Strong words, tough minds, trained bodies: a life history narrative analysis of female student teachers of physical education

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the construction of gender identities within the context of Initial Teacher Training in Physical Education within England. The life story narratives of ten female student teachers of physical education are documented and analysed, drawing upon a feminist theoretical framework informed by tenets of post-structuralist thinking. These approaches assisted in accommodating and explaining the contradictory social positions that the women engaged in, within a variety of discourses, as they constructed multiple, diverse and often contradictory gender identities. The participants consist of ten determined and highly successful women (strong minds) who have much to say about their agency (strong words) yet simultaneously find themselves complicit to a number of traditional gender discourses, particularly in terms of the body – an awareness of which increases during the process of training to become a Physical Education Teacher (trained bodies). Such complexity precludes any finite conclusions being drawn. Rather the thesis engages in, and extends, the discussions surrounding the theorising of gender, resistance, and agency within teacher training in Physical Education. The stories capture some fundamental shifts in the place of feminisms in post-modernity or high modernity, with a simultaneous use of both, to borrow Giddens (1991) terms, ‘emancipatory’ and ‘life politics’ styles of feminism; with gender inequality defined as a collective problem, but with an individual solution. Moreover, a number of gendered inequalities at both the structural and micro-political level are highlighted. In particular, a liberal discourse of equal opportunities appeared to mask the institutionalisation of ‘otherness’ these women experienced in teaching practice, and supported the essentialisation of male and female identities.

Whilst there aren’t tales of radical changes in their teaching of Physical Education, the narratives alluded to their embodied vision, and in acts of naming, the agency they had for telling, constructing and shaping their lives is revealed. As such, the thesis concludes by suggesting that teacher education and educational research need to embrace more explicitly and centrally a framework which considers further, the role of gender in the formation of a variety of teachers identities. Moreover, in developing more critical reflexive forms of teacher education, a number of strategies of intervention which draw upon critical post-structuralist perspectives are outlined.


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, my thanks to all the women whom so kindly and openly provided their life stories in this research. Their altruism, determination and indeed dedication to their teaching is worthy of acknowledgement here.

A special thanks to my supervisor, Professor John Evans, for his contagious enthusiasm, dedication, for engaging in my work, and providing me with a unique role model throughout the research. This is a professor who has helped my confidence and ability grow in ways I never thought possible. Thanks also to David Brown who has been a source of inspiration throughout; our conversations and collaborative work have provided the impetus to see social dynamics through new lenses. Again, his sheer enthusiasm for the subject has provided much support throughout the research process. Members of the Loughborough Physical Education Pedagogy Group have all been of assistance in various ways, and provided a source of stimulation and support; particularly Dr. Dawn Penney and Dr. Kathy Amour for their feedback, Dr. Jo Harris for stepping in during my third year as Director of Studies, and the late Dr. Colin Hardy who, as a director of studies was never short of enthusiasm, advice and thought provoking questions to help me find my way. Thanks also to my undergraduate supervisor Dr. Tess Kay for nurturing my academic interesting.

To academics in the field of have helped me in various ways; Heather Sykes, Jan Wright, Anne Flintoff and Gill Clarke in particular, and to all those others who have provided more indirect stimulus.

This has been its own adventure, and many along the way have been there to help through the ups and downs. A very worthy thanks to Abi Clayton who has always been there to help me through the tougher times, providing motivation, support and a friendship unique and rare in its nature. Rachel Holroyd, Gemma Leggett, and Toni O’Donovan for providing an always supportive, warm and helpful research office. A thanks also to Kelly Marshall who provided support during the seemingly difficult last phases of this research.
This thesis is dedicated in its entirety to my family, particularly my Mother whom I have learnt more about strength and dedication from than anyone else I know. Thanks for always providing me with a loving and supporting environment within which I could grow. To Julian, for always making me smile and for being the caring and compassionate, and encouraging brother that comes so naturally to him. Finally to my Father who has offered the hand of support during this study, and who in recent years has succeeded in fighting his own battles. Not least, for providing challenging discussion!
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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis broadly addresses the social construction of gender identities within the context of Initial Teacher Training in Physical Education. More specifically, it focuses on the lives of ten female students training to become Physical Education (PE) Teachers and the construction of their identities before, during and after this process. Subsequently, the purpose of this chapter is two fold. Firstly, following a number of calls for researchers to position themselves as multicultural subjects embedded in the research process (Jones, 1991, 1992; Middleton, 1988, 1993; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), I attempt to expose the motivation for engaging in this area of study. To do this, I present a brief narrative of the self. Secondly, the chapter presents an overview of the content, focus and structure of the thesis.

1.1 The ‘I can have everything’ girls?
The use of narrative or stories to assist our sociological understandings in relation to sport is now well documented. Moreover, this has led to a collective voice to encourage researchers to experiment with their writing as a craft (Cole, 1991; Denison, 1996; Foley, 1992; Sparkes, 1992, 1995, 1997). In this brief narrative, I highlight some of my own beliefs and background, in order to illuminate the processes and influences involved in deciding and perhaps defining the form that this study takes.

I have never taught Physical Education (PE), nor do I intend to. I have never undergone Initial Teacher Training, nor do I intend to do so in the future, nor am I a Teacher Educator. Why then, have I spent three years of my life carrying out social research in the context of Initial Teacher Training in Physical Education. What has driven me to this thesis? Let me set the backdrop to my arrival at this research. I have grown up in a culture that has seen the birth of ‘girl power’. As a national standard athlete, and county hockey player, I have experienced a highly competitive sports arena, and a university sports culture wherein groups of young women could be found engaging in behaviour traditionally deemed suitable only for men, downing pints ‘after the match’. I have grown up in England where we have seen a woman Prime Minister, a woman head of MI5, a woman speaker of the House of Commons, a
Woman president of the board of Trade and a Woman as Sports Minister. These women might all be exceptional cases, but they are also possibilities, figures that seemed almost unthinkable thirty years ago. In terms of women gaining access to traditionally male dominated contexts, second wave feminism has in many ways been a dramatically successful social movement. Ostensibly, there has never been a better time to be a woman! But what are the complexities of our current social condition?

I have written this thesis at a time when new forms of subjectivity, organisation and policy are rapidly developing. There have been huge changes in the global labour market, changes that have caused the British economy to become dominated by the service sector, the technology and communications industries and a huge and powerful financial sector. As Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001) note, there is massive unemployment of men, and in the light of a new economy some women now have the economic power that these men have lost. Cohen and Ainley (2000) suggest that within this context the distinction between ‘men’s’ and ‘women’s’ work is now open to question along with the whole social construction of gender. New Labour, taking Government after eighteen years of successive Conservative rule with the UK, seems fully committed to globalism and its attempts to reduce the welfare state remain in line with monetarist practice. This has demanded subjects who are capable of understanding themselves as autonomous agents, producers of their present and future, inventors of the people they are or will become (Giddens, 1991). Such self-invention has, and continues (under the current Government rhetoric) to demand subjects who are ‘responsible for their own actions’; subjects that are created to fit with a neo-liberal democracy (Foucault, 1977). Within this discourse, as ‘free and rational’ agents individuals are positioned as making ‘individual choice made in the furtherance of a biographical project of self-realisation’ (Rose, 1991 p.12). So if one is out of work, one has to transform himself or herself into the right kind of employable subject. I can vividly remember my working class upbringing and somehow thinking I had to transform myself to become the ‘right kind of subject’ for academia, something I still struggle with now. My thinking was very oriented towards a belief that a failure to do so, would ultimately result in signs that could be read as personal failure, rather than social inequality or oppression. It is only now that I have come to see this as a strong pathology, embedded in a discourse of individualism. I have come to see my class as very much lived as an identity designated, rather than simply something as some
economic relation or status. No matter how external the constraints, I somehow always made sense of these within an individualistic way of thinking – that it was about me taking autonomy and action with my life; something which felt simultaneously empowering and restrictive. Growing up, these were complex subject positions through which I was regulated and through which the deeply embedded aspects of the production of my subjectivity might be linked to the social and cultural.

The social fabric of Britain has thus been a site of rapid change: changes in the labour market, some breakdown in some older established traditional communities, diverse population make up, new ethnicities, new feminisms. Have I therefore, grown up in period in which girls and women are re-shaping and re-making themselves as modern neo-liberal subjects? There are complex social, cultural and psychological dynamics to entering womanhood today. Have inequalities been removed, or are they just organised differently?

For some time I felt a strong sense of ambiguity over my femininity. The culture of ‘equal opportunities’ was pervasive, yet the older practices of femininity/masculinity, and subjectivity, still existed (even if they had been transformed materially or legislatively). Moreover, these are particularly acute in contexts where the gender binary is challenged. I recollect vividly the experiences I had as pupil in Physical Education and sport. There were countless occasions when I was called ‘lesbo’, ‘man’, ‘gay’, and ultimately became a punch bag for much ad feminam hostility; and all because I chose to participate in my sport, and achieve a reasonably successful standard. Ultimately gender caught my attention as a social construction when I realised that whilst I felt access and opportunity to sport, education, employment was equal in gender terms, the secular legitimacy of oppressive gender dualisms were still pervading much social practice. These ‘lived understandings’ of gender are therefore micro-political serving not only as an identity resource, but as a motivating factor for this thesis. Whilst I understood and lived in an active arena of gender politics, whilst I had some recourse to challenge that, I had neither the discursive, embodied or practical experiences to draw upon.

For some time, I consequently felt ambiguity about my identities. The principles of equal pay and equal work could be well heard (whether this was achieved in practice
is another issue). The liberal notion of equal opportunities appearing as a dominant discourse was heavily reflected by my belief in a 'right to choose'. The only way I had of understanding, dealing with and addressing my gender, was through a narrative focusing on a very strong expression of individualism. My sense of agency largely appeared to be underpinned by a belief that resistances were a question of individual choice. This second wave feminist discourse somehow felt exhaustive to me, I was both intrigued and disenchanted by what it had to offer. It confirmed my own superficial need to voice 'women's rights' but did little to offer me any resolution to the contradiction, splitting and fragmentation of my identity. Nor did it provide me with the sufficient resources or discursive tools and understandings to feel confident or able in challenging a great deal of backlash I experienced whenever I chose to speak up, or go against the 'norm'. With the benefit of this, and hindsight, I understand how I was positioned with a disarmingly take-for-granted gender organised environment within sport and PE. Despite this, I felt some need to protect the Physical Education and Sport system since I had felt it had served me so well. I felt that it had given me an opportunity to dispel dominant gendered assumptions. I naively thought 'if only more girls would access it, make the most of the opportunity'. So when I became the 'lesbian' or 'the man' or any other derogatory term popular at the time, my attention never turned to the PE system itself, or the wider social and cultural issues. I remained locked in a very individualistic way of thinking.

I wondered how many other women felt this way? Moreover, I wondered how many other women remained complicit to this process of social reproduction? The caricature of the feminist was a strong and restrictive one. Like other young people in today's culture, I had learnt to question the precepts of my parents, my teachers, politicians, employers, those in the media. I'm not sure where this came from, or why I felt this, but there was a strong sense of feminism being about - are you for it or against it? Such a polarisation obscured my understanding of what feminism had achieved, or what it had to offer. It took me a long time before I allowed myself to even address these questions, and they often initially felt uncomfortable. I needed to look at gender afresh, to understand why it was so important, yet conversely at times felt like a straight-jacket. This became increasingly pertinent when I began to recognise that my own reactions to these incidents had implications for the gender order, and thus others' gender identities. This became a significant consideration therefore in trying to
understand how it is that Physical Educators might contribute to ‘bringing a social reality into being’ (Connell, 1995).

It was only upon my introduction to more theoretically advanced Feminisms, such as post-modern and post-structural feminisms, that I really began to feel comfortable with myself, and able to begin to rethink my social positioning. These theories had the force and attraction of a profound explanatory system. Feminism has provided me with a set of tools for understanding my gendered positioning in a range of various discourses. Moreover, it has offered me a resolution: not by de-fragmenting my identity, but allowing me to feel comfortable with adopting a variety of multiple and often contradictory subject positions. Rather than something to be resolved, this has very much become a resource for my very living. It has helped me to identify some of my contradictory and ambiguous feelings, relationships with others, tastes, views of others, coping strategies, and management of my identities, and link these to my own biography. Moreover, I have become more sensitive to my own social positioning, particularly in relation to how I have (and perhaps still am) complicit to traditional gender dualisms. I have begun to realise why many of my successes never came easy, and why many of these left me with a feeling of fragmentation and disruption to my identities. Moreover, this is not to suggest that my experiences were unique but in reflecting upon them it has helped me to understand the complexities of identity construction; the contexts might be different, but most of us experience to some degree complexity, contradiction and struggle in developing our identities.

I don’t suspect that this is a unique story, nor does it highlight anything which has not yet been addressed in feminist or sociological literature. However, risking melodrama, these have been small epiphanies for me, prompting changes in the way I speak, in my views towards the type of female that I am, and how I might otherwise engage with others and the world around me. Perhaps one might call this narcissistic? Or maybe these are necessary qualifications that may inform the reader of the biases that might emerge in the construction of this thesis; it is, after all, my construction. It was however, this struggle with my identity that led to a strong fascination with the ways in which others come to position themselves and construct their identities within these discourses. Whilst much of today’s media, and to some extent academic literature, paints a society that is gender neutral, or even of ‘women emancipated’ it is
significant that there are still complex social, cultural and psychological dynamics to entering womanhood today and growing up is no easy business.

1.2 And so to education

These experiences constantly remind me that the need to investigate gender relations and the issues of masculinity and femininity are as pertinent today as they were decades ago, even before the women’s liberation or gay liberation movements. Gender practices raise important questions about social justice, inequality, domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, institutional barriers to women’s inequality, and organised violence. Dominant discourses of gender still teach us that boys are to be dominant, competitive, detached from others and disassociated from their feelings. This is detrimental for those who adopt such a position, and to those who resist it. The implications and social consequences of feeling on the ‘outside’ were thrown into stark relief for me, when during the late 1990s just prior to beginning this research, there were a horrific series of school children rampage shootings in American High Schools; a place where children are expected to be safe. On the surface these tragic cases above seem far removed from any issues of the Physical Education class, the broader education system, or issues of gender. However, these extreme acts of violence share a frightening commonality – they were all perpetrated by white males, white males who felt isolated, powerless, ridiculed and rejected. One case in particular caught my attention:

Columbine High School
Littleton, Colorado, USA

On April 20, 1999, a 17-year-old boy and 18-year-old boy (Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold) entered Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado armed with a number of guns including a semi-automatic rifle. They shot and killed twelve students and a teacher and wounded 23 more before killing themselves. Authorities later found several bombs planted at the school, in vehicles and in at least one of the homes of the killers.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were part of a group called the "Trench Coat Mafia", a nickname given to a group of students, who wore black western dusters, by a group of people referred to as "Jocks."

http://www.disastercenter.com/killers.html
"They were tired of those who were insulting them, harassing them. They weren't going to take this anymore and they wanted to stop it. Unfortunately, that's [exactly] what they did." Eric Veik, friend of Harris and Klebold, the two shooters at Columbine school (Robinson, 1999)

http://www.religioustolerance.org/sch_viol.htm

A member of the Trench Coat Mafia reportedly told "The Denver Post" -- "that life for members of his group as ''hell ... pure hell." He said that the athletes at the school called him "faggot," bashed him into lockers and threw rocks at him as he rode his bike home'

http://www.disastercenter.com/killers.html

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were members of a group called the Trench Coat Mafia who were known as the ‘dorks’, the ‘loners’ and the ‘outcasts.’ It was reported that this group regularly traded taunts with athletes and other ‘more popular’ teens and the ‘jocks’ at school gave the group its name. A founding member of the group, Joe Stair, claimed that the ‘group joked about getting even with the ‘jocks’ and that Harris and Klebold had made a videotape showing themselves as Gunmen shooting athletes.’ One football player, Chris Reilly responded to the tape with ‘OK, whatever, freaks’ (http://insidedenver.com/shooting/042shoo1.shtml). Harris and Klebold did not display the qualities of the hegemonic masculinity that the ‘jocks’ did, and as such faced taunting, ridicule, isolation and hurt. Whilst their reactions of shooting down their classmates, and getting even, seem extreme, they epitomise the far reaching consequences of what appear to be simple taunting or ‘cultural stigmatisation.’ These acts of rage demonstrate how a global gender order underpins how we come to understand who we are, and our place and value within society; it makes insiders and outsiders of us all. Our cultures divide people on the basis of physical attributes, skin colour, anatomy, and describe them as ‘other’; rather than enriching humanity, they divide. ‘Other’ becomes inferior and manifests in a perpetual cycle of hate, hurt and de-humanisation. Perhaps now we are beginning to awaken to the seriousness and far reaching consequences of those taunts of ‘freak’ ‘sissy’ or ‘wimp’. This is not to say that bullying, threatening, tormenting, or even physical abuse justifies anyone committing such acts of violence. However, it is important that we seek to understand the impact that a gender order has on society, in it’s many shapes and forms, be that
torment, physical abuse or discrimination. Indeed following Kenway (1997) I would advocate the development of burgeoning work on men and masculinities which draw upon a pro-feminist position and now opens the door for more relational work in considering not only how particular practices might subordinate women and girls but the ways in which these may be restrictive for men and boys (Jennifer Hargreaves, 1994; Humberstone, 1990; Connell, 1995; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996).

Whilst I am critical of the way in which our education systems have constituted or reproduced traditional gender identities and gender relations, I remain optimistic about the potential of education as a vehicle through which to bring about change. For me, being a feminist is not just some part time political commitment in our personal lives. It is about bringing to all of us some social responsibility and as such as educators perhaps a shared vision that we should be striving to promote equality within our professional contexts and not just our private lives; to the reflections upon what we teach, and how we teach it. Educators in their very practices and discourse, have the potential to challenge patriarchal expectations about femininity and masculinity, and with that, the social conditions within which we operate. The research is broadly framed within a feminist political purpose. As such it harbours a commitment to take steps (even if small as in the case of this thesis) to contribute (albeit in the form of contributing to a body of knowledge) towards disrupting patterns of oppression/repression that might be attributed to particular hegemonic forms of social construction. Given the context of multiple and contradictory knowledge, values and identities which influence the practices of teachers and students in physical education lessons, a simplistic notion of change in the direction of equal opportunities is problematised. The shift from liberal feminist thinking, to one which takes into account the differences in interests and experiences of, and between, girls and women, and in relation to men, opens doors to possibilities in thinking of alternatives to those privileged and institutionalised within society.

The subsequent text is therefore a production no doubt mediated by these experiences, values and positions. Having engaged with this narrative, I now invite the reader to consider some key questions raised by Ellis (1995) in order to make connections between researcher, researched and the production of text:
Did my story engender conversational response toward the text as you read? Did the story illustrate particular patterns and connections between events? Did you give the story to others to read because you think it speaks to their situation?...What text did you, the reader, create of my story? Did this narrative make you think about or shed light on events in your own life?...Did the words I wrote elicit from you an emotional response to examine? What did you learn about yourself and your relationships through your responses to my text? (Ellis, 1995, p.319).

These are important questions. It is unfortunate that they are so rarely asked in the academic world and I am left wondering why this is so. I have tried to remain reflexive throughout the research process and the subsequent write up. However, my arrival in academia once more presented a heightened sense of awareness about the presentation of my gender. I have experienced some struggles as a feminist in academia in the context of contemporary intellectual debates about entrenched authority, disciplinary boundaries, writing genres, and the ethics and politics of social scientific inquiry and representation (see Richardson, 1997). There is so much more I could have done with this text. So many different ways in which I could have written, presented or structured it. For example, I could have written more of myself into the text, written a fictional ethnography, or analysed different aspects of these women's narratives. But echoing at the back of my mind, throughout my research and even now, are the calls from other academics who constantly question attempts to experiment with textual form with 'is it really sociology?'. Richardson (1997) constructs a similar narrative around her struggles as a feminist in academia. In her texts, she asks; how do the specific circumstances in which we write affect what we write; how does what we write affect who we become. In answering these questions for herself, Richardson found that if she was going to write the Self into being what she wanted to be, she would have to "de-discipline" her academic life.

Experimenting with genre is, however, a risky business. Not to learn the language of a discipline and its acceptable forms of representation can lead to exclusion from that world. As part of our academic socialization we are sometimes taught to hide the details of our individual experience. Against this backdrop, other scholars have been a source of inspiration and solace producing similar narratives of self (see for example Sparkes, 1996c).
1.3 OVERVIEW AND CONTENT OF THESIS.

The study draws mainly upon a life history approach in attempting to understand the gendered social process of becoming a female teacher of Physical Education. The life stories of ten female student teachers of Physical Education are collected throughout the duration of their one year teacher training on the Post Graduate Certificate of Education. The study focused on the narratives of these women in the following ways. Firstly, examining the ways in which these women draw upon a life long set of gendered practices, experiences and resources, and how their interpretations of these biographies influence their dispositions towards physical education. Secondly, examining whether the experiences of teacher education significantly alter or reinforce these biographies. Finally, in analysing these narratives, the aim was to contribute to theoretical and professional understanding of the ways in which identities of femininity are constructed in the process of Initial Teacher Training.

In chapter two, I explore the major research pertaining to gender and physical education, and outline the problematic central to this study. A brief overview of both the history and the contemporary condition of Physical Education policy and practice is provided, leading on to highlight a number of contemporary issues, concerns and gender inequalities within the social context of PE and Sport. What seems generally agreed in academia is that PE and sport has as a history, the explicit embodied celebration and expression of hegemonic competitive masculinity, defined and controlled by white, middle class practices and values (see Kirk, 1993; John Hargreaves, 1986). It is suggested that the dominant approach towards gender equity has been a popular liberal framework of equal opportunities; providing equal access and opportunity to the educational system as it remains. In addressing this caveat, this chapter points towards the need to employ more sophisticated relational and dialogical understandings of gender relations within sport. The chapter concludes by suggesting that much of the research points towards the need for a greater understanding of teachers themselves and their involvement in the social reproduction of these gender inequalities, which will be partially explored by this study.

In understanding the construction of the identities of a generation of female PE teachers, it seems necessary to have some background and understanding of the social
contexts within which such identity work takes place. Chapter three of the thesis thus addresses some of the key changes to the structure, content and approaches within Teacher Education, making specific reference to the case of Physical Education where necessary. In a review of the literature pertaining to this context, it is shown that whilst the conceptions of the 'modern teacher' are shown to have a marked influence on the construction of teachers' identities, the gendered nature of this still remains relatively unexplored. More specifically, the literature pertaining to gender and ITT PE is explored, and it is suggested that we need further understandings of the subjective experiences and active negotiations of student teachers, and their understandings of their 'agency' are worthy of further analysis.

