaneous consent failed.” (Gramsci, 1988,12)

I will also be exploring the idea of common sense assertions in the press because “common sense is a site on which dominant ideology is constructed” (Simon, 1991,27). Gramsci himself focused closely on the ideas of common sense in his work. He says Common sense is:

“an ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept, and that to refer to common sense as a confirmation of truth is a nonsense. It is possible to state correctly that a certain truth has become part of common sense in order to indicate that it has spread beyond the confines of intellectual groups but all one is doing in that case is making a historical observation on assertion of the rationality of history. In this sense, and used with restraint, the argument has a certain validity, precisely because common sense is crudely conservative and opposed to novelty so that to have succeeded in forcing the introduction of a new truth is a proof that the truth in question is exceptionally evident and capable of great expansion”(Gramsci, 1988,346)

Gramsci was concerned about how revolution occurs; from the perspective of my work I use his ideas to explore how social movements, in this case the queer, change society by transforming the overall public perception, the popular consciousness.

Gramsci said

“Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force(that is to say political consciousness) is the first stage towards a further

progressive self consciousness in which theory and practice become one”(Gramsci, 1988,333)

He went on to consider how a national popular movement (in the context of my thesis, movements such as civil liberties, feminist, peace and queer amongst others) do not succeed if they focus too closely on their own interests alone, he also asserted “Any formation of a national-popular collective will be impossible unless the great mass of peasant farmers burst simultaneously into political life”(Gramsci, 1971,133) and this was only possible by going beyond class considerations.

Finally, for my purposes, Gramsci describes how “A social group can and indeed must already exercise ‘leadership’ before winning governmental power [...] it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power but it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to lead as well”(Gramsci, 1988,249). From my perspective this is when we start to see queer Establishment voices being expressed in the press.

4:4 Press Coverage of the Prosecution of *Gay News* in 1977

I now want to start the exploration of the archive by focusing on Press coverage of the *Gay News* Trial in 1977.

Gay News itself was formed as a function of the radical Gay Liberation Front, although it, “soon cut itself off from its radical past” (Jivani, 1997,28). It was established as a “fortnightly paper

that offered the gay population a distinctive voice” (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991,107). It reached a paid distribution figure of 20,000 copies every two weeks (Weeks, 1990b,221) with the aim of promoting queer self-identity and community.

In 1977, *Gay News* was prosecuted for blasphemy after it published an “obscene” poem that spoke of the “homosexual love of a centurion for the crucified Christ” (Jongh, 1977). This is an excerpt from that poem, *The Love That Dares To Speak Its Name*, by James Kirkup:

“I was alone with him.

For the last time

I kissed his mouth. My tongue

found his, bitter with death.

I licked his wound-

the blood was harsh

For the last time

I laid my lips around the tip

of that great cock, the instrument

of our salvation, our eternal joy.

The shaft, still throbbed, anointed

with death’s final ejaculation

I knew he’d had it off with other men-

with Herod’s guards, with Pontius Pilate,

With John the Baptist, with Paul of Tarsus

with foxy Judas, a great kisser, with

the rest of the Twelve, together and apart.

He loved all men, body, soul and spirit. – even me”

(Kirkup, 1976)

Originally brought to Trial through a private prosecution launched by a Christian campaigner, Mary Whitehouse, the prosecution was taken over by the State.² The prosecution was widely reported in the British Press throughout 1977 and quickly became both a focus for queer activism and, more generally, a test of the British right to freedom of expression (Weeks, 1990b). *Gay News* published the poem in June 1976. Whitehouse began her private prosecution in December 1976 and the paper and its editor were found guilty in July 1977. Dennis Lemon, the editor of *Gay News*, was fined £1000 with costs of £500 and forced to pay Whitehouse’s costs. He also received a suspended sentence of 9 months. The archive of national newspapers offers few other articles concerning the queer community in 1977. Whilst they do exist and indeed many are used in this thesis, there is an explosion of articles around this story. Thus, the press reporting of this Trial offers a key insight into how society viewed and responded to a newly legalised and increasingly visible queer culture and community during the late 1970s.

Overall, my research shows that British newspapers attitude to the case split broadly into four groups. The first group, that of the queer print media used the case as a rallying call. They used it to raise funds for the Lemon defence and also to raise awareness within the broader queer community. Examining the editions of *Gay News* from this period it quickly becomes evident that the Trial of *Gay News* itself is the paper’s central and overriding focus. In the second group,

² Later, in chapter 8 I will examine how the hegemonic power of Christians to take such actions was vastly, if not completely, diminished over the period.

the local Press, *The Llanelli Star* maintains, as we saw in chapter 4, a complete silence on the matter despite regularly reporting national news. *The Argus*, however, reports freely on the Trial. The remaining groups split into a small minority that see the Trial as a focus for free speech, such as *the Guardian*, whilst the majority (which includes *The Mail* plus both the tabloids under study *The Mirror* and *The Sun*) most definitely place themselves alongside the prosecution, in seeing a need to protect traditional Christian society from subversion by reprehensible queer.

One response, taken from the *Daily Mail* (Unknown, 1977e) typifies the attitude that much of the British Press adopted when dealing with queer matters at the time. Entitled, 'Gay News poem on Christ is Blasphemy', the article includes the following excerpt:

"The homosexuals' newspaper *Gay News* and its editor Dennis Lemon were found guilty of blasphemous libel last night... after hearing the verdict Mrs Whitehouse said 'I am rejoicing that the public in this country have made it clear through the jury that this material is blasphemous' (Unknown, 1977e)

In this article the queer is set apart as "other" by the use of the definite article to exclude and by Mrs Whitehouse's claim that the jury stands for the country. Lemon here is immediately disempowered by the paper's refusal to award the queer subject the use of the title "Mr" and using his familiar first name, whilst doing the opposite to the non-Queer subject, Whitehouse. The defeated queer is labelled as "blasphemous" and the victor (in the style of a Christian saint) as "rejoicing". Again this excerpt taken from *The Mirror* at the time:

“Gay News the homosexual newspaper published ‘unlawfully and wickedly’ a blasphemous libel...His poem said that Christ had a homosexual orgy with the Twelve Apostles. It also said that Christ has unnatural relations” (Glenton and Hampson, 1977)

As these articles illustrate, in 1977 there are few positive words about queer people to be found in the mainstream Press at this time, instead there is often silence as I discussed in chapter 5.

In many different articles from the archive in 1977 queer people are defined in ways that create the “anti-gay” and “heterosexist” sentiment expressed by Shidlo. Nowhere in the press of 1977 are queer people given a voice, or allowed to speak for themselves. Instead they are paraphrased and censored which is a reflection of their overall position in society at that time

Through such articles, we begin to see clearly that queer people are promoted as other, as different. They are not given room to defend or define themselves and, hence, there is little language change at this time. There are a number of scholars who discuss silence and queerness such as *Out of Place* edited by Kuntsman and Miyake (Kuntsman and Miyake, 2008) but I want to use Sanderson in *Mediawatch* (Sanderson, 1995c) which specifically concentrates on queer issues in the press. He explores a history of silence used against queer folk in the British Media since 1885, which he describes as “generations of silence” (Sanderson, 1995c). He emphasises my own findings when he says “we were written about, rather than allowed to speak for ourselves” throughout the 1970s and 1980s” (Sanderson, 1995a).

I want now to begin my analysis of language by examining the words used to describe queer people in the press around this time and the Marxist idea of oppression in language. I want to then underline press recordings of how different facets of society came together to oppress the queer person in 1977 using ideas of the speech community, before finally exploring ideas of ideological conflict and dialectical change. While predominantly using a set of articles that focus on the *Gay News Trial* in 1977 I will also draw on a second set of articles from the time that focus on the employment rights of queer people in 1977 to illustrate my ideas concerning co-operation in society. Overall, I am drawing on the archive to illustrate the overall disempowerment of queer people in 1977 which feeds into the idea of compression at a later date.

Before this Trial in 1977 early queer activists at the start of the decade had already identified words as one of the central methods of oppression, for example, the Gay Liberation Front stated in its manifesto of 1971 that:

“Words – anti-homosexual morality and ideology, at every level of society, manifest themselves in a special vocabulary for denigrating gay people. There is abuse like ‘pansy’, ‘fairy’, ‘lesbo’ [...] there are words like ‘sick’, ‘bent’ and ‘neurotic’ for destroying the credence of gay people. But there are no positive words. The ideological intent of our language makes it very clear that the generation of words and meanings is, at the moment, in the hands of the enemy” (Power, 1995,318).

Two decades later during 1993 Dyer also wrote:

“White people, heterosexuals, the able-bodied, do not generally go around worrying over what to call themselves and have themselves called. Having a word for oneself and one’s group, making a politics out of what that word should be, draws attention to and also reproduces one’s marginality, confirms one’s place outside power and thus outside the mechanisms of change.”(Dyer, 1993,9)

The data analysis from this research affirms the GLF’s and Dyer’s positions. Across all the news stories concerning queer people in 1977, the language used to describe queer subjects and queer life was very derogatory. Terms such as “wicked”, “promiscuous”, “vile”, “obscene” and “unhealthy” “buggers” are regularly quoted and reproduced hidden within broader comments appearing in articles that mention queer/homosexual lives during this year. Meanwhile, subjects and institutions that are seen as opposing queer people in these stories are variously described as “campaigners”, “Christian”, “jubilant”, “tolerant”, “conscientious” and “people”. Illustrative of the point is ‘Gay News Poem on Sex and Christ is Blasphemy’ from *The Mail* in 1977. It asserts:

“The prosecution started by Mrs Whitehouse and taken over by the Crown said the poem was so vile that it would be hard for even the most perverted imagination to conjure up anything worse”(Unknown, 1977e)

My data analysis of the archive demonstrates that “people” as a term is never associated with queer persons in the articles I studied from 1977; only from 1988 does it make a gradual appearance where it is used once by the *Pink Press*. In 1994 it is associated four times by both the queer *Press* and the broadsheets. However, by 2005 it is associated widely, a total of

twenty times across all elements of the press. This positive trend is one that can be seen with a number of associate words such as “love”. This is a repositioning within Press discourse of the queer person from a vilified “other”, almost an animal, into a real caring individual on par with the rest of society.

In this manner the queer community in 1977 is positioned as not just existing outside of the mainstream, but also as a dangerous threat to the mainstream. The individual queer person may not be able to resist such self-labelling of being a non-person. Leading to guilt, shame and self-censorship, as the GLF also argued in the early 1970s, queer people needed to “free our heads” from oppression, of which the language of the press is one such instrument. (Power, 1995,328). This is a convergence between the words used and reported about queer people in 1977 and the ideas of language as a point of ideological conflict I noted above (Volosinov, 1973).

To further demonstrate, in *The Argus* in 1977, queer people are described as “unhealthy and wicked”. Reporting on the conclusion of the blasphemy Trial the paper quotes the Judge in order to add credence to the newspaper’s attitudes towards queer people:

“he [the Judge] hoped their [the jury’s] verdict showed the pendulum of public opinion was beginning to swing to a more healthy climate[...] perhaps being a little too optimistic in this era of obscenity” (Unknown, 1977)

It does not matter in viewing language as a site of oppression whether the language is used or reported. Its effect on the speech community is the same. It has the same meanings feeding into broader descriptions (Adler, 1980, Lecerclé, 2006, Volosinov,

1973). Thus this sort of reporting highlights just how disempowered the gay community is. In *The Mail* from 1977 queer folk are described as “vile and perverted” (Unknown, 1977e) and in *The Sun* 1977 the idea that queer people are an unholy minority is underlined. It labelled them as a wicked “other” and said that queer people may only speak provided they do not offend:

“Christ may have been homosexual” it asserts counter intuitively “You can say it provided you do it so as not to offend the vast majority of people who respect Christ” (Walker, 1977).

Ironically in a the *Gay News* Trial, a Trial that centres on freedom of speech, queer people are denied a voice in the British Press and are prevented from standing up against that structure of subjugation. They remain silent: unquoted, un-consulted and misrepresented.

Queerness, for example, is reduced to a painful sexual act by the prosecution in the *Gay News* case, and then reported across the press as an objective fact. This example from *The Guardian* at the time:

“it was a poem about buggery from start to finish, or connections made between one man and another. Buggery is not love. It is about injuries, lust and pain” asserts counsel *Mr John Smyth* in *The Guardian* (Jongh, 1977).

This quote is illustrative of assertions made by people about the queer minority without any ostensive experience of the queer community. Such assertions pepper the archive, appearing as “fact”. Sanderson says that news stories surrounding queer people are frequently manipulated

by the “omission of balancing data”(Sanderson, 1995c,122) whilst Bell asserts that the “facts are defined by journalists”(Bell, 1991).

Reading these articles, one would be forgiven for believing that queer people had remained silent about the blasphemy Trial, such was their treatment by the mainstream press. Queers were a vocal minority who had a lot to say during the process of the Trial (Mason, 1977), as the following quote from *Gay News* itself demonstrates. Ultimately it was left to the gay Press (meaning *Gay News*) to provide any sense of an alternative view of the Trial and a voice for those who were repeatedly denied one by the mainstream reporting:

“The Judge refused to allow most of the defence’s witness to appear” (although he did interrupt to provide the cricket score). “The jury did not need the literary witnesses to explain the poem” he said “nor did they need religious and theological witnesses to explain the doctrinal tenets of Christianity” (Mason, 1977).

It is clear from oral and newspaper histories, (Power, 1995, Weeks, 1990b) that queer people did have a great deal to contribute to the discussion regarding the blasphemy Trial. Yet analysis of the archive demonstrates that only the Christian, middleclass “anti-porn campaigner”, Mary Whitehouse, and the prosecution are given considerable room to speak freely. *The Mirror’s* ‘Gay News Guilty of Blasphemy’ (Glenton and Hampson, 1977) quotation demonstrates this:

“I am tempted to say what I really feel and that is quite simply “Thank God”. I say that because there has been an enormous amount of prayer gone up about this case though out this week. What I saw in that poem was the re-crucifixion of

Christ in the 20th century. And as someone bought up in the love of Christ I would have felt a traitor if I had not taken the action I did.”

(Glenton and Hampson, 1977)

The queer subject is reduced to a couple of words “shocked” and “disappointed” at the end of the story.

This is a narrative reporting structure that is repeated over and over in the tabloids and which facilitates a misrepresentation of queer people which obstructs change.

Patterns emerge across the press. For example in 1977 within the broadsheets there is more considered and balanced reporting of both sides. Surprisingly, maybe, the most linguistically tolerant is *The Times* (Jongh, 1977) which quotes at length from the defence argument and marginalizes the prosecution statement. It says:

“A poem and illustration in *Gay News*, the newspaper for homosexuals, which is alleged to have been a blasphemous libel, was no lavatory limerick, Mr Geoffery Robinson for the defence told the jury... ‘this is a genuine expression of how one man came to love god’... ‘The prosecution is seeking to use the criminal law to protect society from one man’s imagination. What sort of society is it that needs protection from an artist’s search for the truth about the faith by which we live”(Jongh, 1977)

However, even here the voice of the queer person is absent. Instead, authority figures in the form of defence barristers speak for them and rules are enforced around them.

As a record of a wider society, analysis of the newspaper articles of 1977 illustrate a social conflict within society concerning queerness and its challenges to tradition. The fight in language was to find a voice and to exist within the broader speech community of the 70s, to become part of the cultural fabric, in order to be visible and accurately represented and thereby effect change. It is an ideological conflict which is dialectical in nature, focused on the meaning of words and feeding into the broader speech community.

I believe that the prosecution of *Gay News* was an act of oppression by society which acts as a metonym for the oppression of the whole queer community in 1977. However, just as the Stonewall Riots in the USA galvanised an emboldened (and embattled) queer community, so the *Gay News* Trial, I argue, had the same effect here. It galvanised a disparate community, providing a cause and campaign in which to coalesce. It did this through fundraising, marches and protest adverts. In doing so, I believe that this Trial had the opposite effect to the one intended. I want to continue to explore this co-operation in civil society by non-Queer parties in the next few paragraphs.

The queer strategy against the kinds of oppression and censorship witnessed in the reporting of the *Gay News* Trial was based on the principles of increasing solidarity and visibility. Indeed, the strength of the queer Rights Movement has long been based on solidarity with other queer people “it was a touchstone of the involvement in the GLF [therefore] that you should come out” asserts Weeks (Weeks, 1990b,191). I want to explore this strategy in a wider context by examining two different articles that concern the employment rights of queer individuals in the 1970s and highlight this need for co-operation, which led to the formation of a number of Gramscian popular movements. I will come back to the Trail of *Gay News* but I want to make a

short departure to explore some the very few other queer articles in the press at the time in order to bring the discussion into broader focus.

The record shows that in the press of 1977 two different forms of co-operation were being illustrated: queer and non-Queer. The queer community co-operated in order to achieve together materially what they are unable to achieve individually because of prejudice: shelter, work and community, even to resist oppression and eventually force change in wider society. As demonstrated by two articles from different newspapers: in *Dismissal Over Lesbian Badge Upheld* (Unknown, 1977d) taken from *The Times* (a story which was also reported in *The Mirror* at the time (Unknown, 1977h)) and in *Anti-Litter Man Fired 'Because I Am Gay'* from *The Argus* (Unknown, 1977a) we see articulated the difficulties of being openly queer in 1977, that of being simply able to work and receive the protection of the law. In both cases, the queer person is removed from their job for being queer: simply for being brave enough to wear a queer badge, in the first, or to have the audacity to organise a picnic for queer folk, in the second, to be part of the “gay scene”(Unknown, 1977a)

The Times begins:

“The dismissal of Louise Boychuk for insisting on wearing at work her Gay Liberation badge proclaiming ‘Lesbians ignite’ was upheld by the Employment Appeal Tribunal. It ruled that employers had a limited right to instruct an employee not to wear a sign or symbol that could be *expected* to offend fellow employees and customers” [my emphasis] (Unknown, 1977d)

The second from *the Argus* is even more oppressive in that the queer person is sacked for activities in his spare time, i.e just for being a queer individual. The Argus says:

“Gay football referee Norman Redman today alleged he was given his marching orders by Brighton based Keep Britain Tidy group because he is a homosexual...

Mr David Lewis told him he would have to resign as public relations and promotions assistant as his involvement on the gay scene was “unacceptable”

(Unknown, 1977a)

Whilst the queer woman in the first article sports a radical GLF badge – “lesbians ignite”, the queer man in the second was a member of the more moderate Campaign for Homosexual Equality or CHE. The archive shows that to be an openly queer person in 1977 demanded co-operation with other queer persons for economic and social survival. Time and time again, the archive demonstrates, the reaction against any form of overt queerness was to lose ones job, home and family. In the end queer folk were often left with only each other and were, therefore, forced to co-operate with each other to survive (Power, 1995). In drawing together they also achieved a critical mass, forming groups such as the GLF and CHE, exchanging ideas and, ultimately, building communities. They did this by raising consciousness in the Gramscian fashion.

Both of the relatively simple acts of speech, of attempts at vocalisation by queer people above, were met with a strong reaction from society to my mind this amounts to an invite to self-censor which is supported by the weight of the Law. Examination of all the articles from the archive in this period demonstrates that in both cases society and the state co-operate with

each other to silence and disenfranchise the queer person. In these two particular cases the employer sacks and the tribunal supports, inviting queer people to self-censor in order to keep their jobs. This invitation to self redaction is seen in many articles as I will discuss in chapter 5. Paradoxically, this thesis argues, such pressure ultimately leads to liberation by forcing queer people to co-operate and communicate with each other because they could be publically vocal and take a leadership role within broader society. However, it is not a process that happened quickly.

Returning to the Trial of *Gay News*, it is clear that not only in employment tribunals but also in court, does the dominant group in the press in 1977 co-operate in an organised fashion to subjugate the queer person. This is entirely in line with Gramscian ideas of coercion and force. In the case of *Gay News*, the prosecution was “*initiated* by veteran anti-porn crusader, Mrs Mary Whitehouse, and then *taken over* by the Crown” (Walker, 1977) [my emphasis]. The Judge seeks to direct the jury in a number of oppressive ways, not least when asked if its editor and *Gay News* may be tried separately. He replies “you may take the view that they stand or fall together” (Jongh, 1977). The press is selective and biased in quoting actors who support the heteronormative status quo. However, the queer community also co-operate within itself, organising funds to fight in court against this oppression (Mason, 1977, Power, 1995). In fact, it is a constant feature of *Gay News* which reports frequently not only on the fundraising efforts, but also the tactics of the opposition. For example, in its edition of the 14th July 1977 is a piece entitled ‘*YOU DID IT! £21,000*’ it reports that:

“At the time this is being written, the Trial is still going on and we can’t give an accurate figure for the state of the fund. But, approximately, the sum now stands

at £21,000. The days have been pretty long at the Old Bailey – and things haven't been all that relaxing at the office either (tufts of hair pulled from heads clogging typewriters, etc). But whatever happens, we are not going to give up - we cannot give up. So please keep wishing us luck. Meanwhile our sincere thanks to the following organisations and groups..."(Mason, 1977)

For me the archive demonstrates that co-operation within this subaltern community was an essential element of change but it does not require the whole of society to engage with them. There is, however, in news articles from the archive a real sense of the opposite, of ideological conflict, of attrition between opposing groups which in the long term was shown to promote language change (Volosinov, 1973). I would like to examine these ideas of change for dialectical attrition next.

The string of articles in the mainstream Press surrounding *Gay News'* prosecution for blasphemy should be understood within the historic-political dialectical process of the time which this thesis asserts: that of a Judeo-Christian state actively seeking to suppress queerness and queer groups using ideology, whilst queer people do the opposite through revolutionary actions or other "subversive" activities such as radical drag, blitzing a meeting of the evangelical Christian Movement, the Festival of Light, of which Mary Whitehouse was a member, (Power, 1995). queer groups, then, were beginning to challenge both Christian ideology and traditional power structures within the state (Weeks, 1990b, Power, 1995, Jeffery-Poulter, 1991). This Trial of a queer paper for blasphemy, ultimately by the state, can be seen as a repressive reaction. Mainstream newspapers took an active role in disseminating this repressive message beyond that surrounding the Trial. The two articles concerning employment rights demonstrate this

repressive message, too. All these articles and many others from the archive highlight the difficulties of being an openly queer person in 1977 and repeating of a repressive theme.

In the next few paragraphs I want to examine a few Marxist perspectives in order to explore the social changes that were taking place and to explain why the gay community were so oppressed. This can be explained from a Marxist perspective as repression by the state and from the Gramscian as coercion. For Althusser

“The state is explicitly conceived as a repressive apparatus. The state is a ‘machine’ of repression which enables the ruling classes to ensure domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion” (Althusser, 1984,11)

In this way, the state is a vehicle of domination and exploitation of one group of people by another in order to exploit the subjugated group for the benefit of the other. In classical Marxism this involves the extraction of surplus value by the bourgeoisie. In queer Marxism it is the idea that sexually dissident people are oppressed in order to harness them into a productive social model which is best facilitated by marriage and children (Spitzer, 1975). Any citizen not harnessed to this model, such as a queer individual, is labelled and processed as “deviant”. Thus the press articulations in 1977 can be seen as a form of what Spitzer calls “deviant processing”(Spitzer, 1975). This a process by which society labels and constrains those who step outside the dominant productive model in order to bring them back into “order” or to dismiss them as criminal or sick. For Marxists, the issue of sex between classes and sexual morality as a whole is a class issue because sexuality is one weapon in class war, (Kollantai,

1996,254) a war that centres on conceptions of family and which one sees reported in the press as the suppression of the queer minority. For many Marxist theorists and the GLF it is the bourgeois family unit which is the site of oppression, operating as an extension of patriarchal property rights (Kollantai, 1996). The Los Angeles Research Group insist that the traditional nuclear family is a site of oppression that perpetuates ideology through values, “the purpose of the bourgeois family is to first of all socialise children into understanding and accepting class relations” (1996,124). Consistently in the archive across the period of my study one see the family unit as being portrayed as threatened by the existence of the queer community and Press articulations against this perceived threat. For example in ‘Row Over Gay Pay for School Children’ which reports how:

“A plan for school children to see a play about homosexuals started a row yesterday [...] Fifth and sixth-formers will be invited to attend the theatre to discuss their ‘prejudices’ with their teachers before watching the play. [...] Dr Boyson, Tory MP for North Brent said “Fifth and sixth-formers should be in school and not playing around with homosexual matters”(Unknown, 1977i, 13)

In its manifesto of 1971 the GLF stated that “we face the prejudice, hostility and violence of straight society” (GLF, 1995). The court cases and newspaper articles are, I am arguing, the state’s response to an emergent queer voice.

Language, the archive demonstrates, reflects the social experience of the time. As Volosinov argues “the immediate social situation and the broader social milieu wholly determine and

determine from within [...] the structure of an utterance” (Volosinov, 1973,86). A human is not free to say anything he wishes; his speech is always directed towards another and is always in context. The research demonstrates that in the 1970s, the immediate social situation envisaged the queer community as the outsider, unable to speak in modern society. Misrepresented and disempowered. Further, the archive demonstrates that this was reflected in the language of the press at the time, both queer and non-Queer, tabloid or broadsheet (Glenton and Hampson, 1977, Mason, 1977, Unknown, 1977e, Jongh, 1977). To promote change the queer community had to change the language for ideological change which led to social conflict.

Time and time again, this thesis argues, the queer community fought a war for the meaning of words. It was a war that began in the 1970s, just after the legalisation of a limited number of queer acts between men, at a time that queer people were first acquiring a voice. This is a linguistic battle, a war of words and ideas. The first prerequisite to enter the field is a voice. It is a conflict played out in the media, an arena that is defined and constructed by language.

Winning this battle was fundamental to the normalisation and assimilation process and its ebb and flow can be seen across the period under investigation in this thesis.

Social and ideological struggle within Marxist theory is concerned with constant attrition between different elements in society, not co-operation. It is this I want to focus on now because it leads into the idea of compression in language. These struggles over signs are dialectical in nature (Volosinov, 1973, Lecercle, 2006). For Deleuze and Guattari “The object of interlocation”, language and the semantic meaning of words “is therefore not a co-operative exchange of information but [concerned with] establishing power relations” (Lecercle, 2006,124). Tickanove cites Marxist linguists Mucnnik and Panov who argue that “the dynamic,

historical changeable system of language is subject to the fundamental law of dialectics, the law of the unity of opposites” (Tickanov, 2000,189). Dialectical materialism is based on change through the conflict of opposing forces and is demonstrated by the archive surrounding the queer community. An example is the essential fight by the queer community for the use of the term “gay” rather than the medicalised “homosexual”. Analysis of the data from the articles shows that a decreasing use of the term “homosexual(s) or homosexuality: 94 uses in 1977, 79 uses in 1988, 61 uses in 1994 and 42 uses in 2005. However “gay(s)” shows the opposite trend 58: uses in 1977, 83 uses in 1988, 118 uses in 1994 and 178 uses in 2005. This has been a dialectical struggle because it has been based in an attrition of ideologies. On one hand press reporting has evidenced the determined use of some actors in reports to use the term “homosexual” whilst the queer actors have always fought to use the term “gay” and are often ignored.

This can be demonstrated in the queer ideological struggle that is being exhibited in all of the articles from the archive, the ideological struggle over signs. One such struggle is over the naming of queer people, and the movement from the medicalised term “homosexual” to the politically-engaged “gay”. The right to define oneself and ones community through language that is affirmative and ‘owned’ by the community is perhaps one of the most fundamental struggles over language facing a marginalised people. It is mirrored in other minority struggles such as those from the disabled or Afro-Caribbean communities (Barton, 1996, Stable, 2006).

Jivani identifies this battle over (self)definition when he references an article from in *The People* from the early 1970s that included the headline ‘They Call This Gay But We Have Another Word For It –Urgh’ (Jivani, 1997,162). He identifies how the adoption of the term “gay” by queer

people lead to a stream of letters to the newspapers about the ‘hijacking’ of this term by homosexuals (Jivani, 1997). This battle over naming the queer subject is not just confined to the term “gay”. Many other queer terms including the term “queer” have also been fought over in this decades long battle. In the GLF’s manifesto of 1971 there is a quote from *The Sunday Times* in February of that year, which highlights the pejorative use of “queer” from just before the start of the study. It is a story concerning “queer bashing”:

“Afterwards a boy from the same estate said: ‘when you’re hitting a queer, you don’t think you’re doing wrong. You think you’re doing good. If you want money off a queer, you can get it off him – there’s nothing to be scared of from the law ‘cause you know they won’t go to the law’ (Power, 1995,318).

It is not only in this article that one finds the term queer in the 1970s. It is spread across society and therefore reflected in the press (Irwin, 1977, Palmer, 1970, Unknown, 1977, et al). Even this powerfully pejorative term, used to such effect to oppress queer ideology and people in the past, has been rehabilitated in this thesis and in many others (Floyd, 1998, Morland and Willox, 2005, Kirsch, 2000, Warner, 1993) and become ideologically liberated. As Jagose says:

“Once the term ‘Queer’ was, at best, slang for homosexual, at worst, a term of homophobic abuse. In recent years ‘queer’ has come to be used differently, sometimes as an umbrella term for a coalition of culturally marginalised sexual self-identifications and at other times a nascent theoretical model” (Jagose, 1996,1)

These are a few of the contested signs surrounding the queer community but it is the power to invest that sign with meaning that is the real ideological fight. GLF's vision, organisation and commitment in this regard cannot be underplayed. As Michael Mason says, "adopting the word 'gay' proved to be a small piece of political genius on the part of the GLF [...] for although it drew the disingenuous protest that we robbed the English language of an innocent flower, headline writers could not long resist the connivance of the three letter word" (Power, 1995,123). This, the smallest of functions of sub-editing, may have done much to drive forward the language around the queer community and win the ideological and linguistic battle. It is certainly demonstrated in this research that the press, time and again, particularly in the 1970s newspapers, began to use "gay" in the headline and then predominantly "homosexual" in the body of the text (Unknown, 1977b), particularly more conservative papers such as *The Mail* and by 2005 usually across the whole text (Tate, 2005). These two articles, both from *The Mail*, are typical of the trend, in 'Row Over Gay Play for School Children' (Unknown, 1977i) one sees the use of the term "gay" in the title but only homosexual is used in the body of the text. By 2005, in 'Elton To Wed At Windsor as 24,000 Gays Name The Day' (Lampert and Doughty, 2005), we see the use of "gay" throughout the text. The use of "gay" proved to have both ideological and editorial efficient uses and the resulting synthesis between the two, drove language change in the press and also in the speech community, thus changing the characteristics of thought in that speech community. Its initial use acted as an intellectual and social wedge driving the adoption of the term "gay" into the broader language community and winning that ideological battle and promoting the success of others.

Dialectical materialism in language (Lecercle, 2006, Volosinov, 1973) suggests, for me, that changes will happen when there is most attrition between different social groups within the speech community. It is when there is most polarization, the greatest volume of debate and the largest number of social issues that language comes under the most pressure to change such as in 1988.

Before the 1970s there was a wholly uneven struggle because the queer person, who had virtually no voice in the mainstream press outside of the occasional voyeuristic human interest story, was being marginalised and prosecuted under the law. Following law reform in 1967, queer people were able to begin to find their voice in public, via both the mainstream press and the formation of a gay print media industry. As this occurred the imbalance began to be addressed - and the fight for ideological acceptance entered a new phase. Adler supports this thinking when he writes that “the ruling thoughts are nothing else but the ideal expression of the ruling material relationships [...] thoughts are reflected onto language as an objective consciousness. One can change language only by changing power relations” (Adler, 1980, 22).