In Chapter four, the theoretical underpinnings for the research are highlighted, underlining the contemporary shifts in feminist theorizing in education. Having highlighted the caveats in some of the traditional feminist approaches, this chapter engages in the debate surrounding the ostensibly oppositional positions of feminism and post-structuralist theory. The chapter suggests that the principal benefit of adopting poststructuralist perspectives in educational research is that post-structuralism attempts to work productively with, rather than against, the complexity of human existence. Moreover, since it refuses the opposition between the individual and the social, it has ways of investigating the relations between them. Nonetheless I also argue against the employment of such theories in the absolute sense since such an 'anti-ontology' in its entirety would lead to a political paralysis. The feminist project after all, ultimately remains a modernist one since we need concepts (including gender, ethnicity, place, time) to be able to say anything. These theoretical positions are only provisional, and as such at least afford some latitude in terms of a developing thesis, and a consequential framework that will change over time. In summary, as I have stressed in other chapters, I have outlined a variety of conceptual tools which I will draw upon in trying to make sense of the gender constructions of a generation of student teachers within Physical Education.

These debates continue into chapter five, which addresses the method, methodology and epistemology utilised in this study. I take a reflexive approach to writing this methodology. This has entailed taking time to consider the fusion of ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that underpin my belief systems,
and which have led me towards particular paradigms and social perspectives. Whilst this chapter focuses strongly on the conflict in terms of epistemology, it also provides a rational for using a life history narrative analysis.

These narratives are presented with a brief analytical commentary in Chapters six and seven. These narratives allude to the multiple and often contradictory subject positions taken up by these women. The modes of self representation embedded within the narratives illustrated how they emerged from these contexts not as some relatively fixed unitary 'end product', but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participated. In the process of constructing gender identities, a variety of discourses were drawn upon simultaneously, often conflicting with one another (Parker, 1990), and a number of common discourses concerning gender relations can be reconstructed from the stories told by the women in this study. The stories capture some fundamental shifts in the place of feminisms in post-modernity or high modernity, with a simultaneous use of both, to borrow Giddens (1991) terms, 'emancipatory' and 'life politics' styles of feminism; with gender inequality defined as a collective problem, but with an individual solution. Moreover, a number of gendered inequalities at both the structural and micro-political level are highlighted. In particular, a liberal discourse of equal opportunities appeared to mask the institutionalisation of 'otherness' these women experienced in teaching practice, and supported the essentialisation of male and female identities. Whilst there aren't tales of radical changes in their teaching of Physical Education, the narratives alluded to their embodied vision, and in acts of naming, the agency they had for telling, constructing and shaping their lives is revealed. As such, in the final section of the thesis, attention turns to the ways in which we might begin to rethink identities in education. Chapter eight therefore considers the notion of human agency in relation to the empirical evidence in the foregoing chapters. In paying some cognisance to a feminist critique, I therefore consider the ways in which we may influence this process of gender identity formation, as an exploratory approach on two levels. Firstly, by considering the ways in which we might consider teacher 'agency' in terms of developing reflective and active agents in the process of change. A narrative reflexivity approach is developed, dismantling the liberal notion that political agency means unconstrained action. The focus instead is on the individual as a reflective agent. Secondly, in developing more
critical reflexive forms of teacher education, a number of strategies of intervention, which draw upon critical post-structuralist perspectives, are outlined. In particular it is suggested that teacher education and educational research need to embrace more explicitly and centrally a framework which considers further, the role of gender in the formation of a variety of teacher's identities.

\[1\] Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001) suggest however that there are stark class differences within women's employment.
Chapter Two: Gender inequality within Physical Education: The significance of teachers’ gender identities

If, as Armour (1999) argues, body-work is the primary rationale for Physical Education’s place in the social curriculum, then it seems essential that, as physical educators, we should pay close attention to the kinds of body-work that we foster and the forms of embodiment we produce (Wright, 2000).

In this chapter, I explore the major research pertaining to gender and physical education, and outline the problematic central to this study. As a starting point, a brief overview of the both the history and the contemporary condition of Physical Education (PE) policy and practice is provided. A number of current issues and concerns are highlighted pointing towards the problem of gender inequality within the social context of PE and Sport. A cursory critique is provided on the various approaches and theoretical standpoints to the study of gender and PE, explicating how this thesis attempts to address some of the caveats identified in the review of this literature.

It is shown that the popular approach within education policy and practice has been to address gender inequality within a liberal framework of equal opportunities; on providing access and equal opportunities to the educational system, rather than changing the system itself. Moreover, until relative recently, research on gender and PE has utilised this as a theoretical framework through which to study gender inequality. A number of more sophisticated understandings of gender relations within PE are explored, concerning issues of social values, cultural expectations and gendered practices within sport and PE (Messner, 1992; Connell, 1995, 1998; Kimmel and Messner, 1995; Hickey et al, 1998; Hickey and Fitzclarence, 1999; Wright, 1997) thereby underlining the complexity of gender inequality. It is shown how some research posits PE and school sport as bastions for the social construction of gender difference (Griffin, 1989; Talbot, 1998; Wright 1997) dominated by a ‘cult of masculinity’ (Clarke, 1998). Therefore, what seems generally agreed in academia is that PE and sport has as a history, the explicit embodied celebration and expression of hegemonic competitive masculinity, defined and controlled by white, middle class practices and values (see Kirk, 1993; Hargreaves, 1986). I conclude by suggesting
that much of the research points towards the need for a greater understanding of
teachers themselves and their involvement in the social reproduction of these gender
inequalities, which will be partially explored by this study. Moreover, if we are to
attempt any radical gender reform towards ‘equity’ within PE then more relational,
dialogical understandings of gender are crucial.

2.1 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY AND DISCOURSES WHICH DEFINE
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

British physical education is gendered in ideology, content, teaching
methods and through its relationship with the wider dance and sports
contexts. While teachers of physical education may claim they espouse
equality of opportunity for all children, their teaching behaviours and
practices reveal entrenched sex stereotyping, based on ‘common sense’
notions about what is suitable for girls and boys, both in single-sex and
mixed-sex groups and schools. The situation in physical education is
complicated by its content. Competitive activities embody the end of
exclusive success — on the face of it, antithetical to the aim of equality of
opportunity. (Talbot, 1993, p.74)

Talbot’s comments above, about the gendered nature of PE implore us to consider
how and which particular groups have had the power to define the values and attitudes
that matter in PE and Sport and to consider the social implications of these for
children and young people. How is it that members of marginal (and subordinated)
groups are prevented/constrained from occupying privileged positions in Sport and
PE. Such questions lead us to consider both the actual positions of labour and the
privileged positions of whose voices and actions influence the various representations
of and practices in PE. Why are ‘different’ or certain perspectives silenced by the
dominant discourses of Physical Education, and why and which particular groups have
had the power to define what values and attitudes matter, and what forms of
corporeality are legitimated in physical education. An increasing body of research has
begun to address, in gendered terms

how social and cultural differences are constructed through various
representations and practices in education and PE that name, marginalize
and exclude the voices and actions of subordinate groups in Britain and
elsewhere (Giroux, 1991)” (Evans, 1995).

As Evans (1995) points out, concepts that reside in the ‘official discourse’ come to
define ‘what is to count as valid knowledge in PE and as culturally legitimate
conceptions of the body, the individual, social order and society.' These concepts underpin the plethora of policy initiatives which are imbued with views and directives relating to what it means to be 'physically educated and what forms of behaviour, attitude, identity and citizenship the curriculum should promote' (Penney and Evans, 1999, p. xi). Research by Penney and Evans (1999) has demonstrated the political nature of policy development in education and Physical Education. They have begun to address the influence of political agendas and interests in determining what is defined as worthwhile knowledge in PE and how it is to be evaluated and taught. They suggest that little has changed in terms of curriculum design and content, and modes of delivering the subject matter of physical education, since the introduction of the Education Reform Act (ERA) in 1988. Whilst the National Curriculum is not silent on pedagogical matters, there is limited guidance on how pupils and teachers are to address and deal with such social and cultural issues relating to PE and sport. This leaves the door ajar for particular sexist and stereotypical 'common sense' ideologies to prevail:

As struggles over the NCPE in recent years have highlighted, what passes for PE in the school curriculum is neither arbitrary nor immutable. It is a social and cultural construct, laden with values which not all would adhere to, or want to share. PE as with the education process more generally, makes both friends and enemies of those subjected to it. It positions and repositions, inspires and alienates, it conditions and reconditions social class and cultural (gender, ability and race) subjectivities, power relations, and structures. (Evans, Davies and Penney, 1996)

From a gendered perspective there are some powerful arguments that suggest these developments have far reaching negative consequences; concerns that are not voiced without substantiation. From a social science perspective, many of these reforms have drawn on traditional cultural preferences as a means of securing economic survival. This form of PE therefore draws upon values that can be traced back to another social era - the values of meritocracy, a view of equal opportunity that ultimately relies upon individual achievement, and the value of competition and measurable achievement.

Hall (1996) reminds us of the importance of historical perspectives for a relational understanding of the processes of gender in sport and society. In exploring the dominant discourses of contemporary physical education, we therefore need some
understanding of the relationship between the past and the present (Kirk, 1992a). British Physical Education has been marked since its inception by very different purposes and practices for girls and boys. Sport has been constructed and is still valued, as a central element to boy's education (Mangan, 1981; Goldlust, 1987; Kirk and Twigg, 1993a and 1993b). PE has historically served as a training ground for males, providing a forum within which they could 'prove their manliness' through the demonstration of values such as competition, vigour, aggression and strength (Messner, 1992). This traditional form of PE found in the 1950s public schools, however, still retains a position of importance to the extent that it is considered as common place PE for all (Kirk, 1992a), and as such has profound implications on gender relations. The reassertion of this 'PE discourse', sustained by a Western knowledge system that is underpinned by privileging assumptions about masculinity (Grosz, 1988) has received much critique from both sociologists and feminists.

2.1.2 Educating 'Ideal' bodies?

The manner in which the body is constructed does not take place in a social or political vacuum but within systems of meaning (or discourses) that are imbued with power. That is, some constructions come to be more equal than others, some come to be more legitimate than others, and some constructions get to be promoted above others (Sparkes, 1997a, p.88).

Research has shown that the discourses outlined above, have had a marked effect on the schooling of bodies (Kirk, 1993) and therefore the construction of embodied identities. In other words, contemporary discourses are socially significant in as much as they are implicitly involved in producing particular types of schooled bodies; classed, ethnic, gendered, sexed and so on. Through this process particular embodied identities are rendered socially legitimate within the context of PE, whilst others may come to be positioned as marginal or subordinate.

The historical roots of these constructions are based loosely on the principles of the Protestant Work Ethic which reflect certain class, gender, culture and racial perspectives in which the principles of individualism /meritocracy, healthism can be found. Tinning (1990) suggests that these are predominantly middle class perspectives, and similarly Hargreaves (1986) makes reference to these being
conservative ideologies. Either way, these differentiated views of 'worthy' and 'valued' bodies, ultimately mean that some pupils are socially disadvantaged before they even participate within the PE class.

The construction of social difference through bodily inscription is particularly significant since whilst we can shape our bodies or modify them, we can not actually choose them. Moreover we can not hide our bodies, making the issue of inequality acute within the context of PE and sport. Tinning (1990) notes that mesomorphic body images are given higher status than the somatotype extremes of ectomorph and endomorph within PE and Sport. This discourse of mesomorphism is part of a broader ideology of shapism which is prevalent not just in schools, gyms and sport but in society at large, reinforced by images channelled through the media and is often, but not exclusively, driven by consumerism. From a gendered perspective, shapism contributes to the social constructions on what it takes to be feminine and masculine; the former characterised by slenderness and the latter by a lean muscularity. Kessler and McKenna (1978) note the way in which the social construction of gender identifies it with physical attributes; although gender is considered a social construct, it is attributed on the basis of physical signs and forms. The social construction of difference through physicality therefore has serious implications for the issue of gender and PE.

The bodies that individuals bring to the PE class therefore meet with the exigencies of these discourses. Pupils and teachers whose bodies or embodied dispositions do not conform to the 'norm' might therefore be excluded from gaining positive embodied identities through the subject and as a result, this process of 'normalisation' goes on. Whilst a number of other theoretical perspectives suggest that the dynamics of subjective experiences and constructions of the body are more dynamic than these might suggest, they nonetheless provide important insights into the types of discourses operating within the PE context.
2.2 GENDER INEQUALITY IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

In setting out the problematic central to this thesis, what follows is an overview and critique of major research to date, attending to the issues of gender and Physical Education.

2.2.1 “The problem with girls and women” - The primacy of liberal feminism and ‘equal opportunities’ in addressing gender inequality in Physical Education

For some time now, gender equity issues within Physical Education (PE) have been addressed within debates about equal opportunities in the subject field. These debates have been important in highlighting that structurally, PE and Sport in schools remain strongly mapped and bounded by gender ‘appropriate’ forms of activity and organisation that carry unequal status and differentiated opportunity (Talbot, 1993). Birrell (1989) suggests that women’s involvement in Sport up until the 1970s was a 'heritage of exclusion' based on a 'misunderstanding' [or mis-representation] of what was good for women based on opinions of the medical establishment. Consequently females were prevented from taking part in but few 'female appropriate' activities (Jennifer Hargreaves, 1985, 1987; Lensk, 1986). In an attempt to overcome this 'heritage of exclusion', PE and Sport has received much attention from the liberal feminist campaign.

From a liberal feminist position the notion of natural biological inferiority is rejected, claiming instead that the imbalance in participation and performance between the genders, is due to socialisation practices carried out by the family, media and school. Differences in performance and participation in sport are seen as the result of early socialisation practices that press individuals into particular gender roles. In the context of Physical Education, attention has turned to the differentiation of activities and the ‘socialisation’ of girls into ‘female’ activities (netball, hockey, gymnastics) and boys into ‘male’ activities (football, cricket, rugby). Discriminatory practices relating to clothing for PE lessons, stereotyping of girls and boys by PE teachers, unequal access to facilities and extra-curricular time, and differential career structures of female and male teachers have all taken their place in these research agendas. These liberal approaches have been carried out predominantly in relation to sex role
socialisation theory and reproduction theory, particularly in areas of research on gender equity and schooling (Davies, 1989a). There has been much criticism of these theoretical approaches, and these points will be revisited in chapter four which explores the theoretical approach employed within this research.

2.2.2 A reliance on co-educational settings

Despite these criticisms, liberal feminist studies have been important in reminding us that inadequate access, resources and opportunities do have very real and negative consequences for particular groups of boys and girls (Wright, 1999). As such, they advocate that given adequate provision, legislation, opportunities and informed attitudes, issues of biological difference can be eradicated. To this end, an equal opportunities discourse has commonly been interpreted as a need for co-educational (or integrated) classes in PE (Scraton, 1993, cited in Wright 1999, p181), in providing girls with ‘the same’ opportunities as boys. The problems of co-educational classes within Physical Education (see Browne, 1992; Scraton, 1993; Wright, 1996a) resonate with those in broader debates concerning single sex and co-educational classes (see Deem, 1978; Delamont, 1980; Evans, 1988).

There are links here between the egalitarian discourse on gender and sport and PE, and co-educational equal opportunities approaches. Teachers who are committed to co-educational classes have in many instances attempted to become more ‘sensitive’ to gender issues in practice. Many of us, I am sure, can recall games situations where the boys had to pass to the girls before scoring, that there had to be at least two girls on each side, and so on. However, whilst one can empathise with this genuine desire for equality, these practices may ultimately work to reinforce the very stereotypes that teachers might be committed to eradicating (Vertinsky, 1992). As Wright (1996b) suggests, in some instances, mixed sex classes result in a curriculum that has rested upon a ‘normative male orientation’ and its assumed social legitimacy. Scraton (1993) draws on a range of qualitative data to problematise the promotion of equality in physical education through coeducation settings. By adopting Connell’s (1987) categories of ‘hegemonic’ masculinity and ‘emphasised’ femininity, Scraton asserts that inequalities are likely to be reproduced as those boys who display hegemonic (heterosexual) masculine characteristics are likely to dominate and subordinate girls and other boys in mixed settings. Similarly, Wright (1996b) contends that integration
can potentially be problematic, since when organised sport dominates the curriculum the valuing of individual achievement through aggressive competition, within a context of male dominance, becomes the normative standard. I would emphasise again that this is not to position aggressive competition as wrong for women, rather that we need deeper understandings of the implications of the discourses of PE on a diverse number of identities and subject positions, and resultant gendered relations.

A number of scholars have expressed concern that there are serious limitations to liberal democratic ideology of 'equal opportunities' (See for example Bennett, Whitaker, Smith and Sablove, 1987; Birrell, 1988; Gross, 1986a, 1986, 1988; Jennifer Hargreaves, 1990; Bacchi, 1990; Scott, 1988). Within the model of equal opportunities women's equality is measured against the capabilities and abilities of men. The rhetoric of 'sameness' associated with the call for 'equality' is problematic in that 'the point of reference between men and women 'is always man'" (Bacchi, 1990, p.x). Feminists' critical of the 'equal opportunity' approach, (which draws upon the liberal democratic theory of the ability of women to be the same as men) assert therefore that within such a model any gains might well be counterproductive since such a version of equality is based on an unacknowledged male norm. Whilst the liberal campaign has had some success in accessing particular institutions and practices, and therefore the male symbolic order, because the discursive practices themselves are not challenged, the gender order is in danger of remaining intact.

Hargreaves (1990, p.22) offers a further explanation in suggesting that the equal opportunities approach is premised upon quantitative not qualitative change and thus fails to question the values of sport and PE and the issue of whose interests are served by the perpetuation of such values. These issues are compounded by the fact that equality or equal opportunity is taken as synonymous with 'equity'.

Single sex PE has both a history and tradition of sex / gender segregation. The rationale for a differentiated curricula has been based around stereotypical assumptions concerning sex / gender and what is appropriate male and female activity. Coeducational PE was intended to overcome such sex differentiation, by instigating a forced structural equality. This is a crude rationale for using mixed practices. Much subsequent research (see for example Deem, 1978; Delamont, 1980; T.Evans, 1988 in
education generally, and Macdonald, 1989; Wright and King, 1991; Scraton, 1992; Vertinsky, 1992 in the context of Physical Education) confirmed that neither co-educational nor single sex classes fundamentally challenged gender inequality until it focused on the complex discursive, embodied and textual practices which underpin the schooling experience of individuals. Provision of 'the same' programme of activities for all children, without regard to the myriad of diverse identities and subject positions teachers and pupils bring to these contexts does not automatically produce or provide equal opportunity. Equal access may be achieved, but 'equality' is also affected by the positioning of the teacher, the social backgrounds of pupils, previous experiences and levels of competence, and embodied and discursive messages that are transmitted during interactions within the classroom. This viewpoint is fundamental to the theoretical juncture which presents an 'either or' scenario to the organisation of the physical education class.

Kenway and Willis (1997) make some fundamental observations, which broadly respond to such calls for deeper considerations of how it is that interactions in the PE class, be it co-educational or single sex, are implicated in a gender order. Kenway and Willis (1997) suggest that there are sometimes unintended consequences of moving to single sex classes that can, on occasion, be counter productive and these need to be recognised and addressed. I would echo these sentiments: neither single sex nor mixed sex classes will be fully effective until we consider the complex discursive, embodied and textual practices which influence the schooling experience of individuals. As Wright (1999) asks:

Does single sex PE actually challenge the major issues of sex-based harassment of the power relations operating between females and males – or does it only contain it? (Wright, 1999, p.183)

This is not to deny that co-educational PE may be a productive strategy and indeed improve participation amongst girls and boys. However we need further insights into what happens in single sex classrooms. What forms of behaviour and attitude remain unchallenged? What happens when all male classes collude in forms of solidarity that reassert hegemonic masculinity? How do these relations affect those male pupils who demonstrate non-hegemonic masculinities? How are teachers' own identities invested or involved in the social dynamics of the PE class? Moreover, these resultant
disposition-forming practices and relationships may extend into wider contexts having significant social implications.

Inequality may be overlooked and ‘legitimised’ in the belief that particular forms of provision (i.e. single sex or mixed sex) in itself eradicates inequality. Indeed whilst girls may be developing their skills and abilities in these single sex environments the question remains as to whether these positions can be maintained in other social spaces where boys’ perceptions and attitudes towards women remain unchallenged (and are perhaps reinforced through their experiences in the male PE class).

A number of disconcerting uncertainties arise when this liberal position is employed in practice, I shall expand this argument with reference to the ‘women/girls in sport’ campaign where a number of approaches and interventions strategies have been employed to increase the participation of girls in PE and sport. The popular premise has been to ‘socialise’ women into the PE and Sport systems, and allow them access to all activities/opportunities/structures. Where seemingly positive steps have been taken to improve access for girls and women as a way of increasing participation, providers have sometimes, therefore, been disappointed and surprised that so few women/girls seem to take advantage of the opportunities provided. An equal opportunities framework of ‘cause and effect’, lacks explanatory power, and so the danger here is that we may ultimately slip back into essentialist notions of gender; i.e. that when, despite the efforts of providing access and opportunity women/girls still don’t participate, the only explanation can be that these differences really must be biological and natural after all, serving to reproduce dominant discourses on gender and sexuality. Research evidence (Talbot, 1988) suggests that a strong ideology of individualism is evident in sport and leisure where women have been described as ‘their own worst enemies’ for not breaking through the glass ceiling and making the most of opportunities provided for them. In Physical Education, this discourse reinforces the notion that ‘women teachers’ and ‘girls’ are the ‘problem’ and that it is their behaviour, which needs to change. Wright (1996) suggests such frameworks are fundamentally flawed since they fail to take into account the:

Complex work of political, economic and ideological practices in constituting what happens in and through schooling in both subverting
and facilitating change... it rarely involves a critique of its assumptions about the homogeneity of girls experiences and desires, or a critique of the way in which sport and physical education continue to reinforce and be reinforced by dominant discourses of gender (Wright, 1996, p.32).

As Weiner (1985) argued, over a decade ago:

Expanding equal opportunities is not just a question of juggling resources or re-arranging option choices ... To liberalise access to an inadequate system might be acceptable in the short term but for more permanent change a major restructuring of all social institutions, including schools is needed. (Weiner, 1985, p.10)

2.2.3 Power relations, perspectives on ‘oppression’ and Physical Education;
Radical, Marxist and socialist feminist studies of gender inequality in PE

Other research has attended to the underlying reasons for the patterns of subordination and domination within Physical Education, looking to the broader social context and power structure that prevent women from gaining equality with men. Radical feminists' accounts suggest that male sexuality, or what Connell (1987) might refer to as ‘hegemonic masculinity’, functions to control women in all aspects of society. In their focus on patriarchy some radical feminists have questioned what constitutes acceptable knowledge (Spender, 1982), the dominance of boys in classroom practice whereby they are taken to monopolise teacher attention, linguistic space and physical space (Clarricoates, 1982; Spender, 1982; Mahoney, 1985) and the use of girls' appearance and sexuality for disciplinary purposes (Llewellyn, 1980; Griffin, 1985). Attention has therefore turned to the means and processes through which PE reinforces ideologies of female and male heterosexuality. As Scraton (1987a; 1989) suggests, it is the connections between physical activity, sexuality, physicality and gender power relations that are integral to this approach.

Lenskyj's (1986, 1990, 1995) well cited research, has attended to the issue of male control of sexuality in and through sport, and the importance of female reproductive functions in the medical-physiological restrictions on girls and women's participation in sport and PE. Using extensive historical studies, Lenskyj suggests that there has been an emphasis on traditional sex stereotyping, in an attempt to legitimise women's subordinated sporting and physical position. She further suggests that male control over female sexuality is based upon a heterosexual hegemony and that sexism and
homophobia are employed by a ‘dominant’ hegemonic order that works to devalue and exploit women. This focus on means and process points to the ways in which PE reinforces and reproduces female and male heterosexuality – that girls and women learn, or have confirmed through PE a female ‘physicality’ emphasising appearance, presentation and control. Similarly, males are encouraged to develop their physical strength, aggression and confidence to assert their ‘physical prowess.’ These studies have offered insights into the links between physical activity, sexuality, physicality and gender power relations, and have been a useful way of recognizing and countering androcentric and sexist scholarship.

However, these and other radical feminist accounts of sex/gender and sport have a number of shortcomings. The ‘gender problem’ is constructed within these perspectives, as an issue of patriarchy and male domination of sport. The solution to this, is posited as the need for redefinition of female sporting values and separate sport / PE opportunities centred on women, for and by women. Whilst this highlights the ways in which women might negatively experience sport and PE, it also reinforces biologically reductionist explanations of gender relations, suggesting that ‘the masculine values, attitudes, and behaviours attributed to sport and criticised by feminism are an inevitable feature of maleness’ (Scraton, 1988, p.11/12). The over-reliance on the concept of patriarchy as ‘the’ cause of women’s subordination, and the tendency to over-state the nature and control over female sexuality emerges as problematic here. The problems of ‘patriarchy’ as a totalising concept are revisited in chapter four.

Some Marxist feminist studies suggest, in a way that is as patronising as it is over-deterministic, that through schooling, ‘daughters’ learn to take their place in the domestic arena serving to support men who can then enter the world of work, thus ‘reproducing’ the next generation of workers. Research on PE has focused on the ways in which the subject matter might be implicated in the reproduction of these capitalist values (Hargreaves, 1986). Using historical analyses, some studies suggest that PE for girls is based on this relationship between physical health and their later role in motherhood; that it developed out of a desire to ensure that the mothers of the next generation of workers were physically fit to produce them (Scraron, 1989). Atkinson (1978) suggests that in Victorian England physical exercise for the
daughters of the middle classes was intended to produce attractively feminine wives with a graceful deportment and healthy mothers to maintain the integrity of the British Race. Whilst theoretically the division of labour is taken as a real constraint on the lives of women and girls, the empirical evidence developed within this framework is sparse.

Identifying the roots of teaching, ideologies of femininity and masculinity and their relationship with physicality, motherhood, and sexuality, particularly through historical analyses has formed the focus of Socialist feminist accounts (drawing upon the works of both radical and Marxist feminism). These analyses have extended to consider how girls' experiences of physical education are not only implicated in issues of sexuality and physicality, but are dependent on 'class location.' Integral to this approach is the notion of sexual division of sport and leisure and how the experiences might differ for working class and middle class women.

The acknowledgement of both patriarchy and capitalism as dual systems of oppression can be found in, for example the work of Scraton (1992). In her doctoral research, Scraton (1989) examined the relationship between sexuality and the body and the role of physical education, employing a historical, comparative approach to understand the ways in which gender relations in PE have developed. Within this, Scraton posits schools as institutions, which serve to reproduce the 'status quo' in relation to a capitalist mode of production and male-female power relations. Scraton suggests that 'Physical Education as an aspect of schooling fits into this process both in terms of its relationship to a sexual division of leisure in society and the reinforcement of patriarchal power relations' (p.). Furthermore, Scraton (1993) draws on a range of qualitative data to problematise the promotion of equality in physical education through coeducation settings. By adopting Connell's (1987) categories of 'hegemonic' masculinity and 'emphasised' femininity, Scraton (1993) asserts that inequalities are likely to be reproduced as those boys who display hegemonic (heterosexual) masculine characteristics are likely to dominate and subordinate girls and other boys in mixed settings. These studies have illuminated dimensions of power in gender relations within the classroom, which raises political issues of gender and sexuality, which as Scraton summarises, need to be better understood in theory and practice by PE staff.
Scraton's well respected and much referenced research offers some important feminist insights into gender and PE, particularly its social and historical development in the UK since the late nineteenth century onwards. Moreover, her research was germane in offering practical recommendations for PE teachers, emanating from her own concern for offering positive alternatives and recommendations that recognised the importance of both gender and class relations so that a 'comprehensive insight into the conditions necessary for change can be achieved' (Scraton, 1992, p.16). In this sense, the research attended to one of the major criticisms of socialist feminist analyses that the theoretical analysis of the relationship between gender and class remains under-developed. Whilst there remain some uncertainties with this research, it has been significant in drawing attention to the relationship between sexuality and the body and the role of physical education. Moreover, Scraton's work was important in highlighting the need 'to examine the means by which dominant ideologies of femininity and masculinity have consequences for, and are reinforced by, the priorities, policies, and practices of physical education in the institution of schooling' (p9).

2.2.4 Relational approaches to the study of gender inequality within Physical Education

Whilst Scraton's research offered important contributions to our understandings of the social and historical development of PE in the UK from the late nineteenth century onwards, other theoretical uncertainties emerge related to the conceptualisation of gender and sex. Scraton (1992, p.8) suggests that

the acknowledgement that it is the social construction of gender that is important, not biological differences, allows the development of a more critical and adequate understanding of gender inequalities in sport and physical education, locating the debate within the wider power structures of society.

This view challenges any opposition between biology and culture (Vertinsky, 1994), in suggesting that 'relations of the sexes... are socially rather than naturally constituted.' Whilst this research takes the social construction of gender relations as
the focal point, the above comments assert an apparent belief that we can be clear that all the differences between men and women are culturally rather than naturally/biologically produced. Whilst I would support the need for clearer understandings of the social reproduction of gender relations, there is also a need to consider the complexity of the relationship between biology and culture. More dynamic conceptualisations of sex/gender can be found in the work of sports feminists who employ a relational approach to their research on PE and Sport (see for example Hall 1990; Humberstone, 1990, 1993; Jennifer Hargreaves, 1994; Birrell and Cole, 1994; Kenway, 1996, 1997; Kenway et al, 1998). This relational approach allows us to understand and explain sex/gender relations in terms of the unequal relationships between dominant and subordinate groups and acknowledges that sport plays a role in the construction of these relationships and their persistence over time (Hall, 1996):

A relational conception of gender necessarily includes critical examination of both femininity and masculinity as they develop in relation to each other within a system of structured social inequality' (Messner and Sabo, 1990, p.13).

In this conceptual framework, femininity and masculinity are recognised as social realities, which change ‘historically, and according to specific ideological, political and social structures’ (Hargreaves, 1994, p.150). Whilst Scraton (1992, p7) does acknowledge this, and also examines the historically changing nature of PE, such opposing distinctions between sex/gender hinder the ability to account for the changing, process and nature of sex and gender, the diverse experiences of males and females and the variations in masculinity and femininity.

These relational analyses ‘begin with the assumption that sporting practices are historically produced, socially constructed and culturally defined to serve the interests and needs of powerful groups in society’ (Hall, 1996, p.11). Over the past two decades there have been an increasing number of calls for more theoretically informed relational analyses of gender, race, and ethnic issues in sport and physical education. The work of American Sport Sociologist Susan Birrell (e.g. 1988, 1989) has been seminal in advancing feminist analyses that draw upon a relational approach. Birrell argues that gender and race relations are characterised by unequal relationships between dominant and subordinate groups, and that sport contributes to the
construction of these roles, taking on specific forms at specific times and further suggested that a critical analysis of the cultural and ideological practices that determine these ideologies was essential. Similarly, in the British Context, sport sociologist Jennifer Hargreaves (e.g. 1985, 1990, 1994) advocates the need to understand how in sport, as a cultural activity, gender relations are part of a wider complex process specific to capitalist social relations.

Similarly, the work of Yevonne Simth (1992), including a review of the state of research about women of colour in sport, has alluded to the need for more relational analyses of and by diverse women of colour to understand how the collective and the personal are mediated and informed by race, gender and class power relations. Hall (1996) points to the importance of historical analyses in that 'we cannot fully explain the role of sport [and physical education] in the construction and persistence of unequal social relations today unless we understand the specific forms of these relations in the past and how they have evolved over time' (p.39). Hargreaves (1994) provides a sociological and historical account of the development of 'sporting females' in Britain from the 19th century. Hargreaves suggests that evidence consistently 'suggests that female sports have been riddled with complexities and contradictions throughout their history' (p.3). For example, although women opposed popular notions of their biologically inferior bodies through their involvement in 'male-defined' sport, such physical emancipation was never without resistance from men [and other women]. Balsamo (1996) makes the point that historical studies are useful since they 'illuminate the process whereby one set of beliefs (about female biological inferiority) is articulated with another discursive system (concerning women in sport and physical education)' (p.343).

These points have reiterated the need for analyses that understand both the macro and the micro and the dialectical and relational ways in which particular forms of gender inequality might be reproduced within physical education. The focus here is on gender as a non-unitary power and relational phenomena, and how gendered practices in physical education (as a result of the interplay of identities, discourses, gendered expectations, values and beliefs) might provide ontologically stabilising gender realities which are implicated in the (re)production of identities and subject positions of pupils. Connell (1995) suggests that the degree of complicity shown by both males
and females who find themselves oppressed or restrained in education is indicative that the 'gender order' is effective in shaping everybody's perceptions and identities, even those it disadvantages. This dialectical perspective therefore focuses on the interplay between individuals, societal influences and the educational institutions. In this sense, gender relations in education are taken as interrelated and defined in terms of power; masculinity and femininity as non-unitary and context dependent (see Mac an Ghail, 1996; Thorne, 1993).

The social construction and reproduction of gender relations and identities has thus increasingly been acknowledged within the field of PE and school sport (Mangan, 1981; Kirk, 1992; Hargreaves, 1996) and this call for a relational approach to the study of gender and physical education is not seminal. However, there is clearly a need to understand how social constructions are sustained in a relational sense. There have been calls from a number of eminent academics (Brittan, 1989; Hargreaves, 1996; Kenway, 1997; Messner and Sabo, 1990) for the need to improve the 'relational agenda' of current research on gender and sport/PE. In broad responses to these, we have witnessed the beginnings of a shift from the exclusive (and detrimental) focus on how women differ from men, and the long standing engagement with femininity, to a more relational approach which considers the gendered behaviour (and impact on social structures) of both sexes. This challenges us to re-examine certain dichotomies such as mind/body, nature/culture, structure/agency. These studies may become increasingly important producing knowledge that might ultimately contribute towards an understanding of the positioning of women:

Whilst much feminist research rightly focuses on women, on creating knowledge about women's oppression we need to target our attention to the ways in which it is structured and reproduced... Women's accounts cannot provide us with everything we need to know, since we (individually or collectively) do not necessarily 'know' either the extent or the content of the deliberate strategies men and male dominated institutions use to maintain their power. (Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994)

Hall (1996) echoes these positions in reference to the sports context, suggesting that explanations of women's oppression and sub-ordination in sporting fields are inseparably tied to analyses of men and masculinity. These studies have illustrated for example, the ways in which gendered activities construct and discipline gendered
bodies through *practice* (Light and Kirk, 2000; Swain, 2000) and the significance of contact, pain and pleasure in developing masculine identities in school sports (Gard and Meyenn, 2000). New perspectives on men and masculinity that are being constructed by feminist men’s studies scholars, might therefore contribute to the understanding of the relationship between the construction and practice of masculinity and women’s (and children and subordinate males) oppression (Laws, 1990). Indeed studies which seek to ‘reconstruct masculinity in ways that generally enhance the lives of girls and women’ (Kenway 1996, p447) may be of value to feminist educators and academics. Indeed, the interpretations within this thesis, found in chapters six to eight, illustrate how men, even as an absent presence have retained a place in the relational analysis.

Within sport and Physical Education, these approaches have been employed within a burgeoning body of research on men, masculinity and sport with contributions from a number of eminent academics (e.g. Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; Connell, 1995; Kidd, 1987; Kimmel and Messner, 1992; Sabo, 1985 Messner and Sabo, 1990) employing critical and deconstructive approaches (Connell, 1987, 1993; Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997). Messner and Sabo’s (1990) text *Sport, Men and the Gender Order : Critical Feminist Perspectives* was seminal in the sociological study of sport and PE since it made the study of sport, men and masculinity *visible* in the analysis of the social construction of gender relations. Integrating critical and feminist perspectives, it employed a relational concept of gender that critically examined the traditional presumptions about men, women and sport.

2.3 TEACHERS’ GENDER IDENTITIES AS A FOCAL POINT OF CHANGE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Whilst a ‘gender problem’ remains well cited and debated among teachers of physical education, and academics, there are few references and even less guidance within official PE literature and documents, on addressing the issues which are beyond legislation; the issues of social values, cultural expectations and gendered expectations which underpin the way the ‘gender problem’ is approached. As Flintoff (1990) suggests, if the culture of physical education is to change then it is incumbent that attention should turn to teacher education and the need to produce critical reflexive
teachers who can challenge the ‘status quo’ rather than reproduce dominant gender relations based on hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1989). Research in the area of gender relations not only needs to account for the social structures of PE but also the expressions of agency exhibited by PE teachers. As Evans, Davies and Penney (1996) suggest ‘we still know as little about the complexity of the interpretative activity and social life in ‘PE classrooms’ as we did a decade ago’ (p.). They further suggest that an understanding of who teachers are and how they have been socialised within and by the discourses of their professional training and the departments in schools is essential to our grasp of the nature of pedagogies in PE. As such, becoming and being a teacher is under increasing scrutiny, even more pertinent given that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in England and Wales has undergone significant changes. Questions have been raised about both the process of social reproduction of gender inequality, and furthermore, the potential for oppositional discourses.

Moreover, Flintoff (1993, p.184) points out that ‘an understanding of the role of PE ITT in challenging or confirming gender inequalities has not yet developed as an area of enquiry’. Beyond the National Curriculum there exists an invisible curriculum (Bain, 1990) transcended with a plurality of meanings and values about what it is to do PE in schools and ITT PE, for example what constitutes success or failure, all of which sends out messages about the social positioning of particular individuals. Teachers are implicated in the (re)production of gender inequality through their use of discourse, their positions, and pedagogies. As teachers they therefore take to their departments strongly influencing if not directing ideologies and gendered values that may influence the development of PE and through their own practice, have the potential to unwittingly help to reproduce the existing social structures and inequalities.

Furthermore, Flintoff (1993) underlines the social significance of teacher education as a vehicle through which to attempt gender reform. Teachers have, after all, the potential to challenge or legitimise particular knowledge forms and discourses. In order to produce ‘critical reflexive teachers that can challenge the status quo’ (Flintoff, 1990) we need to understand the processes through which teachers’ constructions of subjectivity enter and influence the discourses of pedagogy, and to what extent these might be negotiated, challenged or contested. Thus, we need a
clearer understanding of teachers themselves and their involvement in the process of gender reproduction or inequality. In understanding these hegemonic processes it seems imperative to locate the ways in which teachers acquire their own gendered dispositions, and how these might influence the gender relations in PE classrooms. Humberstone's observational ethnographic research (1990, 1993) drew attention to teachers, curriculum and policy in the process of the reconstruction of gender differences and stereotypes, in an exploration of the impact of outdoor education on a group of children. The environments were seen to provide alternative gendered experiences and relationships to those found in a 'normal' PE class. Boys and Girls shared classes, wherein, unusually, they both had limited prior experiences and wore similar uniforms. Teachers worked alongside these pupils, encouraging them to be termed by their first names. Finally Humberstone suggested that the element of responsibility and independence required in these dangerous situations induced some 'sharing of experience'. Humberstones' observations led her to conclude that these programmes visibly challenged stereotypical assumptions about gender and everyday notions of physicality. Moreover, her findings implore us to further consider the implications for the PE class, in terms of curriculum content and form, who teaches and how it is delivered.

Talbot (1993) further implicates teachers in these processes suggesting that despite gender inequality being enshrined in the British 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and more recently within the Education Reform Act 1988, with regards to sport and PE there remain many anomalies due to the acts lack of explicit recognition of biological sex difference and consequent lack of clarity over discrimination based around gender. Many teachers of physical education continue to use the anomaly sex differentiation basing this around 'gender expectations'. The result however is the reinforcement of a curriculum and forms of pedagogy which become 'gendered'.

To this end, teachers are intermediaries in the processes of social (re)production and transmission of what counts as legitimate forms of gendered knowledge, practice and embodiment. Therefore the biography of the teacher, what they know and how they come to know it, might be significant in how they shape the PE classroom. As Talbot (1995) suggests 'the kind of person that a teacher is, also affects the children's attempts to construct or respond to norms of behaviour and parity of treatment.'
Recent research has drawn attention to the significance of teachers in constructing gender relations through their pedagogy (Wright, 1997). As Evans, Davies and Penney (1996) point out:

Patterns of personality and attitude no doubt mingle significantly with teacher's own pupil identities and careers to provide distinctive inflows to teacher training and thereafter into departments strongly influencing, if not determining, provision and practice in PE (p.179)

Viewed this way, the lives and identities that teachers bring to their profession, position them not simply as products of a period of professional socialisation but as knowing subjects whose sense of self is implicated in the pedagogical process. These points are important since if we are to move towards inclusive forms of physical education then the lives and identities of teachers are significant since it is through these individuals that subject knowledge and pedagogy must pass. This is not to position teachers as rational consumer driven professionals who are pivotal agents in educational reform. Rather, the focus is on the subtleties of social reproduction in both the discursive and embodied sense. It is the everyday practices of exclusion which are more subtle, more deeply embedded and more difficult to resist, despite the rhetorical claim towards egalitarianism.

If as Scraton (1989) suggests, Physical Education is a potential site through which to challenge gender relations, then changes in the gender identities of teachers might cause ripples of change throughout the pedagogical process. For instance, Leaman (1984) and Scraton (1989) have found that female PE teachers have altered the curriculum on offer to adolescent girls in an attempt to make it more meaningful and appealing, and this was often done through building upon curriculum options that focus on the culture of 'femininity'. Any move beyond this may require a radical shift towards knowledge forms that can 'explain gender in ways other than sex/physiological differences, and which can help them challenge accepted and limited definitions of women's physicality' (Flintoff, 1993, p.327). In order to move towards these radical changes, what is needed is as Deem (1986a) suggests, a transformation in women's identities.
The question arising therefore, is whether or not we can influence (or even if we should?) these transformations in women's identities in relation to the socio-cultural construction of the female PE teacher. To this end, further insights are needed regarding the processes involved in the constitutive elements of women's identity work in relation to a number of contexts. Furthermore, in contributing to the body of knowledge on critical reflexive forms of PE ITT, it seems necessary to consider this in relation to the emerging professional and personal selves within the local sites of teacher training. During the focal point, teacher training, there are two forms of influence, pedagogic understanding or theory, and social action or practice. We know relatively little about the ways in which these differing contexts impact upon the gendered biographies and identities of female PE student teachers. The question as to how identities are formed, and whether we can influence teachers through their training is an important one therefore in both policy and sociological terms.

What teachers know, how they come to know it, and what they come to embody, is likely therefore to shape individual interpretations of PE discourse and as a consequence, modify and inform the delivery and content of the subject. Recent studies of gender and physical education have underlined the significance of teachers in the social reproduction of gender relations through their pedagogy. An analysis of teacher language used in physical education for example, reveals the influence of many discourses that are current in our culture, including those related to gender (Wright and King, 1990). Wright's (1997) study on the use of language by physical education teachers in two secondary schools and one Catholic secondary school in New South Wales, suggests that teachers choice of language 'construct very different social realities and learning environments in single sex as well as co-educational environments for the boys compared to the girls in the lesson analysed for the study.'

An analysis of the teacher language used in physical education lessons reveals the influence of many discourses that are current in our culture including those related to gender. The subtle meanings carried in the linguistic choices made by teachers provide one framework through which girls and boys come to form particular relationships with their bodies (Wright and King, 1990, p.210)

Differences in meaning produced different social realities for the boys and girls, contribute to the construction of a social order for the participants of physical education lessons that mirrors the gender
relations in the culture of the larger society (see Wright, 1995).

These recent works suggest similar conclusions: the identities of teachers matter. What teachers say and do, contribute significantly to a social order for pupils of physical education. The construction of these identities, and the opportunities for professional intervention within ITT from a gendered perspective, however, still remain relatively unexplored.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have attempted to give an overview of some of the key research highlighting, exploring and pertaining to the problem of gender inequality within PE and Sport. The research covering this field is varied, both in its nature, and theoretical approach. Whilst much has been achieved in terms of providing equal access, a more subtle but pernicious form of gender inequality is evident within contemporary education. The critique presented, albeit a cursory one given the context of a PhD thesis, highlights the need for the continued development of research which employs theoretically sophisticated frameworks that can assist in uncovering the subtleties and complexity of the social reproduction of gender inequity within and through PE. What is generally agreed within the literature is the need for a greater understanding of the social, personal, cultural and professional identities of teachers themselves, and in particular the gendered nature of these. Wright (1995), who suggests that teachers are pivotal points for change and reproduction, has usefully captured the social significance of such research. Wright suggests that in their interactions with pupils teachers have the potential to not only reproduce dominant gender discourses and practices (the patriarchal expectations about femininity and masculinity) but might also be productive in challenging them. The question as to how identities are formed, and whether we can influence teachers through their training is an important one therefore in both policy and sociological terms if we are to move towards forms of PE that are ‘gender inclusive’. In the next chapter, the context of PE ITT will be explored.