A Marxist theoretical framework envisages language as communal in nature, a community record of the ideological and social activities of a community. Much like Foucault (Foucault, 1977, Foucault, 1978), power and domination are essential elements of the critique as are the ensuing struggles over meaning and signs (Lecercle, 2006, Volosinov, 1973, Adler, 1980). This theoretical framework considers change to be an outcome of a period of painful and protracted dialectical social and linguistic struggle and one would expect this to be reflected in the newspaper records. It suggests that times of most attrition or most compression upon signs will subsequently produce the most change. I want to explore these periods of compression which

lead to significant change later in the next data set because it is in 1988 that I have found the most compression.

4.5 1988 a point of compression on language

As I mentioned, in 1977 there were few stories about queer people but by 1988 there was a veritable explosion. There was much reporting of protest from queer groups, much reporting of polarized heated debate and many investigations of suppressed sexualities, mainly of priests which I will discuss in Chapter 8. The queer press had grown beyond a single newspaper with a single voice and the queer movement was very visible and indeed very vocal. Outside of queer sexualities, in the 1980s queer people in the UK, as reported in the press, faced two specific issues – one legal, concerning *section 28*, and the other medical, concerning HIV/AIDS. These concerns were used as “wedge issues” splitting the population and facilitating the oppression and curtailing queer rights and freedoms. Thus 1988 was again a period of social oppression against queer people (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991, Robinson, 2007).

When one counts the sheer number of articles in the archive, the polarization of the voices and nature of the news stories themselves then 1988 is the moment when most pressure is applied on semantics during the period under question. One moves from 1977 when queer people are relatively disempowered and silenced to a process of change to a point after 1988 when we move into a period of normalization

For example, prior to 1988 the archive demonstrates that the debate in the press, about what the final social settlement for the queer community within broader society should look like, is largely confined to within the emergent queer community itself. By 1988 this debate

concerning integration has expanded and one sees a large press reaction concerning it. A real, if often vitriolic, engagement, which produces a large amount of articles, of which only a few are used here, texts and opinion from both sides, a dialogue with multiple empowered players such as different parts of the queer community, different opinion makers in the press and different political groupings. This is simply not present in my research before 1988. I want to begin by exploring *Section 28* and Press reporting surrounding it by exploring its conception in context.

Whilst the 1970s saw the birth of serious queer campaigning (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991), the 1980s saw sustained, vocal and energetic pressure for equal rights and LGBT equality within the UK (Jivani, 1997). As I mentioned, the 1980s provided the press with two key opportunities to engage with queer people and queer communities beyond salacious scandal. Alongside these key events, there were other queer central stories that attracted Press attention such as *The Spanner Case* in 1987 which centred on sixteen men's ability to consent to queer Sado-Masochistic sex.

The advent of HIV/AIDS around 1984 and the burgeoning crisis that loomed on the horizon was joined in December 1987 by the inclusion of a new clause (initially numbered 27) in the *Local Government Act*. This clause was initially tabled by Conservative MP Jill Knight but it failed due to the 1987 general election. It was later reintroduced by David Wilshire on 2nd December, 1987. It stated that:

"a local authority shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the

teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship”(Government, 1988)

With regard to *Section 28*, Conservative values and political rhetoric throughout the 1980s on AIDS, queerness and left wing councils can be demonstrated to have lead to the clause (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991). Jeffery-Poulter says:

“It was the Prime Minister herself who signalled the main assault on the gay rights policies of Labour councils by pouring scorn on the very notion of gay equality”(Jeffery-Poulter, 1991,218)

This discourse can be seen to construct the following quote from Thatcher’s speech to the Conservative Party Conference of 1987 which was widely reported in the press. Here she foregrounds a supposed link between the Labour Left, their education policies and queerness, prefacing the formation of the anti-Queer legislation *Section 28* in 1987.

“And in the inner cities—where youngsters must have a decent education if they are to have a better future—that opportunity is all too often snatched from them by hard left education authorities and extremist teachers. And children who need to be able to count and multiply are learning anti-racist mathematics—whatever that may be. Children who need to be able to express themselves in clear English are being taught

political slogans. Children who need to be taught to respect traditional moral values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay.”(Thatcher, 1987)

This is the continued rhetoric of exclusion, so familiar in the 1970s; it clearly defines “the Left” and “the teacher” with the queer as other, something alien and subversive to the traditional moral Christian family values. To devote this amount of time to one subject in a Prime Ministerial key note speech, this thesis argues, is indicative of the political value that was placed upon the suppression of queerness. This rhetoric bleeds into the tabloid Press discourse of the time, with the headline ‘When The Gays Have to Shut Up’ (published by *The Sun* on 10th February 1988) as a prime example. This article clearly reflects the same overall anti-Queer – and self-perpetuating discourse:

“Homosexual practice is condemned in the Bible but Homosexuals no longer campaign merely for the right to be left alone or regarded as equals, many now regard themselves as superior [...] Above all they want to go into schools and make known to children the homosexual way of life [...] The mass of people have sympathy and understanding for homosexuals. They want them to be left alone. Equally, they want the homosexuals to leave them alone” (Editorial, 1988,6)

This newspaper article acts to exclude queer people as a faceless and threatening horde bent on the destruction of society and the molestation of children and it frames it in a way that

appeals to common sense. It brooks no argument. There is an “us” –the civilised child-rearing members of society - and a “them”.

It has a very close connection with the Thatcherite appeal to “traditional moral values” (Thatcher, 1987) and its talk of “homosexual practice” as condemned by the Bible, a foundation of British values. Whilst Thatcher talks of an “inalienable right to be gay” the paper asserts that “many now regard themselves as superior. Thatcher speaks of children being taught to be gay and *The Sun* says an “opportunity to go into schools” (Unknown, 1988j,6).

These were a part of Tory rhetoric in 1988 (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991) and were projected through an appeal to common sense as “fact”: that there are “hard Left” or “loony Left councils” bent on the queer indoctrination of children, even though no such process was occurring (Weeks, 1990a). It creates a linguistic reality which does not exist. “Common sense” positions taken by the ruling class in order to manipulate and control the subordinate class are very much part of Gramscian theoretical critique. Thatcher used common sense many times. This is an example from her 1980 Conservative party conference speech:

“I prefer to believe that certain lessons have been learnt from experience, that we are coming, slowly, painfully, to an autumn of understanding. And I hope that it will be followed by a winter of common sense. If it is not, we shall not be—diverted from our course.” (Thatcher, 1980)

This connects “common sense” with the perceived failure of the left. Her “common sense” positions on queer identities are rearticulated in *The Sun*’s article in two ways. Firstly, through the assertion that “they want grants from local councils for meeting places” –suggesting that queer people are a homogenised group and are only interested in grants. Secondly, *The Sun* undermined Labour’s hegemonic authority by positioning the whole piece next to a comically erotic cartoon of Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, and Mandy Mudd, the former chairman of Tottenham Labour Party and champion of queer rights, thus making the negative and unfounded connection between the protection of children and Labour policies. This synthesis is at the heart of hegemonic struggle, the linguistic articulation of political positions and their reflection in discourses. As Fairclough points out, “Politics and government are social practices in which language is a salient feature” (Fairclough, 2000,155). Newspapers, in making and reinforcing linguistic – and, indeed, visual – connections, affect social practice and take hegemonic positions. In this way, they facilitate the position of some in authority and act as a record of such facilitation. Frequently in the press in 1988 queer people are presented, like the “loony left” council, as being “out of control,” “crackpot”, “insane”, when such councils had merely adopted “gay rights as part of a general anti-discrimination policy”(Jeffery-Poulter, 1991,203)

Much like 1977, although linguistically oppressed in 1988, the queer community organised and fought back. In fact, *Capital Gay* concluded that “ we have seen the coming of age of the Gay and Lesbian movement”(Jeffery-Poulter, 1991,234) in its fight against *section 28*. As with the prosecution of *Gay News*, these political and Press articulations galvanised queer resistance, and *Section 28* would become a central topic for the queer, if not the straight Press during the

period. Again, repression is illustrated to be a driver of social change because it forces co-operation within the minority community and keeps the subject in the forefront of the wider speech community's awareness.

The Sun may have demanded that they be silent in its headline 'When the gays have to shut up' (Editorial, 1988) but many queer people in the 1980s did no such thing. They, much like their predecessors in the GLF and early queer movements, roared back with their activities often reported in the press. For example when, "three screaming lesbians abseiled into the House of Lords on ropes [...] as elderly peers looked on in amazement" (Potter, 1988). Time and time again queer folk, as Michael Cashman asserts, fought for their "rights as human beings" (Jongh, 1988). They did this against an atmosphere that had "a smell of Weimar" about it, prompting Bernard Levin of *The Times* to title one of his opinion pieces 'Bring on the Gaystapo' (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991).

The archive demonstrates considerable organised resistance to the clause. This active resistance by queer groups was also reported in the mainstream Press however, there is then a reaction by some elements of the press against this resistance, as this article from *The Mail* published on 3rd May 1988 demonstrates:

"Police alert as gay activists demand: 'Vote for us or die' [...] police protection has been offered to 28 peers after death threats from activists demanding changes to the Governments legislation on homosexuality [...] The Clause which forbids the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities and council run schools has caused an outcry in the homosexual community [...] 'I got a bit of a

shock at first... its dotty people who sent them. It's very stupid to think anyone would be influenced'" (Williams and Gardner, 1988,1)

The article assumes without question that there has been the promotion of queerness in schools by local authorities, which there was not. Instead the idea of such promotion was used to curtail queer freedoms and facilitate the "return to family values" agenda of the Conservative government. Secondly, that a reaction against the legislation is confined to a "homosexual community" and who are intend on disorder, again a threatening faceless "other" in fact, in the Gramscian way the reaction against *section 28* was a broad movement (Jongh, 1988). This article seeks to curtail individual sexual freedoms by creating a description of the predatory queer who corrupts youth. In fact an article from *The Argus* entitled 'Despair That Faces The Gay Teenagers' suggests this is not the case and such legislation can only hurt young people. It states:

"Teenage suicides will increase if the Government succeeds in stifling classroom discussion of homosexuality" (Unknown, 1988c)

Here the description is queer teenagers who will suffer if not allowed to be openly queer. I will explore Press stories surrounding gay youth more fully in chapter 7.

To apply pressure, there must be active resistance which is not at all present before the 1970s but, the archive demonstrates, slowly builds. The archive shows that 1988 proved to be a point of considerable pressure on language because of the presence of huge resistance and polarization of views. I have chosen a number of articles at random from 1977 and 1988 to illustrate this build up further:

Firstly, I want to examine the number of column inches devoted to queer issues. As I mentioned previously in chapter 4 and 5, there is very little writing at all about queer folk in the 1970s. In some newspapers such as *The Llanelli Star* they are non-existent. That is not true by 1988 where the amount of column inches and the number of articles devoted to queer topics has increased substantially. For example, typical article lengths are; 'Are They Sinners' from *The Sun* is seven paragraphs and 'Row Over Gay Play For School Children' from *The Mail* which is eight; 'Dismissal Over Wearing Lesbian Badge Upheld' from *The Times* is just four. Moreover, there are no front page leading articles concerning queer folk in 1977 in the national Press but there are six in 1988 including 'Gay Slur On Paper Boy' from *The Sun* (Hall, 1988), 'Beeb Man Sits On Lesbian' (Peacock and Barnes, 1988) from *The Daily Mirror* and 'Death Threat to 28 Peers' (Williams and Gardner, 1988) in *The Mail* and all are around 30 paragraphs long. The article count in the archive for the papers under discussion goes from a very clear 30, depending on how they are categorised, for the non-Queer Press to 90 or more in 1988. This is consistent with what Wykes defined as a "veritable explosion of discourse about sex" in the media (Wykes, 2001)

Data analysis shows that there is also a change in the nature of the words being used to describe the queer community. In 1977 associated words are often to do with sickness or deviance such as "sick", "pervert", "wicked", "obscene" and "vile" but by 1988 this has changed somewhat to include words of protest and conflict such as "protest", "shouting", "unleashed" and "demanding". Taken with this is an overall demand in the archive by the queer community towards more accurate representations which begins in the 70s but is at its most vivid in 1988. Unlike in 1977, in 1988 queer people are given considerable voice to speak. In 'Beeb Man Sits

On Lesbian' from *The Mirror* they are given a full 15 paragraphs within a story of 42. This is a short excerpt from one of those paragraphs:

"The second we got inside the newsroom a pal and I handcuffed ourselves to a desk. I was within a foot of Sue Lawley, but she carried on reading the news as if nothing had happened. But within seconds I was flattened as a man with ginger hair jumped on top of me. He kept a hand over my mouth and said repeatedly in my ear 'keep your effing mouth shut'" (Peacock and Barnes, 1988)

There is no doubt that the archive shows that during the campaign against *section 28* the queer movement finds its voice in both the queer and non-queer Press through co-operation, small groups local groups and large organisations form to protest against the issue. Where many lesbians organisations had stopped cooperating with male groupings (Power, 1995) now they began to work together (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991). However, they were also faced with a considerable amount of symbolic coercion, which only strengthened the compression on semantics. Just like the 1970s the queer community was also the subject of secret police action (Power, 1995). In a 'Threat to 28 Peers' "Special Branch officers" were said to have "mingled with the 20,000 protestors" (Williams and Gardner, 1988) during a march against *section 28*. This demonstrates the newspaper's own ideology that queer people are a threat and in need of policing. It does this by making connections and assertions that are not present elsewhere in the press and amount to a fabrication. For example, towards the end of the piece it admits that the threats were probably made by sympathetic anarchist groups, not queer rights campaigners. However, again, there was a reaction against this type of policing, which is demonstrated in the language and discourse from future articles by 1994 and after, as I

highlighted in the previous chapter where I discussed policing. In 2005, for example, *The Brighton Argus* in 'Call for Crackdown On Gay Hate Crime In City' describes how visibly the police work with the LGBT community to ensure their safety and protect them from prejudice. An "LGBT Police officer" is reported as saying :

"There has been a substantial increase in coverage due to constant high-visibility patrols. We have been working to increase the trust and confidence of [Queer]people" (Tate, 2005,3)

The strategy of the queer movement itself across 1988 appears to have been as creatively visible and vocal in their protests as possible. Ironically, for a group fighting to be recognised, this was aided by their inherent invisibility and by a plurality of strategies. As the article 'When Dykes Penetrate Auntie' (Unknown, 1988d) demonstrates, lesbian avengers managed to enter the BBC studios because they were able to pass before the event as mere tourists. A similar tactic was used in 'Lesbians Abseil In Lords Chamber' (Potter, 1988). They represented as being able to spring a vocal and visible surprise. An apparent sudden unveiling of queerness, to shout "stop section 28" (Unknown, 1988d). Later they are reported in *The Pink Paper* as saying "'this is just the beginning'. 'Sarah Ponsonby' (a pseudonym chosen by the demonstrator to celebrate a famous historical lesbian) told our reporter, 'when we're through they'll be wishing they'd never heard of Clause 28'" (Unknown, 1988d). In reality, such acts of civil disobedience are ironically facilitated by the ability to pass as non-Queer. They are the tactics of ambush, of stealth, of camouflage. But the political march in May 1988 is representative of a different use of visibility, is not sudden and shocking but planned, advertised, nuanced and sophisticated. It is deliberate and public and as organiser and TV personality, Michael Cashman, says "The

importance of this protest is to show that we are determined to stand up and fight for our rights as human beings” (Jongh, 1988). Thus, there is demonstrated in language and in action a plurality of queer political action: radical action and earnest debate. This plurality helped drive language change, not least by shattering the representation of queer people as one homogenised group and by driving the motor of dialecticalism. For example, the actions of those queer activists who invaded the Commons “shouting obscenities as TV cameras rolled” (Potter, 1988) and the more measured protest of Chris Smith et al in leading “Britain’s biggest ever gay rights rally [which included] a strong contingent of marchers from the arts [in an event where “the mood was relaxed and good humoured” (Jongh, 1988). In the 1970s the queer movement had manifested itself into the GLF and the CHE, one radical, one conservative before the 1970s there were campaigns for law reform before this decade notably led by the Albany Trust (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991) but nothing that could be said to amount to a movement . In the 1980s campaigning took the form of committed acts of disobedience and more conservative marches forming around the conservative Stonewall and radical Outrage! In addition, there is the growth of additional organisations such as those devoted to AIDS awareness, for example, The Terrence Higgins Trust or later, Gay Men Fighting AIDS or GMFA. The voices in the media were different in tone and nature but together they caused such a breadth of difficulty that the Government was reported ready to admit in a private meeting with queer activist, Sir Ian McKellen, that it “was embarrassed by the fuss and was doing everything to ameliorate the impact of the legislation” (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991,234). What had changed between 1977 and 1988 was the scale of the protest. The GLF could induce a march of two or three hundred people (Power, 1995) and disrupt a lowly meeting of the Festival of Light but by 1988 the

research shows the queer Movement was reported as being able to generate a march of twenty to fifty thousand people (Jongh, 1988). Further, they were able to disrupt The House of Lords and the BBC, claiming front page headlines for both and raising the idea of queer oppression in the press, making it relevant for all, and affecting language due to the sheer volume of discourse, of compression upon the signs. Thus, it appears from examining the newspaper archive that the queer community was able to mobilize more fully in 1988 its own populous and appeal more widely to mainstream Britain by incorporating a plurality of voices and strategies. Certainly there is the reporting of this plurality in the press. This was a trend that continued into 1994 and was a fundamental driver of language change. Such plurality, I believe, increased the pressure on semantics even further than the mere volume of articles by varying the angles and points that pressure was applied.

I believe that a significant social conflict was being played out in the press in 1988 demonstrating a period of particular polarization. As per its stance in 1977, *The Guardian* in articles such as 'Thousands Join Protest against Section 28 Curb on Gay Rights' is broadly supportive of the queer community and is using quotes from a variety of queer protagonists which compare and contrast different positions whilst at the opposite end, *The Mail* and *The Sun* using the language of fear and anxiety to evoke menace in their articles.

This is a process which is not just one of dialectical or ideological in nature, although this is certainly true, but one that can best be described as an illustration of Gramsci's hegemonic processes in action (Bucci-Gluckmann, 1982). As we have seen hegemony is not a linear goal; rather it is a point of constant negotiation between classes where the dominant class seeks to retain its hegemonic position by imposing its values and by convincing the rest of the

community of the natural, *common sense* nature of its position, thereby projecting cultural and moral leadership this is seen throughout 1988. This, for example, may include the position that queer people are a negative group in different ways and need to be controlled. It involves the use of speeches, politics and spin to develop a message of common sense through rhetoric. Hegemony is, therefore, a contested process where a dominant position is presented as being good for the whole, even if it is only good for the ruling class “far from dominating its junior partners a successful hegemonic group has to thoroughly recreate itself”(Jones, 2006,45). This is supported by Gramsci himself who asserts “A class can win only if it is aided and followed by a great majority of the social strata”(Gramsci, 1994,322). Thatcher’s constant return to power during the 1980s and 1990s is illustrative of this point. She was re-elected to government not because she necessarily had a programme for change, especially at the start of her term, but rather because the Conservative Party was able to present itself as the logical, natural choice which served the interests of the entire British population (Torfing, 1999,35). When *The Times* comments without a balancing opinion that *Section 28* states that

“a local authority should not intentionally promote homosexuality...that there is no intention of persecuting homosexuals or treating them as second-class citizens”(Unknown, 1988g)

It is re-affirming the hegemonic position of the ruling class as set out by Thatcher.

The research demonstrates an apparent acceptance of “limited” hegemony by the queer community which will be explored by concentrating on texts from 1994 and from 2005, meaning they never quite achieve absolute and complete equality. According to theorists,

Laclau and Mouffe, a dominant group can choose to accept or offer *limited* hegemony, thereby making small changes to accommodate the subaltern group or *expansive* hegemony in which it meets the majority of all of the demands (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Hegemonic strategy is, accordingly, fluid, subtle and dynamic. For the dominant group it operates as a series of concessions, for the subjugated as a series of minor gains. Over time these small movements can lead to substantial social change which is marked, this thesis argues, by these periods of differing offers. The articles from 1994 demonstrate this idea as well as that of leadership by the queer community and I want to turn to them next.

4:6 Queer leadership and the pluralisation of the Queer voice in 1994

During 1994 I believe that we see in the archive an increasing leadership characteristic within the queer community being expressed in the press. One sees queer establishment figures such as Ian Mackellan and Chris Smith speaking openly and professionally. This professionalism and leadership, which Gramsci defined as essential to promoting a change in the national consciousness and indeed the speech community, opens the way for a dispersion of the drivers of language change to come. It is part of the release phase which I described at the beginning of this section. In this section I am going to explore the debates around the age of consent vote in 1994 just 6 years after section 28. In this section I also want to examine the idea of limited hegemonic settlements and how these are represented in the press (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

In 1994 on the day of the vote to equalise the age of consent for sex between consenting queer people with that of non-Queer people, *The Mail* produced a piece entitled

‘Homosexuality And The Age of Consent’ on 21st February, 1994 (Unknown, 1994c) in which it argued that:

“Not for the first time on an issue of profound moral significance in the way our society is going, progressive opinion in the Commons would appear to be out of kilter with a more traditional view in the country” it continues “what was permitted to youths would be practised on boys. The legal barrier to the corruption of boys by men would be dangerously lowered [...] let MPs be in no doubt that the majority of their constituents would consider that to be one libertarian step too far”(Unknown, 1994c,8).

Three assertions lie at the heart of the paper’s own appeal to common sense. Firstly, that progressive opinion is always ahead of public sentiment. It is clear, though, that such progressive elements should be satisfied with what they have achieved to date. Secondly, it repeats the refrain that queer people corrupt boys and therefore children need protecting. It argues that queer youths should be satisfied with sex at eighteen years old and not push for anything more, even though their non-Queer contemporaries may have sex at 16, that a reduction in the age of consent to eighteen is enough. Finally, it talks of being out of step, and of things going too far. This concept of a movement too far towards queer equality is one that is seen often in the press, which is part of a mechanism disseminating the ideas of the dominant group, as is the concept that queer people should settle for the status quo. As has been discussed, in 1977 the judge in the *Gay News Trial* asserted “it is possible to hope that by this verdict the pendulum of public opinion is beginning to swing back to a more healthy climate” (Unknown, 1977) and in *The Sun* in 1988 a similar sentiment “homosexuals cannot help being

what they are. How they behave in private is their own affair. But the danger is that the pendulum has swung too far” (Editorial, 1988) i.e that the status quo, traditional boundaries, are under threat. These are common metaphors of balance made by the dominant group, offering *limited* hegemony to the queer community (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Be happy with what you have achieved, they argue, whilst at the same time, they are appealing to the common sense of the rest of society, asserting things have “swung too far”.

1994 is a period in which the newspaper archive demonstrates these differing offers of hegemonic settlement most vividly. It is, I argue, a period where some of the pressure from discourse is being released and a new period of negotiation has settled in as more conservative voices seek to negotiate a limited settlement. It is a point where pressure is beginning to be released from language and one sees a change and moderation in language as well as a growth in acceptable new terms. However, next I want to focus on sketching out some of these differing offerings as I see such negotiations to be a seminal moment on the path to release of the pressure on language.

The Guardian in Gay Age of Consent Cut to 18 (Michael White et al., 1994) reiterates the politicians’ arguments offering an illustration of differing settlements. They essentially divide along these concepts of limited hegemony and expansive hegemony and demonstrate this process in action. Fundamentally, this article describes a moment in time when queer people are moving from oppression to normalisation and this is demonstrated by the different positions taken by the actors, the appeals to common sense and the type of hegemonic settlement they offer. It is noteworthy that all sides now have adopted a conciliatory tone in language.

Michael Howard, Conservative Home Secretary, states in a seemingly considered and reasonable manner the limited:

“For my own part I believe that reducing the age of consent from 21 to 18 strikes the right balance. On the one hand we should not criminalise private actions freely entered into by consenting mature adults. On the other, we need to protect young men from activities which their lack of maturity might cause them to regret” (Michael White et al., 1994)

In the same article, Tony Blair, Labour Shadow Home Secretary, argues for equality from the alternative expansive viewpoint, insisting that:

“The real objection in this debate is not one of reason but of prejudice. People are entitled to think that homosexuality is wrong. What they are not entitled to do is use the criminal law to force that view on others” (Michael White et al., 1994)

Interestingly, this article and the archive demonstrate the beginning of the relative suppression of the conservative Christian voice. A voice which was so present in 1977 and 1988 was becoming marginalised. This voice is short and relegated to the very bottom of a long article and in many newspapers is not reported at all. The Rev. Ian Paisley claims that queerness was the

“fundamentally wrong course, neither natural nor normal” (Michael White et al., 1994).

There is a continuing trend towards a growing plurality and professionalism of queer voices. For example, we have the charismatic campaigner from Stonewall, Sir Ian McKellan, who says in a considered appeal to the country at large that “the government will come under enormous pressure before the next election to change the law”(Michael White et al., 1994); we also have the militant activist from Outrage!, Peter Tatchell, who confronts using hyperbole and is reported in *The Guardian* as saying “It’s a shameful day for democracy that MPs have refused to accept the human rights of gay people. It’s going to lead to a huge amount of anger”(Michael White et al., 1994) and, finally, we hear from our queer MP, Chris Smith, who functionally declared “there were fewer abstentions than we expected”(Michael White et al., 1994) again making a steady appeal to the common sense of the nation, the middle ground. These three styles of queer campaigners are represented in the press. There are those activists such as Ian McKellan from Stonewall who offer a “considered appeal”, secondly campaigners such as Peter Thatchell from Outrage who use “hyperbole” emotive argument and finally the press who portray the “functional” bureaucratic argument used by professionals such as Chris Smith. All speak to different constituents but work together to effect change, I believe, in a way that is not possible separately. The variety of styles and voices gives weight to the whole argument, as does the stature of the speakers. The increasing stature of queer people reinforces their arguments, increasing their stature further. This pluralisation is also indicative of a more accepted community, feeding more broadly into the wider speech community.

Again, the analysis using this cycle of newspapers shows language change occurs when there is the most pressure and volume of discourse, when, as in this debate, opposing voices are at their peak. This time it is the professionalism of the voices that is having affect. For example,

data analysis shows that after this date there were much more positive, inclusive and naturalized terms used to describe queer people. They become less associated with words that promote otherness or exclusion. This is a point of moderation in language and demonstrates varying offers of limited hegemonic settlement. Such offers the archive demonstrates are indicative of social change because they don't need to be made before. Also demonstrated in 1994, I believe the increasing plurality of queer voices enables language to change.

4.7 The effects of the release from compression in 2005

In this final section of this chapter I want to examine articles from 2005 which I believe speak to a release in discourse where we see a number of new terms around the queer community being used broadly across the press. We also see very warm and inclusionary phrases where anti-queer sentiments and connotations have been diminished. I will start with this article from *The Sun* published on 20th December, 2005:

“There was cheering inside as soon as Shannon and Grainne signed the book... it was a lovely occasion. It was very simple and took about half an hour...’This is about having our civil rights acknowledged and respected like every human being should’ she said” (Johnson, 2005,6).

These quotes taken from *The Sun* article in 2005 ‘Sod’em We Are In Love’ illustrates the level of social acceptance that queer people had achieved by that date. The words, sentiments and language are very different from anything that has gone before, particularly in *The Sun*. They represent a seismic shift in social relations which is recorded in press language.

Unlike Thatcherism, with regard to queer people, the political discourse of New Labour, elected in 1997, was presented inclusive and socially consensual, drawing everyone within it (Fairclough, 2000). Where Thatcher's ideas achieved hegemonic dominance through an appeal to common sense, Blair built upon this, recognizing the importance of linguistics itself "manipulating language to control public perception" (Fairclough, 2000, vii) more fully than Thatcher. I want to examine the use of comforting, inclusionary discourse in newspapers and offer it in juxtaposition to the type of language that has come before.

The queer person is clearly included in a new consensual discourse by 2005 as demonstrated by the following excerpt from a speech given by Tony Blair at the Labour Party Conference in 2004 which was widely reported in the British Press:

"And remember when to be in favour of gay rights was to be a loony leftie, race relations was political correctness, and Red Ken frightened people even as brave as your own leadership? Now the Parties compete for the gay vote, unite against the BNP and Ken has led and won the debate on congestion charging and community policing. So many things that used to divide our country bitterly, now unite it in healthy consensus" (Blair, 2004)

The most notable effect of the inclusionary discourse of New Labour which both appealed to and constructed a change in the accepted consensus, is not only that it has led to a significant number of legal advances for queer minorities (which will be examined in the next chapter) but

it led to an introduction of a number of new terms, terms such as “civil partnership” as can be seen from this quote from the *Daily Mail* published on 6th December, 2005:

“Couples yesterday signed up for ‘civil partnerships’ as the gay marriage laws came into effect. All are hoping to be among the first to enjoy the full legal benefits that were once reserved for married heterosexual couples” (Lampert and Doughty, 2005,4)

What is also recorded in the press is the extent to which this normalisation created a backlash from religious groups, for example, the Christian Institute (Insitute, 2008) or the Muslim Council of Great Britain (MCGB, 2006). It was expected at the start of this project that this new discourse of tolerance and inclusion would be reflected in the language but the broader counter discourse was not. This thesis will focus on this outcome in chapter 8. However, in brief, it has allowed the fundamentalist religious community to be redrawn as the new “other”, replacing the queer in the mainstream British Press, this thesis argues, particularly in chapter five, as the hegemonic bogey man. For example Reverend Ian Brown is called a “firebrand” and his “booming comments” suggesting civil partnerships were “dishonorable [and would not] be recognized by God... [were] laughed off” (Johnson, 2005,6).

By 2005 this inclusionary discourse had entered the queer media to full effect, becoming normal and unremarkable. Thus, the positive process concerning queer people reached a relative zenith. This is illustrated by ‘Questioning the queer Status Quo’ from *G-Scene* in 2005 (Wildblood, 2005a) which is representative of the archive as a whole but is supported by the non-Queer Press in articles such as (Tate, 2005, Brule, 1994, Hustwayte, 2005). Wildblood’s

article speaks of “the rights and responsibilities [...] that civil partners now face”; of “an alarming lack of advice” on tax, pension and benefit changes; of “cohabiting couples”, “LGBTs”, “partnership” and guidance. It is perhaps the most dry and undynamic article in the entire set under study. Any hint of queer campaigning or radicalism had dispersed even though equality has not been met: civil partners are not marriage partners, IVF is not available to all queer couples and there are a number of other inequalities within Britain (Outrage, 2011). Gone are the heavy dialectical and ideological engines of language change.