1Early feminist work in education has been strongly oriented towards this ‘equal opportunities’ approach, and the rights of women to have an education equal to that of boys. A widespread body of research from the United Kingdom, North America and Australia has focused on the ways in which opportunities and treatment has differed for girls in education (Delamont, 1980; Spender and Sarah, 1980; Deem, 1984). Many feminists (e.g. Sharpe, 1976a; Stanworth, 1981; Spender, 1982) have drawn upon social learning theories to explain women’s lack of power in society as resulting from a process of socialisation beginning in the family and reinforced in schools (see Delamont, 1980). Thus, it was
argued that girls failed in educational settings because of a hidden curriculum of taught sex roles and assumptions concerning the comparative inferiority of girls. This research has been influential in the political battles of challenging exclusion, in some cases leading to legislative developments such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. It has further been important in reminding us that inadequate access, resources and opportunities do have very real and negative consequences for particular groups of boys and girls (Wright, 1999).

2 I use the term ‘providers’ generically here to encompass a wider range of people involved in the provision of sports activities, practices and opportunities, for example Sports Development Officers, teachers, coaches, leisure centre managers.

3 If liberal feminists in their fights for equality describe women as 'disadvantaged' then it is the radical feminists who believe that women are 'oppressed'. They use the concept of 'patriarchy' to explain the power relations between men and women, and more specifically where men come to dominate women within that system. From this perspective, gender inequality within education is seen as the product of patriarchal ideology embedded in every other level of society. Some research identifies sexuality as a principle source of oppression for girls and women both as consumers and providers of education. This body of work has been the most influential research from a radical feminist perspective.

4 Marxist feminist theoretical explanations draw upon the broader Marxist framework situating gender relations within a consideration of class relations. More specifically, it focuses on way in which the capitalist social structure as a whole and particular aspects of it ‘reproduce’ the class/gender structures which exists within society. The primary focus for this is the relation between men and women and within the context of dominant exploitative relations between the owners of the means of production and wage labour. This sexual division of labour is integral to explaining women’s subordinate position in the context of capitalist class relations, in that women are involved with the reproduction of labour resources, both by servicing and supporting the male bread winner and reproducing the next generation of workers (Barrett, 1988; Gardiner, 1975).

5 Socialist feminists have been concerned with the under theorisation of the concept of patriarchal control and domination within a Marxist framework. This has led some to an attempt to integrate both capitalist social relations and patriarchy as structural determinants of women’s 'oppression' (Cockburn, 1983; Eisenstein, 1984) into one theory. Socialist feminism therefore draws upon the works of both radical and marxist feminist theorists in trying to understand the complex relationship between gender and class. Gender is either situated alongside class, drawing upon the ‘dual system’ theory which acknowledge the existence of two systems which exist separately but which are in continual interaction (patriarchy and capitalism) (Hartmann, 1979; Cockburn, 1983); or a framework is adopted which draws upon a unified system which comprehends capitalist patriarchy as one system, with the oppression of women as the essential characteristic to that system. Both of these positions take their understanding of gender relations within capitalist society from a neo-Marxist approach rather than the economic determinism of classical Marxism, stressing the importance of the role of ideology and social reproduction rather than economic reductionism, attending to the significance of culture, ideology and history.
Chapter Three: Initial Teacher Education and Physical Education

In understanding the construction of the identities of a generation of female PE teachers, it seems necessary to have some background and understanding of the social contexts within which such identity work takes place. Consequently, this chapter begins by highlighting some of the key changes to the structure, content and approaches within Teacher Education, making specific reference to the case of Physical Education where necessary. Literature addressing these changes will be highlighted, including the body of work that has attended to the influence of the conceptions of ‘the modern teacher’ upon the construction of teacher identities. However, as it will be shown, the gendered natures of the changes to teacher education still remain relatively unexplored. The chapter therefore alludes to some specific caveats in this body of research, which this study subsequently attempts to address.

3.1 THE CONTEXT OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

It seems useful to begin by considering the policy framework in which teacher education operates within England. Since 1989, Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in England and Wales has been a site of reform, based on the rapidly developed policy tactics of new right ideologies of successive Conservative Governments, and more recently ‘New Labour’ policies. Since (DFE) Circular no 9/92 (Secondary phase) schools have played a large part in Initial Teacher Training as full partners of higher education institutions (HEI). Moving the content and assessment of ITT courses increasingly into schools meant the setting up of a competitive market in the training of new teachers in an attempt to break the monopoly that higher education held over the provision of ITT. Partner schools now exercise a joint responsibility for the planning and management of courses and the selection, training and assessment of students. As such, ITT experienced fundamental changes to the design, organisation and management of courses at the secondary phase.

What followed was the establishment of ITT courses based primarily in schools, with the involvement of Higher Education substantially reduced. To enhance the role of the
schools, teachers have more extensive involvement in the whole of the training process, from initial design of a course through to the assessment of performance of the individual student (DFE, 1992). Moreover, a plethora of government initiatives since the 1980s, have nurtured an instrumental philosophy of laissez-faire, open competition in education. Within the educational system, this has been expressed in the establishment of league tables for schools, the reduction of equal opportunities discourses within ITT, and the emergence of the notion of a 'rational teacher' and more recently, the emphasis on a new professionalism within teaching generally. The changes have stimulated a great deal of research and publication, most obviously in relation to the expanded role of teachers (as mentors) in the new partnership schemes of ITT (for example McIntyre and Hagger, 1996) and to the implications of this for the role of their partners in the university context (for example, Furlong and Smith, 1996).

3.1.1 Regulating the Competent Teacher: Teacher Education and the primacy of professionalism in the 'new world' order

Market liberal reform in education is changing the dimensions of professional practice, reworking the occupational guarantees in education and reshaping the regulatory framework that orchestrates broader articulations of power, knowledge and social groups in the wider politics of civil society' (Seddon, 1997, p.7).

In relation to education policy, the imperatives emerging from the school effectiveness and school improvement movements have been profoundly influential. 'Effective' teachers and leaders are seen to be the key to 'effective' schools (effective schools being defined through the process of school inspection, largely in terms of academic performance which is reinforced through the publication of annual league tables) (Hextall and Mahony, 1998). On this, there is little to no disagreement between the former conservative and the current Labour Secretaries of State (DfEE, 1998b; Shephard, 1996 cited in Mahony, 2000). The emphasis placed on effective schools arises from a belief that they are crucial in the production of a labour force with sufficiently high levels of knowledge and skill to guarantee the competitiveness of the United Kingdom in the global economy.
In their 1997 manifesto the Labour Government presented a palpable recognition of an emergent ‘modern world’, and the need to respond to global change. The emphasis was on the adoption of policies appropriate to new world conditions forwarding a vision of ‘a Britain equipped to prosper in a global economy of technological change; with a modern welfare state; its politics more accountable; and confident of its place in the world’ (Manifesto, p.3). The rhetoric since then has been towards a ‘third way’ politics, which as Giddens (1998) suggests, represents a coherent and distinctive reconstruction of the state, civil society and welfare more appropriate to a world characterized by increasing globalization and self-reflexivity. Here, the idea of an egalitarian market economy is fostered ‘which seeks new ways to promote and reconcile the objectives of efficiency, justice and freedom’ (Gamble and Kelly, 1996). The government has emphasized the states purpose as twofold: firstly, it appears as the ‘controller and regulator’ of the market (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998), secondly, it simultaneously acts as ‘provider’ (a product of welfarism). This dichotomous use of educational discourse suggests that New Labour’s educational policy is informed by two separate strands of philosophical thought; both strands working together have been described as ‘a radical centre-ground’ approach to politics (Giddens, 1996). However despite some remnants of old Labour ‘first way’ thinking, the government’s strategies have been largely an extension of ‘neoliberalism’, particularly those that relate to a belief in minimal government, market fundamentalism, and at least tacit acceptance of inequality (Power and Whitty, 1999).

The imperative underpinning these reforms is the demand for ‘effective’ teachers to ‘produce’ an up-skilled workforce able to enhance the nation’s competitiveness within the global economy (Hextall and Mahoney, 1998). Thus the roles, freedoms and identities of teachers is addressed implicitly and explicitly in many policy texts, most obviously in those directed towards Initial Teacher Training.

New Labour’s Green Paper Teachers; Meeting the Challenge of Change set out the Governments proposals for ‘modernizing the teaching profession’ (DfEE, 1998) according to the needs of the ‘school of the future’ where a ‘new professionalism’ (pp.12-13) was now required. A performance management system was established in which a restructuring of the profession, the introduction of annual appraisal and performance related pay, are all underpinned by a ‘framework of standards’. The first mandatory gateway into the profession within this scheme is Qualified Teacher Status
(QTS) (DfEE, 1998) where student teachers must attain a comprehensive list of standards developed by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). The development of national standards therefore provides a centralised specification of 'effective teaching' giving agents within the state an enhanced capacity to define the desired outcomes of education, with 'policy steering' achieved through much tighter regulation. Some suggest that these 'national standards' can be understood as a technology enabling central government to retain control, whilst at the same time decentralising or devolving responsibility for implementation (see for example Mahony, 2001).

Within these frameworks of professionalism, New Public management or 'new managerialism' (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998; Lingard, 1999) the liberal discourse most commonly associated with the modern teacher is the rational, instrumental actor. As such, Gilroy (1998) notes the New Labour Government has not reversed the policies of the previous government but has instead 'embraced them'. The rhetoric of the reforms in teacher education, it was claimed, was the 'raising of standards' in education through the injection of free market principles, as a solution to both our economic and moral problems. However, the possible consequence of this, as Gerwitz (1997) notes is that there is pressure on teachers to adopt more traditional pedagogies with a focus on output rather than the process and on particular groups of high attaining students [...] These shifts are in large part a consequence of a deliberate strategy on the policy makers attempting to ameliorate particular problems of the state — problems of capital accumulation, legitimisation and control (p.230)

A developing body of research, attempting to demonstrate the links between professional identities and the modes of state regulations over teachers' labours, suggests that these rational instrumental discourses undermine egalitarian principles and teacher authenticity (Lawn & Ozga, 1981; Mahoney & Hextall, 1998; Jones and Moore, 1993; Dillabough, 1999). Such research tentatively suggests teachers and teacher educators are being 'positioned' within these discourses as rational consumer-oriented professionals, and as the key to the success of the nation in the global marketplace. Teachers then, are in some ways expected to subvert personal interests in accordance with the objective standards of practice, and behave rationally and 'competently' (Hodkinson, 1995) in the name of student attainment, and ultimately
economic change. The shifting from ‘substantial’ to ‘instrumental’ rationality in education (Bottery, 1992) appears implicitly within these standards for QTS which consist largely of achieving the subject knowledge and craft skills necessary to teach and assess the National Curriculum, thus depicting the new teacher as a technician rather than as a ‘critical professional’.

### 3.1.2 The place of Social justice issues and equity within Teacher Education

Attention within teacher education research has turned to the possible consequences of these reforms, disconcertingly pointing towards the creation of a ‘condition under which a reflexive approach to professional development becomes impossible’ (Carr, 1989 p.5). There are concerns that concepts such as practice, competency and skill have become ideologically and politically interwoven into recent policy changes in ITT, while principles relating to equal opportunities occupy a conspicuously low profile. Carr (1989) notes:

> Technocratic rationality continues to provide the dominant epistemology of practice, and central government's predilection for technological views of teaching is inevitably creating a conditions under which a reflexive approach to professional development becomes impossible (p.5)

Within Physical Education, Evans, Davies and Penney (1996) voice similar concerns, pointing to the limits of school-based ITT, suggesting that it will serve to perfect the process of pedagogic traditionalism of PE teachers whose views are neither shaken nor stirred by training:

> Teachers then, were, and likely to be, left by their training as individualistic tricksters rather than participants and collaborators in a strong technical professional sub-culture. Their predispositions and goals tend to be personal. Their lone central value continues to be that personal characteristics are overwhelmingly important in determining the quality of teaching as well as the fate of its receptors (Evans, Davies and Penney, 1996)

Evans et al (1996) point out that teacher education has been effectively de-theorised to the point where teacher educators are limited to providing the minimal techniques for teaching without time to provide opportunities for theoretical feedback or reflection on what and why, they do what they do. It has been suggested that many ITT PE
programmes are dominated by instrumental or technical forms of rationality and scientific functionalism (Devis-Devis, 1997; Devis-Devis and Peiro-Velert, 1992; Dewar, 1990; Kirk and Tinning, 1990; Macdonald, 1998; Macdonald and Tinning, 1995; Pascual, 1992; Sparkes, 1993, 1997b; Tinning, 1990; Williams, 1993). Such programmes represent PE and sport as technical and unproblematic domains rather than sites of critical and intellectual contestation. Pedagogues who adopt a socially critical perspective and attempt to encourage reflection upon substantive issues in PE and Sport, in ways that locate them in a wider socio-historical and political landscape, might therefore find themselves on the margins (Devis-Devis and Sparkes, 1997, p.148)

The 'Teacher' is therefore in some ways being restructured via a framework of National Professional Qualifications and Standards. These both centrally define the activity of teaching at various stages of the teaching career and establish new modes of progression for teachers. Mahony (2001) goes on to argue that this framework neglects teachers' responsibilities in relation to social justice in ways that are particularly worrying for feminists; in particular the absence of a clear articulation of values in relation to equal opportunities and diversity (Mahony, 2000). Furthermore, when students are on practicurn the tasks that they are expected to fulfil generally do not require them to demonstrate an understanding of inclusion in their practical experiences in the classroom (Robinson and Ferfolja, 2001). Mahony and Hextall, (1998) are critical of these frameworks, claiming that the kinds of approaches teachers need to develop to satisfy even the most minimal account of non-discriminatory practice are in no way covered by the legislative framework of the relevant Acts (Mahony and Hextall, 1998).

Moreover, there is little discursive space within the new managerialism model of the teacher profession with its taxonomic, regulatory logic, in which issues of gender can be addressed. The Government's Green Paper (DfEE, 1998) Teachers; Meeting the Challenge of Change, makes no mention of gender in its proposals. Rather it speaks the language of 'all' teachers, ignoring Connell's (1995) reminder that:

... Teachers collectively form a workforce, and the character of that workforce bears on issues of social justice. We need to consider, for instance, how socially representative the teaching workforce is; how it is
selected and trained; what are its paths of promotion... (pp. 63-64)

Moreover, these opportunities for critical reflection have been further reduced following the shifting of most of the ‘professional’ preparation from higher education to the already overburdened schools in England and Wales (Barton et al., 1994). The location of two thirds of a secondary PGCE course in schools has rendered less time for teacher educators within higher education to address theory and educational issues (see Furlong et al., 2000). These conditions therefore have serious implications for the treatment of various social issues within the context of teacher training.

Within the context of Physical Education, research evidence rather worryingly suggests that many teacher educators are not equipped to deal with equity and equality issues (Flintoff, 1993). Research by Lloyd (1998) raises further alarms, concluding that higher education teacher educators are already hard pressed to adequately cover the complexity of teaching. Giving social issues importance within the educational agenda becomes a matter of negotiating a subject curriculum within a context where the School and University have been integrated. In her research on Physical Education Initial Teacher Training (PE ITT), Lloyd (1998) suggests that the college was found to be a more familiar environment than school, to student teachers, who in the main had embarked on the PGCE course soon after completing their first degrees. A more formal jurisdiction prevailed in school, which inevitably impacted upon the professional socialisation of students in very different ways to that experienced in college. School was equated with 'on the job experience' and consequently to some extent given greater legitimacy, whereas time in college was equated with time off, referred to as 'a long weekend.' As Acker (1989) points out, although in her review of the literature on the transition from ITT to primary schools, students discard what they learn, in favour of the modus operandus of the school.

More recent research has therefore addressed the complexities and social implications of these ‘partnerships’. R.Davies (1997) has provided detailed insights on the various ways in which learner teachers and their mentors reached common understandings of what were and were not acceptable agendas to work on in schools. Davies concludes that much of this differed from what has seemed to be a highly acceptable university agenda. Moreover, student teachers are often the least powerful in these ‘partnership’
arrangements, and with schools now largely responsible for judging their competency, they may well be reluctant or unable to challenge uncomfortable relationships within these settings (Maguire, 2001). Moreover, the PGCE route is now considered extremely stressful and anxiety levels are high (Head et al., 1996; Morton et al, 1997). Given this backdrop, it seems sensible to consider the training of the next generation of teachers, and in particular the transmission of cultural values embedded within these socio-educational contexts (Clemson, 1996).

3.2 RE-ARTICULATING STRUCTURE AND AGENCY WITHIN TEACHER EDUCATION

The dialectical nature of these interactions and negotiations has caught the attention of more recent research. This has involved a consideration of the theoretical perspectives on the processes of teacher training which might inform the agenda for more critical, reflexive forms of ITT. The need to consider the effect of training as a differential experience for each individual is increasingly being voiced (Grenfell, 1996; Hagger and McIntyre, 2000). This entails a move away from more traditional research approaches in teacher education that have adopted a utilitarian view of the profession or been overly deterministic in applying particular theoretical metaphors to it (socialisation, trait theory, critical theory etc) (Grenfell, 1996). As Curtner-Smith (1997) noted, much of the early work assessing the impact of organisational socialisation on beginning or newly qualified physical education teachers (Cruz, 1991; Napper-Owen and Phillips, 1995; O'Sullivan, 1989; Solmon, Worthy and Carter, 1993; Stroot, Faucette and Schwager, 1993) generally ignored or failed to report the mediating effects of biography or pre-professional socialisation, assuming that all teachers studied are fully inducted by their PETE programmes. Much of the research on teacher socialisation within PE has drawn on a functionalist approach to occupational socialization. That is to say, it has adopted a perspective where individuals are seen as essentially passive and accepting; that if they receive the ‘appropriate’ socialization then they will assume their ‘proper’ place in the social order.

More recently a number of dialectical approaches consider teacher education as the complex process that it is, which requires a number of different forms of knowledge and experience. The literature on learning to teach has therefore begun to emphasise
the richness and complexity of the phenomena, which encompasses a wide array of idiosyncratic, contextual and dynamic variables. More emphasis on teacher education as a complex dialectical process in which both structure and agency are in operation is providing more sophisticated insights into the processes at work. I would agree with Griffin (1989) and Flintoff (1993) who suggest that forms of social reproduction within the context of teaching physical education need to be viewed in broader contexts of society and across generations. The semantics of 'reinforce' or 'challenge' suggest that these gendered attitudes and practices are already deposited in the individual from a variety of practices and discourses that go beyond PE ITT. Such views are congruent with Templin and Schemmp's (1989) dialectical perspective of teacher socialisation, wherein 'socialisation focuses on the interplay between individuals, societal influences, and the institutions into which they are socialised' (1989, p.3).

3.2.1 Teachers as knowing subjects with unique histories
Lawson's (1983a, 1983b) perspective is a useful starting point, noting that the practices and perspectives of physical education teachers are likely to be shaped by three types of socialization; acculturation, professional socialization and organisational socialization. Acculturation is ongoing, from birth, experiences that lead to the individual translating or understanding what it is to be a male or a female. Professional socialization is the period of teacher education whereby the individual will learn skills, values and knowledge that are deemed to be suitable for the teaching of PE. Organisational socialization refers to that which is experienced and learnt as the individual enters the workforce (begins teaching). It is the combination of these socialisation practices and the discourses experienced that position the individual as a pedagogue of one sort or another. Literature on teacher socialisation (Pataniczek and Iccason, 1981; Tabachnick and Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner and Gore, 1990; Flores, 2001) has highlighted the low impact of the formal context of professional learning on changing student-teachers implicit theories about teaching and being a teacher. Rather, it is suggested that prior experiences and observations as students have a powerful influence on their teaching (Lortie, 1975; Schempp, 1989), and even that when students teachers enter teaching their views are largely fixed (Tabachnick and Zeichner, 1984).
The importance of a teacher’s pre-professional background in the development of a professional identity has already been highlighted in the context of Physical Education (Whithead and Hendry, 1976; Templin and Schemp, 1989; Mawer, 1996; Green, 1998; Armour and Jones 1998; Brown, 1999) The work of Armour and Jones (1998) points to PE teachers' backgrounds, sports histories and educational careers as profoundly influencing their gendered understandings of role expectations and professional philosophies. Similarly, the work of MacDonald and Kirk (1996) has also provided compelling evidence of the dilemmas of the struggles between PE teachers' own sense of self and the stereotyped social expectations made of them. The key dynamic here is the degree of interplay between the self and social identity when set against the social environment and it’s role expectations. More specifically, this body of research suggests that many recruits begin teacher training because they have had positive sporting experiences (Templin, 1979; Dodds et al., 1992). Such patterns expose physical education teachers not merely as the products of a brief period of initial teacher training, but knowing subjects with lives and identities that they bring to the profession.

The social study of physical education has extended to consider PE teacher identity since the seminal work of Whithead and Hendry (1976). Although drawing primarily on role theory, they suggest teachers own experiences as school pupils where they were successes of the physical education system, may be important to future role enactments, and in turn this reinforces an enclosed traditional system of anticipatory socialisation (Whithead and Hendry, 1976, p.92). They further acknowledge that the self, as personal identity, carries over into professional identity. More recently, the work of Templin & Schempp (1989), Mawer (1996) and Green (1998) add to the view that personal experience and identity have a socially significant impact on physical educators’ actions, where gendered construction through teaching physical education can be observed (Evans and Penney, 1996b). More recently, in focusing on male teachers and masculinity, Brown (1999) suggests that PE teachers draw on their habitus in constructing their pedagogies and communicate gender, class, ethnicity and ability with and through their bodies in the process of teaching. Such insights seem essential to our grasp of the pedagogies and complexities of PE. Perspectives on structure and agency allow us to build on this body of research, by further considering the strength of personal agendas that beginning/student teachers bring with them and
the *active* role they play in *negotiating their own learning* (Hagger and McIntyre, 2000).

Thus far, the literature on teacher education points to the lack of theoretical space within which students can reflect upon the nature of their own experiences and practices. The question emerging at this juncture in relation to gender is this; what are the consequences of this lack of space for the construction of teachers gendered dispositions and practices? How might these contribute or challenge the social reproduction of particular gender positions and practices within Physical Education and beyond? Moreover, it has been suggested that the biographies of these student teachers meet with the institutional discourse and practice of higher education and the biographies of mentors, lecturers and PE teachers in schools. As such, the process and period of becoming a PE teacher is mediated by that which student teachers already bring to their training as embodied, socialised individuals, whose gendered attitudes and practices go beyond PE ITT. How teachers interpret their gendered experiences of Physical education as students, is therefore socially significant, and worthy of further inquiry in contributing to a reflexive form of ITT. The nature of these experiences, and the influence of teacher training as a focal point of social reproduction are worthy of further investigation.

**3.3 BEYOND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: CONSIDERING THE SOCIAL POSITIONING OF WOMEN WITHIN TEACHER EDUCATION**

These perspectives have also been useful in beginning to provide us with more comprehensive insights into the gendered nature of teacher education. Studies emerging in the late 1980s focusing on social issues, such as gender, (EOC, 1989; Leonard, 1989; Skelton and Hanson 1989) tended to concentrate on the educational experiences of the pupils (Leonard, 1989). Little consideration was paid to issues of general pedagogy during the ITT period; the effects upon lecturers, teachers and the teaching practice of students.

If, as a large volume of research suggests, masculinities and femininities are socially constructed, ordered and practiced differently in different contexts, then the issue of gender equity goes far beyond the presence or absence of women. With women clearly involved in the teaching of Physical Education, the issue of access is no longer
such a pressing concern on the feminist agenda. Subtler but more deeply embedded forms of gender inequality need addressing, particularly in the context of Physical Education. The gendered nature of the micro-politics of teaching, including the study of ‘teachers’ careers, collegiality and cultures’ (Acker, 1994, pp. 157-158) emerges here as a ‘priority for future feminist work’ (ibid). In particular, female student teacher’s gender positioning is a crucial area of educational research, which remains relatively unexplored to date.

There is a developing body of research attempting to demonstrate the links between professional identities and the modes of state regulations over teachers’ labours under the recent changes to teacher education (Lawn and Ozga, 1981; Mahoney and Hextall, 1997; Jones and Moore, 1993). However, what is lacking from these analyses is an engagement with the gendered nature of these socio-educational contexts. The focus in the profession on teachers as rational actor or pivotal reform agents rather problematically assumes a separation of self from experience. Moreover, these reforms assume that teachers are rational or unitary, and posits educational reform as best achieved through rational consumer driven professionals who are pivotal agents. A number of social expectations are therefore created, surrounding the process of becoming a ‘rational’ teacher in the contemporary educational environment.

However, the theoretical perspective adopted here is that the teaching of physical education (and other subjects) is a micro-political arena where the self is positioned within pedagogy. More specifically, these views are congruent with Templin and Schemmp’s (1989) dialectical perspective of teacher socialisation, focusing on the ‘interplay between individuals, societal influences and the institutions into which they are socialised’ (p.3). Within this political arena, the identities of teachers are mediated by the larger social structure, as well as the particularities of difference. Furthermore, teachers engage in meaningful and complex interaction with pupils and other teachers. These social elements appear to be unreasonably ignored within these instrumental models of teacher as rational agent. Gendered tensions further arise within these instrumental conceptions since they strongly imply a notion of liberalism, rational actors who are free and disembedded from these gendered arenas. This misleadingly implies that women are free to shape their conditions as teachers, since it assumed that they are detached from their social experience and therefore the social constraints they
might experience. As Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) suggest it is still the bourgeois male teacher or student who is honoured with the title ‘rational being’ since they are seen as ‘endowed with reason’ (p.200) in the purest sense. To this end, some feminists suggest that this dominant discourse of rationality within education disguise the historical gendered constraints imposed on women teachers, and their ability to be viewed as ‘rational reform agents.’

Some research has unpacked some of the constraining narratives surrounding women’s involvement in teaching. It was over a decade ago however, that Walkerdine (1990) suggested that being a woman teacher was an ‘impossible fiction’. Walkerdine claimed that to be a woman was to be socially positioned as lacking authority, knowledge and power, yet to be a teacher is to have authority, knowledge and power. Similarly Munro (1998) identifies some of the constraining images of female schoolteachers, including the spinster, the school ma’am, the old maid, and the mother-teacher. The mother teacher is taken as representing the ‘altruism’ of women; the self-sacrificing, nurturing woman who complies with some ‘natural’ duty: the unconditional love of children is taken as signifying some true ‘womanhood’. Juxtaposed against this, the spinster is represented as the ‘embittered, sexless or homosexual’ (Oram, 1989). The image of the spinster or lesbian teacher work to regulate women’s behaviour and figure heavily in the context of teaching physical education, and this is explored in the final section of this chapter. Moreover, this dichotomy of mother-teacher and spinster/lesbian function to perpetuate the dominant dichotomy of women as good or bad, virgin or vixen, obscuring the agency and complexity of women’s lives.

This thesis therefore attempts to explore how women negotiate a self within and against cultural norms and expectations. Moreover, the meanings women give to their teacher training, and teaching, remains relatively unexplored. In asking questions about the relationships between the sense of self that these young, student teachers have, their understandings of what it means to be a professional become relevant. How, for example do women construct themselves as subjects? I attempt to understand how women negotiate moving multiple feminine selves against these contradictory dualisms/positions. This alludes not only to the gender norms inscribed within teaching, but perhaps, reveal a little as to how such caricatures function as a
form of gender regulation. Whilst these dualisms might appear as normal and much of the everyday, in an attempt to reassert patriarchal control of the profession as normative (Apple 1985) women have not simply been acted upon as passive victims. Increasingly, educational research is pointing to the active negotiation, resistance and creation of meanings by women teachers (see Hoffman, 1981; Kaufman, 1984; Casey, 1993; Munro, 1998).

In researching the gender positioning of female student teachers within Initial Teacher Training (in Physical Education) this thesis therefore considers some important aspects, which have been relatively unexplored to date within the literature on gender, education and teacher education. The first concerns the issue of male power and the construction of contemporary educational concepts, which resonate within the period of teacher education. In theoretical terms, this leads to a consideration of the complex ways in which historically determined gender dualisms might frame identities in the field of teaching. Moreover, the thesis seeks to explore the role of gender in the formation of a ‘professional’ identity within teaching (Physical Education). Secondly, a clearer understanding is needed of the ways in which teachers’ biographies meet with these contexts, and are modified or drawn upon in developing what are seen as appropriate teacher identities in relation to such contemporary educational conceptions. My intention within the thesis is to bring together teacher authenticity or biography (previous attitudes, experiences, narrativity) with a more contextual analysis of teacher education to offer insights into how these combine to impact upon future social transmission. The research therefore explores the local production of feminine identities, within the teacher-training site. As a point of departure, this demands a move away from an instrumental assessment of teacher identities to one that takes a more sociological and dialectical perspective (Templin and Schemmp, 1989).

As such I hope it might provide insights for the development of gender education policies within ITT, and as such echoes Tsolidis’ (1996) calls for these to incorporate pro-feminist theorisations of identity as un-essentialised and shifting in response to varying contexts. To this end, I have chosen an alternative feminist framework, echoing the position of Dillabough (1999) in utilising an intersubjective theory of teacher identity formation; where teachers can be seen as embedded in relationships
‘between active subjects’ (Weir, 1997) and as ‘bounded individuals who possess some degree of political agency’. Thus teacher identity within specific, historical contexts are multi-faceted, diverse and complex. Similarly, the stories that these teachers tell about their lives, are not simply coherent and unitary, instead the self tells the story but as embedded within a ‘web of gendered narratives’ (Benhabib, 1997). It is through these complex webs that the research turns in order to uncover the complexity of PE teachers’ gendered identities. This feminist framework seeks to theorise teacher identities by cutting across crude generalisations regarding gender distinctions, instead working from a theoretical base that assesses the complex and often subtle ways in which teacher identities are formed in everyday practice. This prompts us to consider power contextually and the particular points through which it passes (Foucault, 1980a); if we are to attempt any feminist reform in education, then it is through the lives and identities of the next generation of PE teachers that it must pass. The narratives and embodied dispositions that constitute a teacher’s identity are therefore important. The theoretical framework for such analysis is further explored in chapter four.

Whilst the biographies of these female student teachers are clearly important, the study draws upon aspects of Foucauldian theory in considering historically specific discursive relations and social practices. Thus, I posit the view that their own narratives, or voice does not solely constitute these teachers’ identities. They are also shaped by, and help to shape social and structural relations both within and outside of education. I consider therefore, the ways in which these women are situated in social and dialectical relation to others, both in the past and importantly, within the local context of PGCE PE. As such, it seems necessary to further consider both the history of this context, and the current research pertaining specifically to Gender and the PE Teaching profession.

3.3.1 Historical and Structural Influences in teaching Physical Education: A brief overview

The single sex history of PE ITT, and its consequential gendered distinctions, is seen to be an influencing factor upon the shape of school PE as it is today (Fletcher, 1984; Scraton, 1989). As Fletcher (1984) observes, the professional training of PE teachers, until relatively recently, was carried out in separate institutions effectively producing
two very different types of PE specialists. Fletcher further suggests that these differences existed not only in terms of activities into which they were initiated but also the educational aims and philosophies of their practice. Within these contexts women were deemed more suited to particular activities such as gymnastics, dance and modified games. The division of boys PE was based predominantly in the public school system and oriented more towards the competitive games.

Flintoff (1993) suggests that ‘conventional’ gender power relations have not disappeared despite the reorganisation of Initial Teacher Training in Physical Educational (ITT PE) in England along co-educational lines, and that within these contexts women are constantly cultivated as a less valued ‘other’. Sparkes (1993) highlights one of the consequences in the shaping of the form and content of ITT PE programmes:

The reinforcement of patriarchal values as the dominant position within the profession coupled with the creation and maintenance of a structure in which women along with other oppressed groups are discriminated against in a variety of ways. (p.108).

Whilst the body of research on how girls may lose out in mixed sex PE in schools has increased (e.g. Evans et al 1987, Scraton 1989) there is still limited research on the ways in which PE ITT in the UK in a co-educational setting may be reinforcing or challenging gender inequality. We remain some way off understanding the more complex issues of how the training of teachers may (re)produce or challenge particular predispositions, identities, or prejudices favouring or disadvantaging particular categories of people or types of Physical Education. An understanding of these aspects of teacher education may inform us as to how ITT should or could be shaped in order to achieve a more balanced curriculum and also to influence the type of subjectivities that teachers take with them into their professional environment since as Skelton and Hanson (1989) suggest ‘unless teachers are born rather than made, then the initial teacher education they receive has important implications for their future behaviour in classrooms and their own development and careers’ (p. 109).

There are some notable pieces of research, which have provided some key insights into these educational processes. Research by Sheila Scraton (1989) demonstrated that
even during the late 1980s the current practice at that time, had continued to be
underpinned by ideologies of femininity. Flintoff’s (1993) study on the ways in which
teacher education institutions constructed, confirmed or contested gender identities in
secondary PE has additionally provided some key insights into the gendered nature of
PE ITT in the British Context. Flintoff examined two higher education institutions,
one a former male college and the other a former female college, now part of a
university and an institute of higher education respectively, both offering four year
undergraduate courses and one year postgraduate courses. Flintoff (1993) suggests
that existing gender power relations have not disappeared with the reorganisation of
the PE ITT on co-educational lines, but that their forms have been modified from that
which existed within single sex PE ITT institutions (Fletcher, 1984). Flintoff further
suggests that the move to co-education have been met with struggles and conflicts
over the nature and content of the curriculum with issues of gender power central to
this conflict. The consequences of this were that these struggles were resolved in
favour of male students and what has been defined as 'male PE.' Whilst in some cases
there was evidence to suggest some staff had made efforts to raise gender issues with
students, it was revealed that a number of PE staff held attitudes of apathy or hostility
towards raising such issues within their work. Gender was found to be a key influence
with regards the timetabling of physical activities, which it was suggested was based
on ideologies about the nature of physical ability and performance of men and women.

Attempts to therefore 'de-gender' the public sphere of teaching Physical Education
consequently raise some significant issues. It has been suggested that the ‘de-
gendering’ of this sort in public fields (Sullivan, 1990, p.174), is premised upon a
liberal discourse that posits the uncomplicated extension to women of the rights males
enjoy in the public sphere. However, the norm of a male life experience is taken as
given. Indeed male PE teachers continue to enjoy the dominant positions in PE, and
despite adjustments to the National Curriculum many PE curricula evidently still use
male activities as the reference point for school sport and Physical Education.
Sullivan further warns that moves to de-gender the public sphere may privatise and
depoliticise issues of particular relevance to women, effectively relocating issues
bearing on women’s sexual difference in the private sphere.
This focus of attention purely on the individual and his or her efforts, without critique of the social structure, depoliticises the central questions of power and control in explaining gender inequality. Ultimately, these approaches lack a thorough consideration of the multiple and contradictory values, knowledges and beliefs that may inform and impact upon the practices of PE teachers. This position assumes a condition of ‘equality’ or ‘equity’ without considering the complex discursive, embodied and textual practices, which underpin the educational experience of individuals.

The North American Title IX project pays testimony to the limits of advocating simple solutions to the provision of equal opportunities for men and women within teaching PE. In this instance, single sex male athletic departments in schools, colleges and Universities were compelled to amalgamate with women’s departments. The result was a programme heavily controlled by male executives. It was from these departments where feminist writing suggesting alternatives began to emerge (see for example Bain, 1985; Theberge, 1985). Griffin (1989) suggested that coeducation innovations based around notions of access ‘failed to examine carefully enough how gender is conceptualised by both teachers and students and how deeply rooted that conceptualisation is in the larger societal context’ (1989, p.220). Moreover, she argued that this problem was largely due to the assumption that people would change their practices and the situation would be ‘corrected’ once people were informed of their errors. Griffin’s (1989) sentiments are highly significant here, pointing to the deeper complex socialised, embodied, political nature of gender that forms the basis of our practices in PE. Indeed, Griffin’s (1989) research raises questions of how is it that PE teachers conceptualise gender; how do teachers’ identities frame the ways in which they view others’ gender positioning; is it possible for teachers to relinquish biologically grounded conceptualisations of gender in favour of more developed conceptual understandings of gender as a social construction, legitimated through the status quo of gender power relations in society in the form of a gender order? What all these questions point towards, is a need to move beyond the aim of developing equal access. Teacher’s conceptualisations of gender therefore form a key point of departure and thus it is incumbent that we address where, when and how such dispositions towards gender are acquired, developed and legitimised.
3.3.2 The Social (Re) production of Gender Relations within PE ITT

Flintoff (1993) asserts that for many women, negotiating an identity in PE is difficult and contradictory, suggesting that classroom interaction can be a site of reproduction of gender relations, dominated by masculine identity work by both male student and some male staff. If the research findings are endemic to Institutions involved in the training of Physical Education teachers more widely, PE ITT potentially reproduces an ideology of male physicality as strong, aggressive and naturally competitive, which influences and effects the experiences of all men. This also has direct consequences for the experiences of women within ITE in PE, whose physicality is defined in relation to and comparison with male standards.

Whilst Flintoff’s study has been seminal in offering insights into the ways in which ITT courses constructed, confirmed or contested gender identities, the studies involved participant observation, document analysis, and interviews with key decision makers in the institutions in making these observations. The thesis therefore builds upon Flintoff’s work in considering both teacher authenticity (narratives, biography and gender identity) and the contexts and processes of professional socialisation through drawing upon the life stories and experiences of the student teachers themselves.

Within the British context a smaller scale study by Sherlock (1987) also explored the process of negotiating a gender identity for students in PE ITE. The process studied was characterised as one of conflict, particularly for female students, since affiliation with sport and PE was found to automatically set them apart from the majority of ‘disinterested girls’ that they would teach in schools. Sherlock was more optimistic about the ways in which male PE students manage to negotiate a masculinity other than the dominant ideal concluding that there was more space for the males to develop different kinds of masculinity within PE than there were for different kinds of femininity. Skelton’s (1993) autobiographical account however, suggests that the informal student culture of physical education students reproduces a ‘hegemonic masculinity’, including compulsory heterosexuality, that undermined the humanist, formal curriculum of the teacher education program.
Research in the American context, has presented similar findings. Dewar (1990) suggests that both male and female students negotiated their gender identities within a subject that was male defined, and located within a 'patriarchal society'. Moreover, the groups of students in her study tended to construct their gender identities in some relation to the label 'jock' (male student with enhanced heterosexuality and athletic prowess). Although this research suggests there were a variety of masculinities and femininities these were all constructed within boundaries set by traditional hegemonic notions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity found to be reinforced / reproduced by ITE.

3.3.3 Professional 'other' in Physical Education: The active body and Suspicions of lesbianism

For years, feminist work has shown that the body plays a crucial role in the reciprocal role of relationship between women's public and private identities (Hooks, 1989). The social meanings that are publicly attached to the body can become internalised and exert powerful feelings on women's private feelings of self-worth (hooks, 1990; Shilling, 1993). Since women come to understand and experience their bodies, in part, through the inequitable and political systems of their cultures (Sparkes, 1997) it is not difficult to recognize the degradation that many women experience as they learn to participate in particular discourses.

Whilst the study of the body has featured as a point of discussion in mainstream sociology, the subjective experience of the body has more recently become a direct focus of investigation (Kirk and Tinning, 1994; Sparkes, 1996a, 1999; Brumberg, 1997). Furthermore, the social place of the body and the ways in which we experience ourselves as bodies (Morgan and Scott, 1993) has become increasingly important in situating the individual in cultural and organizational contexts. Indeed, as Shilling (1993a) suggests, the body is central not only to PE but also to the wider business of schooling. As such, the experiences of female student teachers in these contexts highlight some important social issues for consideration in the broader field of teacher education. As hooks (1989) notes, it is at the crossroads between public and private that the body remains central. The subjective experiences of the body amongst female physical educators are a crucial site of study, in terms of how they experience their
bodies and how they resist oppressive discourses – how they constitute themselves within the corporeal and discursive ambiguities of sport.

The professional body of the female physical educator has long been inscribed as ‘lesbian’ and is perhaps indicative of the types of control over women’s physicality which serve as ‘a constant reminder to women that they are bodies first and people second’ (Bloom and Munro, 1995, p.109). A small body of research has begun to highlight the many ways in which women are involved in perpetuating dominant gender constructions (Clarricoates, 1980; Stanworth, 1981; Francis, 2000). Since the early 1990’s a burgeoning body of life history research has contributed to our understandings of lesbian identities and PE teaching through life history work (Sparkes and Templin, 1992; Sparkes, 1994a, 1994b, 1995; Squires and Sparkes, 1996; Clarke, 1996; Sykes, 1998) historical research (Cahn, 1994a) participatory action research (Griffin, 1992b) and research into the management of these identities (Griffin, 1991, 1992b, 1992c; Woods 1992; Woods and Harbeck, 1992). In problematising the lives and self-identities of gay and lesbian PE teachers, the dichotomy of public/private in their everyday lives (Woods and Harbeck, 1992; Sparkes, 1996, 1997; Squires and Sparkes, 1996; Clarke, 1998a, 1998b) is revealed. Sparkes (1996) suggests that the dichotomy reduces lesbian and gay identity to sexuality, and that schools, as patriarchal institutions, are ideologically and culturally heterosexual. Sparkes counterpoises the public realm of the school against the private life of the lesbian teacher, where deviance from this is perceived to be a personal ‘problem’ to be kept in ones private life.

Using a Post-structural life history approach Sykes (1998) examined the life histories of six women from three generations who had taught physical education in Western Canada. The accounts provided testimony to the notion that PE teachers’ participation in various women’s sports accentuated the suspicion of lesbianism. These suspicions, explains Cahn (1994a) function as both a homophobic repellent and as a magnetic sexual field of force in physical education. Sykes (1998) suggests that this is due to ‘the peculiar (some might say queer) location of women’s physical education teaching at the nexus of ‘masculinist sport, gendered education and pedagogies of the body’ (Sykes, 1998, p.2). Cahn (1994) illustrated how heterosexuality and homophobia...
determined how women's sport was historically organised in North America, particularly in Physical Education.

Despite the pervasiveness of these dualisms, the literature suggests that women involved in sport and physical activity experience their bodies differently within various discourses. Cox and Thompson's (2000) study on female soccer players suggests that the players underwent four distinct, yet interconnected bodily experiences. Such a multiple body perspective facilitates a more subtle understanding of women's involvement in sport, which might be extrapolated to the context of teaching physical education. A number of other studies have alluded to such contradictory experiences, for example the case of female bodybuilders who present an image of muscular girls but who nonetheless continue to meet classical standards of femininity (Castelnuovo and Guthrie, 1998; Hargreaves, 1994). Women's bodybuilding can be seen both as a compliance with the requirements of femininity and as a mode of resistance to those imperatives (Hall, 1996). On the surface, female bodybuilders transgress the 'normative' ideals by demonstrating musculature and strength, yet in competition these women are judged according to identifiable characteristics that include prettiness and heterosexual attractiveness (Dobbins, 1990; Obel, 1996). In the same way female rugby players simultaneously reproduce and transform the 'masculine' sport (Wheatley, 1994). Similarly, findings from Young (1997) drawn from interviews with Canadian female athletes involved in rugby, rock-climbing, wrestling, ice-hockey and martial arts, indicated that these women were creating meanings of involvement in sport for themselves whilst also reconstructing 'female appropriate' behaviour. Menneson's (2000) more recent examination of women's participation in boxing, provides further insights into the identities forged in traditionally male contexts. Menneson suggests that the women's entry into and continued involvement in boxing depends on both disposition and situation. She further suggests that women boxers occupied an ambivalent position; on the one hand, by definition, they challenged the existing gender order; on the other hand, they also reinforced the status quo by displaying traditional modes of femininity. A key insight here is that the process of identity-formation among these women was inseparably social and sexual.
3.3.4 Female PE teachers and identity surveillance

While carving out feminine identities (Theberge, 1995) women participating in what have traditionally been seen as men’s sports, or male contexts, still face the ‘logic’ of binary gender opposition (Kane, 1995) and the ethos of male superiority. The discourse of heterosexuality is particularly influential in the construction of sportswomen’s bodies. The sporting discourse posits that the body must be physically powerful. However, the heterosexual discourse, which depends upon gendered distinctions for it’s meaning, constructs the male body as strong and active and the female body as passive and weak. In this way physical education/sport confirms the semblance of heterosexual gender order/heteronormativity. The binary and contradictory logic of these two discourses is evident in the valorisation of male athletes possessing strength and muscularity, and in questioning whether a sportswoman can be a ‘real’ (read heterosexual) woman. Some suggest that feminine has served as code word for heterosexuality within the context of sport (Griffin, 1992; Hall, 1996). Female athletes who deviate from the norms of ‘femininity’ by having short hair and athletics bodies are challenged covertly or overtly about their sexuality. Similarly, female physical education teachers are negatively stereotyped as being lesbian (Woods and Harbeck, 1992).