“It’s not all loved-up vows and pink limousines. The Civil Partnership Act is a welcome milestone in LGBT history. Any couple that registers a civil partnership will have the same rights as a married couple in areas including tax, social security, inheritance and workplace benefits.”(Wildblood, 2005a,30)

Here, in this article the queer battles have, apparently, been won. The boredom of equality, of heteronormative society, of shopping, mortgages and voting has set in. It is, of course, difficult to be radical, subversive and dangerous when these performances have been accepted, normalised and subsumed into everyday society. Queer people may have gained rough equality from society but in return they offered sexual liberation, sequined jock-straps, drag queens and annual parades to the Non-Queer community (Manning, 1996). These things so shocking in the 1970s and 1980s were by 2005 simply a staple of any half-decent town such as Bournemouth, Liverpool, York, Hull and Norwich to name a few (Limited", 2011). So, in 2005 when *The Argus* reports “Lesbian and Gay Brighton Pride” was replaced with simply “Brighton Pride” by the organising committee or “Pride 2005” (Bridgewater, 2005) it is reflecting a change in the

terminology used in the town; it is reflecting a social change. Losing its associations with the queer it became the family event, with a play area for children, more a celebration of the diversity and inclusion of Brighton itself than a campaign for anything meaningfully queer because the queer had been normalized and had done so in the face of the difficulties of section 28. Pride had become a carnival, not a campaign. A commercial event fully supported by the city, not just by the queer community (Bridgewater, 2005), thus the queer community had become more mainstream. There was nothing for the queer campaign to assert itself against. The police who had so mercilessly invaded and entrapped queer folk in the 1970s and 1980s (Power, 1995, Weeks, 1990b) now marched at the head of the parade and mixed openly in the park. The police, like the armed forces, had, along with much of the Establishment who had vilified queer people, finally come out and supported queerness as this quote demonstrates: "Brighton and Hove Mayor Bob Carden attended with various MPs, Chief Superintendent Paul Curtis of Sussex Police and Brighton and Hove Chief Executive Alan McCarthy" (Bridgewater, 2005,14). Much like the article in *G-Scene*, everything in this article is couched in the language of inclusion which brooks no argument: "Pride" it says "is a registered charity promoting equality and diversity and advances in education to eliminate discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community" (Bridgewater, 2005). *The Argus* would later that year, and continues to do so today, publish a full colour celebration of sequined jock-straps and drag queens (Wells, 2005). The revolution and revolutionary tactics of the 1970s such as radical drag had dissipated into broader inclusion even before full equality had been achieved. Such dissipation ended, or certainly slowed, the engine of language change.

This chapter has examined how the queer community moved from oppression and silence in 1977 to a vocal and empowered position by 2005. It identified different drivers of language change from a Marxist perspective.

It began by using reporting of the *Gay News* case in 1977 and explored how words were used to define the queer person as an unhealthy, heretical other and how words acted as a site of oppression. It examined the idea of ideological and dialectical conflict and the importance placed on words by both Marxist and queer theorists. This chapter suggest that the formation of social movements and active campaigning is essential to language change. That is through organised protest that change in language is effected. It explored the GLF's ideological fight for accurate description against a media and society that often silenced and censored the queer individuals, forcing them to co-operate to survive. This chapter also explored how the prosecution of *Gay News* for Blasphemy in 1977 was represented in the press and how queer people were relative disenfranchised and excluded from discourse.

The second section explored the press reporting of the fight against section 28 in 1988 as a function of hegemony. It argued that 1988 was a seminal point of language change because of the pressure on language from all sides forming a point of compression. It used events in 1994 to examine Moufee's ideas of limited or expansive hegemonic settlements. It argued that newspapers were both a record of and a contributor to the hegemonic process. Later, it argued using texts from 1994 that a key development in language change was the establishment of a

variety of voices within the marginalized community and the ability to ignore a limited settlement. It asserted that by 2005 queer people were largely normalised in the UK and in the press this was portrayed as relatively mundane. Central to this thesis was the idea of change through compression on discourse and release and I suggested that 1988 was a moment of significant compression not seen before or after because of the volume of words and the polarization of the debate. I also argued that this compression forced cooperation, particularly in 1980s and the release of such pressure led to seismic shift in language over a short time.

In relation to the overall structure of the argument contained within my thesis. One sees in this chapter the “energy” of change. These campaigning, compression and pluralisation of the queer voice are the drivers of rapid change across the period. I want next to compare and contrast that language change in different regions of the UK and in different constituencies.

5:0

Linguistic Explanations and Differing Rates of Change

5:1

Biography: Little Windows on a Queer Life

It never ceased to amaze me in 1992 that I did not have to knock on the door of the nightclub and watch the little metal window slide open. In Swansea and Cardiff queer clubs there was always a little window so they could check to see if you were as queer as your knock conveyed and Llanelli had no queer venues at all. In London you could simply walk through the open door. Having grown up in Llanelli during the late 1980s, being isolated and alone, it blew me away when I returned to my home town in 2011 for my research, to find that in modern Llanelli queer folk now, not only have Gaydar, a national internet based dating site, but also their own contacts' column in the back of *The Llanelli Star* and were using mobile dating apps such as Scruff and Grindr. My experience had been very different. In 1987/88 when I lived in the town and was tormented by my sexuality, my only outlet had been sex in toilets. In fact, that was my sex life for a couple of years, along with all the threat and the danger that came with it. I remember being chased and harassed by a group of school children, no more than 12 or 13 years old. I remember too the thrill of queer contact, no matter how anonymous. In London, just like Brighton, there was acceptance, freedom, even a choice of venues.

It often struck me, after meeting a lover of two years who came from Brighton, how free and easy his entry into queer society had been in comparison with mine. There had clearly been much change around the social acceptance of queer people but it was also apparent to me that change had not been uniform across the country. To me at least the South East was its own queer little bubble.

In this second analysis chapter, I want to begin a full consideration of queer language alteration by initially considering the process of representational change in British newspapers from the position of traditional linguistics. I will not only sketch the fundamental positions within general linguistics on the drivers of this change but will also, discuss whether these drivers adequately explain the breadth and dynamism of the semantic change that surround terms used to describe the queer community in the British Press since 1977. This work will be inlaid with a comprehensive dialogue between the theories of change and the actual linguistic fossil imprint left in the strata of newspaper print I have compiled. I want to begin by demonstrating my finding that there has in fact been a great deal change in the language representing queer people in the press between 1977 and 2005 and to establish that this has not been even in either regional or national press.

Further, another key argument I am making in this chapter is that the speed of language change around queer folk was exceptionally rapid during the period understudy. Particularly, in comparison to language change in general. It is clear from a study of traditional historical linguistics (Bower, 1994) that language has developed in such a way that it can be almost impossible to understand medieval or Tudor English today without specific training in archaic languages but these are changes that happened over hundreds, if not thousands, of years. By comparison, the focus of my thesis, the language used in representing the queer community since 1976, changed, and is changing, extremely rapidly. Is this explainable by traditional linguistic theories, without the energy of compression which I identified in the previous chapter?

Firstly in this chapter I will introduce the theories I will be applying to the articles from the archive. Then, I will move to compare two local newspapers - *The Llanelli Star* and *The Brighton Argus* exploring the differing speed and nature of language change between these two. In the following section I will compare aspects of change in two national papers, *The Guardian* and *The Sun*, to explore examples of language change between broadsheets and tabloids. Finally, I want to explore social change as a “functional” driver of language change. I will centre my investigation in three broad areas a) the explosion in discourses surrounding sexuality in the period and how this can be seen in newspaper print; b) How long term social changes can be said to play into changing press representations of queer folk and c) Finally, I want to focus down on the changing linguistic treatment of queer women because I believe and wish to highlight that women were doubly disempowered at the start of the study. I shall therefore begin with theories of language change.

5:3 Linguistic Theories of Language Change

Such is the interest in the words and ultimately, signs that we use to communicate that the investigation of the history of the English language has spawned innumerate studies, notable amongst many are David Crystal’s *The Stories of English*, N.F Blake’s, *A History of the English* (Crystal, 2005, Blake, 1996) and the work of one of the fathers of linguistics, Edward Sapir (Sapir and Madlebaum, 1985). As I discussed in the literary review, whilst there have been many studies on the general social construction and labelling of the queer community, there has been little on diachronic change in the press generally and none on the linguistic queer (how queer people are described in the newspapers). Therefore, this chapter will consider explanations of representational change that draw upon the field of linguistics and their

broader implications for this study by first laying out a historical sketch of the study of standard English, thereby facilitating a clearer conception of how recent changes around the queer community fit into an overall pattern of change in broader society.

On the subject of language change, Sapir specifically noted that:

“Language moves down time in a current of its own making. It has a drift [...] nothing is perfectly static. Every word, every grammatical element, every locution, every sound and accent is slowly changing configuration, moulded by the invisible and impersonal drift that is the nature of language”
(Sapir, 1963,154).

He is not alone in this belief. It is clear from studying linguists that all living languages are filled with words that cascade and tumble through the social events that give them meaning (McMahon, 1994, Croft, 2000, Aitchison, 2001). It is this changing, fluid social nature of words that ensures that “all living languages are subject to change” (Hogg and Denison, 2006, 37). “Words usually do not retain meaning unaltered for any length of time” (Sihler, 2000, 95) but change over time, for me the larger social processes behind word change are the most meaningful. It is not the fact that it changes but the reason why it changes that is important. It is then, within this conception of English language as a current of change, as a living language, that those transformations and the forces of alteration must be studied. One of the most important aspects of change, especially for this study, is the speed of change generally and the differing regional or social variations. It is clear from analysis that it did not change at the same

rate all over the country and I want to use a comparison of two articles, one from *The Brighton Argus* and one from *The Llanelli Star* to demonstrate this.

There is in the press, especially at the start of the period under investigation, a huge amount of silence about queers, a real absence from newspaper discourse³. This silence is more profound in some publications than in others. Silence can be used in a number of ways, such as to create interpersonal distance and avoid embarrassment (Richmond and McCroskey, 2000) whilst it can also function to mark boundaries of discursive acceptability (Burgoon et al., 1996). Lovass argues that “silence itself [...] may convey a wide range of meaning and perform associated functions” (Lovaas, 2003, 88). Silence then is an absence. An absence then is created to avoid embarrassment, to allow a one to stay within acceptable norms or to mark the boundaries of acceptability. To be queer is to be absent in the press because of one’s unacceptability, it is to avoid the reader the embarrassment of talking about the taboo. The markers of emptiness are significant by what isn’t said, isn’t talked about and isn’t revealed: the queer subject. Such silence and its differing applications is particularly noticeable in the regional reporting of the queer.

The English language is made up of a number of different elements from the lowliest morpheme to the most passionate narrative. English has transformed and adopted a huge amount of nouns, verbs and adjectives, other elements of language such as prepositions and conjunctions have remained unchanged (Singh, 2005). In considering aspects of change some analysts will focus solely on the grammatical aspects, whilst others on the social function of language (Hogg and Denison, 2006). It is the social aspects of language and, therefore,

³ I will explore this here and again, more fully in the next chapter, chapter 5.

representational change that are central to my analysis and, accordingly, I centre my investigations firmly in discussions around theories of the speech community⁴ even in later chapters. It is changes in meaning of words and representations, rather than analysis involving minute sound change and the like that I pursue in my work. For many linguists, such as Noam Chomsky, the grammar is everything. Blake also argues that for some linguists such as Saussure, “only changes within the structure of the Language, its langue are permanent” and relevant (Blake, 1996,308). Blake, for example insists “that changes in language happen slowly over time” (Blake, 1996,5) because he is focused on the deep grammatical elements of grammar but Singh asserts the opposite “change can occur relatively quickly and easily, often within a lifetime”(Singh, 2005,19) because she is focused on the surface, the semantic, the social. My analysis supports Singh’s assertion, certainly in social linguistic terms. Singh’s argument for rapid change can be observed in the press in terms of both the depth and stability of the linguistic change. I will discuss how surface semantic changes are indicative of social change. Indeed, such change can be used as an analytical tool to measure social history whilst deeper changes are almost certain to be related to evolutionary changes within the speech community (not the biological human), such as the advent of new technologies. Blake points out that writing (once a new technology in itself) “allowed for the development of technology and science which in their turn have had a considerable impact upon the language” at its base level (Blake, 1996,37). I believe that, whilst writing and technology have been the ultimate drivers of sub-grammatical change, it is semantic change that is most relevant for exploring social changes, providing a powerful investigational and methodological tool for historical and cultural

⁴ A speech community is a Marxist linguistic term. A “speech community” suggests that language is not owned or created by the individual, rather “language is the product of society” ADLER, M. K. (1980) *Marxist Linguistic Theory and Communist Practice*, Hamburg, Helmut Buske Verlag.. To say that language is a production of society rather than the individual is a common position in linguistics which was brought to prominence by numerous theorists LECERCLE, J.-J. (2006) *A Marxist Philosophy of Language*, Boston, 2006.

research. However, I do not believe that semantic change itself is strong enough in on its own to explain the nature of the rapid change around queer folk.

In studying language Chomsky believes that we will come close to understanding the human mind and what it means to be human. In *Language and Mind* he writes “when we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the “human essence”, the distinctive qualities of mind that are [...] unique to man and that are inseparable from any critical phase of human existence; personal or social” (Chomsky, 1972). Chomsky is underlining the personal and social importance of language for the queer individual. If language is a reflection of the mind, how we think, what we are, then the study of its changing use and the meaning of terms used is crucial for an understanding of the development of marginalized communities but it is also reflective of how others think about us.

Causes of language change then are double layered “on the top layer there are social triggers that set off or accelerate deeper causes, hidden tendencies which may be laying dormant within language”(Aitchison, 2001,153). These social triggers are able to set off changes fully because semantics are “less resistant to change [...] than other areas of grammar”(McMahon, 1994,174). Social triggers that can be seen in the articles under investigation would be such alterations as the move to a more tolerant society concerning disability, feminism, race and queer rights which brings with it a readjustment in language. It is, of course, a process that is explained by Saussure’s doctrine on the arbitrariness of signs which demonstrates the random and casual nature of the link between the sign and the signified (Saussure, 1983). Change in language is triggered by social change.

Semantic change is not restricted to a single word but can affect a cluster of related words (McMahon, 1994,185) and I will therefore be exploring both words and phrases in this thesis. For the queer community, an alteration in the value and meaning of words to describe other marginalized groups such as women, ethnic minorities and the disabled also led to a change in the words used to describe them, creating a type of semantic feedback loop. It is through the study of “diachronistic semantics or the science of changes of meaning” (Ullmann, 1959,171) over time that we can come to an understanding of these social changes, how they are interwoven and how they are recorded in the press.

Historical Linguistics argues that traditionally, in the past, new words entered the language as travellers, traders and administrators brought them back into a linguistic community that had developed in isolation on an island (Crystal, 2005). As communication and technology increased from a relatively short stock of words English has expanded rapidly through compounding and borrowing (Crystal, 2005). New words such as “blaxploitation”, “handbag” and “bonk” enter the language as words such as “deodand” (devoted to God) and “smicker” (to gaze amorously) exit. From a relatively short stock of words, English has expanded rapidly through compounding and borrowing (Crystal and Davey, 1969). Some words enter and leave so quickly that they are hardly noticed at all, for example “Les-bi-gay”(Sinfield, 1988) being a case in point. In our modern society “gay” as a word to describe some members of the queer community was imported from the USA in the early 1970s, brought back to the UK on a wave of identity politics and cheap travel (Jivani, 1997). It is towards a further explanation of how semantic and representational change occurs and why new words and semantic shifts achieve traction in a speech community using historical linguistic explanations that I want to now turn.

Noted American Linguist, William Labov, has asserted, in what has become known as *Labov's Uniformitarian Principle*, that

“the forces operating to produce linguistic change today are of the same kind and order of magnitude as those which operated in the past 5-10 thousand years. There are certainly new factors emerging with the growth of literacy, the convergence of widespread languages, and the development of scientific vocabulary. Yet, these represent minor influences in the structure of languages”(Labov, 1972,275).

Labov is referring to the structure of language which, indeed, as I have argued previously, may be only slightly affected by recent changes, but this does not negate the importance of his insight which applies equally to semantics. In semantics these new forces of literacy and mass communication have had a great impact, forcing the pace of language change at an ever increasing rate (Aitchison and Lewis, 2003) . This was played out in the newspapers under examination. For example an explosion in the discourse on sexuality was mirrored and facilitated by other media, particularly new media (DagmarÂ Herzog, 2006). My research shows that the length, breadth and volume of articles and potential articles under study grew exponentially across the time period. It is clear that not only language, but ways of thinking changed. The volume of discourse on a subject must effect the change in language because, just like a virus the higher speed and amount of replications the higher number of mutations (Nowak, 2006).

I want then, to continue to explore some of the forces of change at the surface semantic level, as described by linguistics in order to explore how these mutations occur. Hogg and Dension have summarised the forces of change as:

Structural – these changes are exemplified by the replacement of longer words with shorthand such as “homo” for homosexual or, as in this requote from the national tabloid paper *The Daily Star* on 23rd May 1988n “Loony *Lezzies* attack Sue” (*Unknown, 1988d*) in which they have substituted “lezzies” for “Lesbians”.

Functional – changes that have developed in response to new technologies and operate to avoid ambiguity or doubt. For example, an evolutionary position on language change would see language as adapted, and adapting to its environment - language changing to meet the needs of the user. Changes occur to better facilitate communication under new conditions. As the environment changes for example, with the development of new technologies or scientific insight so the language adheres to the changes (Croft, 2000). A “car” used to mean a “wagon”. With the advent of new technology, it became attached to motor to form “motorcar” thus differentiating the wagon from the car, the motorised vehicle. As this new condition has become the dominant meaning and the wagon as a form of technology has become redundant, so motorcar has been reduced back to car. This is important because it is exactly the same process that has occurred with the terms around queer people. The use of the term “homosexual”, invented in the 1890s (Miller, 2006), is a medical scientific term used to define a person and classify them through certain types of sexual behaviours (Miller, 2006). Social changes often, saw the rejection of “homosexual” as a term, as the new conditions of inclusion

and diversity saw the rise of the term “gay” (Cook, 2007). It is this process that is of most interest to my study. It is a movement that can be seen across the newspapers in question.

An understanding of the wide variety of linguistic forces acting on semantics is important to the overall topic so I want to continue to develop these ideas. To Hogg’s and Denison’s forces, Aitchison (Aitchison, 2001) has added the following:

Fashion, a view that asserts that change is random and unpredictable. Some words are used for a time before dying or falling out of fashion for no apparent reason. One such example in this study was “pansy” used frequently in the press in the 1970s to describe queers but almost unused or “dead” by the 1980s.

Foreign, some people consider that the majority of changes are due to foreign elements brought by conquerors or immigrants. Some words are “borrowed” from other languages in such a way as to remain on permanent loan. One could think of the example of “gay” and “Queer” both of which have been repatriated from the United States but with new meaning and connotation, “gay” to liberate the discourse from medicalized “Homosexual”, “Queer” to liberate it from the straight jacket of “gay”. However, more specifically borrowing would include terms such as “déjà vu” which came from French but is now directly incorporated into the English language. One of the common words in French for queer people is “pede” and if it were for some reason to become adopted and used in Britain its use in the English speech community would be descriptive of the action of the foreign in linguistics.

Aitchison too asserts that the most widely held view of language change is the functional view, that “language alters as the needs of its users alter” (Aitchison, 2001,145) and it is something I

highlighted above and what to explore a little more. Firstly, this is a social view of language change which regards language as property of a community rather than an individual. Political correctness can be seen as one social change. In this regard the use of the label LGBT is one such example. It was first used in my study by the Gay Press in 2005. Before the 1990s to be other than straight was to be gay or lesbian as in early identity politics and in the press, Sinfield argues “to declare yourself gay or lesbian was such a strenuous project that to blur the effect [...] seemed just too complicated, and scarcely possible”(Sinfield, 1988,10) but now multiple identities are splitting the queer psyche and fragmenting identities into acronyms because the functional needs of the community and, therefore, language have changed because the demands of society upon it has changed and this can be seen in the acronym LGBT. First it was “LGB” which deliberately becomes “LGBT”, then “LGBTQQ”, then “LGBTQQSF” and finally “LGBTQQSFI” or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Supporters, Friends, (and lastly) Intersex. In the polysemic drift of semantic word play it is questionable whether “LGB” now has the same meaning and definition, the same core as “LGBTQQSFI” which, despite its attempt for clarity and inclusion, presents a less definite, more blurred facade than the original and the core signified have been overwhelmed by peripheral. In the case of “SF”, even “TI” these are barely associable concepts to LGB. But nevertheless these changes are driven by an overwhelming move within society towards political correctness I will explore these fully in chapter 7.

A study of language use in the press and its alteration “can tell us a great deal about social meaning and stereotypes projected through language and communication” (Garnett and Bell, 1998,3) because language is a “social semiotic”. As Fowler clarifies “The power of discourse in

facilitating and maintaining discrimination against “members” of “groups” is tremendous.

Language provides names for categories and so helps set boundaries [...] discourse allows these names to be spoken and written frequently” (Fowler, 1991,94) but what it signifies in “newspapers is often myth associated with certain words” (Hartley, 1982,28).

“Lexical change [...] frequently reflects change in society” asserts Bower in *Watching English Change* (Bower, 1994,30) and McMahon sees “an intrinsic link between meaning and culture” (McMahon, 1994,175), so words change meaning because the world has changed. As Trask puts it “we can only understand the history of a word by knowing something crucial about the society in which the word was formerly used” (Trask, 1996). Words, then, are a lightning rod into the understanding of cultures that used them whilst semantic change, therefore, provides deep insight into the way the changing nature of society is portrayed into the press.

I want now to turn to examples from the press which demonstrate these theories. I am going to use a comparison between *The Llanelli Star* and *The Brighton Argus* to explore differing rates of change and absence in the press. I want to continue the theme of change by using a comparison between *The Sun* and *The Guardian* to look at communities and language and finally I want to use a two newspaper articles, focused on queer female identities which I believe describe the idea of functional language change.

5:4 A Tale of Representation in Two Parts of the UK

Alongside the national publications, the research focused on two local newspapers. One, *The Brighton Argus* (*The Argus*) serves a city of approximately 250,000 people situated in an affluent area of the south-east coast of England. In May 2010, *The Guardian* asked ‘Is Brighton Britain’s

Hippest City?’ (Petridis, 2010). *The Argus* was formed in 1880 and has a circulation of 24, 949 (NCS, 2011), some of which is distributed outside the town.

In comparison *The Llanelli Star* (*The Star*), serves a town of just 35,000 people on the south-west coast of Wales. Llanelli is a poverty-stricken ex-steel and mining town situated deep in the heart of the dwindling Welsh industrial landscape. *The Llanelli Star* was formed in 1909 and has a circulation of 14,857, some of which is also distributed outside the town (South-West-Wales-Media-Limited, 2011)⁵. During the same month as *The Guardian* posed its question on Brighton former Conservative leader Michael Howard, who was born and raised in Llanelli, was reported in the *Llanelli Star*, as describing Llanelli as a “sad” town and “a bit of a mess” (2010). These then are the two local papers, one serving an affluent area in the South East of England with a reputation for being hip and the other serving a very poor area of South Wales with a reputation for being in need of development. I want to start with *The Llanelli Star* and the absence of queer identities before moving on to examine how *The Argus* represents the same identities.

⁵ Most persons when considering English tend to consider “Standard English”. Standard English does not take account of regional variation and is characterised by a highly regulated written form which is different from the spoken BLAKE, N. F. (1996) *A History of the English Language*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.. In actual fact, for every one person who speaks and writes Standard English, there are many who do not CRYSTAL, D. (2005) *The Stories of English*, London, Penguin.. For example, there is great local variation within Britain as well as variation internationally. Whilst in Brighton one might generally expect Standard English to be widespread in both the written and spoken forms, Llanelli has one of the highest rates of Welsh speakers in Wales with some primary and secondary schools conducting lessons purely in Welsh (2011) Our Schools Been Lost in Translation. *Llanelli Star*. Llanelli.. This has an effect on both the English used and the speed of change. Interestingly, it means that language and language use in Wales is resistant to change as it is cut off from developments in English, particularly as Welsh is a “dead” language with all new words being imported from English BELLIN, W. (1984) Welsh and English. IN TRUDGILL, P. (Ed.) *Language in The British Isles*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press., this then is a further barrier to transformation.

Research in the National Newspaper Archive at Colindale, London, demonstrates that in 1977 not once are queers of any type mentioned in *The Llanelli Star*. In a town of 35,000 people, no-one is represented as queer. Eleven years later in 1988 *The Llanelli Star* makes one brief foray into the world of queerness but does so with overtly negative connotations. In the provocatively entitled article 'Nudist Attacks Flashers', the term "Homosexuals", is allowed to pop out for one brief moment in an article that is mainly centred upon the concerns of local nudists' families (Burton-Davies, 1988). The article from 20th May 1988 positions local queer people as follows:

"There are a lot of couples and their families who go down there [a tract of Forestry Commission land, called Cefn Sidan], but there are lots of perverts and homosexuals as well. The genuine naturists are being scared off" (Burton-Davies, 1988,6).

I believe that there is a close connection between first finding a structuring absence on a suppressed group, such as the absence in 1977 that is then followed by the use of stereotyping such as the portrayal of "homosexuals" as "perverts" and "flashers" as they are described at a later date. This collapsing of queer people and perverts together is also a common social theme of the time (Hocquenheim and Moon, 1993, Power, 1995). However, whilst queer people are portrayed in this article as uncontrolled sexual predators,

"Nude sunbathers on Cefn Sidan beach are being harassed by perverts and 'flashing' homosexuals [...] a fortnight ago there were a couple in the dunes who were flashed by two fellows playing with each other" (Burton-Davies, 1988,6)

others with social dissented life styles at this time, the nudists, are describe in wholesome terms, as “families”, “couples” and “people” whose alternative and dissident lifestyle as nudists is portrayed, in this article at least, as little more than a mild curiosity, a bit of family fun.

“My little boy who is three was ‘flashed’ by a pervert. A lot of naturists use windcheaters and the perverts look over them [...] I’ve had a lot of arguments with people. They sneak around the sunbathing couples and when you stand up and argue they say you shouldn’t be here with your wife with no clothes on, she must be game”(Burton-Davies, 1988,6)

Having examined every copy of *The Llanelli Star* in the archive from 1976 to 2005⁶ it is clear for the rest of 1988 and throughout the next key year in this study 1994, *The Llanelli Star* retreats once more into silence, erasing queer people from its pages until 2005.

This is not the case for *The Argus* who, from the start of the study in 1977 and in every year in question continually and, arguably, fairly engages with the queer community making it wholly and clearly visible.

The Argus, has for many queer people, been seen as intolerant of the queer community (Cooke, 2010), apparently, quick to denigrate and to misinform. However, it would seem from this research that such negative stereotyping of the newspaper appears to carry with it little actual substance, especially when compared with the other local newspaper, *The Llanelli Star* and in fact, even when compared with national newspapers. This is not to say that it has never

⁶ *The Llanelli Star* is a weekly paper. So I read every paper in the target years from cover to cover making 52 in every year or 208 in total.

carried a homophobic comment or is pro-Queer rather than it has always been less homophobic than other papers.

Research at both Colindale and at the archives of *The Argus* itself in Brighton demonstrate that the number of stories concerning queer people and the breadth and complexity of the stories, increased in the paper as one works through the years under investigation here, with many articles available for analysis in every year. The language use is, of course, mired in its time and changes from epoch to epoch. For example, throughout 1977 it does use the term “homosexual” frequently rather than “gay” to describe a person directly, even when they describe themselves in quotes as “gay”. In not using “gay” consistently it rejects the more politically correct identification of queer people as gay – an identification that was championed by the GLF which has resisted the medicalised term homosexual (Power, 1995, Cook, 2007). However, unlike national newspapers who restrict the use of the word “gay”, particularly in the body of the text, well into the 1990s *The Argus* seems to yearn to use the actual word “gay” where it can, slipping terms such as “gay-scene”, “gay-rally” and “gay-rights” even “gay football referee” past its readers in a single article in 1977 entitled ‘Anti-litter Man Fired ‘Because I Am Gay’ (Unknown, 1977a). I do need to differentiate between the use of “gay” in the title of a piece, where it is frequently used for punning etc and for the sake of space in a headline even in 1977 and its use in the main body of the text where it is immediately replaced with homosexual. There is also the “thesaurus-al” use of the term homosexual later in long narratives but again this is different in nature. Both of these uses are editorial technical uses rather than social uses. It is the changing social use of words and the trends within the body of the text that I am investigating.

It is a reporter's trade to use and gather words, but they are often restricted in their use by those that the paper's readers will accept and the Editor will allow (Hodgson, 1987). As this register changes the newspaper is simply reflecting language change in the community. In 1988 discussing *Section 28*, *The Argus* gives voice to the 'Despair that Faces the Gay Teenagers' (Unknown, 1988c) on 30th January 1988 allowing a significant amount of comment from a range of different queer organisations, which is highly unusual in the mainstream Press in 1988. It clearly and squarely talks about queer youth, something not witnessed in any of the other mainstream newspapers until 2005. Before this, analysis shows that queer youth is excised from the newspaper view of the world. However *The Argus* printed comments asserting that there are children who "have recognised or will recognise that they are lesbian or gay" (Unknown, 1988c). *The Argus* prints this article against a backdrop of a general Thatcherite and media discourse of the need to protect children from queer people which itself had led to *Section 28*⁷. *The Argus* is protective of queer clergy in Sussex both supporting and arguing in their defence in 1988 and celebrating their marriages in 2005.

In 1994 when many papers were providing balanced, if energetic, coverage of the queer age of consent vote and *The Llanelli Star* remained silent on the issue, *The Argus* published an article entitled 'Activists Attack a 'Grubby Compromise' (Axford, 1994) where, once again, it invited and published comment from a variety of queer organisations which has the effect of producing a wholly progressive piece in favour of queer equality and an equal age of consent. This was something *The Llanelli Star* was struggling to do even in 2005. This is an excerpt from that article published on 22nd February 1994:

⁷ Section 28 was a piece of anti-Queer legislation introduced by the Thatcher government in 1988. I will discuss it more fully in chapter 6

“Angry gay rights activists in Sussex have attacked Parliament’s reduction of the homosexual age of consent to 18. Campaigners described last night’s vote as a “grubby little compromise” made in an atmosphere of homophobia. Lobby group Stonewall has promised to fight [...] Simon Barnes secretary of Sussex gay community group Grapevine was locked inside the Commons after thousands outside responded angrily to the vote. He said “The debate was actually very good and most of the arguments were in our favour but in the lobbies I heard MPs openly talking about queers, poofs and joking about combining the gay vote with a vote on hanging, suggesting the hanging of queers [...] Arthur Law of AIDS education group Fighting AIDS in Brighton said “It is still impossible to target younger gay men with safer sex information”(Axford, 1994,3)

The issue here is that firstly *The Argus* is directly quoting a number of different queer organisations and secondly it is doing so in a very favourable manner. It is unquestionably on the side of lowering the age of consent because it carries no balancing opinion.

This research shows that against the general perception that the paper is homophobic at its most progressive *The Argus* is a clear, even outspoken, advocate of queer rights, for example in arguing against *Section 28* (Unknown, 1988c). At its least supportive it is blandly neutral, allowing readers to pick through the facts and form their own judgements. As this article from 30th January 1988 says:

“Teenage suicides will increase if the Government succeeds in stifling classroom discussion it was claimed today. Gay groups in Brighton say clause 28 [...] will

stop teachers providing neutral and unbiased information. They say that local councils could be forced to cut all funding for gay information and counselling services” (Unknown, 1988c)

In the samples under analysis it has never, in my opinion, been overtly hostile to queer people. How might we reconcile these findings with the perceptions of the newspaper among the local queer population of Brighton? Brighton which has been dubbed the gay capital of the UK as this excerpt from *The Evening Standard* in 2004 shows:

“Brighton is the gay capital of Britain, according to the Office of National Statistics. The Coast city has 2,554 people in homosexual couples - or 13 for every 1,000 residents.” (Unknown, 2004)

Therefore, one explanation might be that the expectations of queer people in Brighton are far higher than in other provincial towns and cities. Such expectations mean that they fail to recognise how far the rest of the population in their city has come. Being queer in the 1990s, as Michael Warner asserts, means “fighting about issues all the time, locally and piecemeal” (Warner, 1993, xiii), it becomes second nature, even as the environment becomes more hospitable. Certainly with in Brighton there are a large number of queer campaigning organisations (Unknown, 2013).