Kolnes (1995) revealed how sports women experience conflict between their athletic and feminine statuses. To compensate for displaying the seemingly unfeminine trait of playing elite sport, some of the athletes actively emphasise what they consider symbols of heterosexuality by having long hair and by dressing in feminine ways outside the sporting arena. Woods and Harbeck (1992) in their phenomenological study of twelve lesbian physical educators found that all study participants held two assumptions; that they would loose their jobs if their lesbianism was revealed, and that female physical education teachers are negatively stereotyped as being lesbian. Participants most often engaged in identity management techniques designed to conceal their lesbianism, such as passing as heterosexual, self-distancing from others at school, and self-distancing from issues pertaining to homosexuality. Similarly, in an action research study Griffin (1992b) identified a continuum of management strategies lesbians used to separate and integrate their personal and professional identities. These ranged from ‘passing’ as heterosexual, ‘covering’ which involved censoring rather than deceiving, ‘being implicitly out’ to being ‘explicitly out’.
These insights provide a powerful testimony to the highly structured denial of self-identity that renders gay and lesbian teacher identities invisible in schools. Clarke (1998a, 1998b) and Sparkes (1996b, p.173) both draw attention to the significance of their silence in the face of oppression in which 'the conscious refusal to be defined as victim provides them with a sense of agency' (Sparkes, 1996b, p.173). Whilst this might form resistance, one of the unintended consequences of these silences, might be the confirmation of the semblance of heterosexual gender order/heteronormativity. These forms of research have therefore begun to highlight the reconstructive significance of personal and public identities of physical education teachers, and further demonstrate the silent discourses and practices which operate to sustain heterosexual, patriarchal gender relations within physical education.

Although women continue to make inroads into traditionally male-only activities, it remains a moot point as to how much impact this has had on the hegemonic gendered representations, identities and relations of sport (Pirinen, 1997; Theberge, 1998; Wright & Clarke, 1999; Young 1997). The dispositions and attitudes of female PE teachers need to be explored for their part in perpetuating the gender relations and dominant PE discourse and practice across generations of teachers and pupils alike; teachers are, after all, at the interface between public and private.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted some of the key research pertaining to the context of teacher education and the construction of teacher’s identities. It was suggested that whilst there is a developing body of research connecting the structure of teacher education with the active development of teacher’s identities, the gendered nature of these processes have been largely unexplored to date. A number of exceptions were highlighted, particularly in the context of PE ITT, where the struggles to negotiate a ‘feminine’ identity during teacher training have been highlighted. However, it seems that we need further understandings of the subjective experiences and active negotiations of student teachers, and their understandings of their ‘agency’ are worthy of further analysis. Chapter four of the thesis draws upon the conceptual development of feminine identity and how we might begin to move forward in theorising gender
relationally. A range of social theory is eclectically drawn upon in an attempt to expose the problem of feminine identity in the context of physical education.

1 The data presented in this chapter was collected in England, and as such the paper is about the English Initial Teacher Training (ITT) system. Scotland has its own ITT system and the DfEE writ does not run there.
2 For an account of the New Right and their influence on the politics of policy making during the Conservative administration, see Ball (1990).
3 Also evident in other contexts which have adopted free market principles, such as industry and commerce.
4 Newby (1999) suggests there were 877 of these competences listed in a recent count. For an overview of the major criticisms of the QTS approach, see Welch and Mahoney (2000).
5 The TTA is an executive non-departmental public body. It was set up in late 1994 under the Education Act 1994. The Agency is responsible for a wide range of initiatives to promote recruitment to the teaching profession; for funding initial teacher training, which is linked to the quality of the training provision and identified through OFSTED inspection; for further development of the standards for award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), including the QTS Skills Tests for numeracy, literacy and ICT; and working with the new Opportunities Fund for the provision of training in the use of ICT in subject teaching. The standards set out in this document replace the more general "competences" set out in DFE Circulars 9/92 and 14/93, and DfEE Teacher Training Circular Letter 1/96. They reflect the Secretary of State's requirements for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) as set out in DfEE Circular 10/97. The standards apply to all trainees seeking QTS and, except where otherwise specified, should be met by those to be assessed for QTS from May 1998. Successful completion of a course or programme of initial teacher training (ITT), including employment based provision, must require the trainee to achieve all these standards. The teacher training agency has taken responsibility for specifying these long lists of 'competencies' or 'standards' which purport to tell us in an authoritative way what qualified teacher should be able to do; but these lists have been accompanied neither by any rational for the items listed nor by any explanation of the conception of the teaching expertise which underlies the lists (Hagger and McIntyre, 2000).
6 All courses must involve the assessment of all trainees to ensure that they meet all the standards specified. QTS is a requirement for all those who teach in a maintained school. QTS is awarded by successfully completing a course of ITT at an accredited institution in England or Wales, either concurrently with, or after, the award of a first degree of a UK university or a higher education institution with degree awarding powers.
6 Title IX is a federal act that states 'no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.' This particular piece of legislation and its implementation has been found to have significant implications upon the growth of high school and women's collegiate athletics.
Chapter Four: Theorising the social construction of femininities in the teaching of Physical Education

Since the groundswell of feminist movements in the 1960's, 'gender inequality' has received growing political and analytical attention. Activism and political campaigns have extended to the development of theoretical debates and frameworks on the premise that social, historical, economical and political analyses of women's positions might inform feminist practice. In this chapter I briefly highlight the caveats in 'traditional' feminisms, and tentatively develop a theoretical framework for analysing the gendered experiences and identities of women in general, and in particular, those who are learning to teach physical education. The first part of this chapter attempts to position the social study of gender in a broader theoretical context, constructing a general framework for understanding these issues of power and social reproduction, pointing to the wider social orders that frame our gender realities. This is a critical exercise since it positions femininities as a relational construct, and thus theories of femininities cannot be considered in isolation, but need to be related to wider society, their relationship with masculinity, power and socio-historical contexts. Emerging fields of sociological inquiry that have an interest in the social construction of the body form important areas of consideration in the study of femininity and Physical Education. Thus research into femininity, identity and PE and school sport might benefit by drawing upon an eclectic range of related areas from sociology, cultural studies, sociology of education, sociology of sport, sociology of physical education, feminist studies, women's studies.

4.1 SOME CRITICISMS OF TRADITIONAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

Bordo (1990, p.135) suggests that we can no longer speak as if there were one omnipotent feminist position, rather that 'contemporary feminism remains a diverse and pluralist enterprise' emanating 'across disciplines, theoretical affiliations, speaking in different voices and crystallised around different concerns.' Critically, what divides these diverse feminisms that have emerged over the past twenty years, are questions concerning the source of women's 'oppression'. This has resulted in several strands of feminism giving varying attention to different factors in explaining gender inequality. Within feminism, there are different views of the causes of
women's oppression and the most effective ways to bring about social change (Boutlier and SanGiovanni, 1983). Furthermore, in eliminating oppression, we also need to recognise that some feminist work has been elitist and exclusionary, just as more main/male stream studies have been (see Hall 1996\(^1\)). It is taken here that such critical evaluation of conceptual and ideological foundations is necessary in terms of assumptions, values, premises and biases, as a pre-requisite to advancing and strengthening feminist explanations and understandings of sport/physical education and gender relations. The intention here is not to review all feminisms as others have covered this extensively elsewhere\(^2\), nor is it my intention to merely repeat old orthodoxies. Hall (1996:v, cited in Clarke, 1998b, p.17) comments that 'the older feminisms — liberal, radical, Marxist, and socialist no longer are adequate to map the terrain of feminist theory'. There is not space in this chapter to do justice to the complex debates between all feminist perspectives, and following Kenway (1994), in relation to the ‘differences’ across feminisms:

Rather than implying the necessity of abandoning certain modernist feminisms, it implies the need for an education in different feminisms, for an exploration of their different weaknesses and strengths in particular circumstances in schools and beyond, and for a view of them as strategies rather than truths of pedagogy. (p. 207).

Many of today’s liberal feminists are not ignorant of the need for fundamental transformation and more radical, socialist and post-modern feminists are supportive of some of the reformist liberal changes that have at least brought about some actual changes (albeit without fundamentally challenging oppressive structures and practices). Liberal approaches have, for example, been important in reminding us that inadequate access, resources and opportunities do have very real and negative consequences for particular groups of boys and girls (Wright, 1999). However, it is worth pointing out the fundamental differences that underpin these varying perspectives. Kristeva (1981, 1986) suggests that the feminist struggle must be seen historically and politically as a three-tiered one consisting of the fight for:

1. equal access to the male symbolic order
2. equal right to have ones way of being legitimated by the educational system
3. the right to have a symbolic order that does not have as its basic underpinning the male female duality.
Whilst this approach may be a little deterministic, it does give a sense of the changes taking place across new feminist movements. Whilst there is more overlap than is perhaps suggested, at each of these junctures new demands have emerged, and with that, new forms of feminism, and in crude terms, can be summarised as thus: The liberal feminist's movement has been at a political and legislative level in attempts to gain equal access to a system that already exists; Radical feminism has attempted to celebrate femaleness as a response to inequality experienced within the 'male' symbolic order; More recently, attempts have been made to deconstruct the opposition between masculinity and femininity, and therefore challenge particular notions of identity (Moi, 1985). There have therefore been a number of different theoretical and political starting points that have been developed at different levels. The ongoing debates between feminists concern the engagement with the complexities of the production of feminist knowledge, each reflecting differing positions of epistemology.

At the centre of the debates is how we conceptualise power and oppression, which has been largely dominated by the concept of 'patriarchy'. Whilst the term 'patriarchy' has been important in highlighting male domination, such a 'transsocial and ahistorical concept' (Messner and Sabo, 1990, p.7) cannot adequately account for the varying forms of male domination, and the varying ways in which women have resisted such 'domination' and 'oppression.' As Hargreaves (1982) suggests 'the concept of patriarchy implies a fixed state of male oppression over women, rather than a fluid relationship between men and women which is complex and moves with great speed at times' (p.115). There is an abundance of debate surrounding the concept of 'patriarchy', particularly since, as Walby (1990) notes, the assumption of 'coherence and stability over time and culture' (p.15) lead to elements of essentialism.

Moreover, a concept of 'patriarchy' as monolithic and totalising (Cocks, 1989) is therefore unable to adequately explain the dynamics of gender relations, and the complexities of power and diversity amongst women (including why some women oppress other women and some women resist oppression). As Clarke (1998, p.20) suggests, 'early feminist work and the resultant metanarratives that developed tended to oversimplify the cause(s) of women's oppression'. These were founded on white, middle class, heterosexual experiences, falsely universalising these as representative.
of "women's" issues (see Barrett and Phillips, 1992) and were in some cases guilty of being class blind (Arnot, 1981) and monocultural (Awatere, 1984). Dewar (1993, p 211) draws attention to the ways in which these feminist theories have been homogenous, taking the white, middle class women's experience to be generic, and representative of all women. There is little scope for considering cultural and historical change and there is a tendency to marginalise women's sexual differences, ethnicities, class, abilities and other social categories. What of women that are exploitative, or men that are exploited? Without attending to these issues, patriarchy comes to be represented as 'free of conflicts and contradictions, totally dominated by a unified masculinity' (Halberg, 1992; p.374). Jones (1993a) argues that a post-structuralist approach be taken to gender and education, claiming that many feminists have failed to recognise both the complexities of 'being a girl' and the differences between girls.

Within feminist theory today, there are two opposing but related meanings of difference. The first, often qualified as sexual difference, simply refers to the female/male dichotomy and the insistence that the male does not represent the universal... The second... suggests difference or diversity in race, ethnicity, religion, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age and disability among women (Hall 1996:40, cited in Clarke, 1998b).

This has been particularly the case within sex role socialisation theory, leaving men and their life experience as the only standard of analysis (Birrell and Cole 1984; Smeal, Carpenter and Tait, 1994, p.410). Like others, I am critical of a conception of patriarchy in its ahistorical, acultural and transsocial form, and would take seriously the recognition that there may be many forms and degrees of patriarchy (Walby, 1990).

To this end, the study seeks to understand, rather than reconcile, the complexities of power, through the subjectivities of these women, in terms of the 'myriad of power relations at the micro level of society' (Sawicki, 1991). This theoretical shift from product to social process prompts us to consider narratives of the feminine self at a level of multiplicity, at both the societal and individual level. In order to understand both these contexts, we need a further understanding of the constitutive elements of PE teachers' gendered identity work within these contradictory and complex
environments. Moreover, these processes need to be considered therefore in relation to the emerging personal and professional narratives of selves within the local context of PE ITT.

4.2 SCALING BACK THE THEORETICAL BRICK WALL: The possible benefits of aspects of post-structuralist thinking to the feminist emancipatory project

The 1990s witnessed a transformation in the feminist agenda, questioning and re-evaluating the notion that women are united by a shared oppression (Ramazanoglu, 1989). Furthermore, previous theories of socialisation lacked the theoretical space for resistance and change, presenting a hopeless and pessimistic picture of women as oppressed victims.

The focus of the last decade, concerned the theorisation and accounting for the notion of difference and these challenges seem high on the future agenda. With this has come a new generation of feminisms more complex in their analyses of gender relations. I take seriously here the consideration of differential axes of women’s ‘oppression’ as Clarke (1998) does, understanding this not as some monolithic structure, but rather conceptualised as multifaceted, multicomplex, in some places interlocking and in all cases involving relations of power, privilege, domination and subordination and always located within a specific cultural and his/herstorical context (p. 47).

The notion of power employed within the thesis is appropriated from the work of Foucault (1977) where rather than being exercised from above through coercion, power is viewed as decentred, multiple, invisible, and internalised within the practice or every day life, even at the micro level. Moreover, theories of discourse are drawn upon to explain the ways in which socio-cultural hegemonies of dominant groupings are acquired and challenged (Fraser, 1992) opening up insights into the ways ‘cultural authority is negotiated and contested’ (Fraser, 1992, p. 179) in relation to gender identity.

The term post-structuralism is a contested concept and has been influenced by a number of scholars who have developed varying theoretical positions, including for example, Lacan (1977), Kristeva (1981, 1984, 1986), Althusser (1971) and Foucault.
Poststructuralist work is explicitly about the refusal of singularity and unit, of universality and transcendence, of foundational principles and of particular dominant notions of rationality. Debate abounds concerning the extent to which post-structuralist theory can be usefully applied to feminist educational research. There is not space here for a detailed exploration of the arguments and this has been done expertly elsewhere (see Fraser and Nicholson, 1990; Ramazanoglu, 1993; Griffiths, 1995; Francis, 1999). However, this chapter attempts to highlight the main attractions and criticisms of these approaches to feminist educational research, exploring the central dilemma of the distinction between the application of post-structuralist theory to descriptive and ‘emancipatory’ research. From this, I attempt to establish a position from which the research is built.

Following Francis (1999) ‘pure’ post-structuralism is positioned as incompatible with the feminist emancipatory project, yet there are aspects of post-structuralism that may usefully be employed within this research. Francis (1998, 1999a) has argued the benefits of an ‘analysis of discourse’ approach (as opposed to discourse analysis or conversation analysis), maintaining that it is essential that feminists identify and analyse the various discourses used to construct gender difference if we are to deconstruct or reconstruct these. In attempting to contribute to these on-going debates, I would echo the sentiments of Clarke (1998b) in that rather than adopting post-structuralism in the absolute sense, my attention turns to how post-structuralist thinking might ‘lend itself to a feminist understanding of the lives of women’. At this stage it is important to note that the way in which I understand, interpret and utilise post-structuralism for the purpose of the study is one reading and interpretation (through the eyes of one individual). In this sense, an eclectic collection for the purpose of a theoretical framework must not be viewed as a perennial or universal representation of post-structuralism. Since it is taken that the types of research ethnography engaged in within this study might help to ‘build’ theory, these debates will be re-visited in the concluding chapters of the thesis, focusing in particular on their application and development in the context of gender relations and Physical Education.
4.2.1 Employing aspects of post-structuralist thinking within feminist educational research

Whilst it may appear that poststructuralism limits feminism to what Alcoff (1988, p.421) has described as the 'negative tactics of reaction and deconstruction' some of the concepts used by poststructuralists namely language, discourse, difference, and deconstruction are useful to feminists. In the following section I explore some of the concepts.

This focus on power relations at the micro level of the individual has become central to research in education, with 'discourse' becoming the medium through which these power relations are understood, negotiated and mediated. Foucault\(^4\) (1972; 1981) describes discourses as the historical and cultural production of systems of knowledge and beliefs that regulate the behaviour of an individual in a culture. According to Foucault, an individual's thinking, feeling and acting are determined by their positioning in specific historical and cultural discourses. For Foucault, discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (1977, p.49). In other words, they bring cultural objects into being by naming them, defining them and delimiting their field of operation. Discourse supply sets of concepts that we use to understand a topic, what can and cannot be said about it, and thus influence how we understand ourselves. The notion of discourse that I employ within this research focuses on the ways that discourses make up and are expressed through social institutions and other practices in order to illustrate how these impact upon the gendered identities of female student teachers of PE.\(^6\)

Kenway (1994) suggests that feminist post-structuralist theory 'acknowledges the complex ways in which institutions, meaning, power, human subjectivity and gender come together' pointing towards power as a dynamic, rather than something that is imposed upon women. These discourses make up the discursive fields (Foucault), that structure practice and institutions, such as the law, family, and education, which make up social structures and processes. Feminist post-structuralist Chris Weedon (1987) suggests that '[discourses] consist of competing ways of giving meaning to the world and organizing social institutions and processes'. Discourses bear power in their ability to position objects and subjects in particular ways, and within Physical Education, a number of competing discourses exist, occupying varying degrees of
power. Wider discursive fields impact upon the subjectivities of teachers, and thus in the context of teaching physical education, we need to understand the ways in which understandings of gender are informed by the whole range of discursive fields which impact upon current practice\textsuperscript{7}.

These unwritten rules for speaking, writing and being, constrain what can be said within particular discursive parameters. Foucault (1980b) argues therefore that the ‘self’ is not fixed, but rather positioned within discourse – socially and culturally produced through patterns of language, which constitute power by constructing objects in particular ways. Consequently, the inner core of the subject is not autonomous and self sufficient, but formed in relation to significant others, and identity is therefore formed in the interaction between self and society\textsuperscript{8}. Whilst the post-modern claim of the self as socially constructed is important, this is not to suggest that the self has completely disappeared and the concept of core self has nothing to offer. Rather, it may be more useful to acknowledge that there exists a core self, but this is never stable, not given once and for all but constantly worked upon. Thus rather than a notion of an unchanging identity with existential co-ordinates fixed at birth, we might look towards the person as socially defined and the self as phenomenologically experienced.

The Foucauldian supposition that power is not a possession, but is constituted through multiple and constantly shifting discourses (Foucault, 1980) has therefore appealed to a number of feminists. The post-structuralist theory of discursive positioning has been used in more recent feminist studies as an analytical tool in their investigations. Valerie Walkerdine’s work has been seminal in the development of an alternative model (to socialisation theory) pioneering the application of post-structuralist theory to the production of gender in educational and domestic settings. Walkerdine (1981) argued for the need to shift the focus away from individual identity to relations of power and to the multiple subjectivities that are available to any one person within the discursive practices of our society.

Certain feminist accounts have used the psychological concepts of ‘role’ and ‘stereotype’ to understand women and girls as unitary subjects whose economic dependence, powerlessness and physical weakness is reflected in their production as ‘passive’, ‘weak’ and ‘dependent’
individuals. Whilst such accounts have been extremely important in helping us to develop feminist practices... such analyses might not be as useful as we previously supposed... Female teachers and small girls ... are not unitary subjects uniquely positioned, but produced as a nexus of subjectivities, in relations of power that are constantly shifting, rendering them at one moment powerful and at another powerless.’ (Walkerdine, 1981, p.14).

As Davies and Banks (1992) suggest ‘from a post-structuralist perspective, subjectivity is formulated through discourses, given substance and pattern through storyline and deployed in social interaction.’ In this sense people, move through multiple positioning during any one-day or even within one conversation. Positions are discursively and interactively constituted and so are open to shifts and changes as the discourse shifts or as one’s positioning within, or in relation to that discourse, shifts. Through taking up these discourses as one’s own, each woman is a speaking subject and also one who is subjected or determined by those discourses (Davies, 1982). Thus the concept of ‘positioning’ is an important one in understanding the ways in which people are constituted in and through existing discourses (Davies and Harre, 1990). These become the framework through which we understand the past and present:

The personal histories of being positioned in particular ways and of interpreting events through and in terms of familiar story lines, concepts and images that one takes up as one’s own effectively constitute the me-ness of me separate from others. To the extent that one takes oneself up in terms of these familiar positionings and story lines, then they have become part of the subjectivity of that person (Davies, 1992, p.57).

These post-structuralist ideas have served as a source of inspiration to the development of a discursive approach to gender and identity⁹ becoming increasingly used by feminist educational researchers (for example Davies 1989a, 1989b; 1989c; Walkerdine, 1989, 1990; Jones, 1989, 1993a, 1993b; Kenway et al, 1994). A feminist discursive approach is a radical departure from former theories on gender identity since it takes gender identity not only as a social process (Davies, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c; Walkerdine, 1989; Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg, 1994), but also perceives the concept of gender itself as social (Volman and Ten Dam, 1998). Gender in this sense is a layered concept, a category of individual identity but also symbolic constructions, and a dimension of social relations and social organisation (Scott, 1986). Thus what
becomes 'feminine' and 'masculine' is a historical and cultural 'social construction' subject to change and internal contradictions. Deconstruction is concerned to expose the workings of power through this binary structuring. That is, the binary organisation of meaning involves a process of centring and marginalising of one or the other of the two terms of the binary. One term is thus understood as the first, or foundational term, and the opposite is defined in terms of its 'not-being' that term. A poststructuralist reading of gender, for example, sees 'masculine' as the first term, while the second, 'feminine', is defined in terms of the first, in terms of 'not-being'. Gender is oppositeness, within an economy of the same. The female is 'the same' (that is, human) as the male, yet different (lacking). 'Difference' is thus always the 'other' of the dominant term within the binary. This position allows both a recognition and a disavowal of difference. These dominant binaries of hegemonic social constructions of gender include:

Figure 4.1 Dominant Social binaries of gender difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine/feminine</th>
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<tr>
<td>skills/content</td>
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<td>process/product</td>
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<td>physical/human</td>
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<td>'man'/land</td>
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<td>'fact'/value</td>
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<td>speech/silence</td>
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<td>speaking/writing</td>
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<td>instrumental/reational</td>
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<td>subject/object</td>
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<tr>
<td>us/them</td>
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<td>economics/conservation</td>
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<td>'nature'/nurture</td>
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<td>'nature'/culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>linear/non-linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technicism/humanism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These are mediated by other categories such as ethnicity, class, and age. Therefore, at the level of individual identities people have to present their sense of self in relation to different discursive practices. The rejection of the fixed self means that 'gender' itself is deconstructed in post-structuralist theory, the repudiation of a fixed self means that gender is not fixed, rather that the self is positioned in gender discourse.

However, the investments (the needs and desires) that underpin particular positions are highly significant and the notion of choice is not simply a rational action predicated on knowledge. This is a critical departure from the idea of rational choice underpinned within a humanist discourse by individualism. Positioning, or being positioned, in this respect, points to the 'taking up as one's own the discourses through which one is constituted as female (Davies, 1982). The constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions. Once having taken up these subject positions as one's own, a person

inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines, and concepts that are made relevant within the particular discursive practices in which they are positioned (Davies, 2000, p.89).

Similarly, Smith (1988, p.xxxv) introduces the concept of positioning, (which Davies and Harre (1990) later expand upon). Smith distinguishes between 'a person' as an individual agent and 'the subject'. The subject being 'the series or conglomerate of positions, subject-positions, provisional and not necessarily indefensible, in which a person is momentarily called by the discourses and the world he/she inhabits' (p.xxxv). Furthermore, Davies (1989,1993,2000) suggests that in speaking and acting from a position people are bringing to a particular situation their history as a subjective being-that is, the history of one who has been in multiple positions and engaged in different forms of discourse. I use Davies' (2000) concept of positioning within this thesis, wherein it is 'a discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines' (p.91). This entails both interactive positioning in which what one says positions another, and also reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself, although neither may be necessarily intentional.
Post-structuralism claims therefore, to explain the gendered nature of society as influenced by discourses which position all people as men or women, and present these categories as relational (see Davies, 1989a). This provides a framework for the research through which to understand resistance to gender roles, inexplicable by sex role theory (and challenges ‘gender essentialism’). Radical feminists that draw upon ‘difference’ often maintain that an ‘essential feminine’ exists, which positions ‘womanhood’ as a homogenous group (see Cixous, 1976). Other feminists view this as self-subverting, as they effectively explain, and therefore in some ways legitimise, the difference between men’s and women’s social power. Post-structuralism attempts to moves beyond these binary dichotomies of masculine/feminine (see Davies, 1989; Davies and Banks, 1992) and enable an argument that there is no essential ‘femaleness’ (Soper, 1990; Nicholson and Siedman, 1995).

4.2.2 Gender identities: Complexity, contradiction and resistance

In learning to be active members of our social worlds we actively negotiate and live the different gender positions available, developing a gender identity by participating in the existing discursive practices and occupying our own place within these. In this sense the analytical framework focuses not on the ‘thoughts’ a person as if there is some coherent femininity, but the discursive constructions, as they are positioned and position themselves in multiple, shifting discourses. As such, socialisation is no longer seen as a more or less linear process with a well-defined outcome, but as a process full of contradictions and ambivalence, that is never actually finished (Davies, 1989a, 1989c): Individuals are not the passive recipients or objects of structural processes, but are constructively engaged in the securing of identities. To this end, gender identity is never ‘achieved’, although it may feel relatively constant at an individual level. It is also multiple, historically changeable and potentially conflictual and thus I consider femininity within this study from a relational perspective.

Building on the work of Connell (1987) the recognition of diversity has led many researchers of gender identity to refer to ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ in plural, rather than ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’, in order to reflect the different versions of masculinity and femininity adopted by different individuals. ‘Hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 1987) refers to the social ascendancy of a particular version or model of
masculinity that, operating on the terrain of common sense and conventional morality defines ‘what it means to be a man.’ It thereby secures the dominance of some men, and the subordination of women, within the sex/gender system. Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1987) and Connell (1989) argue that ‘hegemonic masculinity’ should not be understood as the male role but as a particular variety of masculinity to which women and others (young, effeminate, homosexual men) are subordinated.

Masculinity and femininity are relative concepts which are socially and historically constructed and as Connell (1987, p.85) observes ‘the meanings in the bodily sense of masculinity concern above all else the superiority of men to women, and the exaltation of hegemonic masculinity over other groups of men which is essential to the domination of women.’ Some writers are beginning to express discomfort with this concept suggesting that it inevitably evokes typologies (different ‘kinds’ of masculinity and femininity). Creating these ‘boxes’ suggests gender constructions to be more fixed than is really the case (see Kerfoot & Whitehead, 1998; Peterson, 1998; Francis, 2000; Wetherell and Edley, 1999). Notwithstanding these criticisms, it seems that if we view this framework as a heuristic, it offers a useful starting point for understanding the relative forms of gender evident in teacher education and physical education (Brown and Rich, 2002). Francis’ (2000) approach is instructive here, rather than seeing various ‘kinds’ of femininity and masculinity, she suggests there are various strategies by which men/boys and women/girls attempt to achieve masculinity or femininity. This position provided a useful perspective for conceptualising femininity within the research, since it prompted an understanding of the strategies employed by women and girls as resistance to dominant gender discourses.

4.2.2 Employing strategies of resistance

Over the last twenty years, researchers have become increasingly aware that presentation of gender is not monolithic. Post-structuralism offers an understanding of women not as ‘passive and universally oppressed’ but living in a system, shaping it and being shaped in contradictory ways. This is not to refute the position that women are subordinated in a global gender order (see above), rather that this oppression is not linear nor all encompassing.
The premise here is that women and girls will take up gender positions in multiple and contradictory ways, simultaneously accommodating and resisting them (Davies, 1989b; Riddell, 1989; Lees, 1993). This offers an incorporation of resistance and contradiction, since the self is passively positioned in some discourses, but at the same time is active in positioning in other discourses. Researchers such as Riddell (1989) and Lees (1992) have shown how girls actively resist the classroom regime, often using particular constructions of femininity to do so. They thus showed that girls’ portrayals of femininity were not necessarily consistent and often contained contradiction. For instance, in her research on the cultural production of classroom practice Jones (1989) highlights how working class Polynesian and middle class Pakeha (European) girls actively and rationally ‘produce’ classroom practice in a New Zealand secondary school. Girls and women take up some or all of these contradictory positions at different moments. Similarly, Bird (1992), points to the ways in which girls and boys ‘take up’ various positions in the discourses which constitute powerfulness in contemporary New Zealand Classrooms. Bird claims that girls’ authority in these settings, can be variously understood, for example when they ‘take on’ the authority of the (female) teacher, and gain some power via their nurturing relationship with other pupils. In this sense, Feminist theorisations of identity as shifting and unessentialised offer a range of insights most relevant to educational studies (Tsolidis, 1996).

4.3 GENDER IDENTITIES AND BODILY INSCRIPTION

4.3.1 Perspectives on the gendered body
As Tuner (1984) suggests, the body is of major significance in any social study since ‘there is an obvious and prominent fact about human beings: they have bodies and they are bodies’ (p.1). With Physical Education highly focused upon the body, gendered bodies / selves become a pertinent issue within such a social practice with the potential to send out embodied gendered messages and meanings. What a PE teacher displays and transmits in the bodily sense is highly significant. As Wright (1996) points out, until recently feminist writing which has been concerned with the social construction of gender or the reproduction of gendered subjectivities has looked to cultural meaning as constituted through language, texts, or practices. Less attention has been paid to the ways in which subjectivity has been constituted in and through
the body. Turner (1984) and Rothfield (1986) have both pointed towards the ways in which the body has traditionally been viewed as a fixed transcendental phenomenon which has made it difficult to conceptualise the body in relation to social and cultural practices. Most research on subjectivity has taken a disembodied approach ignoring subjectivity as it may be constituted in and through the body. Similarly there has been an absence of the body in sociological theory, although this is now changing (Frank 1990), with increasing consideration of the body in culture. Indeed social science inquiry has begun to bring back the ‘body’ in its sociological agenda. In much of the sociology of the body, (Freund, 1988; Frank 1990; Featherstone et al, 1991; Shilling, 1993; Falk 1994; Crossley 1996) the body itself has been explored as a product of discourse, as an object of practice and power.

Although social constructionism has increasingly influenced the analyses of the body, theoretical developments have been limited by its own grounding of binary oppositions in the debate as to where the body is natural, pre-given or a socially constructed entity. Thus, turning the reflective gaze onto our own work, if we are to avoid essentialism then we need to move beyond this restrictive debate. Bodies cannot be understood simply as raw material, that is non- or pre-social. On the other hand, bodies are not simply and purely social, cultural and signifying effect lacing in their own ‘weighty materiality’ (Grosz, 1994, p.21). Whilst meaning may be transmitted cognitively or discursively, it is also embedded within the practices of physical education in an embodied way. Although second wave feminists appropriated the concept of gender as a useful strategy for contesting the naturalisation of sexual difference (i.e. biology as destiny) in different areas of struggle they have also inherited some of its problems. The concept of gender formulated within ‘gender identity’ paradigm in decades after the Second World War as part of a liberation of the life and social sciences. However, this formulation failed to interrogate the political-social history of binary categories like nature/culture, and so sex/gender in colonialist Western discourse. Whilst early second wave feminists criticised the nature/culture dualism, they hesitated in extending their criticism fully to the derivative sex/gender distinction. Biological determinism and dualistic thinking carried over into feminist theorising in the correspondence of sex with nature and gender and culture – a politics based on biological determinism versus social constructionism. In arguments against biological determinism and in favour of social constructionism, Haraway (1991)
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maintains that feminists have failed to enquire into how bodies, including sexualised and racialised bodies appear as objects of knowledge and sites of intervention in the 'biology' (1991, p134). If we are to move Feminist theorising forward, then it seems imperative that we go beyond some dualistic tension between essentialism and relativism.

By the end of the 1990's a growing number of feminists had begun to rethink the status of the body in feminism, with an explosion of feminist writings concerned with exploring the specific constructions of, and significations attached to women’s bodies. Kessler and McKenna (1978) note the way in which the social construction of gender identifies it with physical attributes; although gender is considered a social construct, it is attributed in the basis of physical signs and forms. Wright (1996b, p.62) suggests that the Foucauldian notions developed in the History of Sexuality (1981) serve as a good starting point 'from which to talk about the masculinity and femininity as constituted through a process that is both historically and culturally specific and that begins with a focus on the regulation of bodies.' In Discipline and Punish (1979) Foucault argues that the material practices of discourses and institutions manipulate, shape and train bodies to particular ends. Gilroy (1999) pointed out that one of the main attractions of Focault's work was his argument that the body was not natural, but produced through relations of power, and was therefore a cultural product: 'To understand the body we need to understand the discourse within which the body is constructed and then operates' (Gilroy, 1999, p.99). Thus according to Foucault the body is not neutral, not simply a product of biology, but rather is worked upon through specific cultural and historical conditions. Within patriarchal societies, modes of behaviour and notions of acceptability have a profound significance for the ideological discourses which come to define 'femininity'.

The influence of Foucault has challenged the naturalistic view of the body that has a fixed structure and immutable desires and behaviours. Rather than seeing bodies as biologically given or pre-discursive, bodies have come to be viewed as fabricated through discourse, as an effect of power/knowledge. Thus sexism emerges from the assigning of negative characteristics to the corporeal existence of women, and the classification of different body types differentiating between male and female bodies, and with that, sexual types. Critiquing the idea of the natural body and its supporting
discourses seems sensible if we are to counter essentialism and naturalism (as the feminist agenda wishes to do), particularly since it seeks to control and negate that which is ‘different.”

As Bartky (1988) notes, while individuals may be born male or female, masculinity and femininity are achieved as the result of a process of disciplinary practices. The body and its appearance, has thus become even more linked to the ‘project’ of self identity, since following Giddens (1991) the body is no longer an ‘extrinsic given’. In Western Society, individuals have become more and more involved in the management, shaping, maintenance and appearance of their body. This is perhaps because they are being developed within a society which is clearly recognising the body’s potential to act as a resource and provide symbols about self-identities (Shilling, 1993).

Disciplinary practices have been seen to operate on the female body through diet and exercise, restrictions of posture and gesture, ornamentation and techniques of self-presentation. Bartky (1990) and Bordo (1989) drew upon Foucault’s analysis of body disciplinary practices by looking at the ways women attempted to control and shape their outer bodies in order to conform to the construction of the ‘ideal’ female body. Featherstone (1991) connected the relationship of the ‘real’ body to ideals about the body that circulates in consumer culture. Thus the ‘closer the actual body approximates the idealised images of youth, health, fitness and beauty, the higher it’s exchange value’ (Featherstone, 1991, p.177). The ideal female body is represented as tanned, slender, athletic, contained or taut, that if free from ‘unsightly’ and ‘wobbly’ fat (Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1990; Duncan, 1994; Spitzack, 1990). As Bartky (1990) points out, these procedures are not simply reducible to ‘difference’ between men and women but are social constructions. Bartky (1990, p.72) suggests that the accolade of prescribed femininity requires radical transformations of the body: ‘A woman may live her life with a pervasive feeling of bodily deficiency. Hence a tighter control of the body has gained a new kind of control over the mind’ (Bartky, 1990, p.81). This power has an encompassing effect – disciplinary practices permeate society, focusing on the creation of a new individuality that becomes inscribed into gender identities. Women can refuse to submit to this, although to do so is to risk the stigmatisation of noncompliant behaviour at both an institutional and individual level.
The sum of this research points to the use of ‘bodies’ in the oppression of women and girls (Bloom and Munro, 1995). These studies implore us then, to consider how girls and women might learn to name and resist the more subtle and harmful messages about the body that are imbedded through popular culture and images (Oliver, 2001). Particularly the ways in which women’s sense of self is damaged when the female body is objectified and demeaned in society (Bordo, 1997; Collins, 1991; hooks, 1989a, 1995).

However, whilst the idea of disciplinary practice has revealed much about the nature of social constructions and the maintenance of the body, the interplay between discourses, identity and embodied agency is far more complex than some of these studies might suggest. In the study of sport and PE, the focus is shifting towards multiple body perspective which elicit insights into the contradiction and complexities of the various discourses that surround women’s sport, as well as the sportswomen’s own experiences and perception (Cambell et al., 1998; Fasting, 1998). For example, Ryan (2001) using the work of Grosz (1994) discusses the significance of fitness regimes/exercise, suggesting that the body becomes a vehicle for expressivities, which at the same time is locked in a particular power/knowledge game about gender and body image. Significantly though, Ryan argues that there is a need to move beyond seeing weight training in terms of either docility or empowerment. Such theoretical perspectives furthermore allow us to consider the multiple ways in which bodies are constituted. This feminist post-structural position proved useful for Cox & Thompson’s (2000) recent examination of the conflicts and tensions that women soccer players experiences, exploring how the players experienced their bodies within the discourses of sport, gender and hetereosexuality.

Transposing these insights into the context of physical education and sport might potentially expose the contradictions that women and girls are presented with, and a growing number of feminist academics in these contexts are utilising critical post-structuralist theories (Sykes, 1996; Wright, 1995, 1997; Clarke, 1998a, 1998b) to assist this process. These perspectives have much to say about the social constructions of gender and sexuality within sport. Whilst ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is based on ideals of strength, aggression, mesomorphy and natural competition, femininity is
marginalized as the weaker ‘other’. Hegemonic ideals of female physicality are on the other hand, the binary opposite, what Connell (1987) terms 'Emphasized femininity' (Connell 1987), a form oriented towards accommodation of the needs and interests of men. Griffin (1992a) uses the notion of the 'heterosexuality' based on more explicit displays of heterosexuality, where sports involvement is encouraged for the purpose of maintaining a feminine appearance. For some individuals, this may contradict with the kinds of physicality required for success in many physical activities. The discourse of heterosexuality is particularly influential in the construction of sportswomen’s bodies. The sporting discourse posits that the body must be physically powerful. However, the heterosexual discourse, which depends upon gendered distinctions for it's meaning, constructs the male body as strong and active and the female body as passive and weak.

There are various and contradictory discourses operating within the family and school setting; within some social contexts that encourage a traditional notion of femininity the physically active woman might be positioned as tomboy, lesbian, man hater yet at the same time these girls may also be positioned quite differently in discourses where physicality is encouraged and where they may come to be viewed as 'competent'. These limited definitions of women’s physicality or femininity are problematic in that they frame the ways in which females can legitimately identify themselves. These ideologies 'go back a long way in history and are so much part of everyday life that for the vast majority of people they seem eminently sensible' (Hargreaves, 1994, p 145). As McRobbie (1978, p.32) suggests we are both 'saved by and locked within the culture of femininity'. Femininity is a safe place for many in that they can recognise themselves as having characteristics that locate oneself as female, and thus develop their personal identity. Despite the challenges to such narrow meanings of femininity through their participation in sport, many women find it difficult to act from the margins, and as Deem (1986a) notes 'it is not only men, but women too, who are desperate to hang on to certain value differences' (p.138), influenced by some metaphysical nature of maleness and femaleness.

This highlights the ways in which gender is discursively constituted and therefore individuals learn a gender knowledge. As Davies (1987) notes individuals ‘learn to position themselves correctly as male or female, since that is what is required of them
to have a recognisable identity within the existing social order'. Subjectivity and identity are chosen, but within discursive frames that are not always negotiable. Wright and King (1990) point to the need to make visible the layers of meanings encoded in the language of teachers. Through an analysis of teacher language in physical education lessons they suggest that these meanings contribute to the production and reproduction of expectations of femininity and masculinity that mirror cultural stereotypes in Western societies. Moreover, they suggest that for girls, this has the potential to position them in a particular relation to physical activity that may discourage their participation and disempower them in a patriarchal society. These points are reiterated in Davies' (1989) work analysing the discursive practices through which males and females are created as opposites (in the school setting) and through which people become identifiably either one sex or another. Davies suggests that conceptions of gender, or gender categories are created by individuals and within individuals as they learn the discursive practices through which to locate themselves as individuals and members of the social world.

4.4 RACING FOR A THEORY FOR CHANGE, TRIPPING ON POST-STRUCTURALISM: the difficulties of applying post-structuralism to 'emancipatory' research

Like other feminists, I openly acknowledge that my research is partly oriented towards a political project harbouring a commitment to take steps (even if small) to disrupt patterns of oppression/repression that might be attributed to particular hegemonic forms of social construction. Indeed, analysing gender and educational discourses and the impact upon the identities of female teachers is partially underpinned by the premise that in providing a better understanding of these processes, we have more chance of changing them. As such I support Sawicki’s (1991) view that for practical purposes, feminisms need to reserve spaces for both generalist critique suitable when gross points need to be made’ and for attention to complexity and nuance. Whilst the focus in this study is on understanding individuality, diversity, complexity and multiplicity, what we must not lose sight of is how all women may be subject to wider systems that exert oppression or power over them and the world-wide domination of certain identifiably masculine ways of viewing and organising the world. Most
feminists agree that there are a number of political consequences for the universal positioning of, or identification of, individuals as masculine or feminine based on the sexed body, requiring investigation, and possibly challenge or change. Indeed I would echo these sentiments, acknowledging however that whilst these approaches might be applied by feminists to the experiences of all women, specifically socially and culturally produced discourses will impact on different women at different times, in different ways.

However, the underlying premise that all women are potentially disadvantaged within a dominant Gender Order (Connell, 1987), and that this might be addressed and changed through some ‘human project’ in some ways represents a ‘truth narrative’ (no matter what our theoretical orientations). Since post-structuralism deconstructs all truth narratives, even emancipatory ones (Soper, 1990) these grand narratives (Lyotard, 1984) are taken as exercising a power relationship as they claim particular truths about moral correctness, thus can a feminist post-structuralist position ever be more than oxymoronic? Moreover, many ‘post-structural feminists’ draw on these approaches since the idea of the possibility of subjects making choices in terms of their multiple and often contradictory positioning in relation to various discourses, leaves the door ajar for changing gender relations (Smith, 1988). Jones (1997) however, suggests that the notion of a self choosing to take up certain discourses as well as being positioned by others, is not a post-structuralist position, since it reflects humanist notions of agency. Consequently there are some fundamental tensions between post-structuralism and feminism (Francis, 1999) particularly in relation to how we come to theorise the subject, agency and the potential for social change. The application of post-structuralism therefore requires careful handling, since it can potentially lead to a political paralysis. Two key points require further discussion and these include the use of the term ‘women’ and the focus of post-structuralism on discourse and deconstruction.

4.4.1 Strategic essentialism

As has been noted, post-structuralism suggests that there is no ‘universal woman’, and this has led to a more sophisticated understanding of the relational dynamics of gender relations and power, moving beyond the binary dichotomies of masculine/feminine (see Davies, 1989a; Davies and Banks 1992) and enable an argument that there is no
essential 'femaleness' (Soper, 1990; Nicholson and Siedman, 1995) which radical feminism speaks of. That feminism is based upon a notion of womanhood, and its relationship to manhood, inevitably draws upon some 'universal subject'. However, a number of feminists remain critical of abandoning the notion of 'womanhood' claiming that it remains indispensable to feminism (Balbus, 1987; Bordo, 1990; Harstock, 1990; Soper, 1990), adopting a form of 'strategic essentialism' where feminist can make strategic use of universalising categories like 'women' to advance feminist goals. As Jones (1993a, p.158) suggests we cannot simply abandon the notion of 'girls' or 'women' since they 'form the basis of our political and conceptual work as feminists in education'. She further suggests that 'one option is to simultaneously use and reject it' (p.158). Soper (1990) makes similar points, in that whilst we should move towards indifference feminism rather than difference or radical/essentialist feminism, we should retain the term 'woman' on the grounds that it is needed to both describe and potentially transform women's lives, in order to bring us to a position where we can afford to be gender-indifferent. Jones (1993) argues that the term 'girl' may have to be retained by feminists for practical purposes, but argues that we should use it more carefully. Some are wary about entirely abandoning an identity politics14 founded on the category of gender and others have embraced the scepticism (Bordo, 1993) as a theoretical and political stance, and have begun to turn a critical gaze onto discursive constructions of the category of gender and consider the implications for such a critique for gendered subjects.