I want to continue my exploration of these two newspapers by making a direct comparison using two articles from 2005 both relating to civil partnership. Both *The Llanelli Star* and *The Argus* published more on queers in this year than at any point in the cycle of research. For *The Llanelli Star*, this amounts to three pieces, one of which is a letter in response to an original

article; for *The Argus* there are considerably more articles in the sample. The two articles I wish to focus on are concerned with “gay” weddings and both offer firsts. In ‘First Gay Wedding Man Dies Day After Service’ (Hustwayte, 2005), *The Argus* celebrates the very first civil-partnership in the UK. My thesis is about words, not images, but in this case as a comparison it is important to note that *The Argus* uses a large photograph of the smiling couple and words such as “celebrate”, “couple” and “blessing” in a very warm, positive loving article which is a celebration of commitment. Published on the 6th December 2005 it begins:

“A terminally ill gay man is believed to be the first in Britain to “tie the knot” with his partner in a civil partnership ceremony... surrounded by family and friends the ceremony took place in the hospice chapel, followed by the traditional photos and cutting of the cake.” (Hustwayte, 2005,3)

The Llanelli Star in a story on a similar subject called ‘Gay Wedding First for Llanelli Couple’ (Williams, 2005b), however, blanks out the faces of the couple in its picture. It quotes more defensive phrases which serve to position the article not as a celebration, but rather an appeal for understanding and toleration. Published on 8th December, 2005 it starts:

“We’re no different to anybody else. We happen to be both men but we want the same things as other couples in a serious committed relationship...we just want the same rights and security, and to make that public commitment” (Williams, 2005b,2)

I would suggest, given the redaction of their faces, they clearly cannot make it public at all for their own security.

Queer campaigns and community issues are also dealt with differently by the newspapers and I want now to make a second direct comparison between the two papers. In Brighton, there is a confederation of 'Pride People Ready to Party' published on the 6th July 2005 in what is clearly a cross-community citywide effort (*Bridgewater, 2005*) but in Llanelli, there is just a singular 'Gay Campaigner Backing Bid to Tackle Homophobia' published on 25th April, 2005 in an appeal for understanding, if not acceptance (Henwood, 2005). The language between the two could not be more different. The first is full of energy, joviality and fun. In a text that celebrates inclusion and diversity there are references to local establishment figures such as the mayor and senior policemen who attend the launch event. It says:

"Summer Pride 2005 was launched last night and gave people a glimpse of what is in store when the event gets underway in July [...] Brighton and Hove Mayor Bob Carden attended with various MPs, Chief Superintendent Paul Curtis of Sussex Police and Brighton and Hove City Council chief executive Alan McCarthy"(Bridgewater, 2005,3)

The second is dour, a throw-back in language and content to the identity discourses of the 1970s and 1980s. It has to assert that you "can't catch it" (Queerness) and speaks about the isolation of the queer in Welsh society, of barriers and stereotypes and of coming out and rejection. These are language and themes no longer seen in any of the press at this time. It states:

"A Llanelli woman who was rejected by her parents for being gay has told of her support for an initiative to tackle homophobia [...] She said 'I came out

because I was fed up with lying all the time; living as a heterosexual was killing me emotionally and mentally”(Henwood, 2005,8)

These are cultural records, mirrors of their audience and they speak to the restricted, Methodist and masculine culture of South Wales and the metropolitan, liberal melting pot that is England’s south-east. They demonstrate how the language around queer people evolves differently in varying areas of the country. It shows that although there has been, indeed, great change, it is not uniform and is different in nature. Indeed, there are convenient shortcuts and metonyms in the titles which describe the positions: the many “people” in the first and the singular “campaigner” in the second. One is a celebrated community the other a social aberration.

There is of course a different reading of these stories, one could take the view that *The Argus* has moved away from commenting on queer politics or challenging comments in favour of just discussing the social and economic benefits of Brighton Pride. Further given the low number of queer people in Llanelli one could take the view that *The Llanelli Star* is extremely supportive even radical in its publishing, challenging the status quo in a way *The Argus* simply doesn’t have to. I think that this has an element of the chimera about that view though. If it were true then one would see a string of radical stories in *The Llanelli Star* which simply aren’t appearing. In these two articles the paper is simply responding to a heightened national debate, which it doesn’t always, for example it made no comment on the equal age of consent votes in 1994 nor *section 28* in 1988. Next, I am going to continue to examine different speeds of change but this time in national newspapers.

5:5 A Comparison of Changing Language Use in the UK National Press

The next section takes my previous analysis further by exploring the nature of change surrounding the language used to describe queer people in national newspapers. Using the tabloid *The Sun* and the broadsheet *The Guardian* I want to demonstrate that representational change occurred by using these two national newspapers to explore this movement.

Unlike *The Llanelli Star*, in 2005, *The Guardian* even as early as 10th June 1977 felt able to publish a full length interview, including clear photographs of the subjects, with two real life queer women. Entitled 'It's Absurd When You Think There Are Taboos Against It' (Unknown, 1977g), there is no doubt that it is a cutting edge piece in that it draws back the veil of absence that surrounded the queer community and does so in a very positive manner. It relies on and publishes extensive quotes from a queer couple in considerable detail allowing the subjects to self-define. Whilst almost all the non-Queer Press at this time allows no comment for queers, even in articles that deal directly with them, *The Guardian* does the opposite. Gross says that this denial or representation speaks to their overall disempowerment in society, asserting:

“representation in the mediated “reality of our mass culture is in itself power; certainly it is the case that non-representation maintains the powerless status of groups that do not possess significant material or political power bases [...] those who are at the bottom of the various power hierarchies will be kept in their places in part through their relative invisibility” (Gross, 1995,62)

But this is not true in *The Guardian*. Its article inverts this model speaking about “pride”, “community” and “lesbianism”; of “love-making”, “relationships” and “sexualities” in a way that is only reflected at the time in *The Brighton Argus*, but not to this degree. It says:

“Shauna McDonald-Brown and Suzanne Khanbatt fell in love nine months ago.

Their middle class upbringing had taught them to cope with most things.

Lesbianism was not amongst them. They were both affirmed homosexuals when they first met at the end of last year’s Gay Pride March”(Unknown, 1977g,9)

The Argus may use the term “gay” as opposed to homosexual but *The Guardian* offer in this article at least, a full defence of queer people “it’s absurd when you think there are taboos against it. It’s just falling in love with people” (Unknown, 1977g). This is generally a highly progressive article. It associates the words “people” with queer folk, a seminal marker of changing representations with in hegemony as I shall explain in chapter 8 and something rarely seen in the national Press. Placed as it was in a national newspaper, it must have acted like a siren call to disparate and fragmented queer individuals about the possibilities for the future and for the moment in larger urban communities. It is, therefore, evocative of a time when queer identities were emerging. It is also a very current piece written in such a way that it speaks to the timeless universality of human sexual experience and love. It challenges lesbian stereotypes, even those circulating today, by asserting that “they are both pretty and feminine”(Unknown, 1977g). It provides a queer cultural record of the time in that the women refer to volunteering at “The Gay Switchboard” as a core social event and the rugged nature of “Pride” marches as well as to “being staunch feminists [who] dislike men as a *class*”(Unknown, 1977g)[my emphasis]. It is clear in context that they are describing the comradeship of a sub-

cultural community saying “everybody else was kind of mucky and sweaty and full of the march. There was a great feeling of solidarity” (Unknown, 1977g). However, the article also juxtapositions the normality of their situation calling them a “comfortable couple” living in a “Victorian terrace house” (Unknown, 1977g). They work, support each other and are on good relations with their respective parents. Outside of being girls in love, they are then the quintessential English couple.

However, even years later on 10th February 1988 readers of *The Sun* are faced with a less than progressive piece in ‘When The Gays Have To Shut Up’ (*Editorial*, 1988). There can be no doubt that the root of the story is a truly horrific event that gripped the nation involving the brutal murder of newspaper boy Stuart Gough by Victor Miller⁸. *The Sun* uses this event to make an argument, commonplace in the political discourse of *Section 28* at this time, against civil rights for queer people. Only a very small proportion of the article is used to discuss the murder, almost 90% of this article by column inches being a diatribe against queer people in education, in councils and in the Church. Nowhere in the article are queer folk quoted or paraphrased. In this article, they are a faceless and threatening horde bent on the destruction of society and the molestation of children. Outside the headline, “gays” or “gay” are not mentioned. Instead, readers are treated with the medicalised other: “the homosexual” who is not represented as a person but a member of a group who engages in “acts” through choice. “Reviled”, “perverted”, “cruel and vicious” *the Sun* constructs a clear linguistic divide between “them”, the rampant out of control marginalised queer and “us”, “society”, the “normal people” asserting:

⁸ Gough was a queer man and also a predatory paedophile. He stalked, raped and murdered the 14 year old paper boy. He quickly admitted his guilt and asked for the maximum sentence available. The story was front page news for a number of weeks in January and February 1988.

“They believe it is they who are normal and the rest of society is perverse. They want grants from local councils and meeting places. They want preference for jobs. Above all, some of them want the opportunity to go into schools and make known to children the homosexual way of life”(Unknown, 1988j,6).

The article when *the gays have to shut up* is just one example of the rampant homophobia and the processes of othering that are common in *The Sun's* reporting of queer people around 1988, aligning itself with the Thatcher government at the time. Piers Morgan, who worked at *The Sun* in the 1980s, suggests it is mainly down to its editor at the time Kelvin Mackenzie.

Speaking in *The Telegraph* in 2005 Morgan says:

“(Allegedly) homosexual rugby players were a favourite target of Kelvin's. In fact he generally thought that anyone who played a "dodgy sport" - ie not football or boxing - spoke in a posh accent, sang pop music or just walked in a funny way was "as bent as nine bob note". And his staff were encouraged to share his suspicions rather than commit professional and medical suicide by challenging them.

I am rather ashamed to confess that one of my first features as a cub reporter on *the Sun* was headlined: "The Poofs of Pop" and involved me and a colleague Peter Willis giving our totally ill-informed verdict on whether endless male pop stars were gay or not, and telephoning their agents for a confession or furious denial. I later penned the words to a front-page Sun splash about the first gay

kiss on EastEnders, which Kelvin MacKenzie headlined: "East**benders**." Oh, my parents were so proud..." (Morgan, 2005)

However other factors that will certainly have impacted on the discourse are the AIDS crisis which is rampant in 1988, the Thatcherite struggles against "loony left" councils and the adoption of this struggle in the press along with the debate surrounding *Section 28*, which could also be said to be an explanation. The first is HIV/AIDs which has attracted considerable research as I showed in the methodology, the second is the issue of *Section 28* and how it impacts upon the press discourse is something that I will engage in during chapter 6 where I have the scope to give it a complete analysis.

It is clear from these articles that these two newspapers have opposite agendas in setting the tone and language used around queer folk and they adopt innovative language trends at different rates. *The Guardian* is never vitriolic and generally very supportive of queer folk whilst *The Sun*, with a few noticeable exceptions, by 2005 demonstrates the opposite. I wish which continue my comparison between *The Guardian* and *The Sun*.

Social evolution is at the heart of the next two articles I wish to consider in this chapter: *Gay Age of Consent Cut to 18* (Michael White et al., 1994) from *The Guardian* in 1994 and *Tell It Straight: Church is Backward About Gays* from *The Sun* in 2005 (O'Reilly, 2005). Again, these articles are used as a comparison to explore speeds of change in differing papers and across time.

The Guardian article centres on reports from the debate on equalising the age of consent in February 1994. The language is open, friendly and familiar, quoting well-known figures such as

Sir Ian McKellen for the queer community and Rev Ian Paisley speaking against them and in this way it is similar to the last article. In between is a passionate blur, MPs and Ministers from both sides stating polite, well-meaning and articulate arguments about “love”, “equality” and “choice” - unlike the 1977 piece. The queer people themselves are left, as is often the way in the 1980s and 90s, to scream, heckle and demonstrate from outside the gates of the Houses of Parliament. Apparently impotent observers to the deliberations of other more empowered persons of merit, in this way it is retrograde in its representations. The article published on the 22nd February 1994 says:

“Outside Parliament scores of gay and lesbian activists clambered over the barriers protecting the main entrance at Westminster and began an angry demonstration, trouble flared soon after the crowd of 5000 who had staged a candlelit vigil throughout the debate, learned that the move to bring the age of consent for gay men to 16 had failed [...] Sir Ian McKellen the actor who led the Stonewall campaign promised “to press our case in Strasbourg. The Government will come under enormous pressure before the next election to change the law. It will be a matter of a few years”. The court has already forced equality of treatment between the sexes in Germany and Ireland” (Michael White et al., 1994,1)

The queer people may not be able to decide their own fate but they have been able to affect the language of it. “gay” and “lesbian” are predominantly the linguistic choices of the day with “homosexual” being banished to the vocabulary of the religious right. This is a positive development from 1977. queers are quoted and fundamentally a plurality of queer voices,

often in opposition, begin to speak, from the militant Peter Tatchell , member of *Outrage!*, to the actor, Sir Ian McKellen, spokesmen for the more moderate Stonewall and the MP, Chris Smith. Again, this is a movement forward from 1977 where there was a feeling of queer isolation in the stories even in relatively supportive Press. This is a common theme in the press throughout the period: the queer protests whilst others, overwhelmingly non-Queers, often members of the Establishment, the State, or branches thereof, debate and decide their fate. However, there is no doubt that in the language used in newspapers to describe the debate things has moved on. This is a process I will unpick as I move through chapter 6. The language is very different in tone and content from both the 1980s and 1970s. What remains a common theme is queer being defined and controlled by another and this is explored more fully in chapter 6.

Thereby the changes in *The Guardian* can be seen to reflect changes in Society. As social events, and the uptake of trends, are different for different groups and different regions, change is unlikely to occur in a uniform manner, as we have seen from *The Star* and *The Argus*. This, in itself, can offer an insight into the nature of societies because it demonstrates that social attitudes are not homogenous. No greater can be the forces of semantic change than within *The Sun*, leading it to publish 'Tell it Straight The Church Is Backwards On Gays' in December 2005 (O'Reilly, 2005), unlike the two articles from *The Guardian* which are arguably centred on an identical trajectory and stable philosophy. This article represents a complete reversal of attitude and linguistic form for *The Sun* and a reversal of the newsroom culture and audience that produced it when compared with the article from 1988. It is an argument against the Catholic Church, arguing that whilst the rest of "us", society has moved on "they", and more

specifically the Pope are still trying to connect queers and paedophilia. It is a new “us”, a new “they”, a new “society”, now the queer person is part of “society”, the “us” and the Church is the linguistic other. For example, it asserted on 1st December, 2005 that:

“Once upon a time, gays made up a vulnerable section of society and were easily targeted or scapegoated. Now they are a vocal lobby – and are widely accepted and respected in the broader community. But the Church hierarchy are too backward-looking and repressed to realise that”(O'Reilly, 2005,5)

Now, in this article queers are “accepted”, “respected” and part of a “broader community” whilst the Catholic Church is “backward”, “repressed” and “reviled”. *The Sun* uses terms such as “gay” and “community” to describe queers whilst the Church uses “homosexual” making it outside the main consensus. This from the same article:

“Bosses at the Vatican have published an eight-page document insisting that “homosexuals” should be barred from becoming priests”(O'Reilly, 2005)

This is a massive and dramatic change, not so much a gentle semantic drift but a gigantic seismic shift in relation to *The Sun* articles from previous years.

There is no doubting the differing language between all the broadsheets and the tabloids. Linguistic change is fundamentally about philosophy and cultural audience. If you buy *The Guardian* my study shows that over and over again you are likely to hear the queer voice, quietly at the start of the study but becoming loud and more varied at the end. There are early adopters of language change, such as *The Argus* and there are those newspapers that need a push. My research shows that *The Mail*, for example –which I analyse in later chapters, is

consistently resistant to change relative to other publications. Although transformation does eventually happen they lag behind the curve. In 1994 in *the Mail*, queer people still live secret lives (Unknown, 1994e), prey on young children (Unknown, 1994c), are unsuitable for high office (Doran, 1994b) and provoke fury through their actions for recognition and equality (Doran and Connett, 1994), the last article using the term “homosexuals” more per column inch than any other in that year in the whole study. Tabloids were proven quick to jump on any colloquial phrase and proved to be early adopters of progressive language, unless involved in rhetorical rants.

5:6 Functional language changes and discourses of Queerness

Strangely maybe, the queer Press did not use as many queer labelling words when describing the individual, especially at the start. This is because they are a community looking out, not in. If we are all queer, certainly queer enough to have bought or picked up the paper, then further labels are almost irrelevant. I don't sit at home thinking “Queer me did this” and “Queer me did that”. I thinking “I did this” and “I did that”. When an individual or community is talking about themselves I believe they drop many of the identity labels. Further to this, much political thought is concerned with removing those labels and de-othering.

Language does change and things pick up steam in the 1990s and 2005. But to give one example from *Capital Gay* in 1988 entitled ‘Cashman Wins Libel Cash from Murdoch’ (Unknown, 1988a), nowhere in this article is there any description of queerness. The Cashman in question is referred to as “*Actor and Activist Michael Cashman*” (Unknown, 1988a) and this can only be a positive thing as it is a normalizing attitude that removes sexual identity labelling

from the subject. In the Straight Press he might have been referred to as: gay (or homosexual) actor and activist Michael Cashman. However, the queer Press are years ahead in using the term “gay” in other ways, it is just not often attached to people. From 1977 onwards it is bonded to many things including the title of that seminal queer magazine *Gay News*.

An article published in September 2005 entitled Concern Over Low Prosecution Rate For Gay Hate Crime(Williams, 2005c) demonstrates these advances. A senior councillor is reported as saying: “I am concerned at how few cases of homophobic and transphobic crime are actually prosecuted”(Williams, 2005c,20). Not only does it use words – homophobic and transphobic- that do not appear until the 1980s, and do not have traction in the newspapers until the 1990s (the term used was anti-gay), but it also describes a structural change in thinking and language which, I believe, partially enters the structural and grammatical level. The structures of the sentences are different. They are less formal, more personal. I want to use two excerpts from *The Times* one from 1977 and one from 2005 to further highlight this change. The first is taken from ‘Protest Over Children in Stage Workshop’ from 1977. Published on 24th January 1977 it says:

“The Festival of Light has called on the Government to halt “the growing exploitation of children by militant homosexuals” after the recent announcement that school children in London are to take part in a theatre workshop run by the Gay Sweatshop Company”(Reporter, 1977,3)

The second is taken from ‘Is Queer-Bashing Just The Tip of An Iceberg of Homophobia?’ published on 29th October 2005 in *The Times*. It says:

“Those of us who are gay know very well that the smarter suburbs of London and the trendier streets of cosmopolitan cities do not accurately reflect attitudes still common in provincial and rural Britain. Here gay people may still face incomprehension, pity even hostility” (Parris, 2005,21)

Progressive and colloquial language use is porous with new uses moving between the more receptive Press, for example *G-Scene* in 2005 ‘Questioning the Queer Status Quo’ is littered with it (Wildblood, 2005a) and it has quickly been adopted by *The Brighton Argus*, too, as demonstrated by ‘Pride People Ready to Party’ (Bridgewater, 2005). However, research shows that acronyms such as LGBT are predominantly resisted by almost all the non-Queer Press creating a ghettoization in language. This leads to an informed minority who understand the nuances of the terms and a generalised majority for whom these acronyms relate to one thing only, the queer.

5:7 Examples of Historical Functional Language Change as Represented in the UK National Press

Data analysis of all the core articles I took from the archive demonstrates that positive words and terms begin to surround queer people in the 1990s and are well established by 2005. In 1977 in the articles under analysis the term “people” is associated with queer actors only once but it is associated 7 times with non-Queer. In 1988 this count is 1:13 but by 1994 it is 4:9 and by 2005 the term people is associated with queer actors in a story 19 times and non-Queer actors just 11 times.

I would like to give two examples that are illustrative of this trend. The first is taken from The Guardian in 1977. Entitled 'Miami Puts Gay Rights On Test' it was published on 6th June 1977 and says:

"The anti-gay people claim that homosexuals recruit and molest children, and that homosexuality is a religious abomination [...] basing themselves on higher court rulings that job discrimination is permitted if there is a "rational" relationship to the work being done, some courts have said it is acceptable to ban homosexuals from teaching jobs. They claim that students and teachers will be influenced by their teacher's sexual preferences. Homosexuals still have problems in buying or renting accommodation, many states still punish homosexual acts with prison" (Steele, 1977b,4)

Here one sees that queer people are very much marginalised and not associated with the word "people" unlike in the next quote whilst non-Queer actors are. However, in this next article one can feel the sense of inclusion of queer "people" and the exclusion of geographic areas that are not "Queer enough" it's entitled 'Gay greetings! But not from shoppers north of the border' and is taken from *The Times* on the 28th May, 2005. It says:

"BRITAIN'S first range of gay greeting cards will not be released north of the border because Scotland is not considered gay enough [...] Mike Bugler, managing director of Clinton Cards, which has 780 stores across Britain, said:

"We're not against the Scots but because the company supplying them is a start-up company they only wanted to tackle the south. We took their advice to find out where the greater concentration of gay people were. They felt there was a greater concentration of gay people in these areas but if there turns out to be a strong market, then we will roll them out to the Scottish stores in the obvious places like Glasgow and Edinburgh.""(Lister, 2005,37)

The words and terms used to describe and that are associated with queer people thus changed completely over the period, here once again they are positioned as consumers. Whilst the use of the term "people" is one I have chosen to represent this change, there are others. This process describes how queer folk were gradually allowed to love, to work, to be part of family, to have children and to be young people across the period. In 1977 and 1988 "people" or "person" are not associated with the queer folk at all in the press, neither are words of "love", "companionship" and "family". They start being described as people and other positive terms in 1994 and by 2005 this linguistic practice is well embedded. In 1977 love, when used, was deployed to highlight a "corruption" of the social norm. In 1988 one sees the frequent use of lover as in "live-in lover" but this is a denigration, a reduction of the true depth of that relationship because it focuses the reader on physical acts. It is also a euphemism to cover the true nature of a relationship. In 1994 queer folk are in "love" and by 2005 in love with "partners", or "lifelong partners". There is a movement or a tendency for descriptions and associated words in the press as a whole, to move away from terms that describe the physical acts of sex towards mental states of higher attachments when discussing the queer person.

It is then axiomatic for me that not every group in a diverse nation could be included in a general consensus which includes the toleration of a queer minority; some must be excluded, namely those who are intolerant of it. Further, this process is accelerated because whilst the progressive arguments are dynamic, developing across the period, traditional arguments are just that and in a modern dynamic society they quickly begin to look stale and out of touch, appearing dry and unfashionable. This may be one of the essential reasons why language and the broader social consensus changed so quickly, because traditional positions looked out of place in a post-industrial world. This is a functional view of language.

The functional view suggest that words are manipulated and redefined because of social need however, these changes are often based in events in the past, sometimes the long past. It is these processes one sees above. The second article has a direct heritage to the past and the process described in the previous chapter. Whilst words have a central meaning, they also have associated meanings which allow them to drift down a linguistic stream, moving from their core meaning to stabilize around a peripheral meaning that becomes the new core. It is the fluidity in semantics that offers historians an insight into the past. It is at the core of the adoption of the word “gay” that it could be so completely and totally emptied of its original association and progressively displace many other terms, including “homosexual”, across the breadth of the study.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of language change is that alterations can be governed by immediate or by long term causes (Ullmann, 1959). The ability of the Labour

Government to create the term “civil partner” and see it spread throughout the press in 2005 was predicated on years, if not generations, of struggle for self-definition and equality which has itself been based on social and legal changes. Such terms may appear to be manifestations such as “gaydar” (to identify another queer person through intuition) or “bear” (a normally older, slightly larger queer man, often with facial hair), I argue that they are fundamentally facilitated ultimately, by the growth of urban centres that facilitated queer communities and life styles hundreds of years ago (Boswell, 1980) but that the recent increase in the speed of semantic change is profound and cannot be located in these long-term trends. There has been a sudden shift in attitude. “civil partner” is an excellent example of this. As a term it first appears in *The Times* in inverted commas as part of a report on the Lib Dem conference in the Autumn of 2000, where civil partnership is accepted as party policy (Kate, 2000). By 2001 the Conservative party have adopted it as part of their strategy to improve relationships between the Conservative party and queer community (Bercow, 2001) and the term has become naturalized and outside of commas. By 2004 it has been passed as (Labour) government legislation. Throughout it is a contested sign with many sides attempting to fill it with meaning. It was, and remains, particularly contested ground for the Church and Christians who do not wish to see it become associated with the institution of marriage itself (Browne, 2003). However, the term has a socially functional use and there for has been widely adopted. It is also an example of blending in action.

Whilst some academics argue that change can be accidental, such as the term “friendly fire” (Sihler, 2000), Ullman argues that “awareness and intention play important parts in change of meaning” (Ullmann, 1959, 178). My research suggests that overall words used to describe the

queer community have, on the whole, changed deliberately if subtly because hegemonic conditions have changed leading to changes in the language surrounding gender and sexuality. queers campaigners have actively fought for those alterations. Research in the archive demonstrated that in the press you can see the drive for equalities in the 1990s and earlier explode into a raft of new inclusive words and phrases in 2005. These include “same sex”, “civil partner”, “LGBT”, “relationship” ; and replaced words from the 1990s associated with protest such as “campaigner”, “activist” and “protestor”. These themselves had displaced words and the 1980s which were derogatory and exclusionary terms such as “poofster”, “fanatics” and “live in lover. In the 1970s, religious and medicalised terms such as “homosexual”, “acts” and “perverts” dominated in the press. There is a steady increase across the study of words that express community and identity. To contrast two articles from the press, in *A Dade Loss for Gays* from *The Guardian* in 1977 queer people are defined as “homosexual”, just “homosexual” only . Opponents of queer legislation are described as anti-homosexual. Here is an excerpt from that article published on 9th June 1977:

“The voters of Miami have decided two to one not to retain an ordinance which bars discrimination against homosexuals, in jobs, housing and public facilities [...] the issue aroused wide-spread national interest among religious groups, civil libertarians, politicians and homosexuals. The main champion of the anti-homosexual movement, Anita Bryant, declared at a jubilant victory party that the laws of God had been vindicated” (Steele, 1977a,4)

In this way they are not a community in themselves or part of “our” society. In this article, no positive words are associated with them (Steele, 1977a). On 30th December, 2005 in ‘Murder

Squad Trusted by Gay Community to Be Disbanded’ also in *The Guardian* not only are they described as a “minority group” i.e. they have internal cohesion but also as a “community” (Cowan, 2005). When one separates and analyses the words associated with queer people across the period one finds this trend to be well-established as statistical fact.

I want to now briefly draw out the nature of uneven semantic change as part of a cycle of drift. As Crystal points out “when a change, a new pronunciation, a new word begins to appear, it does not affect everyone and everywhere at once” (Crystal, 2005,250) “a new usage is first adopted by some people on some occasions; from there it spreads to other people and to a greater frequency among those who have already started to use it” (Blake, 1996,5). “There is evidence [Bower asserts] to show that linguistic change can be introduced in a social class and spread outwards from that class to others” such as LGBT which at the start was used only by the queer Press and *The Brighton Argus* (Bower, 1994,16). In this way, it is clear that there are two elements to language change, particularly around marginalized groups. Firstly, that groups must form a new word or a semantic change for a specific reason. This formulation must have a strong enough connotation to develop traction within that group so that it becomes widely used before it can be accepted and used by all of the community outside that group. My research demonstrates that there are many euphemisms and language used by queer communities rarely cross into the main stream usage. For example, the terms “cottage” and “cottaging” from the Pink Paper’s ‘Pensioner Dies In Cottage Arrest’ in 1988 (Unknown, 1988i) is a term I haven’t found in the mainstream Press in my research. Similarly, there are social forces within British society in the second half of the 20th century that facilitated the use of non-pejorative terms around queer individuals and left their mark in language.

In this final section I will continue to explore language change around queer people but specifically in this instance the shifting attitudes towards queer women and how they are reported in the press. I explore the idea of a “Queer Panic” defence in *Society* in 1977 before it became a mainstream argument during the 1980s. Fundamentally though I am juxtapositioning two articles and exploring the differing representations within them thereby demonstrating linguistic change which I believe is mirroring social change.

Perhaps the most important cultural divide in society which exists is between men and women. Whilst Feminist and queer theorists may work hard to blur the distinction, linguist David Crystal sees the differentiation as seminal driver in semantic change. He postulates “women are more innovative with language than men, it is the pronunciations which women use that become the prestige forms in language, men may be the dominant voice in society but their accent has been given to them by female sanction (Crystal, 2005,418). Blake concurs, saying “an important influence on the language has been the rise of feminism [...] spawning a whole new vocabulary and to avoid words which might cause offence to some groups” (Blake, 1996, 315) including the queer. In this way it can be seen that the female voice has a definite effect on semantic change. Women have led the way in driving new meaning and usage of words defying the patriarchy and facilitating inclusion. This paper argues that this is a process that has increased in dynamism since 1976 leaving its semantic mark in the drift of language change, as women have become steadily more empowered so they have been able to influence meaning to a greater extent. This power shift can be studied in the lexical “fossil” record. The campaigns by new social movements, including Feminists have, this paper argues, redrawn meaning in a modern

society and will be expanded upon in a later chapter. I want to explore a concept central to my thesis: that of newspapers as a “linguistics fossil record” of social change by comparing two different articles twenty years apart. In doing so I will also demonstrate, again, significant change has occurred in newspaper representations across the period. I start with a piece from *The Mail* in 1977.

To take two articles which uniquely sum up this shift, in 1977 *The Mail* ran a piece called oxymoronically ‘I’ll Try To Win Back My Lesbian Wife’ (Steeple, 1977). This is a full page monologue that centres on the prosecution and acquittal of Company Director Stanley Jackson for the stabbing of his wife’s female lover. Published on 16th April 1977 it asserts:

“Company director Stanley Jackson, who lost his wife to her girlfriend, left The Old Bailey a free man yesterday determined to save his 16-year marriage. A jury, which included seven women took three and a half hours to clear Mr Jackson of stabbing his wife’s lover, 22 year old Mrs Bernice Taylor, with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and maliciously wounding her”(Steeple, 1977,12)

This article is notable for two reasons. Firstly, the language throughout reduces his wife to his chattel. She is “my wife”, “his wife” and he speaks for her on many occasions, for example, saying “obviously my wife is very upset by all the publicity”. At one point he claims he is forced to stay at home and look after his children, clearly implying this is a women’s role, because “of them being out night after night”(Steeple, 1977). Whilst he is quoted at length, Mrs Jackson is never interviewed, quoted or paraphrased and neither is her lover, Mrs Taylor, who is seemingly also married, even though the newspaper has taken a photograph of her. She and

her lesbian partner are rendered mute because they are transgressors of social norms. It is the aggressor, Mr Jackson, who stands for what is correct and proper. It is notable, secondly, because although “Mr Jackson was said to have forced his way in [to Mrs Taylor’s home], hit [her] on the face and stabbed her with a dagger” (Steeple, 1977), something he does not deny. This is considered by the jury to be a justifiable response to his wife’s new romantic entanglement. As Mr Jackson says himself “I was shattered, degraded and humiliated when I found out about her Lesbian affair with Mrs Taylor. I think my patience was incredible. I have spoken to other men and they say they would have gone completely mad long before I threw my little tantrum” (Steeple, 1977). It is misogynistic and patriarchally arrogant beyond measure. For me it is one of the first examples of the queer panic defence.

Compare that language and article construction to this from *The Sun* on 15th June, 2005 which was able to report on the sentencing of:

“A sleazy pervert [who] sexually harassed a Lesbian couple for three years – and begged for a kinky threesome. Sex pest John Robinson told cops after he was nicked that it is every man’s dream to sleep with two women at the same time ...when twisted Robinson committed a sex act in front of her the woman told him to put it away” (Fairburn, 2005,6).

Robinson’s crime is relatively modest in comparison to Jackson’s and there can be no doubt that the societies reflected in these two articles represent very different attitudes to women and to queer relationships. They are social historical records. In the first, the women are “other”, bad parents, transgressors even property. They are consistently formally referred by

the heteronormative title “Mrs” which the mere relationship clearly subverts. In the second, they are constructed as empowered, valued and independent. In the first, a man may force his way into her home and stab a woman but still escape justice. In the second, any form of harassment is swiftly dealt with and labelled sleazy. It is no wonder that the two women interviewed in *The Guardian's* article of 1977 “disliked men as a class” (Unknown, 1977g).

The language between the two is very different. For me, it is fixed at the moment of writing, in the way of many fossils and like palaeontology one can't simply dig it up and pronounce it satisfied. You have to work with the language and contexts from epoch to epoch to understand the evolutionary nature of the texts. This is particularly pronounced when one makes a diachronic comparison and explores semantic change.

5:9 Conclusion

In chapter I have demonstrated that the language used to represent queer people in the press changed considerably over the period. I have shown that it changed in all groups but that it was not even varying on a regional and local level.

Consistently, the articles in the study have demonstrated the value of general linguistic theories and ideas in describing elements of language change around queers. The theories from linguistics and data analysis have demonstrated the social functionality of language, some aspects of absence in language as well as some of the technical aspects of language change such as blending.

However, I don't believe that linguistics evidence the reasons for the exceptional speed of semantic change surrounding queer folk in this period relative to other points in history. Also it

seems that linguistic theories suggest processes and mechanisms of language change in different papers and constituencies but not the social reasons why. They do not delve into that social functionality; they just allow it to exist. They do though open a window onto the world of changing queer language representation.

In terms of the structure of the argument I outlined in the introduction, this chapter has built upon the Marxist theories used in the previous chapter to demonstrate that change is not even either by publication nor region. It has underscored that change has been rapid and dramatic. In the next two chapters I want to explore the consequences of such change.

6:0

Power, Representation and The Closet

6:1

Biography: How to Camouflage Your Closet

Of all the closets I have ever been in, perhaps the darkest and the smallest was when I was in the army. Growing up I vividly remember my parents talking about the scandal. We were stationed in Germany and one of the officers had been caught fucking a corporal. I was fifteen. It was shocking that these two men should be having sex at all. It was even more troublesome that they should have come from opposite sides of the divide: one commissioned and one from the ranks. Later, when I myself enlisted, I strove for the neutral, anonymity that I had honed to a T in boarding school. The very fit, very masculine corporal, who had beasted me through basic training and whom I had secretly admired was someone I particularly tried to dodge. He would lean casually in the doorway, chatting and laughing with the other training staff. I still have at home the picture of the entire platoon, including that corporal. In 1994, several years after leaving the army, I was to meet him and his boyfriend in a queer London nightclub called “Trade”. He had been in a closet of his own.

Closets, though, bleed into everyday life. Public toilets, that public private space, are one such. You can lock the door, but you are never quite alone. Surrounded by the smells, excretions and occasional artworks of those that have gone before, at 15 on the way back to school I found them a perfect place to hide from my twin sister on the train from London to Bishop’s Stortford, somewhere to explore my very recently purchased copy of *Playgirl*. I had never seen a naked guy before and I was very satisfied with my purchase and aware of its dynamite power to expose me. I folded it and stuck it in the back of my trousers, covering the protruding part

with my blazer. I left the close confines of the toilet and walked the length of the train carriage. On arriving at my seat I realised that my blazer had ridden up and exposed not only the magazine but the title for all to see as I had walked along. I never made that mistake again and hid the magazine, like my sexuality, deeply in school and in the army.

6:2 Introduction

In this chapter I want to explore the effects of such rapid change on language by investigating the nature of power in society and how that has been used to define and control queer sexualities. I want to use theoretical underpinnings of violence and the “the closet” to explore how these conceptions disempowered queer folk in the press. I will use the work of discourse theorists to underpin a broader investigation into press power, silence and oppression of the queer voice in the British Press. This is a chapter, then, where I will mine the media archive on queerness to explore how the representations of this community who are often silent and marginalized, in the press, particularly at the start of the period under study, changed suddenly over time and how new “truths” were formed.

I will begin by using the Foucaultian concept of epistemes as a tool for exploring newspaper narratives of queer people in the military. It is my contention that changing newspaper narratives of queer military personnel, amongst other indicators, are indicative of a new episteme in society. I will then move on to discuss the nature of power and its position in the shattering of the anonymity of “cottaging” - or the exposure of men having sex with men in public toilets – in the press. Here I am arguing that queer men, for it is they who tend to have

sex in toilets, are no longer powerless and you can see this changing across the period. In fact they are now so empowered that the reactions to these activities in the press and the reporting of policing of this offence has almost disappeared. This again I suggest is indicative of a new episteme. Next, I want to explore issues of violence against queer people, both symbolic and otherwise and how they are portrayed. I will examine queer theoretical perspectives on the closet in the twentieth century in relation to media discourse and suggest that it is the closet which is the enabler of violence. Finally, I will draw on an article from *The Times* in January 2005 to establish whether this was a moment when the United Kingdom finally “came out” in the press: a linguistic representation of a paradigm shift in discourse when Britain neither persecuted queer people, nor merely tolerated them but instead began to celebrate them. This I argue is indicative of a new social “truth” circulating in society which is demonstrative of the new episteme I have been alluding to above. However, to begin, I will start by looking at some of the theoretical ideas that underpin the rest of this chapter.

6:3 Discursive Theories of Language Change

Discourse theorists often describe systems through which all knowledge is produced, rather than the knowledge itself. For them, human subjects are not the origin of “discourse”; they are both created by and at the same time the creators of it (Howarth, 2000); they are produced by those systems that they themselves construct. Discourse theories decentre individual agency in favour of the systems that are produced by discourse. Queer people are the product of the discourse, including the press discourse that surrounds them (Schiffrin, 1994, Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). Often discourse theorists avoid totalizing forms of analysis in favour of looking for such difference in history (Sarup, 1993). Foucault, for example, was interested in those who

are marginalized in society as well as those in the mainstream (Foucault, 1965). Whilst, generally, queer people actually occupy both spaces, they often also pass and can be invisible in the mainstream but are also part of a stigmatized, marginalized minority. In fact “to be in the closet means that individuals hide their homosexuality in the most important areas of their life” (Seidman, 2004b,25). This duality is no more acutely demonstrated by the military queer folk and the history of their portrayal in the press.

Discourse is a term which is difficult to define and is described by different theorists in numerous ways (Mills, 1997). For some theorists discourse is closely linked to linguistics, particularly the written application of language (Royle, 2005). For some, it extends to “embrace all social practices and relations” (Howarth, 2000). It is clear that for most commentators on discourse its central aspect is that it is social in nature and that it is centred on language (Macdonell, 1986, Howarth, 2000, Royle, 2005, Rice and Waugh, 1992).

A Foucaulian perspective would argue that every social discourse is regulated through three methods of control. Some discourses are forbidden. Some taboos are observed by the individual and, finally, discourse is policed at the limits through commentary by others. We see all three in the construction of queer people in the British Press. The forbidden is discourse represented by silence and euphemism such as during the 1970s, when self-censorship of the queer person who stayed in the closet, and the policing of queer people in the press as in the 1988 articles. Some conditions operate to make some statements “true” whilst prohibiting others (Foucault, 1974,78). In this way, in every society some statements are produced whilst others are suppressed. In a cycle of newspaper articles focused on a subject one can see a changing in the statements on queer folk which suggest a change in the conditions that

produced them. The research in this thesis suggests that the underlying rules and conventions pertaining to the production of queerness altered significantly in the period under question and this is explained by Foucault's theories of epistemes. Foucault has illuminated my ideas because of his ideas on sudden lurches in discourse when relations to knowledge are formed. He led me to consider what the indicators of such would be.

For Foucault, history and discourse are not unbroken, smooth, evolutionary practices. Rather they are fractured and disrupted periods where statements and knowledge cluster around structures of thinking. It is clustering that creates epistemes. Although Foucault was later to rework his conception of epistemes in favour of epochs, his initial definition is useful here:

“By episteme, we mean... the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences and, possibly, formalized systems; the way in which, in each of these discursive formations, the transitions to epistemologization, scientificity, and formalization are situated and operate; the distribution of these thresholds, which may coincide, be subordinated to one another, or be separated by shifts in time; the lateral relations that may exist between epistemological figures or sciences insofar as they belong to neighbouring, but distinct, discursive practices. The episteme is not a form of knowledge (*connaissance*) or type of rationality which, crossing the boundaries of the most varied sciences, manifests the sovereign unity of a subject, a spirit, or a period; it is the totality of relations that can be

discovered, for a given period, between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities” (Foucault, 1972,191)

Epistemes, then, are periods in history which are defined by a way of thinking. A dramatic illustration would be a time when people believed in witchcraft as a literal practice. They believed completely in the supernatural and it constructed their worldview. An episteme is not concerned with the specific history of witchcraft but rather the system of statements and beliefs that facilitated that type of thinking.

Foucault suggests above that an episteme is a “total set of relations” and I would argue that this is true of the representation of the queer person because they are drawing on cultural, scientific and social systems in their formation. It is exactly these systems that are at the heart of the representational changes I am exploring. He argues above that an episteme “crosses the boundaries of the most varied sciences and manifests the sovereign unity of a subject, *a spirit*” and I would suggest that is exactly what we are witnessing in relation to the representation of queer people, a new spirit: a new way of thinking of them.

I now turn to conceptions of power in society which I will use to explore, the production of knowledge through power relations and the nature of power in language. I will, later, be drawing on a series of articles on queer people who are publically made visible by being forcibly expelled from the closet through arrest because of gross indecency offences for “cottaging” or some form of violence, whether symbolic or actual.

In Discourses of Power, from Hobbes to Foucault, Hindess considers numerous conceptions of power (Hindess, 1996). Power, for example, may be considered to be quantitative: the ability to act is based on the right to act through consent or it may be applied through capacity: you acquire power and are able to apply it. In this model, power is an instrument of domination. Mann considers power as “the ability to pursue and attain goals” (Hindess, 1996,7) whilst Nola asserts that “power relations can either increase or decrease the range of actions of people” (Nola, 1998,9). I would argue that this has certainly been true of the queer person.

In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault claims “Power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared; something that one holds onto or allows to slip away [...] power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault, 1978,93). Power then circulates and is constantly being produced. It is diffused throughout society and discourse. It is produced from all locations simultaneously. There is nowhere that the subject can stand outside of the effects of power; much like discourse they are created and tempered by it. There is no escape. Relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations and take many forms. However, there can be no power without resistance (Barker, 1998,27). It does not drip down from above but is a creature of tension between objects, a tension that implies resistance (Merquior, 1991).

Power produces knowledge because it is able to control the “regimes of truth” (Morris and Palton, 1979). In this way, knowledge is not determined by reality, rather knowledge is structured by power because it is through the application of power that the rules concerning

the suppression or liberation of statements and truths within discourse are enabled (Nola, 1998). This demonstrates that there are no prior truths. Society struggles within itself to express the dominant truths of the time. These truths, this knowledge, become the basis of future power structures, structures that produce knowledge. One incites the production of the other. For many discourse theorists there are no truths outside of these power/knowledge systems (Rouse, 1994).

Bourdieu book *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu, 1991) argues that the amount of power one possesses depends on one's position within a "field"; fields are abstract conceptions of reality, such as the educational, economic and political, and the amount of "capital", accumulated influence, one has obtained. At its heart, power comes from the relation between fields and the metafield, the social reality in which all other fields are situated. As queer people have gained more capital and more influence within certain fields and in relation to the metafield, so they have been able to exert more power in defining social reality.

Bourdieu's theory of the "symbolic violence" under which groups struggle is also very relevant because one says that much symbolic violence against queer people in the press invites them to retreat into their closet. Symbolic violence is defined as that exercised against groups in order to subjugate them; for example, by treating them as inferior or denying them resources in such a way as the disenfranchised consider symbolic violence to be the natural order of things (Webb et al., 2002). So for me, it is the application of power and violence against queer people which forces them into closets, further disempowering them.

Queer theorist, Eve Sedgwick, in *Epistemology of the Closet* crucially identifies the closet as one of the most structuring social forces of the twentieth century, that “western culture as a whole is structured – indeed fractured – by a chronic now endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition”(Sedgwick, 1990,1). Seidman agrees, asserting “that it is the power of the closet to shape the core of an individual’s life that has made homosexuality into a significant personal, social and political drama in the twentieth century”(Seidman, 2004a,25).

Sedgwick goes onto assert that “the language of sexuality not only intersects with but transforms the other languages and relations by which we know” (Sedgwick, 1990,3).

Transforms “truths” which is reflected, I believe, in the newspaper record because the media acts as a filter on information, correlating and organizing selected facts within discourse that meet its own internal requirements. For Mayr, “the legitimization of news is, therefore, bound up in the actions, opinions and values of the dominant group” (Mayr, 2008,2). These truths are already inscribed in language and in gender performance as “normal” behaviour and aspirations (Butler, 1990). Newspapers always present a subjective viewpoint which is based on dominant facts or truths. They achieve this through the “syntax of hegemony”, by constructing a position, a “truth”, within discourse and “selling” it back to the public as representative of public opinion (Conboy, 2003).

“Truth [...] exists as knowledge within a particular discourse and is bound up with power”(Spargo, 1999,21) and power is everywhere (Morris and Palton, 1979). But in resistance to power the subject is formed as power also produces avenues of action (Halpern, 1995).

Resistance is the key to the formation of identity politics, or new truths. In the *History of Sexuality* Foucault asserts that the modern queer individual was defined, described and

invented through an apparently repressive regime which, in fact, liberated discourse on sexuality. According to Halpern the effect of this has been the birth of sexual identity politics that led a counter discourse in the 1960s and a sexual revolution which has enforced on individuals not only the freedom to express their sexuality but a requirement on them to do so (Halpern, 1995,18) Throughout the period under study we see that resistance to power, particularly to the power of the state as expressed in its actions and described in the press has altered radically. Forged in the furnace of state repression, the modern queer individual is now liberated as a modern consumer and reconstructed in the press as such. Resistance, then, not so much leading to revolution but, a rehabilitation of the queer community as driving “cutting edge culture” of creating “pulsating nightlife” and an essential element to a “sophisticated, cosmopolitan and pulsating community”(Woolcock, 2005) of new regimes of truth (Kirsch, 2000). This is something I will explore in the final section of this chapter.

6:4 A Changing Representation of the Military Queer in the press – A New Episteme

In this initial analysis of articles I want to explore changing press representations of queer people serving in the military. I will argue that changes in these representations describe a real change in British culture, a new episteme. I demonstrate this by first looking at the headlines to provide an overview of change. Next, I will use each story to illustrate a different discursive point in relation to queer representations in the media. The articles I will be using to describe this new episteme are:

Gay Sarge Cleared of Kissing A Soldier, He is Kicked Out For Sex With Another from *The Mirror* on 21st April, 1988 (Unknown, 1988f); *Court Backs Gay GCHQ Worker* from *The Guardian* 29th March, 1988 (Unknown, 1988b); *Gulf Hero Fired for Being Gay* again from *The Mirror* but this time on 6th August, 1994 (Brown, 1994) and, finally, another article from *The Guardian*, this one from 27th August, 2005 *Army joins Gay Pride Parade in Recruitment Drive* (Norton-Taylor, 2005).

It is clear from the briefest examination of the titles that there has been a significant shift as the queer people they describe move from being positioned as sexual dissident in the first, to employees in the second, to heroes and finally to proud service people.

When a paper in 1994 describes a queer person as “A Gulf Hero” they are literally and dynamically affecting future discourse and perception but, they themselves have been constructed by previous assertions including that from 1988 that asserts “Court backs Gay GCHQ worker”⁹. There is a progressive feedback loop constructing and redefining knowledge and opinion. Elements are added and they become social “truths”. As Sanderson points out in *Mediawatch*, in the 1950s homosexuality was constructed as a disease. In *The Mirror’s* sister paper, *The Sunday Pictorial*, the editor said of gay men in the 1950s:

“Most people know there are such things as – ‘pansies’ – mincing, effeminate young men who call themselves queers. But simple, decent folk regard them as freaks and rarities... if homosexuality was tolerated here, Britain would rapidly become decadent” (Sanderson, 1995b).

⁹ GCHQ is the Government Communication Head Quarters in Cheltenham, it deals with the “provides intelligence, protects information and informs relevant UK policy to keep our society safe and successful in the Internet age” DIRECTGOV (2013) Keeping our society safe and successful in the Internet age. Cheltenham, United Kingdom Government.

Research demonstrates that at the start of the period in 1977 there were no articles concerning the existence of queer people in the military at all, so excluded that they are eradicated from linguistic history. It seems, then, unlikely that any queer person, particularly one serving in the military, would receive the support of either the courts or a newspaper but eventually they did and were even celebrated (Norton-Taylor, 2005). This could only happen through a dynamic self-constructing feedback loop in the press where symbiotic reporting trends, both positive and negative, feed off each other (Tester, 1994), it is this case continuing positive pressure on discourse which I want to explore more fully by taking a detailed examination of each article.

The first article, concerning the queer military personnel, 'Gay Sarge Cleared of Kissing A Soldier- But He's Kicked Out For Sex With Another' (Unknown, 1988f) explores the traditional position of queer folk in the military. As well as linguistically demonstrating the application of military and Press power it demonstrates the discourse use of structuring silence to define an individual. This is an excerpt from the article where the accused is allowed very briefly to speak:

"Soer added: 'I did not kiss him. I did not touch his private parts'. The FIRST hearing was told that Fusilier Bates was assaulted while in a drunken haze. A month later in Soer's office the sergeant cupped his hands on his privates"(Unknown, 1988f,7)

On the surface this article is concerned with the sexual activities of a senior soldier, a strict reporting of his court martial for fondling the privates of a private. But it is actually much more than that; it is a report of the application and abuse of power. It suggests the subversion of the

best of British, our young fighting soldiers as the strapline demonstrates, for “he is kicked out for sex with another” (Unknown, 1988f). It says:

“A gay sergeant major was cleared yesterday of kissing and hugging a teenage squadie after a party. But last night balding Alan Soer was told he would still be booted out of the Army – for having sex with a drunken young fusilier. Father of three Soer, 34, was found guilty at a Colchester court martial of a serious sexual offence and indecent assault on 21-year-old David Bates” (Unknown, 1988f,7)

To power first: the immediate question concerning this article is why was it published at all?

Why this article and not another? This piece is purely salacious and, as I will argue in chapter 8, is concerned with drama but it also sends a powerful message of control to other serving members of the forces. It exposes that which is most closeted at the time to make visible that which was most deeply camouflaged: the military queer person. It is done so for the purposes of titillation but also acts to suppress. It does so in a fashion which recycles and reconstructs all the stereotypes of male homosexuality (Lehing, 2010). The “sarge” in question is a married father, a professional soldier (invisible as a queer person) but he is, constructed in the story, also as an abuser of young men even if they are all over the age of consent. He is a balding predator who uses personal power and the vulnerability of youths, whether it be emotional or alcoholic, to satisfy his own needs and commit “a serious sexual offence and indecent assault on 21 year old David Bates” (Unknown, 1988f) and another fusilier. He will according to the report put his desires before country, before his career and before his family; he was a “married father of three” (Unknown, 1988f). This article implies, much like the article from *The Llanelli Star* examined in the last chapter, that queer people are sexually animalistic and cannot

help themselves. The sergeant it says “cupped his hands on” the fusiliers “privates”, a number of times over the course of a month (Unknown, 1988f) very much a physical act.

However, there is a hidden story here and it is the other side of the power dichotomy, that being applied to the Sergeant Major. Firstly, given his rank and unit, he is likely to have fought in the Falklands War (Museum, 2011). He will have certainly served many dangerous tours in Northern Ireland at the height of the troubles because all serving soldiers were rotated through Northern Ireland as part of Operation Banner between 1969 and 2007 (Edwards, 2011) . As a Sergeant Major and instructor he will be in every way an exemplary soldier with at least fifteen years service (Defence, 2011) and would certainly not deserve the ridicule of the story or the camp depiction of the cartoon that accompanied this story. In short, he is likely to have been in every way a British establishment war hero who had given his life to public service for the United Kingdom. Secondly, it is extremely doubtful whether he would have been able to force himself on two very fit “squaddies” in the close confines of an army training camp. The power being applied here is the power of the press to define him, to strip him of what he is and to describe him as they see fit. It is also the power of the military at the time to subject queer folk to harassment, imprisonment and arrest, to define them and confine them. Finally, the power here rests with two young men who intriguingly found themselves involved in several queer acts. It remains uncertain whether they were more revolted by the Sergeant Major’s queer acts, their own, or that so much social pressure from other members of their squad and hierarchical military power was applied to them they felt unable to act. The language used defines the senior soldier’s sexuality as an act. He has “sex”; commits a “serious sexual” act; an

“assault”; an “attack” whilst the soldiers – trained to kill for their country – are defined as weak, needy, vulnerable, “pouring out their hearts” (Unknown, 1988f).

The subversion of “the best of British” by a queer fifth column is a common theme in the British Press and a common depiction of queer folk generally (Seidman, 2004b). Next, this chapter will explore the development of this idea in the press. In the second article, ‘Court Backs Gay GCHQ Worker’ (Unknown, 1988b). Published on 29th March, 1988 begins:

“A data processor at the Government Communications Headquarters in Cheltenham, suspended because he was gay, yesterday won the right to challenge the decision in the High Court [...] Me Hodges had his positive vetting clearance withdrawn in March last year, six months after telling his superiors that he was gay”(Unknown, 1988b,8)

We see later reproduced in the article the standard military argument that “his homosexuality left him vulnerable to pressure of blackmail by a hostile intelligence service”(Unknown, 1988b). At the same time we see the seed of a queer defence: “Someone who has been completely open about his sexuality” the defence argue “cannot be said to be open to blackmail. It is patent nonsense to suggest he could”(Unknown, 1988b,8). In this case the court upholds the right of the GCHQ worker to appeal - a significant milestone in queer employment rights¹⁰. This tribunal was supporting the employment rights of an individual in a sensitive security position, a significant change in power and in truths. Here in 1988 a queer person in a security position becomes one of the first to be reported to be allowed some rights under the law. Its publication

¹⁰ Ten years previously *The Times* reported on the *Dismissal Over Wearing Lesbian Badge Tribunal* where a woman was deemed by an employment tribunal to have been fairly sacked from an ordinary clerk’s job in an insurance office simply for wearing a badge which said “Lesbians Ignite!” UNKNOWN (1977d) *Dismissal Over Wearing Lesbian Badge Upheld. The Times*. London, News Corporation.. That case will be explored more fully in chapter 6

in such a positive manner in the press would surely have had a positive effect on others. It also provides a duality in representation in the same year between the army sergeant in *The Mirror* and the data process or in *The Guardian*; neither story is reported in the other newspapers under investigation.

To go directly back to the forces, whilst the “Gay Sarge” was demeaned for his queer acts in 1988, by 1994, a mere six years later, in the same paper, *The Mirror*, “Gulf Hero” Simon Ingram was lauded for his, in ‘Gulf Hero Fired For Being Gay’ (Brown, 1994). It asserts:

“An airman who fought in the Gulf War told last night how he was kicked out of the RAF for being gay. Simon Ingram 27 had a promising future as an electronics operator until his secret was discovered”(Brown, 1994,4)

It is an interesting piece because, unlike the previous two, it quotes mainly from two queer ex-service men. Moreover, whilst the queer defence has shifted significantly onto the economic stupidity of training and the wasting of talent and onto the professionalism of the men involved, the Defence Chief’s argument remains the same, that of national security, although it now appears very stale. This is a progressive piece from *The Mirror* because it labels the airman as a war hero and also undermines the long term consensus view that gay servicemen were a security risk. It is not salacious at all but allows Ingram to define the love of, rather than sexual attraction for, another man. In an echo of *The Guardian*’s interview with two lesbians from 1977 which I looked at in Chapter 4, he is quoted as asserting: “anybody would think I had committed a crime and undermined the defence of the realm. But all I did was fall in love with a man” (Brown, 1994). The article goes on to undermine the official military position asserting

the value a professional serviceman, no matter his private sexual preferences. It allows Ingram to say “The taxpayer had to pick up the bill for my training and for the person who replaced me. It’s a complete waste of resources”(Brown, 1994). Thus one sees the fracturing of an old truth and old consensus.

So it appears from these examples that representations that the queer assertions can be progressive, intelligent, fluid and dynamic whilst elements of the establishment is fixed and formulaic. For me, this creates a position in discourse where the queer voice looks more and more reasonable over time.

The momentum in favour of queer military personnel, although picking up speed across the narratives, is at its zenith in the final article ‘Army Joins Gay Pride Parade in Recruitment Drive’ (Norton-Taylor, 2005). It says:

“Soldiers will parade in uniform at Manchester’s Gay Pride festival today as the army launches its first recruitment drive aimed at the gay community. The soldiers, around 10 of whom are expected on the parade, will also run a recruitment stall at the weekend event”(Norton-Taylor, 2005,14)

No more the camouflaged invisibility of the military closet for queer folk. This article describes queer soldiers who openly “parade in uniform” at Manchester Pride – out, present and visible. queer persons are no longer “predatory” but a “gay community” not to be targeted for persecution but for recruitment. The modern army “reflects society and encourages diversity” its spokesperson says (Norton-Taylor, 2005). Not only do individual servicemen come out but also the armed forces as organisations. Perhaps the queerest, unexpectedly given the Village

People's articulations on the Navy is, apparently, the RAF which "has the most progressive attitude towards homosexuality"(Norton-Taylor, 2005,14). I would suggest that this is to do with the nature of its deployment which is often from static sites where service personnel are not required to "bunk" in dormitories on the base or operate in squads.

These changes represent alterations in ways of thinking and of social control. The articles are demonstrative of a substantial change in thinking and can be seen as ushering in a new episteme, a new way of thinking about queer people specifically, and sexuality more generally, especially when taken with the other articles in the thesis. In the old episteme queerness was censored against a backdrop of religious and moral indignation, an episteme where judges talked of "moral climates" and soldiers were imprisoned for queerness. In the new episteme queer folk are a valuable economic and social resource and our military now values "privacy", "diversity" and a "progressive attitude"(Norton-Taylor, 2005,14).

Foucault's work on discourse is centred on the search for disruption and difference, the moments when thinking lurches from one structure, one episteme, to another, there clearly is a lurch here evidenced by these representations from the archive. It can be seen in the comparison of just two statements. The first one from August 1994 which says "defence chiefs argue that homosexuality in the services disrupts morale and discipline and poses a security threat by making personnel blackmail targets"(Brown, 1994,4). This is a position they had ferociously defended for many decades at great cost to personnel and resources. The second from 2005 when the same chiefs not only expend money and resources on joining a Gay Pride Parade but assert "as far as we are concerned, people's sexuality is a private matter" and that "the armed forces reflect society and encourage diversity, including sexual orientation"(Norton-

Taylor, 2005,14). I assert that so great and so rapid has been the disruption to the discourse surrounding queer people, which is expressed vividly in the archive in relation to the queer military service personal, that it is indicative of a new episteme. For those queer individuals in the forces the depth of their closet was related to the depth of the pain of outing, of losing job, home and pension, of being thrown back to the 1950s' and 1960s' position of losing their liberty. In 1988 the military queer people are more protected but do not get to speak. By 1994 those forced out or who voluntarily come out, not only speak but they argue, parry and debate. They are forceful, unashamed and unabashed and whilst it may not help them it does help future service men in 2005 who are able to shed the closet and openly serve, becoming in every way visible.

6:5 Cottaging and the Application of Power in Society

I want now to look at the application of power by exploring the representation of cottaging in the press. I want to start by using an article from 1977. 'Cornwall: 11 Men Appear' published on 21st April 1977 in *Gay News* (Unknown, 1977c). This is an account of a group of queer people who are subjected to the diffused nature of power, as is *Gay News* and I am first going to explore that idea.

Gay News never supports these men or campaigns for their rights. It is in fact the report of a classic "chain" prosecution with one defendant informing on the next. Queer men had frequently been subject to such prosecutions (Miller, 2006). The paper is mute on this subject it appears to try and be professional above all things - even at the cost of supporting its constituents. On the surface it is the account of eleven men who appear before for the crime of

gross indecency in a public toilet. However, within the story the multifarious nature of power is played out. This is an excerpt from this piece:

“The frankness of eleven men who made self-incriminating statements to the police was praised by prosecuting counsel in a case that came before Bodmin Crown Court recently. The men were before the court on numerous charges of committing acts of gross indecency in a public lavatory [...] Police officers had visited a lavatory in Camborne and seen three defendants. There was no evidence on which to base a case against them. But later one of the defendants was taken to the local police station, where he told officers he had been involved in “homosexual offences”. Following the young man’s confession extensive enquires were made by the police which resulted in sixteen men being charged with ‘gross indecency’”(Unknown, 1977c,3)

The men are of course, disempowered by the mere nature of their queerness or, more precisely, their queer acts. It is clear that their activities are so unacceptable they need to be covered by euphemism in the press and the courtroom. The judge is reported as saying “the less said about their activities the better”(Unknown, 1977c,3) and the investigation was started by “goings-on” but perhaps the most common euphemism is the offence itself, that of “gross indecency”. So we see represented the power of social and linguistic repression of the unacceptable act. The men are also subjected to the power of the state through the police. The

police investigate the “goings-on” but although they find three of the defendants in a toilet they do not have enough evidence of wrongdoing. Instead, they arrest, seemingly from the article without reason, the youngest man of the group who was nineteen. It may be that they considered him to be the most malleable. As a result of interrogating this man they are able to put in place a chain prosecution. This is a method of investigation that has been applied to and feared by queer folk since the 1950s (Miller, 2006,255). It is asserted in this article that the police went from man-to-man getting each person to confess without evidence. In fact, the article asserts that “the frankness of eleven men, who made self-incriminating statements to the police, was praised by prosecuting counsel”(Unknown, 1977c,3). Thereby we see the power of intimidation in 1977.

Even the “crimes” of queer people are represented as being outside the normal judicial sanction because they are so “other”. Queer people are a separate sub-species for this judge who, when addressing the young man who started the investigation, is quoted as saying:

“your offences cannot be properly dealt with by financial penalties nor can people of your kind be properly dealt with by borstal” (Unknown, 1977c,3).

The men are clearly intimidated by threats of jail and borstal and of being a different kind of citizen. As we have seen in the last chapter in the case of Stanley Jackson reported in ‘I’ll Try To Win Back My Lesbian Wife’ (Steeple, 1977), queer persons are not treated fairly under the law in 1977 and, indeed, have much to fear. An interesting counterpoint is that of all those

arrested, three who refuse to cooperate, and who resist this enormous application of power by the state, are all released because the police can offer “no evidence” against them, suggesting to the observant reader of *Gay News* the benefits of resisting power. This is a case that rests not on evidence but purely on the application of power. It forcibly expels a number of men from the closet, many of whom are said to be married, a few with children or who have high profile jobs. I argue that it does not end for these men. Many will now lose their jobs, perhaps their homes. This case from *The Brighton Argus* in 1977 supports this idea. It concerns Brian Currah whose sacking for a similar offence was quoted to the Cornwall defendants and was reported in ‘I’m No Danger – Says Sex Pest Lecturer’ (Unknown, 1977f) published by *the Brighton Argus* on 28th September 1977. It says:

“The majority of students were under 21 and Mr Currah was often involved in teaching small groups or individuals. In deciding to dismiss Mr Currah the governors bore in mind the impact on the public mind if he stayed at the college”(Unknown, 1977f,11)

For modern eyes perhaps the most interesting aspect of the diffused power play is the passive acceptance of *Gay News* in which Mr Currah’s predicament is never picked up and where it does little but report the court’s actions in Cornwall. It lists the offences, describes the Trial, adds the comments of the judge, even repeats the confession of the young man that he was “corrupted at the age of 14 by a much older man”(Unknown, 1977c,3) without challenge. Surely this was a stereotype which the campaigning queer community newspaper was trying to escape

from. Constructed by the discourse that surrounds it, *Gay News* is generally horribly neutral about this event. It is impossible for the paper to talk of queer adoption and marriage as they are simply outside the scope of discourse at the time. At best the paper offers a warning to others about the dangers of confession – a seminal characteristic of the closet and for Foucault one of the most salient aspects of the nineteenth and twentieth century societies (Foucault, 1977). At worst it too, is involved in the suppression of queer identities through collaboration with the existing power structures by not challenging them. Power is indeed, diffused everywhere in these accounts.

Just a decade later from the previous articles in 'Pensioner Dies in Cottage Arrest' published on 28th July, 1988 (Unknown, 1988i) we have a real sense of this struggle of change in the distribution of power. Gone is the language of subservience; gone too, the language of deference. Not for these queer reporters the quiet acceptance of police actions as the norm but the "continuing struggle" for actualization. In this case a seventy-two year old man collapsed after being arrested by two plain-clothes policemen for 'gross indecency' with another man in a toilet during a "routine check to monitor what was "going on" – a now familiar police euphemism for queer sexual activities. It asserts:

"A 72 year old Brighton man collapsed and died in a public lavatory after being arrested by plain-clothed police officers for 'gross indecency' [...]
amazingly the officers whose identity is being kept secret by the police returned to the lavatory in search of the man James Ballam had been with.

“The man left the scene”, the police say “and we are now trying to trace him”(Unknown, 1988i,1)

Here and in the rest of the article the power play is very different. The police are challenged by *The Pink Paper* at every turn. They are described as “ludicrous” and of failing to offer “sympathy”. The police are condemned for not naming the officers involved and for engaging in, much like the military in previous accounts, a policy that wastes resources. *The Pink Paper* is not only able to call upon national Home Office policy to substantiate its case but also a local councillor from the town’s Police and Public Safety Committee. The power of the police to persecute queer folk has clearly been displaced as was the power of the State to control military queer folk. The queer lobby is making its voice heard with a more engaged and empowered tone, something I explore more in the next chapter. It is forcing the State, through the police, to respond to it.

Interestingly for this study this event occurs in Brighton although it is not reported in *The Brighton Argus* demonstrating that even in relatively pro-Queer papers not everything is considered worthy of support. The last chapter, comparing *The Llanelli Star* and *The Brighton Argus*, demonstrated that social change and language change occurs at different rates across the country. I now want to assert that *The Pink Paper* would have had a much more difficult time eliciting any quotes or dialogue at all from Dyfed Police at the same moment in history. As a result this article would not have been published at all. It is extremely unlikely that any local councillor in Llanelli would have spoken against the police action had this event occurred there

and this article at that point would have become less coherent as a vehicle for queer rights, less publishable by national queer people. Because the Brighton councillor spoke, the police were forced to speak, too. Thus, this article comes into formation. This event comes into the public and queer consciousness of that time because of its specificity in time and space. If the event occurs in another city, with a less established queer minority, with a less liberal non-Queer majority - it is lost to us, lost to collective thought and discourse. This is the point of the queer press and struggles in language. Not only to redress the silence, not only to make the invisible visible but to activate the language and therefore, consciousness to resist the power of censorship and misrepresentation, to be the producer of truth and therefore knowledge.

6:6 Changing Policing of Queer People – A New Episteme

I want now to explore changing policing of queer people. On 23rd December, 2005, *The Times* reported on a case in which the Lancashire police issued a warning to a Christian couple following their distribution of religious literature on council property called ‘Police Tell Christian Couple View on Gays ‘close to a hate crime’’ this is an excerpt from it:

“Police questioned a retired couple for 80 minutes about their “homophobic” views after they asked their local council if they could display their Christian literature next to gay rights leaflets... Joe and Helen Roberts said that officers warned them that their actions ‘were close to a hate crime’ after they complained to Wyre Borough Council about its gay rights policies” (Sanderson, 2005,9)

This story was also covered by *The Mail* on the 23rd December 2005, their article was entitled 'The English Inquisition: Eighty-minute police interrogation for couple who dared to suggest displaying Christian literature next to gay leaflets in town hall' and this is an extract from it:

"A retired couple were questioned at length by police after complaining about a council's gay rights campaign. Two officers arrived at the home of devout Christians Joe and Helen Roberts to 'educate' them out of their belief that homosexual behaviour is wrong... The inquisition in Fleetwood, Lancashire, is the latest in a series of incidents in which police have acted against those who oppose the gay lobby. It provoked fury from Christian groups, who said the police behaviour was 'alarming' and 'intimidating'" (Doughty, 2005,7)

Both *The Mail* and *The Times* can be considered to be socially conservative newspapers and their reporting of the incident reflects this fact; both are against the police action. Yet, however negative and hostile their reporting, such articles are demonstrative of a new social consensus. We might compare the above reports to the following example taken from *Gay News* published on March 23rd 1977 entitled 'Three Men are Charged after Police Raid London Night Spot':

"Two men have been charged with gross indecency and a third with obstructing the police following a midnight raid on Catacombs disco-coffee bar. "I didn't expect anything" said a Catacombs regular "one of them looked extremely gay indeed". But forty minutes later they were joined by their colleagues and there was no mistaking the twenty or so uniformed constables who poured into the

cellar nightspot and blocked the entrances. Customers were stopped from leaving and made to form orderly queues to give names to police officers. The National Council for Civil Liberties is now asking for an explanation”(Unknown, 1977j,4)

For me these three articles represent a real change in the nature of society, in terms of both the actions of the police and the reporting of those actions. In the latter example, the police actions are persecuting the Queer person and in the two former they are ‘educating’ a couple about their views. The focus of the police scrutiny has moved from the Queer to the Christian. All three newspapers disagree with the police actions but in different ways, thereby illustrating the changing social consensus, the new episteme. In 1977 *Gay News* resists the police action because it is oppressing queer people whilst *The Mail* in 2005 resists because it is oppressing a Christian couple.

What I find particularly interesting is that in the reporting of these events the police have gone from being a physical force in the 1970s to a mental force in 2005. They challenge actions in 1977 and thoughts in 2005. For me it parallels a move in mainstream newspapers discourse that understands Queer sexuality as essentially physical in the 1970s and, which therefore, is physically policed, as we saw in chapter’s 4 and 5. By 2005 individual freedoms such as Queer rights have become more prevalent in society. These are very much abstract, mental constructions and are policed philosophically. This is, I argue, indicative of a new episteme. I am suggesting that most of society has moved beyond that position to thinking in terms of abstract rights, which requires abstract policing

Truth and the struggle to be the producer of knowledge are on going as an article entitled *Quit, Vicars Tell Gay Sex Row Bishop* from *The Sun* on 26th September, 1994 demonstrates (Unknown, 1994d). It says

“Clergymen urged the new Bishop of Durham to quit last night after it was revealed he once committed a gay sex act in a public toilet [...] Bishop Turnbull [had previously] declared that gay clergymen are incompatible with the paid ministry, issued a defiant statement” (Unknown, 1994d,4)

The Bishop has previously been prosecuted in 1968 for committing an act of gross indecency or as *The Sun* puts it for being “fondled by a farmer” (Unknown, 1994d). It does not describe him as “gay” rather as a person who has committed a “gay sex act”. He himself in *The Mail* calls the incident “regrettable” but “denied that he was homosexual” (Doran, 1994a), instead stating this action was a burden that he had learned to live with. There is an attempt here to separate the act from the mental state. There are a number of truths being fought over in these two articles and beyond. The first is whether one sexual act makes you a queer person. What is the truth, the test of queerness? The second is the right to self-define. If the Bishop is not homosexual as he claims, then what right do the “gay activists” have to call for his resignation and accuse him of hypocrisy as stated in the article? There are, of course, the further truths of the nature of queerness in the church, the press and modern society, and it is these that are being contested

(I will be exploring Press representations concerning the church and queer people in Chapter 8). Whilst the Bishop is seeking to assert the Church of England's truth of queerness and in the past supported the Church of England's view that "homosexuality was incompatible with priesthood" (Sanderson, 1995b,99), the queer campaigners are also trying to assert their own, that the church is hypocritical. Of course, only the Bishop knows whether this one act represented here is singular or whether there have been more. This is the ironic nature of the closet, of this debate that queer acts are so often invisible and only the individuals know the scope of their queerness. The truth of the three articles discussed so far on cottaging is that society likes these truths hidden and it seeks to repress them but at the same time has historically spent significant resources on just the opposite, on uncovering and exposing them whilst the press, apparently, gains much from publishing them.

The most productive aspect of power is the ability to discipline (Hindess, 1996). In this way power is used to shape and regulate society in an attempt to achieve normalization of standardization of the population (Minson, 1996,133). The emergence of a surveillance society and new forms of power/knowledge since the eighteenth century have facilitated this normalization (Rouse, 1994) which has been demonstrated by the cottaging stories. The attempt to regulate sexuality from this time, particularly in relation to the queer community, clearly demonstrates this conception in action. The system of rules that had been in place, including discursive and linguistic rules concerning what may be said, amount to symbolic violence (Barker, 1998,21), the domination of one community by another by the use of language, amongst other signs. However, any particular set of values which may have emerged

has only achieved just that. It emerged from a struggle for domination, a struggle for truth that will see the dawning of a new set of truths, as with the queer community.

If power may be defined “by the nature of the resistance it produces” (Minson, 1996) then the queer community’s noticeably active struggle against domination defines the intense level of pressure that was exerted against it. One must first be able to focus power in order to achieve some goals (Minson, 1996). This is the achievement of the queer community in the latter half of the twentieth century, that it was able to focus the disparate power of individual queer people in a singular struggle against inequality. This high level of domination, in fact, produced a strong counter-discourse. In *the Pink Paper’s* article *Pensioner Dies in Cottage Arrest* (Unknown, 1988i) one can clearly see this in action. This is an article that despite the circumstances in which it was produced, the death of a suspect who was in law committing a crime, retains that strong resistance that Minson describes.

As discussed in chapter four, language is extremely stratified by class and region and changes at different speeds (Nichols, 1984). Nichols further asserts that “language is one of the primary vehicles through which our relative social status is shown”(Nichols, 1984,23) . At the same time she asserts that “many studies have demonstrated that in the control of standard language variety is a positive asset”(Nichols, 1984,21). Those who control language, the well-educated and the middle and upper classes from which the intelligentsia is mainly drawn, can control social reality. As I have argued, this has been a double-edged sword for queer people, on the one hand being invisible and able to affect argument, but also controlled and dominated. For

Bisseret-Moreau, to be dominated is to be contained, cut off, isolated, unable to speak (Bisseret-Moreau, 1984) because it is the dominant ideology that acts to structure linguistic choices. “Silence” she asserts “is often the language of the powerless (Bisseret-Moreau, 1984,60). From this perspective argue the queer community, prior to Stonewall and before recent equality, queer people had no voice and no power to choose the words used to describe them.

The fourth and final focus article in this series *Was Barman Killed By Serial Gay Bashers?* (Gallagher, 2005), which is taken from *The Mirror* on 17th October, 2005 is an article which speaks to this idea of silence and disempowerment. I am using it to foreground the coming discussion on violence and explore the changed press reaction to acts of gross indecency. It says:

“Police fear two men who beat a barman to death as they yelled homophobic abuse may be members of a gay-bashing gang. Officers believe the killers of Jody Dobrowski, 24, could be responsible for a series of violent attacks. The attackers are believed to have pummelled 6ft 4in Jody to death with their bare hands at a wooded area frequented by gays” (Gallagher, 2005,5)

The article is demonstrative in its language of a cultural shift in the policing of queer people. The police are said to have a deeper understanding and tolerance of “the queer Community” and indeed, this particular team are publically praised by queer rights campaigner, Peter

Tatchell (Cowan, 2005). The language of the article is free and easy and speaks of “lifestyles” and “homophobia”. The euphemism of queer people’s public sex encounters has softened. Clapham Common is a place which is “frequented” by queer people who are depicted as vulnerable, naive and in need of protection so they can continue to “come here”(Gallagher, 2005) for what, the article does not say. This article is useful to my study because it recognises that “gay insults” are shouted at the queer victim as he is punched to death. People passing by do not hear him, only the “killers screaming at him” an apt metonym for the relationship between queer people and society as he, like so many others in the articles throughout this study, is rendered mute, ignored and unprotected. To be made silent is to be made powerless indeed.

Language reinforces stereotypes as well as merely reflecting them and in this way language has a role in constructing inequality (Spencer, 1984,194). Spencer describes power through language as the means of organizing the world, of symbolizing experience and constructing reality in such a way as to produce an effect in others which is often contrary to their wishes (Spencer, 1984,194). He describes how women are excluded from language formation, forced to use the terms that men have produced and how women are excluded from the thought systems which surround us. I contend that it is also overwhelmingly true for other marginalized groups, such as the queer community, who have reacted by producing a counter-discourse hung upon new words and symbols, as *The Pink Paper* amongst other publications sought to do in the period under question, for example with the appropriation the pink triangle as its logo.

Throughout the series of four articles used in this section there has been a demonstrable reproduction of inequalities in relation to queer people in the press. Again and again they are actually and linguistically forced from their closet whilst at the same time those who choose to “out” themselves struggle for legitimate representation. It is a struggle that clearly begins to reap rewards towards the end of the series of articles. In the fourth ‘Was Barman Killed By Serial Gay Bashers?’ (Gallagher, 2005) there is no mention of “the homosexual”, just “gay people”, no sexual acts just “movements” but queer activities, on Clapham Common at least, remain closeted in silence and secrecy. Taken together this is reflective of a new spirit, a new episteme.

These four articles are very representative of a blending of fields across the media: that is, it tends to be male queer people, not female, who are forcibly “outed” through sexual scandal and that the male queer person has significantly more chance of breaking the law than the female with the scandal proportionately greater. Most of the women in the articles, (articles produced because they are newsworthy, included in the study and not) chose to come out, whilst many of the men did not. Generally, what is considered newsworthy for one gender is not for another.

For the queer community, symbolic violence represents the years of repression and their acquiescence as sub-standard human beings under the law, even today. We see in the press the nature of symbolic and actual violence across the period, as ‘I’ll Try To Win Back My Lesbian Wife’ published in 1977 (Gallagher, 2005) demonstrates. Society lines up behind the offender to

exonerate his actions when confronted with the shock of lesbianism, accepting it seems, the widespread defence of homosexual panic (Sedgwick, 1990).

“Mr Jackson said he went to Mrs Taylors home ‘intending to put the fear of God’ into her. When he found both women there he came to the end of this tether. Mr Jackson was said to have forced his way in, hit Mrs Taylor on the face and stabbed her with a dagger. After his acquittal Mr Jackson said: ‘I never despaired all through the Trial I thought British justice would prevail in the end” (Steeple, 1977,12)

However, in ‘Was Barman Killed By Serial Gay Bashers?’ (Gallagher, 2005) although the actual violence is just as shocking and it occurs in what many non-Queer individuals may have historically regarded as fair provocation – men having sex with men in public spaces – the symbolic has dissipated and is now directed at the attackers. This is a real alteration in discourse and in the application of power. It is now directed away from the queer person and towards the non-Queer. Despite this, there are few groups in society who have endured as much symbolic violence in the British Press as the queer person, making these social and linguistic changes even more radical.

“Police fear two men who beat a barman to death as they yelled homophobic abuse may be members of a gay-bashing gang. [...] Bob Hodgson who advises the Metropolitan Police on homophobic attacks said: ‘We need to catch these men.

If they do this to a man who they think is gay, there's a good chance they will do it to someone else"(Gallagher, 2005,5)

In this section I want to explore some of the theoretical conceptions of the closet in the work of noted queer theorists, and the related idea of structuring absence or silence in the work of Foucault. I will mainly look again at two articles 'Cornwall: 11 Men Appear' (Unknown, 1977c) and 'Was Barman Killed By Serial Gay Bashers?' (Gallagher, 2005). "The closet" is a term I have used before in this thesis without fully exploring it but it is a central mechanism to understanding how and why newspapers reported queer lives.

6:8 The Closet – An Enabler of Violence In Both Physical and Linguistic Forms?

One of the most resilient and consistent aspects of queerness in the press has been the use of stereotypes such as that of the tortured queer, tormented and driven to kill by his own issues with his sexuality. This is portrayed as leading to violence and ultimately the thing that is most feared, expulsion from the closet. It is a story construction that appears frequently, although recently with an Islamic twist. It is demonstrated in 1977 by 'Verger and the Choir Boys' (Unknown, 1977) in which the accused is described as "totally deprived of love and affection" and illustrated in 1988 when a queer man who attacks two others in a toilet is defended because he "had problems with his sexuality and found it difficult to come to terms with it"(Unknown, 1988e). In both 1988 and 2005 there are the first queer killings in the press committed by Muslim queer people. Both are said to be "deeply" disturbed by their queer feelings and are recorded in the press in *Lover Set On Fire As Revenge For Jilting* printed on the 6th January 1988 by *The Times* (Unknown, 1988h) and *Spurned Gay Lover Gets Life For Murder*

from *The Mail* on 9th October, 2005 (Unknown, 2005). Both are vicious attacks ending in death through “85% burns” in the first and “disembowelling” in the second. Both attackers had led secret lives and both stories became newsworthy because of the violence and also because of this secrecy and otherness of queer Muslim men. Implicitly in the first and explicitly in the second one is left with the feeling that the personal struggle that these murderers engage in is due to the intersection of queer sexualities and Islamic identity “The court heard that Durrani” *The Mail* says in 1994 “who was of Pakistani origin led a secret homosexual life”, secret, by implication, because he was of Pakistani origin.

Certainly this has been true for the British Press across the period where, time and time again, articles are based upon its investigation and disintegration of the closet. During 1988 *The Mail* in ‘It’s All Over, Say Elton and Renate’ published on 18th November, 1988 (Wallace, 1988) explored the shared closet of Elton John and his soon to be ex-wife. They are accused of being “Rock’s Odd Couple”, of “leading separate lives” and tellingly Elton himself is pictured with that ultimate of queer signifiers at the time, Boy George (Wallace, 1988,1). The inference is clear. The press is systematically dissolving the closet around Elton whilst he, in marrying Renate, has endeavoured to do just the opposite. Elton is ultimately unable to continue with his efforts. “To the fine antennae of public attention the freshness of every drama of (especially involuntary) gay uncovering seems, if anything, heightened in surprise and delectability [...] by the increasing atmosphere and articulations of and about the love that is famous for daring not to speak its name” (Sedgwick, 1990,67) because the public interest in private sex lives is too great, too entertaining. In *Mediawatch*, Terry Sanderson spends considerable effort to describe the various conditions of the celebrity closets and the media’s obsession with breaking into them -

from Russell Harty to Peter Tatchell; from Stephen Fry to Gill Anderton. He believes because the public have an insatiable desire for the consumption of queerness and Elton John's attempts to stay in the closet during the 1980s fuelled the public desire for more scandal (Sanderson, 1995c).

Any forcible outing is of note, not only to the general public but also to the queer community. This is demonstrated by 'Cornwall: 11 Men Appear' (Unknown, 1977c). Printed as it is in a queer community newspaper, the list of men, their ages and professions who were forcibly exposed as queers through a chain prosecution, is of interest to the queer reader because it talks not only of application of power but of the inability of other queer people to maintain their personal closet. It infers two clear ways of supporting your own: do not engage in public sex and do not co-operate with the police, if you do. It reinforces the closet by exposing the social reaction to exposure.

There are many different closets as there are people. Something that all queer people share whatever the sex, gender or sexuality: the personal and individual social construction of a closet with its own individual parameters - often defined in language as each individual chooses to confess or censor. For the queer community, "The epistemology of the closet has given overarching consistency to gay culture and identity throughout the century" (Sedgwick, 1990,68). It has constructed the queer community and aspects of it such as the queer Press and "gay scene". Many theorists speak of "the" closet (Sedgwick, 1990, Seidman, 2004a) as if it were one thing but, as I have just alluded, the closet for me is as infinite in its scope and nature as are people. , Each person has of course, a number of closets, as they have are identities. To come out to one person is not to come out to all or to come out in every situation. Indeed there

are infinite other hidden invisible aspects of self: criminal, mental illness, cancer, incompetence, a self-obsessed right wing politician, a love for train spotting. All may involve a process of confession with ones interlocutors, in coming out or in passing. "Passing [in any circumstance] is not a simple effortless act; it is first about denial of expression. The closeted individual closely monitors his or her speech, emotional expression and behaviour in order to avoid unwanted suspicion"(Seidman, 2004a,31)

Closets are malleable and they change over time. By 2005 in 'Was Barman Killed By Serial Gay Bashers?' (Gallagher, 2005) the queer bashing victim is ostensibly out of the closet, living an openly queer life, unlike his predecessors in 1977 and, moreover, able to access socially acceptable meeting places. But on entering the common in search of sex he enters a public space but a private world which is unpenetratable by the press, the public and the police. He once more enters the closet and is subjected to the most striking form of oppression, the removal of his life. Sedgwick believes "The closet is the defining structure of gay oppression"(Sedgwick, 1990,71) and it is made so because outside of the closet the queer person comes to receive the protection of the State. In fact, one of the arguments made for law reform in the 1960s was that it would remove "the blackmailer's charter"(Miller, 2006,45) by dissolving the closet. Here the victim loses state protection by entering a space which is outside the parameters of a closet. It is dark, secret and shut off from the rest of the world.

Seiman argues that "the state has been a driving force in the making of the closet" (Seidman, 2004a,30) whilst Sedgwick argues that "the most obvious fact about the history of judicial formulation [the manifestation of the State] is that it codifies an excruciating system of double blinds, systematically oppressing gay people, identities and acts by undermining through

contradictory constraints on discourse the grounds of their very being” (Sedgwick, 1990,70). The undulating ubiquitous nature of this codifying force is *clearly* seen between ‘Cornwall: 11 Men Appear’ (Unknown, 1977c) and ‘Was Barman Killed By Serial Gay Bashers?’ (Gallagher, 2005). In the first, the state and its judicial arm conspire with the public to define, limit and punish – to police – the activities of the queer person. They are caught in the social norms of the moment and the trappings of it: wife, jobs, families, forced to express their queerness in public spaces because no other outlet is available because, Sedgwick suggests, to be openly queer, to congregate in specific spaces, is also to be oppressed by the state. For example, by wearing a badge of queer affiliation in ‘Dismissal Over Wearing Lesbian Badge Upheld’ (Unknown, 1977d); by being a professional queer in ‘Sixty-Five MPs are Poofers’ (Hepburn, 1988); for a single queer act in Quit, ‘Vicars tell Gay Sex Row Bishop’ (Unknown, 1994d) and through the silences of queer crimes in ‘Was Barman Killed By Serial Gay Bashers?’ (Gallagher, 2005), we see the powerful, if shifting, nature of the state and its arms to create, define and to police the closet. In fact this influence pervades every article under question and those excluded. The closet is proven in this study, as Sedgwick suggests, to be the seminal force around which sexual discourse is framed, a place where “homosexuality is part of a wider mapping of secrecy and disclosure and the private and public” (Sedgwick, 1990,71). As the article from *The Mail*, ‘Its All Over Say Elton and Renate’ (Wallace, 1988) demonstrates, this need to know, this fascination with the queer person, with the secret, with the sexual, is one of the driving forces around semantic change in this period.

In ‘Was Barman Killed by Serial Gay Bashers’ the major silence is now a comforting, empathic one. The victim’s actions in searching for sex are covered in gentle euphemism. The family,

friends and readers are protected from the harsh realities of penetrative and oral queer sex which are at the heart of the activities of the “50 gay men, mostly young, who come here every night after the pubs shut” (Gallagher, 2005) and through silence are refocused on the violence that is done to them. In this way, press silence around queer folk can be seen to be rehabilitated, in that it can suppress and vilify but it can also protect.

The closet or closets have been the defining social structure of the twentieth century and an aspect of social life that has been thoroughly represented in the press, as has silence.

6: 9 The Whole British Nation Comes Out In The Times – A New Regime of Truth

This final section of this chapter will survey modern construction of queer persons’ sexualities in the press by focusing on an article from *The Times* published on 7th January, 2005. This is an article in which it appears the whole British nation came out: ‘Tourism Chiefs Try to Lure Gay Visitors to ‘United Queendom’ (Woolcock, 2005). This section focuses tightly on the intersection between discourse and counter-discourse of queer representations, as portrayed through the prism of the media, in particular, British newspapers. It will first turn to the production of “truth” in newspapers because this presentation of Britain is a thoroughly new truth within this study.

Classically it is argued by discourse theorists that we can never describe reality in its true form, (Foucault, 1978). That there may be an independent reality outside of discourse, that is impossible to describe, illustrates the true nature of the media, as it attempts to pass off news’

reporting and opinion as fact. From Foucault's stance it can never produce more than an arbitrary, transitory series of statements that may be taken as truth at that particular moment, in that particular episteme, as has been demonstrated by the changing truths of the military queer person, of power relations and of the closet. This is also demonstrated by 'Tourism Chiefs Try to Lure Gay Visitors to 'United Queendom'' (Woolcock, 2005). It asserts:

"Tourist chiefs are trying a new tactic: promoting Britain as the ultimate gay destination. An agency funded by the Government has started an intensive marketing campaign to attract homosexual visitors, chasing the pink pound of gay singles and couples [...] its website has a gay Britain section that boasts about its "proud gay history, cutting-edge culture and fashion, flamboyant cities and pulsating nightlife" (Woolcock, 2005,5)

It evokes the new liberalism of a diverse society, a new truth which is being reproduced without contradiction or irony. It is a tolerant inclusive article which reproduces well-known queer historical reference and cultural icons as common knowledge. It speaks of "Judy Garland" and "Madonna" and celebrates an equal age of consent and civil partnership (Woolcock, 2005). Moreover, this is an article which is not only outward looking, positioning Britain on a world stage but positively queer. It says "we are all counting the days until a union with Jack under the Union Jack becomes more than just a dream" (Woolcock, 2005,5), even rewriting elements of the truths of the past, of chain prosecutions, imprisonments and oppression, asserting that now "Gay Britain [...] boasts about its proud gay history [...] awash with Rainbow

pride”(Woolcock, 2005). The question is how this article became publishable? Such an article in the mainstream Press would not only be improbable but inconceivable at any point much before 2005. The answer is that the nature of the truths surrounding queerness has changed which has facilitated the interest, writing and production of this story so that the configuration and syntax of hegemony has altered, too. The acceptance of queerness is now being presented as being in line with public opinion when, as this thesis has described, in the past the public opinion was often that queer people were not to be tolerated, that they were deviant. So the regimes of truth in this article, at least, have altered, as has the application of power.

Like discourses, there have been many competing truths in the British Press concerning queer folk, the construction by British newspapers of queer people as a security risk. The production by the media of the queer person as effete, deviant, dangerous and subversive of British “values” and “moral” codes is perhaps the most consistent of all “representations” produced by the media (Sanderson, 1995a). As we have seen, others include that queer folk induct children into “Queer” behaviours (Wolf and Kielwasser) and thus children need to be protected directly. This discourse included an article first published in *The Daily Mail* in 1983 to Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 that prohibited the “promotion” of homosexuality in schools which I will explore in the next chapter (Smith, 1994). In recent times the representation of social “truths” has changed. These facts in discourse which seemed so unassailable in the 1980s, and before, have since been re-presented and repackaged as merely historical prejudice unsuited to a modern progressive society (Phibbs, 2009). Despite this, there still is a considerable religious counter-discourse against queer people (Insitute, 2009) which has produced a conflict between

the now dominant “liberal” discourse. At the same time, since the late 1980s there has been a steady decrease in attrition between queer and non-Queer as the radical queer individual has been subverted into the dominant consumerist discourse, something I explore more fully in chapter 7. This article is demonstrative of that. It states “the Government has started an intensive marketing campaign [...] chasing the pink pound”(Woolcock, 2005). the queer person is now a valuable consumer, to be courted by the press and society alike (Kirsch, 2000) and I underline this further in chapter 7.

6:10 Conclusion

In conclusion, discourse theorists would argue that the words used to describe queer people changed across the period under question for a number of reasons. Firstly, the underlying rules and structures which produced the statements changed. Some topics and forbidden discourses were no longer taboo. This may be because the forces in control of the discourse were themselves liberated. Foucault argues for epistemes, periods in which the structure of human thought is different, enabling other new “regimes of truth” to come into being because rules and structures that created knowledge changed.

The further one goes back into the past the more diminished and less powerful those voices become, the more closeted. In contrast, in recent times the queer public voice has become more powerful, as if the queer voice itself has come out of the closet, freer, louder.

The shifting flows of power subsequently moved to the queer people, who were able to use language to define themselves rather than having meaning imposed on them. This led to a fracturing of language from invert and homosexual to Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning. Language has changed because the power to self-describe has changed and meanings are sustained through power. Those who “have”, “direct” influence or are the “focus” of power are able to define the meanings of the words used in discourse. As these power structures ebb and flow, so do the meanings of words.

The mobility of power relations opens up the prospect of change in all relations. The queer community represents the clearest demonstration of this in modern Britain, moving from a position of internment and vilification towards virtual equality and parity. There can be no doubt in these three articles, of the surveillance which society has deployed against queer people. This represents the fundamental domination of one segment of society by another. However, one seeks a gradual easing of this domination as the period passes.

Ultimately, though, what was demonstrated in this chapter has been a radical shift in the representation of queer people. This has led to a new regime of truths, a new way of thinking or more precisely a new spirit or episteme. This has resulted from the pressures incurred from the processes described in chapter 4. Next, I want to explore the dissipation of these forces into normalization.

7:0 Normalisation and Professionalization of Queer Identities

7:1 Biography: Normalization of This Professional Queer Person

I found myself in my twenties to be the perfect gay man. After my degree, I spent most of my time partying in the queer dance clubs that had exploded onto the London scene during the 1990s. They were considered so cool they were filled to overflowing. Many of my straight friends found themselves having to prove themselves “queer”, in the kangaroo courts of the lesbian security guards, just to get in. It seemed to me that the gay scene had gone mainstream. It was everywhere. Boring, political, news based queer press had been replaced by glossy lifestyle and clubbing news. Ecstasy was in fashion and the gay scene seemed to explode into a 24 hour party. I think though, I will always remember an Impulse deodorant advert entitled - *Chance Encounter* - where the beautiful woman drops her shopping which is picked up by a masculine man she believes is flirting with her, only to find out he is gay as he walks off hand in hand with his equally handsome and masculine partner (Mather, 1998). When I first saw that advert on mainstream TV I knew queerness had arrived. During this time I worked on one of those very same glossy queer magazines, *AXM*. I joined the local gay gym in Soho and essentially became a professional gay man. Later I extended this queer professionalism by opening a large male only cruising bar in The East End. Although we were ultimately closed by the police – being the centre of the largest outbreak of syphilis in London since 1890 or so, we were generally well-received and tolerated by the council and its representatives. Moreover, what the out and out sexual orgy that was my club “The Block” personified for me was the liberation of the queer person. These types of clubs, which promote public sex, are everywhere now, but at the time The Block was progressive in actively facilitating this behaviour and so was

the authorities' response in allowing it. The stories are legendary. I still meet people who talk to me fondly about their antics at the club without knowing who I am. My two favourites are the gentlemen who took off all his clothing in the dark room only to have it stolen (we sent him home naked) and the policeman who lost his wallet and warrant card in the same dark room.

However, I was to leave being a professional queer man for another sort of professionalism which is also indicative of new trends. Eventually, I was to become a primary school teacher, where upon I found my sexuality was a non-event in every way. In fact, in many ways it was an asset. I wonder now what younger gay men have to define themselves against? What will it do to the sense of community I felt all the way through my 20s and 30s. Nothing now is subversive or progressive. There is nothing left to throw yourself against when even the Conservative party is doing the throwing for you with legislation on queer marriage.

7:2

Introduction

In this seventh chapter I explore how queer people have increasingly found themselves in a more “normalised” position within society over the last forty years; how they have become incorporated into reporting within the UK Press and how their presence has become increasingly unremarkable. I want to explore some of the engines of that normalization such as Political Correctness (or PC) whilst focusing on real outcomes by examining the changing linguistic treatment of the queer family, queer MPs, queer celebratory and queer footballers. I want to explore how queer children and queer parents are represented. I will then examine the

changing Press presentations of professional people in public life such as gay MPs and how they become normal, public, everyday identities. I will also look at some changing representations of queer celebratory. Finally, I explore one of the remaining social taboos, being out in professional football because this is still presented in the press as hugely taboo.

My central conclusions, concerning the reasons for the normalisations described within this chapter are supported by a synthesis of elements of thinking from Habermas and Chomsky. In essence I am making the argument here, that changing representations of queer people are simply a product of rationalization which has changed the nature of “truth” in society¹¹. These new truths change the consensual bases of a broad spectrum of society and, in broad terms, newspapers respond in a commercial fashion: they adopt these truths as their own in order to be seen as representing society and seek to rehabilitate the queer person as a consumer. Further I believe that language and the language in newspapers have been fundamentally affected by the rise of Political Correctness and a raft of progressive legislation. I will also explore this before examining the press articles.

I want then, to begin by describing the theories that underpin the rest of this chapter.

¹¹ I have previously argued that there are no fixed truths within discourse. This remains my position. When I talk about truths here I am merely suggesting that a contemporary truth develops upon which sits a local consensus. This local consensus might exist between a small group, who see it as true, or extend across the country and indeed the globe but it will not, necessarily, include everyone or every group with whom it touches.

7:3 Spheres, Truths and Politically Correct Drivers of Language Change

Normalization of queer folk in the press is part of a process of general rationalization in society, as envisaged by the work of Jurgen Habermas (Habermas, 1992). Rationalization has enabled queer people, for it is the bedrock of their normalization in a progressive society. It is the replacement of ethereal, religious and emotional ways of thinking with calculated, scientific and reasoned thinking. As I discussed in chapter 4 many of the arguments against queer lifestyles have been based on religious tenants.

This rationalization occurs through dialogue, a dialogue which is situated in the public sphere and facilitated by newspapers amongst other vehicles. Habermas asserted the “public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as public”(Habermas, 1992,27). There are of course many spheres of differing conceptions, notably the private, public, political spheres. It is through discussion and interaction within these spheres but most particularly the public sphere that “truths” and “consensus” are generated. In Habermas’s terms, “The self-interpretation of the function of the bourgeois public sphere crystallized in the idea of ‘public opinion’”(Habermas, 1992,89)

However, the formation of the public opinion is not unsullied through discussion. Rather the facilitators of the exchange of ideas, such as newspapers, introduce a commercial element to the interchange and thus the exchange ceases to be a unbiased, taking on commercial motivations and the lines between different spheres becomes blurred (Habermas, 1992,181) The claims that are expressed in newspapers are an example of this blurring of intention and spheres. “As soon as the press developed from a business in pure news reporting to one

including ideologies and viewpoints [...] a new element, political in the broader sense was joined to the economic one”(Habermas, 1992,182). Here then, in the public sphere which has become exemplified and moderated by a commercial media, interchanges become “truths” and “truths” are portrayed as “public opinion”. “Public opinion” itself

“takes on a different meaning depending on whether it is bought into play as a critical authority in connection with the normative mandate that the exercise of political and social power be subject to publically as an object to be molded in connection with a staged display of, and manipulative propagation of publicity in the service of persons and institutions, consumer goods and programs”(Habermas, 1992,236)

I am arguing that the rationalisation of the public sphere has led to a general acceptance of sexualisation of British culture across groups. Its naturalization has led to a change in the underlying truths, a change to the underlying public discourse. Public opinion has become more amenable to queer lifestyles, thus generating an increasingly tolerant western society which is replicating ever more sexually tolerant cultural knowledge and increased group solidarity. This is at odds with more masculine and religious centred cultures that have come before, thus redefining a new “other”. However, throughout this, newspapers respond with a market model, they do and say what is most profitable for them. They influence discourse and opinion in order to facilitate this profit model whilst at the same time doing so in the guise of progressive moderate or crusading conservative. For Chomsky and Herman “The societal purpose of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate society and the state” (Herman and Chomsky, 1994,298) for

Curren and Seaton, "The press is not representative because it is armed and controlled by the powerful"(Curren and Seaton, 1997,331). As much as I want to highlight the improved position of queer folk and their representations in the press I see no paradox in suggesting that these changes are facilitated in the final analysis by a commercial model which benefits the newspaper industry. In fact I am arguing that the adoption of these representations favours the industry in that it can be said to be both accurately describing society whilst at the same time fashioning a new market for itself –the queer consumer.

There is no doubt that Britain is a western democracy. Here the

"media do not function in the manner of the propaganda system of a totalitarian state. Rather, they permit – indeed encourage – spirited debate criticism and dissent, as long as these remain faithfully within the system of presuppositions and principles that constitute an elite consensus, a system so powerful as to be internalized largely without awareness"(Herman and Chomsky, 1994,302).

With one look at the record one sees a seemingly huge change in the representations surrounding queer people however, this change is not happening as an isolated change but rather as part of a wider change. In this way this progressive change is not in opposition to the general "presuppositions and principles" of the existing system which is already moving in an inclusive direction in terms of woman's, ethnic and disabled rights(Barton, 1996{Fleischer, 2011 #820}). However, I am suggesting that it wouldn't have incorporated the queer voice in its entirety without a significant push or without significant benefit to the elite. "The national media typically target and serve elite opinion, groups that on the one hand provide an optimal

‘profile’ for advertising purposes, and, on the other play a role in decision making in the private and public spheres.”(Herman and Chomsky, 1994,303) and for as long as queer folk can be defined as a clear market, based upon the circulation of truths and part of an overall consensus then they will be accepted as consumers. However, without the overall trajectory of society, queer truth claims would have been rejected because illegalities and violations of democratic substance are confined to marginal groups [...] media opposition is muted or absent altogether.”(Herman and Chomsky, 1994,300). It is through being part of a wider group that queer people were heard and the consensus built.

Changes in the media, or indeed, the inclusion of a marginal voice within a broader trajectory occur because “The national media would be failing to meet their elite audiences needs if they did not present a tolerably realistic portrayal of the world”(Herman and Chomsky, 1994,303). The media must reflect at some level the real experience of the society, of which queer folk are apart. Herman and Chomsky believe that “The system is not all-powerful, [...] the failures of the very well organised and extensive state propaganda effort and the simultaneous rise of an active grass roots oppositional movement” (Herman and Chomsky, 1994,307) can effect outcomes but “the critic must be prepared to face a deformation apparatus against which there is little recourse”(Herman and Chomsky, 1994,306). One sees this in the record when one looks at the reaction within the press to queer campaigns especially in the 1970s and 1980s. The media is quick to defame anyone, or group challenging the consensus but through active campaigning and grass-roots organisation queer groups succeeded. For minority groups to effect consensus in a positive manner in the public sphere and the press, “networking and activism, continue to be the fundamental elements in steps towards the democratization of

our social life and meaningful social change”(Herman and Chomsky, 1994,307). The normalisation process that I describe in this chapter is based on the efforts of the GLF, CHE, Stonewall, Outrage! et al that I described in the last. Those queer people who in different roles endeavoured “to influence the decisions of state authority appealed to the critical public in order to legitimate demands”(Habermas, 1992,57). However this grass roots queer movement has enabled more accurate representations in the press based upon a public demand for accurate representations.

“The freedom to publish in the free market ensures that the press reflects a wide range of opinions and interests in society. If a viewpoint is missing in the press, this is only because it lacks a sufficient following to sustain it in the market place” (Curren and Seaton, 1997,326).

Due to this free market Curren and Seaton describe less tolerant voices are substantially falling away from the market into niche publications as the anti-Queer sentiment ceases to have a following to sustain it. “Newspapers and magazines must respond to the concerns of their readers if they are to stay in business”(Curren and Seaton, 1997,326) which is why, I believe we are reading more tolerant descriptions. The public simply is more tolerant and the moral codes that underpin society have changed.

These then are the theoretical ideas which underpin this chapter and they can be seen at play across the articles under analysis. However, despite the foregoing, I am not suggesting that the media acts alone. I think that two processes that have fed into these ideas of normalization and rationalization in the public sphere, is the rise of Political Correctness during the period under

analysis and the introduction of progressive legislation. I want next to look at this before moving on to examine the newspaper articles from the archive because I think they have been a fundamental driver of language change and helped move language on.

7:4 The Rise of Political Correctness and Language Change in the British Press

I want to highlight again the underlying point that I am making here; that something significant happened to drive language change across the period. In 1988 it was the compression on language followed by release by 1994, as I described in the previous chapter and then from the mid-1980s onwards the rise of Political Correctness and the use of legislation by government – in this case the New Labour Government - to promote the change which I am describing in this chapter. I want to examine these two aspects before returning to a more clear exploration of queer professionalism or naturalization by which I mean how queer people became accepted and unremarkable in the press. I will begin by demonstrating the effect of Political Correctness on media representations. In the 30th December 2005, *The Guardian* ran the following article: ‘Murder Squad Trusted by Gay Community to Be Disbanded’ (Cowan, 2005).

“A crack team of detectives with a near 100% clear-up rate and valuable experience investigating homophobic killings is to be broken up due to cost-cutting...[instead] each London borough has lesbian and gay liaison officers, who do excellent work to support investigative teams. Communities are key to solving crime”(Cowan, 2005)

This article is full of inclusive politically correct terms; it speaks of “communities”, “liaison”, “established relationships” and “minority groups” and is arguing that there is no longer a need for a separate task force. “All teams” it says now “take on a variety of cases and would have a wide range of experience”(Cowan, 2005). In the eyes of the police, at least, the queer community no longer deserved special consideration. This thesis argues that this was because of the naturalization of this community which was built upon a number of factors, notably the rise of Political Correctness which is used by all parties in this article.

The rise of Political Correctness, PC, itself started as a “movement” on American university campuses in the 1980s but had its roots in the cultural politics of the 1960s (Dunant, 1994). PC codes have precipitated a wider cultural and political conflict that has centred on the politics of representation and on identity politics - a central theme of this thesis. The debates around the nature and character of PC have centred on questions of free speech (Choi and Murphy, 1992, Williams(Ed), 1995) but have polarized around the politics of Right and Left. For the Right, PC represents an attack on what may or may not be said, and an attempt by the Left to control the individual and undermine the right of free expression. It is seen as a contributing factor to a “lawless” society based on a victim culture (Fairclough, 2003b). It can be seen to over-emphasise the needs/desires of minority groups and the expense of the majority. For the Left an attack on PC is indicative of an attack on equality (Perry, 1992). The influence of the media, in co-operation with the New Right, in attacking PC during the 1980s and 1990s, was seminal in creating an anti-Queer atmosphere as it amounted to a counter discourse against those groups PC was attempting to facilitate.

The very term PC itself tends to have most currency with a right-wing “anti-pc” agenda which is itself a potent example of how language is always ideological. In *Some Politically Incorrect Pathways Through PC*, Stuart Hall suggests that the combined attack on PC and its association with “Loony Left” councils in Britain was part of a larger strategy by the New Right led by Thatcher in conjunction with elements of the press to undercut an alternative political agenda (Hall, 1994). In this way, any usage of PC became a newsworthy event. For Hall the conflict between the GLC and the Thatcher government was the essence of this battle, in that the GLC represented a serious political alternative to Thatcherism, an effective conglomerate of social forces which presented a serious challenge within hegemony to the Conservative government’s agenda. The GLC, for example, had committed in 1981 to “fight discrimination against gay men and lesbians” (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991,203). Hall argues that it was the Right that wanted to “fix” language and thus, the struggle over PC became a struggle for authority and representation. Cameron suggests that this was a struggle not about PC but about the meaning of PC and the question of who is to be the master? (Cameron, 1995). For her it is the struggle for meaning that is central in this debate. Whilst PC may be superficially concerned with language use, it reflects and evolved at a moment of fragmentation in politics, at a point where new areas of conflict opened up as the political moved from the public to the private sphere. As Suhr and Johnson comment, “the project of Thatcherism itself began to embrace a much wider range of ideological concerns” (Suhr and Johnson, 2003,10). Thatcher and the New Right grasped that social change could be facilitated through language. Despite the opposition and rhetoric, it appears that PC has a solid grasp on all sides of the political spectrum. Allan et al point out that “use non-PC terms now and doubts are raised about your moral commitments” (Allan and

Burridge, 2006,102). Such PC terms are now the norm in the British Press, even if they are still challenged and fought over. They go on to assert that top of a recent British survey into ' language that people find offensive' are pejorative terms used to denigrate minority groups (Allan and Burridge, 2006,108). I view PC as an engine of change exactly because of its dialectical nature and I will be exploring this by unpacking two polarized articles. I will also explore increased use of acronyms in the press by focusing on just one.

There can be little doubt that, despite the seeming backlash against it, perspectives of language centered upon political correctness attempting to address pejorative terms have left a deep legacy in everyday language use. Keith Allan, et al, have argued that PC has significantly changed language against the natural disposition of most people, which is to resist changes to linguistics patterns, particularly those that are imposed (Allan and Burridge, 2006).Therefore, the adoption of "LGBT "by elements of the straight Press, notably *the Brighton Argus* points to a significant social achievement. Although the use may not be indicative of a change in their editorial philosophy it does give the appropriate terms authority in wider language, as this article entitled 'Call For Crackdown On Gay Hate Crime in City' published on 25th February, 2005 demonstrates:

"Confidence in community safety amongst LGBT people, particularly in hot spot areas, is very low. We will always have to deal with hate crime but Brighton's reputation is on the line...LGBT community police officer Brighton and Hove said 'we have been working to increase the trust and confidence of people'" (Tate, 2005,10)

Given the trend towards the use of the word “gay” resistance to PC and to change can be seen in the persistent use by some elements of the press of the term “homosexual” even in 2005, such as this taken from *The Mail* called ‘Elton to Wed At Windsor as 2400 Gays Name The Day’ published on 6th December 2005 demonstrates:

“The singer and his boyfriend will wed at Windsor Guildhall after posting their bans yesterday the day it became legal for *homosexual* couples to marry... More than 1,000 *homosexual* couples yesterday signed up for civil partnerships”
(Lampert and Doughty, 2005,4) [my emphasis]

It is clear from literature (Williams(Ed), 1995, Perry, 1992, Hall, 1994) that debates around language had been predominant for some time before the rise of PC. For example, speech attitudes towards women had been debated since the rise of feminism (Thornton, 2007). As Allan et al point out, it is simple courtesy to address someone by the term they have chosen for themselves (Allan and Burrige, 2006) – As we saw in chapter 3, this was something that elements of the British Press resisted across the period with regard to queer folk. Whilst the Right may have dismissed the use of PC terms as trivial and irrelevant, for the Left, the use, for example, of ‘chairperson’ is indicative not of social engineering but of the social fact that many women do, in fact, chair meetings and committees and language should be gender neutral. My research demonstrates that these polarizations were repeatedly expressed in the press as I shall discuss shortly. PC has had some success in suggesting appropriate terms for marginalised groups but it also can leave people worried about saying the wrong thing “and alienating voices that are already there”(Dunant,xi).

Within the British Press PC can be seen to affect language in two ways. Firstly, there is the rapid adoption of the generally appropriate circulating term by some newspapers, for example, “gay” by *The Guardian* in 1977 and then the active resistance by others, such as *the Mail* who continue to use “homosexual” even in 2005. This is a philosophical reaction to PC with “Left” wing papers with progressive agendas adopting cutting edge inclusive terms and conservative papers with more narrow views on society resisting them.

Some papers actively seek the linguistic vanguard. They lead in the introduction of progressive language. They are early adopters of, particularly, acronyms which then have to be explained to the public, such as “LGBT” which is used by *The Argus* or the queer Press. Then there is specific resistance to any such use. *The Sun* on 16th May 1994 not only demonstrates this but actively shares such resistance with its readers in ‘I’m not gay, I’m a M.W.H.S.W.M.’ the headline declares, whilst the body of the text is a diatribe against the use of politically correct language and a rejection of the subtle social constructions of queer lives:

“Trendy health workers have bent over backwards to invent a new type of sex
M.W.H.S.W.M– a Man Who Has Sex With Men but is different from being gay or
bisexual, according to an ad they put in a local paper”(Coles, 1994,5).

According to *The Sun* there are no alternatives to being simply “straight” or “gay” and attempts at more nuanced descriptions are mocked. They, *The Sun*, become the authority, not the health workers who engage every day in this field. Lifestyles and the language associated with them are swiftly and effectively précised and pigeonholed whilst, I argue, PC terms are rejected in elements of the press because they do the opposite; they open up a range of self-defining

identities which need to be explained. Overall, the data and research demonstrates that PC has facilitated a substantial move towards inclusionary practice and language, particularly by public sector bodies which has promoted the normalisation of the queer person in society and the press.

For me, the rise of PC has been facilitated by a raft of legislative instruments which although undeniably dull in framing have been hugely liberating. For this thesis, what is most notable about the following anti-discrimination legislation is that it begins in the 1970s at the start of the study and continues all the way through the period with a noticeable jump in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Such legislation would appear from the pattern to be solely or generally enacted by Labour governments. *The Race 1976, The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and The Race Relations (Amendment) Regulations Act 2003* make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour or nationality. It also places a general duty on public bodies to promote race equality. As a lot of council interlocution is linguistic, regulations such as this compel councils to examine the use of inclusive language in public spaces and draw on the atmosphere of diversity and Political Correctness. This is also true of other legislation such as *The Sex Discrimination Act 1975* which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex or marriage and *The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) Regulations* which extends these powers. Both these Acts set the premise that some groups need special protection in action and in language. *The Disability Discrimination Act 1995*, whilst protecting the right of disabled persons, also adds to the growing legislative discourse surrounding the elimination of difference and placing on local authorities a positive obligation to promote equality of

opportunity for disabled people and is indicative of an overall atmosphere of social tolerance for minorities.

Legislation is not passed in a vacuum and although these following statutes appear towards the end of the period of study, or after, they are indicative of changes within the political and social discourse during those moments. I believe that data supports the fact that the election of New Labour provided both a mandate and an atmosphere for equality legislation which had not been seen before, and as we saw in chapter 6, a release from compression facilitating a rise in positive legislation. These will have to be sustained and described by linguistic changes as well as supported by extended campaigns and dialogue:

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 which protects the employment and educational rights of transsexuals and *The Gender Recognition Act 2004* that transfers the rights and responsibilities of the acquired, rather than birth, gender to the individual are progressive and seminal pieces of legislation. *The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003* which protect the employment rights of all, no matter what their sexual orientation, and *The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007* which ensures that goods and services are provided to a person, no matter what orientation, have offered significant equalities to queer people in employment and in society. Such protections both stimulate Press attention but also alter language in themselves whilst providing an upwelling in discourse. *The Civil Partnership Act 2004* confers on individuals of the same sex the right to a legal partnership and many of its terms such as “civil partner” have entered the register of everyday discourse and the press. For me, this process is a process of rationalization and I

would like to examine it for the changing fortunes of queer parents and youth in the British Press, underpinned by elements of the work and ideas of Habermas.

Having explored two of the engines of change during this period, I now want to come back to the core stories which demonstrate queer naturalization and examine some other theories which combine to influence language change.

7:5 The Increasing Visibility of Queer Youth & Families in British Newspapers

Political Correctness and rationalisation based upon an increasingly tolerant society has led to a string of stories in the press which are all centred on the idea made by queer campaigners: that queer people, for example, who only “want the same rights and security” as everyone else, are the same as everyone else (Williams, 2005a). It is a process of logical deconstruction that eschews emotional or cultural bias for decisions based on pragmatics. The success of this trend can be demonstrated by its ability to emolliate very difficult and embedded attitudes particularly around the ideas of queer youth and queer parenting including adoption.

Before moving on to explore some newspaper articles I want to explore the following theoretical paradigms concerning queer youth. Driver has asserted that:

“Any attempt to understand queer youth must work against totalizing concepts and generalizing depictions, elucidating the partial and layered ways in which queer difference becomes refracted through the dialogical movements of young people [but] queer youth continue to be a marginalized group denied public

language with which to articulate their experiences, to name themselves and express their needs” (Driver, 2008,3)

Driver he is expressing the isolation that queer youth faces in being to converse about their experience but she also warns about stereotyping them into a single queer identity. They need to be understood as individuals, something that is often missing in press constructions. Cover asserts that:

“Queer youth isolation is often discussed as a formation resulting from loneliness, the inability to communicate with other younger persons of a sexual minority or the inability to access lesbian/gay institutions such as clubs, bars, venues, youth groups due to either age or geographic distance”(Cover, 2012,42)

So queer youth are often isolated from positive or reassuring messages which often leads to suicidal thoughts based on the concept of shame (Cover, 2012). These negative messages were demonstrated in the press but did evolve overtime.

The move towards more progressive truths in the linguistic and actual representation of queer families and queer youth can be seen demonstrated in the following cycle of articles which concern gay youth, *Section 28* and myths of queer procreation which demonstrate a changing consensus:

Counter to the dominant discourse during 1988, which I discussed in Chapter 4, in ‘Despair That Faces The Gay Teenagers’ (Unknown, 1988c) local newspaper *The Argus* demonstrates a linguistic and editorial first. (I am returning to *Section 28* and articles on equality legislation but

this time in this chapter I am focusing on the descriptions of queer youth). The headline leaves no doubt there are “gay teenagers” and they will be in “despair”. In doing this it draws away the veil that had existed in newspapers concerning queer youth. Published by the Argus on the 30th January 1988 it acknowledges them.

“Teenage suicides will increase if the Government succeeds in stifling classroom discussion on homosexuality...the effect on children who have recognised or will recognise they are lesbian or gay might be disastrous”(Unknown, 1988c,7)

What is so radical and in every way rational about this statement was that it ran counter to the inference by most of the contemporary Press that queer people were not born, but were made - corrupted by older queers, that there were not, in fact, any gay teenagers. This idea was still prevalent in 1994, in some papers; this from *The Mail* on 21st February 1994:

“What was permitted on youths would be practised on boys. The legal barrier to the corruption of boys by men would be dangerously lowered”(Unknown, 1994c,8).

Thus, rationalization can be seen to be a slow process, rather than an outcome and in much the same way as I discussed in chapter 4 it can have uneven outcomes. A queer teenager in 1988 should be in despair in conservative linguistic models, not because they are coming to terms with their identity without support or suitable role models as *the Argus* assert, but because they have been the subject of corruption. The whole of the *Section 28* agenda, so dominant at this time, was based on the premise that queer people were not born but influenced into

becoming queer and it is articulated in this article from *The Times* entitled *Lords Keep "Gay Clause" in Bill* was published on 10th March 1988:

"The clause is expected to remain substantially unchanged. It prohibits state schools from teaching the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretend family relationship... Lord McIntosh agreed that some way must be found to protect children"(Unknown, 1988g,3)

The Argus article is rational-progressive in thought and language. It argues that the government is seeking to stifle "classroom discussion on homosexuality"(Unknown, 1988c). Such discussion in a formal setting against an emotional backdrop is the quintessential essence of rationalization and demonstrative of the process that Habermas has defined at work. The article goes on, stating resources to provide "gay information [and] gay books" (Unknown, 1988c) and to fund charities which disseminate support and advice to the queer community as a whole will dry up (Unknown, 1988c). The recognition that there are not just queer youths but queer children, that queer people are born, is the product of much rationalization and dialogue. The removal of such recognition, the application of social censorship through legislation will, they argue, encourage an increase in the already "19% [...] of lesbian and gay teenagers" who attempt suicide (Unknown, 1988c,7).

By 1994, queer youth was national front page news in *The Mirror* with queer rights campaigners warning that the failed vote to provide an equal age of consent would "create more misery for thousands of teenagers turned into criminals because of their sexuality" (Morris, 1994). Again, the application of statistics, and logical debates about them, are at the

heart of the rationalization of queerness in modern societies which began with the publication of the Kinsey Report in America (Cochran et al., 1954)

By 2005, rationalization meant that queer youth culture in Brighton was so well understood that it required no further explanation; maybe the ultimate naturalization as far as the press is concerned. In *The Argus*, a radical and once controversial outreach project for queer youth, are listed as simple “allsorts youth project” with no further explanation needed (Bridgewater, 2005). Buried in a large article concerning the queer community as a whole: *Pride People Ready To Party* (Bridgewater, 2005) queer youth had moved from an invisible and unarticulated subculture to a visible, normal part of everyday culture at least in Brighton. Thus the truths around queer youth had changed. A new consensus had been built which at least acknowledged their existence.

I want now to explore some of the ideas concerning family. Pullen suggests that:

“While gay men have often gained higher social profiles... they are rarely seen as homemakers or loyal partners, or viewed as a politicized cohesive unit. It is this disconnectivity to ideas of family, long-term relationships, child raising, stable romance and political cohesiveness that has denied gay men access to heteronormative worlds.”(Pullen, 2007,1)

I would argue that the evidence is suggesting this is now changing however as Pullen suggests:

“as gay people many may be considered as individuals often rejected by the heterosexual family unit, the idea of a family often seemed distanced from gay identity”(Pullen, 2007,37)

Indeed, I would argue that for a long time the idea of a queer family unit seemed distant to non-queer actors but this is beginning to change.

Two articles which speak to another aspect of the process of rationalization of queers in the press describe the other side of the queer family coin, queer parenting. ‘I Lost My Girls To Lesbian Ex-Wife from The Sun’ (Yates, 1994) and ‘Lesbian Couple Can Be Baby’s Parents’ from *The Mirror* (Dunn, 1994) both in 1994. I am arguing that this moves rationalization towards the margins of newspaper discourse and debate. As the central debates are close to being resolved, the discussion moves to the edges. For the queer community this surrounded children and a resolution of these vitriolic arguments would be indicative of a general social acceptance of queerness, the central debates around queer identities where an equal age of consent, employment protection and civil rights. For me, these two articles appearing in 1994 point to a pivotal moment of rationalization because they represent an “ideological shift in news coverage [...] where the extraordinary is normalised into the ordinary” (Carter, 1998,221). The first article published by *The Sun* on 9th September, 1994 deals with the award of custody of two children to a lesbian mother. It begins with the deliberately emotive positioning of the father. It says:

“A devoted dad told last night how his life was wrecked by a judge who took away his two little girls and gave them to his ex-wife and her lesbian lover”

because the judge felt “the girls would get a more normal family life with the lesbian pair” (Yates, 1994,1),

Something *The Sun* and the father would contest. He contended “*everyone* knows there must be an element of risk [in]putting two little girls into a lesbian household”(Yates, 1994) [my emphasis]. In a social mirror of the queer community that came before him, he is a “hapless victim of the legal system” (Yates, 1994); all through it there are clear elements of homophobia. This is a moment of inversion in society, when the legal rights of queer people begin to have the same force as the non-Queer. This is newsworthy for the paper because before this point the queer person would have surely lost their children. I am arguing that this is evidence of a process of rationalization, that at this point when, “everyone” no longer knows that children living with queer parents is damaging, they are beginning to accept the opposite.

The same is true of the story from *The Mirror*. It is the function of a process of intellectual rationalization which leads the courts to set a new standard resulting in this press articulation on the 30th June, 1994:

“A lesbian couple have made legal history by winning official recognition as the parents of a baby boy”(Dunn, 1994,9)

In this case it is the simple act of the court allowing one parent from a stable relationship to adopt the biological child of her partner, a child they planned together, which demonstrates rationalization. Whilst the paper describes it as a “historic” decision which offers “equal parental responsibility”, asserting that “some councils even allow lesbian and gay couples to be

foster parents” (Dunn, 1994). The counterargument is presented by Tory MP Sir Nicholas Fairbairn who:

“stormed: ‘it’s ridiculous. We don’t put children in the hands of the insane – so why should we put them in the hands of the perverted. Surely the child should have a normal upbringing not an abnormal one” (Dunn, 1994,9).

As with many things novel and rational there is often a counterargument but there is also a clear trajectory making more conservative voices seem irrational. It is outside the consensus. queer parenting is becoming more and more natural. By 2005, in ‘Pride People Ready To Party’, they are quietly listed, as were queer youth organisations, simply as “rainbow families” (Bridgewater, 2005).

My research shows consistently that normalization occurs when there are few stories concerning a minority because they are no longer newsworthy or where such articles appear in the language of inclusion and inevitability. This familiarity and unstressed position is reflected in a more comfortable and relaxed style in the queer Press. ‘We Are Family from G-Scene’ in 2005 (Wildblood, 2005b) demonstrates this.

“Family, Family, Family [it begins] Family is something we all have [...] however we create the circles around us, be it relatives, lovers or friends, that is our family” (Wildblood, 2005b,26).

It is an interesting statement because it assumes the construction of a variety of family units outside of the typical heteronormative and it also states it in a very natural and relaxed manner. The rest of the article has a similar tone each unthinkable or contested territory for

queer people through most of the research period. The first part of the article talks of adoption and fostering, quoting a senior officer of Brighton and Hove Council as saying:

“We have been able to recruit some very strong adopters from the Lesbian and Gay communities” and that “we have found that lesbians and gay men [...] have been robust and successful in meeting the challenges of parenting slightly older children” (Wildblood, 2005b,26).

Thus, we can see represented here a really positive change around the acceptability of queer adopters signalling a broader normalization in society - a change in truths. Normalization brings with it a change which leads to the target group becoming a consumer of the press rather than a victim of it. The article then moves on to consider attitudes to queer youth, the language of inclusion, of “positive role models” and of “enabling young people”. “Yes” it says some young queer people have a unique set of challenges but these are “thankfully being addressed”(Wildblood, 2005b). Finally, it goes on to consider aspects of queer donor insemination now “commonplace in the lesbian community” (Wildblood, 2005b). It talks of the “joys” of children, the “luck” needed to get pregnant and of the “school gate”, again, a natural and unassuming dialogue that would not be out of place in any mainstream mother and baby magazine. “Parenting” it declares is “a tough job” but queer parents enjoy the ability to share support through social organisations such as Rainbow families. All of this is very different from the language and discourse from the past in which the queer Press was involved in legislative campaigning, community building and active resistance. Interestingly, in this context of a thesis centrally interested in linguistic change, *G-Scene’s* article even stakes a new claim for the use of the word “Pride”, so often a stalwart of queer campaigning. It contends:

“Perhaps we should hijack its other meaning. A family of lions is called a ‘Pride’ and maybe this should be the new word to describe queer families. A pride of queers, gays, lesbians [...]a pride of friends, lovers, husbands, wives [...] a pride of children”(Wildblood, 2005b).

The meaning of the sign starts to become contested because the old meaning associated with queer campaigning and politics is beginning to lose its value in this naturalized society, to be replaced with this new meaning of family, community and tolerance.

Similarly, that this social and linguistic naturalization of the queer family, youth and parenting, so hard fought for by queer people, is a mark of inclusion, a truth which indicates social change beyond mere tolerance.

7:6 Changing Press Representations of Queer Members of Parliament

Having just examined the changing truths and consensus around queer family which brought us up to 2005, here I am going to return to look at a 1977 report that looks into a debate in parliament which sets the scene for the broader discussion on MPs to come. I have used it because of the involvement of Lord Arran, a passionate advocate of queer rights. He himself didn’t identify as queer and was married. It is suggestive of the type of reporting and reactions from the press that professionals, queer or not must face, when supporting social change.

On the 30th June 1977 'Gay News, in Who Killed The Arran Bill?' (Mason, 1977), expresses the truth claims of a persecuted minority which is appealing for genuine representation as the basis of sincerity and rightness. It begins.

"The Earl of Arran's Bill to lower the age of consent for gay men from 21 to 18 was crushed in the House of Lords by the most careful, most secret – and most successful - piece of organisation-lobbying by a motley collection of evangelical and anti-gay groups... Peers voted by 146 votes to 25 'that in view of the growth in activities of groups and individuals exploiting male prostitution and its attendant corruption of youth, debasement of morals and spread of venereal diseases, this House declines to give the bill a second reading'(Mason, 1977, 1)

This is a long piece of narrative and within it one finds direct quotes from both sides of the debate. Thus the paper goes on to print two differing and competing claims to truth, one "anti-gay" and one the queer campaigners under the same by-line. Both sets are based on the appearance of truth, rightness and sincerity but make competing claims. the queer claim is that there was a "secret [...] organised collection of evangelical and anti-gay groups" (Mason, 1977) including The Festival Of Light, The National Listeners Organisation and The Order for Christian Unity who undermined the passage of an equality bill through parliament. Further, they achieved this through lies and deceit whilst "gay lobbyists were open and honest"(Mason, 1977). The other "anti-gay" claim is the rational argument that:

“the campaign to persuade society that homosexuality is as natural as being red-haired or left-handed is nonsense and cruel nonsense... those of us who are prepared to listen to homosexuals know well the evil and cruelty of [their] campaign”(Mason, 1977,1).

In short, queer people are corrupted. These two circulating truths and competing claims define *Gay News* at this time. Its language is technical, investigative and often painfully careful. It clearly wants to place itself in the genre of a broadsheet rather than tabloid. It begins “Westminster: The Earl of Arran’s Bill...”. It is very deferent using formal language. This language is an appeal to truth by 1988, the language of the queer Press is an assertion of truth and by 2005 an acceptance of what we all know to be true.

For the queer person during the period under question this paper argues that there was a substantial shift in the nature of validity claims circulating in society due to social changes. These changes eroded the basis of earlier validity claims changing the consensus. Further, such competing claims stimulate creativity and change in language. At times of overall consensus such engines of change die away. Social acceptance, normative rightness and sincerity gradually sped up during the period of study, producing spectacular gains for the queer community by the end of the period. In short, queer people began to win the rational arguments for truth.

Next, I want to use elements of Habermas’s thinking to extend my analysis of how groups become rationalised by looking at the changing fortunes of a group in the public sphere. In the context of queer language change, this section will examine newspaper reports of queer MPs across the period because they are at the centre of the nexus between state, media and

person, between the public and private spheres. MPs are also responsible for the change in the law described above which facilitated change. Thus reports were of special interest to newspapers which also engage in the merging of the private into the public and the regulation of society. Fundamentally, queer MPs have been at the centre of the changing nature of what it means to be considered professionally competent as an openly queer person.

Queerness used to be a feature of the private sphere, censored from discourse, but sexuality has now become very much part of the public sphere, an almost transparent everyday attribute such as the colour of one's hair. There are four articles involved in this study which illustrate this evolution. They demonstrate the changing nature of public discourse surrounding the queer MP as they move from pervert to professional in the press, of the merging of private lives with public persona. They are: 'Sacked MP Goes Off To Hide-Out' (Greig, 1977) from *The Mirror* in 1977, 'Sixty-Five MPs Are Poofers (Reveals One Who Is)' (Hepburn, 1988) from *The Sun* in 1988, 'Gay Age of Consent Cut to 18' (Michael White et al., 1994) from *The Guardian* in 1994 and 'Party Faithful Standing By Their 'Brilliant MP'' (Thomson, 1994) from *The Times* also in 1994.

The first from 29th September 1977, describes how queer MP Maureen Colquhoun is sacked by the regional branch of the Labour Party for being openly queer. Her private life had spread into the public sphere, thus "her public behaviour was not fitting for an MP" stated the Party (Greig, 1977). It begins:

"Gay MP Maureen Colquhoun went into hiding yesterday after promising to fight hard for her political career. She drove to a secret destination with the woman

who shares her life, gay rights campaigner Babs Todd. Mrs Colquhoun, 49, following claims she was sacked by her constituency party in Northhampton North on Tuesday because she is a lesbian. The official reason for her dismissal is that her recent statements and public behaviours were not fitting for an MP.”

(Greig, 1977,5)

She asserts the rational queer defence which is counter to the dominant contemporary discourse: “I propose to fight like mad” she states “My sexuality has nothing whatever to do with my job and being a good worker”(Greig, 1977) . In this we see two spheres, the public and private, in conflict. The Labour Party is concerned with “public behaviour” and the MP with private “sexuality”. It is the merger between the two which is at issue and causes conflict. *The Mirror* has a highly liberal and progressive comment on its front page, which is contrary in tone to most of its own articles and the attitude of most of the press at the time and says:

“Homosexual MPs should be candid about their private life, even if it affects their political life. Voters have a right to know the influences and pressures which shape the actions and judgements of their representatives. The day may come – we hope it does – when a man’s or woman’s sexual preferences within the law will be of as little concern to others as the colour of a tie and skirt”

(Unknown, 1977b,1)

This demonstrates an early argument for the changes that were indeed seen by 2005, by which time there were no press releases concerning queer MPs and many had “come out”, judged for their ability, not their sexuality. However, such naturalization for MPs in the public sphere was

not cheaply won. In 1988 Chris Smith, as an openly queer MP, was still very much a novelty. Seven years had elapsed between 1977 when Labour sacked Colquhoun and 1984 when Chris Smith openly came out and remained in his job. queer campaigners had done much within the Labour Party to alter the culture in favour of equality (Jeffery-Poulter, 1991). Nevertheless he was still very much a curiosity. On the 24th November, 1988 *The Sun* in an overdose of alliteration and pun asserted in 'Sixty-Five MPs Are Poofers (Reveals One Who Is)':

"Parliament is packed with poofers a leading gay MP claimed yesterday... with as many as "65 homosexuals camping undercover... Bachelor Mr Smith –the only British MP to admit he is homosexual –said anti-gay feelings were increasing in the UK... a Labour spokesman commented "Mr Smith is speaking personally. He is quite open about his homosexuality. But I do not think there is any way anyone can find out the accuracy of what he is saying. It is not a figure that can be checked" (Hepburn, 1988,13).

This is the mediation between public and private: we, the Labour Party do not enquire into private matters, it is up to our members to self-declare. It is a discourse that is based on the novelty of Smith's position and at the same time demonstrates a growing appreciation of how language needs to be handled by large organisations in the public sphere. Further, such an article is only possible because of the essential invisibility of the queer person.

By 1994 Smith remained the "only self-declared" MP (Michael White et al., 1994), although Outrage! in 'Activists threaten 'Outing' of Gay MPs'(White and Weale, 1994) published on 23rd

February 1994 assert they will expose others following the failed vote to equalize the age of consent.

“Militant activists angered by the 427-162 result have made thinly veiled threats to “out” gay MPs. Peter Thatchell of the gay rights group Outrage! who had warned that if gays were to be treated like criminals they would behave like criminals, condemned the hypocrisy of MPs who voted against equality and hinted at a future change in tactics. ‘by our calculations there are 12 gay or bisexual MPs who voted against equality’” (White and Weale, 1994,2)

Smith himself is portrayed here as relaxed, professional and integrated, whilst both some queer groups and rightwing politicians share the same linguistic characteristic of fervent fundamentalists with the queers “angry”, “rejected”, “insulted” and talking of “a campaign of civil disobedience” whilst the religious Right are described as “impassioned”, “opponents” and “protesting” (Michael White et al., 1994, White and Weale, 1994).

In May of 1994 Conservative MP Michael Brown was outed as homosexual and resigned from the government. *The Argus* described him as “defiant”, attacking the “gutter press” for “lurid stories that are mostly untrue”(Unknown, 1994b). Published on 9th May 1994, it begins:

“MP Michael Brown today hit back at Sunday newspaper allegations about his private life. The defiant MP pledged to continue in the House of Commons despite resigning as a government whip in the wake of allegations that he had a gay relationship with a 20 year old student.”(Unknown, 1994b,5)

However, there was a very different reaction from the public in the 1970s and 1980s which is demonstrative of a new mood concerning public and private spheres. In *The Times* in an article published on 9th May 1994, Tory activists were said to be “promising 100% support for the brilliant MP” (Thomson, 1994) while “Mr Brown’s constituency chairman , Brian Knight, said “He is a brilliant MP and his personal life is his own [...] he is certainly not downhearted and is in a fighting mood” (Thomson, 1994,21).

Although it falls outside the time frame of stories covered in this thesis, it is worth noting that the trajectory of these conflicts between MPs and their public and private lives was such that for MP David Laws, who was outed in 2010 as part of a parliamentary expenses scandal, the real pain came from not choosing to be out; if he had done so he, arguably, would have still been in government. It was his manoeuvring to stay in the closet, to keep his private and public lives separate, as would have been the norm not ten years before, which cost him his job. It demonstrates an inversion in social attitudes across the period. In 2010 to stay in the closet, to be at all deceptive about ones sexuality was tantamount to a heinous cowardly public sin but to come out was to show courage, leadership and to be liberated.

In this way to be queer and out has become an attribute and something to be valued, not hidden. I contend that this is a notable marker of social acceptance which has been played out in the normalization stories of queer MPs, a marker of a new consensus. Through these stories one sees that society and the press have inverted their expectations across the period in regard to the behaviour of MPs but, this has not been built on a happenstance but rather on a system of consensus building and I believe in responding to a parallel change in society which promotes

the queer person as professional, as capable, as normal. I want to further explore this process my looking at changing portrayals of queer celebratory in British newspapers.

7:7 Changing Representations of Queer Celebratory

During this section I will be focusing on portrayals of queer celebratory across the period. I think it is worth noting that although it quite acceptable to be camp in 1977, it was not acceptable to be openly queer and many performers, even those which may be considered to be clearly queer, never came out, much of the humor and knowledge was implied and audiences laughed for different reasons. As Medhurst says of this time:

“The queen is a laugh magnet, although different audiences laugh for different reasons, ranging from the laughter of the homophobes who are delighted to see their prejudices confirmed, to the laughter of fellow homosexuals so schooled in and attuned to codes of camp they miss none of the in jokes”(Medhurst, 2007,87)

In 1977, the archive has demonstrated the media presented queer celebrities as deviant in two ways: as out of control, sick deviants as we saw in the previous chapter, or as camp non-threatening entertainment. This article entitled ‘Carry on Camping’ from *The Sun* published on 26th February 1977 is typical:

“Almost every night I switch on my telly and some comic is at it. Camping it up for laughs I mean. Put a pansy or a guy in drag into a comedy show and before

you can say “hello, honky-tonk” you’ve got a hit on your hands.” (Balmforth, 1977,11)

It continues:

“Larry Grayson was camp before he even knew what that word meant. He says what other comedians would not come on and say ‘ooh my hair does need washing ‘ or ‘I’m going all giddy, I’ve gone as faint as a robin’” (Balmforth, 1977,11).

This article, like others of its time (Irwin, 1977) my research has shown, is devoted to the explorations of the emasculated camp comic who, as the article says “is neither one thing or another” (Balmforth, 1977); the bachelor entertainer who “minces”, who is “camp” or “pansy” (Balmforth, 1977). Dragged up to please a non-Queer audience these media portrayals of queerness in 1977 were desexualised and attacked in this article by the CHE (Hughes, 1977), the GLF having disbanded at this point. However, they were supported by the actors themselves, such as John Inman. In a rush of non-offensive ambiguity he consistently argued that the queerest of them all, Mr Humphries, from TV sitcom *Are You Being Served*, was not queer “just a bit precious” and simply “would like to be fond of someone whether it is a man or a woman” (Balmforth, 1977).

Rather than engaging in any dialogue on his sexuality, Grayson asserted simply that “to be camp is to be different [... and] you have to admit humour can be naughty”. He engaged audiences with tired, unsophisticated and stereotyped double meanings, for example he says in *The Sun*:

“when a woman brings my laundry back in a mess she says ‘everything is getting on top of me’ and I say ‘I know the feeling well’. She goes on ‘It’s just one thing after another’ and I reply ‘lucky for some’”(Balmforth, 1977,11).

From my research it is apparent that queer celebrities in the media in 1977 were presented as quintessentially camp, effeminate and desexualised. Further, they were labelled as such and appeared to embrace these labels, as this further quote from John Inman demonstrates:

“passers-by call out: ‘are you free?’ and with a quickness worthy of Mr Humphries he replies ‘no, but I am reasonable...When a customer says he is looking for a broad shouldered Scottish Tweed Mr Humphries replies ‘aren’t we all’”(Balmforth, 1977,11)

Such is the power of these media representations of queer life that the queer movement actively campaigned against them (Weeks, 1990b, Power, 1995) and John Inman himself was picketed by the normally moderate CHE. In ‘A Gay Old Carry On’, a report of this incident, *The Mirror* (Hughes, 1977) paraphrased the CHE as saying that Inman’s portrayal of Humphries “distorts the image of homosexuals, [that] John was too extravagant in manner and too keen to dress up in drag. They even passed out leaflets at Brighton where John is appearing in a one-night show”(Hughes, 1977). Medhurst says of this time:

“The queen is also controversial and never more so than in the 1970s, when the emergent movement of gay liberation politics flexed its muscles by lambasting him (most often in the person of Larry Grayson and John Inman) as a reactionary and damaging misrepresentation, reinforcing a view of male homosexuals as weak, shrieking, sexless ninnies”(Medhurst, 2007,87)

Ironically, I believe my research demonstrates that these representations of queerness enable more nuanced representations over time because however painful and misconstrued, and despite a necessary and continuing fight for accurate depictions, without these beachheads of campness invading public discourse and becoming accepted, more relative and real depictions would have been impossible in the future. The research demonstrates that these characterizations were a necessary first step towards normalization because of their unthreatening and emasculated rendering of sexuality. As we saw in chapter 6, the second rendering of queerness in the 1970s was that of the whole radical, subversive and militant queer person, (Unknown, 1977d, Jongh, 1977) of the deviant who refused to conform and who may indeed, be corrupting western society, as we saw in chapter 5. Thus, society was provided with two very different polarised views of queer sexuality, both challenging in their own way.

By way of juxtaposition and as demonstration of change I want to go straight to 2005 where it seems that the queer person had been liberated by the Media. It was certainly a non-issue for *The Sun* and its readers in 'Gay? So What!' (McCullagh, 2005) published on 20th August, 2005. On coming out, singer Mark Feehily of boy band West Life is described as a "hunk" with "guts" and "courage". Unlike in 1977, masculine and sexual identities are very much framed as part of the article. This is very different from the terms used to describe queer characters in the 1970s. More importantly, the article is dense with terms such as "successful", "career" and "acceptable". Sexuality was now not important as a measure of stature in society; success, fame and money were. It says:

“Brave Westlife hunk Mark Feehily who revealed he was gay... was backed by our poll of readers. They all agreed that his sexuality JUST DIDN’T MATTER. Mark had already “come out” to bandmates Kian Egan, Shane Filan and Nicky Byrne - as well as his family in Sligo – and all praised his decision”(McCullagh, 2005,11)[McCullagh’s emphasis]

Other celebrities are offered the same treatment in 2005. In ‘I Was The Only Gay In The Village’ from *The Mirror*, for example, TV dance judge, Bruno Tonioli, is able to define the strengths of queerness as “empathy”, “popularity” and “style” whilst redefining and reinventing those people from his childhood in the 1970s, who rejected queerness, as simply ignorant “bullies”. Again, this article emphasises the importance, not of sexuality, but of success. Published on 26th November, 2005 it says:

“‘When I was 10, I knew there was something different about me,’ says Bruno ‘everyone was football mad but I just wanted to watch musicals and see art. It was frightening. I was the only gay in the village... It’s horrible how money and fame can make you acceptable while, if you’re not famous or rich, you’re not acceptable.”(Robertson, 2005, 30)

It is worth noting that unlike a non-celebratory who comes out to their family, it would be difficult for a celebrity such as Bruno Tonioli in 2005 to retreat back into the closet at will after coming out in the media. Most stars from the 70s such as Larry Grayson never officially came out, despite their camp portrayals. This is the power of the media not just to expose but to expose to all at the same time. Whilst a private queer individual can slip in and out of the

closet, depending on the situation and interlocutor, the public queer person may not. This is true of any public figure, including MPs. It appears then that 2005 was a period of social inclusion, of normalisation for queer celebratory. However this is based on a process, a search for a new consensus, which can be seen in the articles in 1988 and 1994 and I am going to turn to these next.

1988 is packed with intrigue as many celebrities came out and baited those still in the closet. Boy George hid his sexuality at the start of his career but, publically came out, stating on The American Grammys that Americans “knew a good drag queen when they saw it”. Later he proceeded to provoke that other George of the moment, George Michael , who was very much in the closet. In ‘Gay Con Jibe At George Michael’ published on 8th January 1988 national newspaper *The Sun* says:

“Heart-throb George Michael is GAY and his love life is a sham, fellow pop star Boy George claimed last night. He branded Michael’s ex-girlfriend a “fag hag” – American slang for a women who hangs around with homosexuals. And he stormed the idea of George having a relationship with her is about as likely as me having sex with a door.”(Sky, 1988,1)

In the same year the engagement of the queer Press with the rest of society is very different. It has a campaigning style. *Capital Gay’s* piece ‘Cashman Wins Libel Cash From Murdoch’ (Unknown, 1988a) published on the 18th November 1988 illustrates this difference:

“ Actor and activist Michael Cashman has won an out-of-court settlement of several thousand pounds and a full apology from Rupert Murdoch's News of the World – and the jubilant star hopes it will encourage others to sue anti-gay newspapers...At the weekend the ‘newspaper’ published a statement admitting that the allegations were ‘wholly untrue and unfounded’ and briefly explained the truth.” (Unknown, 1988a,1)

This newspaper is not tangling with religious voices such as *Gay News* did with the Festival of Light in 1977; it is tackling the Establishment itself, attacking *News International*, Murdoch and *The News of The World*. The language is based on a new validity claim, a new truth that queer people deserve protection, “Michael Cashman’s lawyers pushed harder for a full-published apology from *The News of the World*,” it asserts, “than for cash” (Unknown, 1988a) – they got both. An apology is more valuable in the arena of competing truths than any amount of money because it gives weight to the validity of the opposing truth and at the same time undermines any associated truths being presented.

Whilst in 1994, as the article ‘Charity Dumps Dyke Comic’ in *Capital Gay* published on 7th October, 1994 illustrates, just the simple act of coming out as queer was enough for charity Save the Children to prevent successful comedian, Sandi Toksvig, from appearing for free at a fundraising dinner because of “publicity in certain papers [which meant] her presence would be a distraction”(Unknown, 1994a).

“Save the Children were in the grip of a bitter internal row this week after the charity’s trustees banned a lesbian comedian from fronting its anniversary celebrations... Save the Children’s behaviour was immediately condemned by the Lesbian Avengers, who on Tuesday infiltrated and disrupted the celebration event... chanting “Sandi isn’t here because she said she was queer”(Unknown, 1994a,1)

It is clear from the article that whilst “the trustees decided to veto Toksvig’s appearance [...] staff expressed ‘strong views’ about the unpaid trustee decision” (Unknown, 1994a) and this demonstrates the social movement between the more progressive tolerant groups represented by the workers and the more conservative trustees.

7:8 The Queer Consumer - a New Truth

By 1994, queer culture and media has been rehabilitated from the political engagements of the past and a swath of new(ish) publications reach out to the affluent, enfranchised queer professional: *Gay News* now swishly titled *GT*, *Attitude*, *QX*, *Diva* and *Boyz* are all focused on delivering queer people to the advertiser, of celebrating the consumer, not the campaigner in every queer person. This is something so prevalent that the non-Queer Press identified it in *The Gloss On The Pink Press* from *The Guardian* and published on 7th February, 1994 (Brule, 1994). It says:

“Over the past year the British Press has reached saturation point with stories about the ‘power of the pink pound’, Soho’s gay take over and other manifestations of the booming gay economy... From this Thursday, the whole

question of integration and mass market acceptance will be put to its final test when the UK's first middle shelf lesbian and gay lifestyle magazines hit the newsstands... The biggest stir has come from *Attitude* which is devoted to gay men and 'strays' (straight men who act and think gay or, at least, hang out with gay men)"(Brule, 1994,13)

Queer culture itself has been accepted as offering much to society whilst articles such as 'Tourism Chiefs Try To Lure Gay Visitors to United Queendom' (Woolcock, 2005) and 'Army Joins Gay Pride in Recruitment Parade' (Norton-Taylor, 2005) demonstrate the truth that queer people have been accepted by 2005 as consumers, professionals and fully enfranchised members of society. As does this excerpt from *The Guardian (Home)* published on 5th December, 2005 and entitled 'Race Is On For Pink Wedding Pound'. It says:

"We think it will be worth hundreds of millions of pounds here," says Ben Spence, co-founder of the Surrey firm behind the Gay Wedding Show. "A lot of guys are coming through who have been together for 15 or 20 years - they've got loads of money and they're not worried about the cost at all."

Brighton's mayor, Bob Carden, is in similarly upbeat mood, eager to promote his city as the flagship venue for gay weddings. "The pink pound is very prominent these days," he says sagely, as a naked butler waltzes past with a tray of hand-dipped chocolate truffles (Spencer, 2005,1)

The queer person thus became a person of consumption in the market place. They moved from pervert to professional, sex pest to consumer and out entertainer. Having explored the

normalization of queer youth, family, MPs and celebratory, I now want to move to more contested ground, professional soccer.

7:9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated a number of ideas in relation to queer identities in the British Press but I particularly explored how the energy of change, or compression and protest dissipated in a general normalization and commercialisation process post the change in episteme.

Firstly, I explored how the rise and acceptance of Political Correctness did much to solidify language change around queer people. Secondly, I looked at how governments used legislation to further enable social change which was then further reflected in the press. My evidence shows that this did much to stabilize and codify the gains from the period of protest explored in the previous chapters.

Throughout, I used Habermas's and Chomsky's ideas to demonstrate how the queer community became naturalized through rationalization and consensus building. I explored this by looking at diachronic representations of the queer family, MPs in the press and celebratory and suggested that ultimately queer people became seen as mere consumers and that newspapers were an industry.

8:0

Thesis Conclusion

8:1

Biography: Heckling the Christian Protestors

As a trustee of Pride the little group on the grass mount always struck me as bizarre. It was not only the gays who were carrying banners but also the Christians and whilst it had always been such, you had to admire the sheer commitment of this group, if not their balls. They had decided to protest against one of the biggest gay festivals in Britain, Brighton Pride. Unlike Brixton in 1992, where the Police had been deployed to protect us, here these Christians were ringed off by a line of officers charged with protecting them from us. Certainly in this town; they were now the minority campaigning against the majority view. The queer guys and girls had cheered the lesbian pastor from Brighton Metropolitan Church at the start of the day as she blessed the parade. Now, as these queer folk passed the mount and the Christian protesters, they hurled vitriolic abuse at this group. None of these queer folk wanted to be saved, each was determined to party! I doubt many people alive have been subjected to such a sustained tirade of four letter words in such a short space of time. My mate did not bother with any verbal abuse. Walking the parade in a jock strap and boots he simply bent over, spread his arse cheeks and invited them in. This obscene gesture brought no reaction from the police.

Later in the year, I was talking to a very middle class, female friend, with no connection to the gay scene whatsoever, about this scene at Pride. I then began to discuss the Bishop of Durham, the Right Reverend Michael Turnball ordained in 1988, only to find that she had been, completely randomly, there at Durham cathedral on the day of his ordination. Apparently it had not gone well. Instead of being “dragged” joyously and ceremoniously to the door of the

cathedral in a parade of celebration, he was forced to scurry from the rectory protected by bodyguards and ushered straight into the building. During this entire journey he was heckled and booed by gay campaigners who had up to that point pretended to be picnicking in the cathedral's grounds. It seems that queer people and the Church have a long relationship of protesting each other.

8:2 Conclusion

For me the major lesson from my work has been the discovery that, we are living through a new episteme where knowledge and "truth" are being constructed in a new way, this is the result of dramatic language change in a short time. We have, during the period under study, come to see personal freedoms, particularly sexual freedoms, from a completely different perspective.

In terms of queer people, this has been the result of great ideological struggles putting pressure on discourse over a number of years which has seen the redistribution of power and a raft of new legislation. Its roots stretch back to the sexual revolution and equality debates of the 1960s but have the heart in the queer campaigns that began in the 1970s. I would argue that such dramatic change has been based on a pluralisation of activist strategies and the constant fight for accurate representation and for control of such representation. It was not enough to simply lobby quietly for accurate descriptions or indeed timidly seek changes in the law. Change occurred through campaigning which was based on solid philosophical arguments. Change occurred through visibility. There also, it seems to me, a lesson for ultra-conservatives who seem by pushing so hard against queer minorities experienced a rebound into the very types of queer acceptance they tried hard to suppress.

At the same time Britain, it seems from the press, has become an increasingly secular society which has expelled the religious right from its social consensus, this again has increased the drive towards personal freedom and allowed the press to position the queer person as a consumer, a person, rather than pervert, strengthening the rapid change in discourse. There has been a new acceptance of the queer, of queer families, youth and professionals which has led to a new society and a new language of tolerance and acceptance which is further solidifying these changes within discourse – for now.

In terms of the academic, I would suggest the lessons are that no one department can provide a complete answer to any question. This has been borne out by the study with each piece building on the one before. Traditional linguistics would not have accurately described what was happening and neither would any of the other theories independently. I believe that I have demonstrated that it is possible to use the newspaper record and the fluidity of language to produce a coherent historical study. This methodology can be applied to historical research surrounding many groups.

The potential flaws in the study are its lack of focus on regional issues or specific individual identities. Quite often when analysing a story in the national or even local and queer press it's easy to equate the outcomes to a whole social constituency or lump all queer identities together. For example, I made no real differentiation between the individual experiences of different celebratories. I didn't take account of age, gender or race. Academics, especially queer academics frequently argue for the fluidity of sexual identity and yet it is almost impossible to make a concise argument without some element of grouping.

Despite the necessity to restrict the amount of material that was explored, the systematic exclusion of some of the major newspapers, some major narrative arcs and indeed the focus on just four years was also problematic. A lot can go on in the intervening years, or other newspapers which was lost to the study. Nowhere in the thesis have I really engaged with personal experiences other than with my own. I think that it would have been possible to introduce an element of oral history to future work. How were these stories received by those reading them? Personnel recollections certainly come up when I have talked with people of all types. They remember the prosecution of *Gay News* or *Section 28* and have strong feeling about it. In working on my own, rather than part of a team the analysis is all mine; others would certainly have may have had a different interpretation of much of the data.

Nothing is ever finished. One of the limitations of this thesis is that it doesn't continue. The debates are still very much alive. Language is not stable nor is society. The fluidity of change continues to push at all groups. No truth remains true for long no matter the circumstances and the social consensus is continually evolving. A few more excerpts from the contemporary press in 2013 which are suggestive of these and a continuing interest in the issues I raide. From *The Mail*

“David Cameron was humbled last night when his plea for support over gay marriage was rebuffed by more than half his party” (Chapman, 2013,1)

From *The Mirror*

“SELENA Gomez was forced to cancel two gigs in Russia after she was denied a visa - reportedly due to her support for gay rights. President Vladimir Putin signed an antihomosexual law in June that prescribes heavy fines for "propaganda" supporting "non-traditional sexual relations"(Moodie et al., 2013,5)

From *The Telegraph*

“This is the coolest part of the capital [Whitechapel, London] - and a disturbing extremist undercurrent has erupted on the streets in response. In the past few weeks, footage has emerged of gangs of vigilantes calling themselves the Muslim Patrol, prowling the streets and intimidating those who "disobey God". In a series of shocking incidents filmed on mobile phones and posted on YouTube, the hooded extremists confiscated alcohol from residents in Whitechapel, calling it a "forbidden evil" and harassed a white woman late at night for wearing a short skirt. They also launched a tirade of homophobic abuse against a man who appeared to be wearing make-up, ordering him out of the area and calling him a "bloody fag"” (Shute, 2013,5)

These articles also speak to another limitation of my work. It is very much a piece of British Cultural history. It may be of interest to those around the world, particularly the methodology but it will mainly speak other academics. When one reads the articles above one is aware of the

continuing oppression of the queer voice around the world and in some parts of the British community. Maybe the limitations of my work also point to the next steps. How are these conflicts resolved? How do we take the model and processes identified here and apply them on a global scale or indeed are we witnessing another compression and release within discourse, with some feeling the weight of a progressive Western society and beginning to resist it? When I read the articles above I am left wondering whether a progressive society is an illusion. Are we as inclusive and progressive as we say we are or are we just fearful of saying the wrong thing even though we might both think and believe it? This though takes one out of the representation of the queer person and into the area of psychoanalytical.

There were a number of ideas that didn't make it into my thesis because they were either underworked or needed substantial room in which to be developed. Firstly, I making an unsubstantiated and unresearched claim that much of the progress made by queer people has been based on the feminisation of western culture. We are moving from a masculine society to a feminine one and as we do so we are facilitating more feminine attitudes in which queer identities are more acceptable.

Secondly during my research I felt that the data showed an inversion in society. I believe some of the most interesting and original suggestions from my research demonstrated the reversal of the hegemonic positions occupied by queer people and Christian groups, articulated through the changing press coverage of these groups. Such articulation is, I argue, indicative of a wider transposition of social power and standing within British society. In other words, the minority group that were once vilified by the press is now increasingly celebrated, while those who, in

the 1970s, held a moral authority within news discourse (as evidenced in chapter 4's discussion of the *Gay News* Trial coverage) increasingly looks tainted, outmoded and perhaps hypocritical.

- the reorganisation of the press relationship to both the Church and the queer Community, and specifically their reporting of these two groups and which led to...
- the press both facilitating and describing the movement from exclusion to inclusion of queer people who then became in the press just that: "people". This demonstrates a re-drawing of the dominant hegemonic consensus in newspapers towards a more inclusive and tolerant society which then promoted the exclusion of religion based on the intolerance of queer people, particularly ultra orthodox groups of any denomination. These newly ostracised groups then became the new "other" – a new object of vilification, taking up the position previously occupied by the queer community within newspaper publishing.

I think that there would be interesting work to be achieved in either of these two areas, as well in applying the methodology to either other groups or issues.

However, whatever the flaws and limitations of the work it is a piece of original cultural history which used British Newspapers as a tool to explore changing representations of queer people between 1976 and 2005. It identified the agents of rapid linguistic change in concerning queer people and established that had led to a new episteme, even if change was not even across the nation. Lastly, it suggested that as the energy of change dissipated queer people were becoming normalised in society and therefore represented as consumers in the press.

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