What becomes of the subject traditionally thought of as necessary for resistance if there is no such category as 'women'? In this sense, within the thesis I paradoxically try to create and disrupt the notion of 'subject', through the exploration of 'women's' narratives. To revive the notion of 'woman' at a time when subjectivity has become non-unitary, and knowledge as ephemeral is to enter into a deeply complex political terrain that is not without its problems. Conceptualising the lives of 'women' educationalists without reproducing essentialist notion of gender identity therefore becomes a rich terrain for theorising the subject, as other education feminists have begun elsewhere (Steedman, 1990; Jones, 1993a; Middleton, 1993). Central to this discussion are the tensions between the deconstruction of the unitary subject which has functioned to highlight gender as a social construction, and the corresponding fear of loosing category of 'woman' central to the politics of feminism. As Munro (1998)
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asks 'when the subject becomes a fiction, what becomes of the categories ‘resistance’ and ‘agency’ thought necessary for social change?’ (p.2). I revisit these concepts in chapter eight. How far might we theorise multiple femininities before these constellations start to destroy our political utility?

4.4.2 Avoiding political paralysis

Another tension emerges between the post-structuralist aim of deconstruction, particularly of ‘principled positions’ (ethical evaluations) (Squires, 1993) compared to the feminist need for a system to explain the socio-economic reality of difference (Francis, 1999). The difficulty with this ‘anti-ontology’ is that we need concepts (including gender, ethnicity, place, time) to be able to say anything. According to Soper (1993) the focus on deconstruction rather than construction results in political nihilism and fatalism: if we are to make any political claims about power relations and differences then narratives become essential (Ramazanoglu, 1993). Without a modernist ‘regime of truth’ which states that particular ‘gendered behaviour’ is a (potentially oppressive) social construction which might lead to inequality, we would have no incentive for ourselves as researchers, or to encourage teachers, children and others, to deconstruct current discourses or challenge gender dualism. Indeed I would echo the sentiments of Spretnak (1993) that we should be proud of our emancipatory aims and beliefs, since the emancipatory narrative forms the basis of most feminist research (Stanley & Wise, 1993; Griffiths, 1993). Dewar (1993) makes this point, that our ‘theorizing about sport and each other presents possibilities for challenging and changing oppression.’ However, this is not to take up this notion of ‘emancipatory’ uncritically, and I recognise here as Humphries (1996) does, that it is a contested term, potentially leading to contradiction.

Maynard (1994) suggests, heavy emphasis on these post-structuralist positions will render social research pointless and becomes problematic since the 'contest, subverting and destablising hegemonic gendered discourses is what the politics of gender is about' (Kenway, 1994, p 200). Burman (1992) observes that while discourse analysis is useful for ‘opening up’ or deconstructing responses, it is theoretically unable to privilege one reading over another. Thus motivated political research which offers a particular reading, cannot claim to be ‘the correct’ reading, and we return to
some liberal pluralism. This is an important consideration for feminists and other politically motivated researchers.

The issue here is whether a theory that deconstructs other theories, but appears to provide nothing to replace them, is of use to emancipatory positions (see Maynard, 1994). It might be easy to conclude therefore, that the feminist project is a modernist one, and as such incompatible with post-structuralism (see Francis, 1999). How can we utilise post-structuralism as a theoretical tool in analysis, within feminist 'humanist' research, since attempts to combine a basically 'humanist' position with a post-structuralist one seem theoretically dubious? However, rather than abandoning post-structuralism entirely, perhaps we should be refocusing the debate. If research of this type remains at the descriptive or analytical level, purely 'deconstructing' and offering nothing in its place has limited value in terms of 'emancipatory or feminist research'. As Francis (1999) suggests:

...apolitical post-structuralism which joys in deconstruction and textual play, cannot, by it's very nature, be used for reconstruction in the sense that many feminists would wish to attempt (Francis, 1999, p.389)

Kenway (1994) draws caution to this form of 'deconstruction' which might present a theoretical 'cul-de-sac', suggesting instead a move;

beyond the blinkered view with its basis of deconstruction and from one of despair to hope...We see post-structuralism as a theory which acknowledges discourses and practices of struggle and resistance, which recognizes the dynamic interplay of social forces, and which therefore can readily be deployed as a theory of and for change' (p.189).

A number of feminists have attempted to resolve or at least circumvent these tensions. Fraser and Nicholson (1990) and Weedon (1997) offer as a resolution, the possibility of continuing with the grand narratives intact, so long as feminists acknowledge the 'historicity' of their theories. Muro (1998) makes an important point here in that the poststructuralist 'subject' where subjectivity is seen as unitary, multiple, and in flux is central to the deconstruction of the universal male subject of liberal and humanist discourse. Indeed it is certainly the case that a number of feminists have successfully applied post-structuralist theory and techniques to educational research in order to
shed new light on the ways in which gender discourses and identities are perpetuated and taken up (as is the focus in this study). It would seem however, that few of these 'post-structuralist feminist' research projects have constituted 'pure' post-structuralist approaches. The dilemma remains; the idea of 'post-post-structuralism' (Francis, 1998) or 'modernist postmodernism' (Holland, 1995) seem problematic, at its worst, solipsistic, yet we need some political base. The challenges of post-structuralism lead us to ask: Can we appeal to a metanarrative of emancipation whilst retaining a concern with the particular and the local? McNay (1992), from a feminist perspective, concludes:

...feminists cannot afford to relinquish either a general theoretical perspective, or an appeal to a metanarrative to justice. I contend that gender issues cannot be fully comprehended without an understanding of general social dynamics, nor can gender oppression be overcome without some appeal to a metanarrative of justice (McNay, 1992, p.7)

I don't therefore see an exclusive focus on post-structuralist theory as desirable, nor that post-structuralism is inherently superior to identity politics. On the contrary, I would agree with Brookey and Miller (2001) who argue that an exclusive single approach is precisely what 'social movements must avoid, and critiques that dismiss either approach as having no value for the movement [whatever that political movement might be] may do a serious and dangerous disservice to the very groups whose rights they claim to advance' (p.140). The challenge, as I see it, is the development of theories which move towards a dynamic and relational conceptualisation of gender within sport and physical education, but which must 'still provide a place from which women can speak, make political demands, and challenge patriarchal structures' (Hall, 1996, p.vi). Burman and Parker (1993) observe that discourse analysis can be used as an effective tool by 'critical' or feminist researchers who seek to comment on the social processes which constitute structures of oppression. This is not to study intersections of identity and politics to describe who we really are, but to identify the means through which we can best articulate our identities in order to achieve our political goals; to recognize the particularities of struggle without abandoning metanarratives of emancipation and justice. One of our greatest resources is the 'non-essential, nonnaturalizable, fragmented identities and the refusal of the delusion of a return to 'original unity' (Harding, 1986, p.193).

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4.4.3 Preferential Narratives

I wish to return here to my opening point, the dilemma which many feminists face. Spretnak (1993) offers a useful perspective here in suggesting that many academics self-consciously avoid making ‘truth claims’, or to even appear hopeful about social change, in their attempts to appear ‘post-structurally correct’. She claims that people who were formerly concerned to act upon the world with egalitarian motives have been rendered impotent by the nihilistic tendencies of post-modern theory, which denies the validity of emancipatory projects. I too felt this dilemma which Spretnak refers to, with a strong political orientation in my research, ultimately I feel that we should act on the world, but harmonising this with post-modern theories has been increasingly problematic: I am not alone in this dilemma. Indeed it remains a vital part of feminism to develop these theoretical debates in order to carry the feminist project through the next century.

Francis (1999b) draws upon Billig (1987) and Billeg et al (1988), who argue that all ideology and argument is dilemmatic; for every argument we articulate we are aware of a contrary counter-argument, which is also part of our construction. Francis expands this suggesting that there can still be one side of arguments, which we agree with or feel is ‘true’, despite our acceptance that we have other discourses to draw on, or that the self is positioned in discourse and constructed in social interaction. Middleton (1992) argues that the evaluations or value judgements we make are often based on feeling and impulse. He suggests that many male academics, including post-structuralists, suffer from the ‘male’ fear of feeling (impulse) and emotion, based on the idea of the separation between reasoning mind (male) and emotional body (female). But as Francis (1999) suggests, to deny our feelings and partiality that form and give preference to narratives, is to maintain some falsehood and deny our subjectivity. I would further echo Francis’ sentiments here in that I feel the feminist argument is a valid one, whilst acknowledging that it is a modernist grand narrative in some ways, based on potentially over essentialist generalisations concerning males and females.

I would agree with Harding (1991) therefore, who argues that enlightenment discourses have progressive as well as regressive tendencies, and that we need post-
structuralist and enlightenment agendas at this time in history. There are no immediate resolutions to these on-going debates and in chapter eight I briefly re-visit some of these key considerations following the analysis of the data.

4.4.4 The materiality of gender relations; towards an embodied understanding

Theory building and explication that rests solely on and in the notion of discourse is arguably incomplete since it largely fails to encapsulate all our lived realities (Clarke, 1998b, p.40)

Messner (1996, p.227 cited in Clarke, 1998, p40) in drawing upon the work of Stein and Plummer highlights 'one of the major shortcomings and danger of post-structuralism: an over emphasis on the causal importance of language and a concomitant under emphasis on material social relations.' Indeed, as Clarke (1998b, p.40) points out 'an over reliance on deconstructing and interpreting discourse without significant reference to material, social and political relations' severely shapes and restricts our interpretations of others lives. A woman for instance, may still feel threatened when she sees a man, whilst walking alone late at night, regardless of whether she theoretically agrees that we should abandon the terms 'male' or 'female'. Similarly Lloyd and Duvccn (1992) argue that post-structuralist analysis allows inadequate recognition that, for instance, gender positions constrain certain types of interaction.

Theories addressing the relationship between social structured and human agency have stimulated some of the most productive debates with sociology and remain central issues both to the discipline, and this research. The body as a site of agency, or of resistance, however, has been absent from much writing. Traditional theoretical conceptualisations of the structure/agency relationship have tended to share a relatively disembodied view of the 'agent' which emphasised cognition and marginalizes the significance of the emotional dimensions of interaction for human action and social structure (Shilling, 1999). As Connell (1995) has argued a sociology of the body needs to be developed 'where bodies are seen as sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct' (p.60). The reframing of the body as a creative component of social actors emerges as integral to this perspective (Watson and Cunningham-Burley, 2001). Shilling (1999)17 argues that a more
developed view of the embodied agent and emotional dimensions of interaction has the potential to provide a level of analysis which mediates and allows for the continued saliency of, structure and action. Whilst Post-structuralist theory has been useful in identifying discourse, we must be cautious to not present a thin view of embodiment, which cannot fully explain preferences of individuals. Habits, senses and sensualities do not simply ground cognitively directed human (inter)action, but mould and constrain social structures, as well as being partially shaped by them (Shilling, 1993). Shilling’s work has therefore been significant in highlighting the importance of the relationship between embodied interaction and the accomplishment of social selves for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between individual agency and social structures.

The ‘interaction order’ (Goffman, 1983; Rawls, 1987) refers to the domain of face-to-face relations (of bodily co-presence) wherever these take place, and includes within its scope corporeal and emotional features of interactions. The precise relationship between embodiment and emotions remains an issue for contemporary debate and is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Goffman raises some relevant points here in that his interest in the interaction order also involved emotional and presentational concerns. The ‘interaction order’ is instructive, identifying the embodied dimensions of interaction as consequential for, yet irreducible to individuals and social systems, enabling us to investigate the ‘loose coupling’ of interaction to individuals and social systems.

There are some key limitations to this however. Goffman’s and Rawls’ account of the ‘interaction order’ has been criticized for its neglect of certain key issues and distinctions that need to be addressed before a full reconceptualisation of structure/agency relationship can be achieved. Shilling (1999) suggests that whilst there is nothing wrong with identifying a sphere of social life in which the emotional, bodily features of (inter)action are important because of their association with maintaining a social self, issues of embodiment are relevant to a far wider set of considerations. They define the limits of individual acts in important ways and confront social systems with certain basic problems (Turner, 1984, 1996; Shilling 1993; Mellor and Shilling, 1997). Furthermore as Layder (1997) points out, we also need to know when processes within the ‘interaction order’ are relevant and
consequential for structures and for individuals, and when they are of internal significance only; when they are developed 'for their own sake'.

4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I have outlined some of the contemporary shifts in feminist theorizing in education. I have critiqued the ostensibly oppositional positions of feminism and post-structuralist theory. In essence, the driving position of this research is feminist, but one which draws upon tenets of post-modernism and post-structuralism. As Clarke (1998b, p.45) points out 'these juxtapositions point towards our occupation in a number of contradictory, diverse, multiple and ambiguous positions'.

These are only provisional positions, for like Clark (1998b, p.46) I believe that 'little in this post-modern condition remains fixed', and as such this is an overview which 'at least affords some latitude in terms of a developing thesis, and a consequential framework which will change over time'. In summary, as I have stressed in other chapters, I have outlined a variety of conceptual tools which I will draw upon in trying to make sense of the gender constructions of a generation of student teachers within Physical Education. I have argued that elements of post-structural and post-modern thinking are invaluable to this investigation since they implore us to question grand narratives, the normalcy of biological gender dualisms being a case in point. In terms of educational research, what poststructuralist theories and methodologies allow is an understanding of the necessary complexity of the school as an institution and a set of social practices. It seeks to avoid the various reductionisms that are an inherent part of other research paradigms. I would suggest, then, that post-structuralism is valuable for educational research for the following reasons. The principal benefit of adopting poststructuralist perspectives in educational research is that post-structuralism attempts to work productively with, rather than against, the complexity of human existence. Moreover, since it refuses the opposition between the individual and the social, it has ways of investigating the relations between them.

Nonetheless I have argued against the employment of such theories in the absolute sense since such an ‘anti-ontology’ in its entirety would lead to a political paralysis. The feminist project after all, ultimately remains a modernist one since we need concepts (including gender, ethnicity, place, time) to be able to say anything. As such,
there are some difficult questions posed by the theoretical synthesis created in this research. In particular; is discontinuity rather than continuity of the self more the norm? If so, how far can we theorise these constellations before it becomes detrimental to political utility, and to the theoretical framework? I have no answers here, only doors to open.

1 Hall (1996) considers how the formal and theoretical discourse about the relationship between gender and sport came to be, what characterises it now, and how it could (or should) be changed. Hall makes three fundamental observations:

1. That there are unrecognised gender assumptions and ideologies implicit in sport research;
2. that these gender assumptions and ideologies are rarely analysed or related to social structure;
3. and that the only viable analyses of gender and sport are those that provide both a critical and historical analysis of the ideological foundations of our past and ongoing research.

See for example Tong (1989)


4 What emerges from even a brief survey of research that goes under the name of poststructuralism is a vast wealth of discourses and practices which are by no means always commensurable, compatible or even always mutually intelligible.

5 Diamond and Quinby (1988) offer key insights into the convergences between Foucault's theorising and feminist work:

'Both identify the body as a site of power ... both point to the local and intimate operations of power rather than focussing exclusively on the supreme power of the state. Both bring to the fore the crucial role of discourse in its capacity to produce and sustain hegemonic power and emphasize the challenged contained within marginalised and/or unrecognised discourses.' (Diamond and Quinby, 1988, p.x).

6 The position taken echoes that of Walkerdine (1989) in focusing strongly on 'positioning in discourse.' This differs from social construction, which uses for example multiple roles, or a structural/functional model. It also differs from other uses of the term 'discourse' as applied in discursive analysis and other similar uses such as 'accounting systems.' The concept of discourse, especially in the power/knowledge relation of Foucault's later work, stresses the historical constitution of knowledge. It is therefore post-structuralist, necessitating a shift beyond usages that rely on structural forms of linguistics and, for example, Althusserian formations of ideology. Central here is the historical creation of knowledge in forms of government. This allows us to claim that such positionings have powerful and real effects, whilst acknowledging that their 'truth' is itself historically produced, within certain specific possibility conditions.

7 For a detailed analysis of mapping of the discourse and practices of physical education see Wright (1996a)

8 The subject is taken to have an inner core or essence that he or she thinks is the 'real me' but this is formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds 'outside' and the identities that they offer. Hall (1992) suggests that the post-modern self or subject previously experienced as having a unified and stable identity is becoming fragmented. The focus is not on the attempt to find an absolute grounding for knowledge, but instead the notion of 'fractured identities' (Bacchi, 1990) and the need to recognise differences among men and women. It is composed of not a single stable identity but of several, often contradictory and unresolved identities. Furthermore, Hall suggests that our subjective conformity with the objective needs of the culture, the identities that make up the social landscape out there. These identities are breaking up because of structural and institutional change. The process of identification and through which we project ourselves into our cultural identities becomes more open.
bodies are disciplined and made 'docile' and productive in culturally and historically specific ways (Balsamo, 1996; McNay, 1992; Sawicki, 1991; Trethewey, 1997). Gendered ways of performing Foucauldian feminists are beginning to provide theoretical accounts of the ways in which women's identities - walking, working, sitting, comportment, dressing are taken within these frameworks as not effectively through the implementation of disciplinary techniques targeted primarily on the body.

Furthermore, it is important in reminding us, as Morgan (1992) points out, that whilst we must acknowledge the variations and diversities within masculinity, we must not do so at the expense of femininity, with other definitions positioned in relation to these. Some argue that hegemonic masculinity remains the dynamic ideological form around which western patriarchal relations are constructed, legitimised and defended (see for example, Brittan, 1989; Siedler, 1997; Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Whannel, 2000). Connell's (1995) framework offers a formulation of relations relative to an established order where the idealised conception of masculinity is itself referenced relative to femininity and other forms of masculinity. For Carrigan et al. (1987) hegemonic masculinity is a question of 'how particular men inhibit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce social relationships that generate dominance' (p.179). As such, it provides a useful heuristic that explores the dynamics of a patriarchy, but as constructed around hegemonic masculine power and how individuals are positioned relative to it; hegemony, domination/subordination and complicity on the one hand, marginalisation/authorisation on the other (1995, p.81). The former relations define the internal gender order with women, heterosexual men and effeminacy being actively subordinated. For Connell 'hegemonic masculinity' is 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell, 1995, p.77).

Connell's (1995) framework seems a useful starting point in analysing gender from a relational perspective. Connell transfers Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, which was applied in the context of class relations, into the area of gender relations, providing a framework/insight into how to incorporate power into an analysis of masculinity. This notion of hegemony defines the maintenance of social power by certain groups, but unlike ideology, hegemony invokes power through consent rather than coercion. This concept has been developed and applied to gender by Connell (1987, 1995) and colleagues (Carrigan et al., 1985). Connell et al (1982) developed this notion of hegemony suggesting that whilst there are a variety of behaviours within 'masculine' and 'feminine' these variations are not random. Dominant patterns become the ones accepted as 'natural' definitions of masculinity and femininity, with other definitions positioned in relation to these. Some argue that hegemonic masculinity remains the dynamic ideological form around which western patriarchal relations are constructed, legitimised and defended (see for example, Brittan, 1989; Siedler, 1997; Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Whannel, 2000). Connell's (1995) framework offers a formulation of relations relative to an established order where the idealised conception of masculinity is itself referenced relative to femininity and other forms of masculinity. For Carrigan et al. (1987) hegemonic masculinity is a question of 'how particular men inhibit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce social relationships that generate dominance' (p.179). As such, it provides a useful heuristic that explores the dynamics of a patriarchy, but as constructed around hegemonic masculine power and how individuals are positioned relative to it; hegemony, domination/subordination and complicity on the one hand, marginalisation/authorisation on the other (1995, p.81). The former relations define the internal gender order with women, heterosexual men and effeminacy being actively subordinated. For Connell 'hegemonic masculinity' is 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell, 1995, p.77).

Wetherell and Edley (1999) highlight a number of problems with Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity. It cannot account for how male identities are 'reproduced', whether more than one hegemonic strategy can exist at any one time, and whether men can experience conflict or tension as they move from one version of masculinity to another. Peterson (1998) critiquing Connell's model from a pro-feminist, queer theory perspective, suggests that the model might be interpreted as essentialising and reductionist in it's categorisation of masculinities and femininities. He points out that by using categories such as hegemonic, subordinate, it tends to 'fix' identity categories and shut down critical interrogation of the sex/gender and nature/culture distinction. Notwithstanding these criticisms, it seems that if we view this framework as a heuristic, it offers a useful starting point for understanding the relative forms of gender evident in teacher and physical education (Brown and Rich, 2002). Furthermore, it is important in reminding us, as Morgan (1992) points out, that whilst we must acknowledge the variations and diversities within masculinity, we must not do so at the expense of recognising the complexities are variations on a deeply entrenched theme, central to which is the male oppression of women, and effeminacy.

Foucault's (1977) work which situates techniques of punishment within particular social and political contexts where control could be, and was, exerted not simply through direct violence but often more effectively through the implementation of disciplinary techniques targeted primarily on the body. Foucauldian feminists are beginning to provide theoretical accounts of the ways in which women's bodies are disciplined and made 'docile' and productive in culturally and historically specific ways (Balsamo, 1996; McNay, 1992; Sawicki, 1991; Trethewey, 1997). Gendered ways of performing identities - walking, working, sitting, comportment, dressing are taken within these frameworks as not
merely culturally relative or acquired through gender socialization, but are regimes of the body which seek to subjectify in terms of a certain truth of gender, inscribing a particular relation to oneself in a corporeal regime.

Identity politics involves the practice of building collective political practice on the ‘common’ experience of individuals with a ‘shared identity’. Within this framework, oppression is recognised and understood through personal experience, and organised around shared identity categories based on gender, race, sexual orientation, or other categories that serve to classify individuals. These personal experiences are then shared as some foundation for a political identity, and a collective identity thus emerges as the basis for political action.

For an exploration of the theoretical difficulties in incorporating post-structuralist and emancipatory approaches in research, see Assiter (1996) and Francis (1999b).

Humphries (1996) identified a number of themes embedded in discourses within the culture of empowerment. These include containment - where the demands of oppressed groups are incorporated or accommodated without a radical reordering of social structures. Related to this is a theme of collusion - where subordinate groups accept unequal terms and in turn obtain resources in competition with other oppressed groups. Moreover, a discourse of empowerment is located largely within existing socially powerful groups - it is not the oppositional agency of the poor and disenfranchised, but the enforcement of the concerns of hegemonic groups. Finally, a theme of empowering nihilism (Grossberg, 1988) leads to the identity of the Other being appropriated by marginalized groups to form a clear, strong identity and sense of power. At the same time this identity is disrupted by a confirmation of the characteristics displayed by them as of the essence of their alien nature, therefore requiring containment (Humphries, 2001).

In this paper Shilling (1999) evaluates recent formulations of the ‘interaction order’. He examines Goffman’s (1983) and Rawls’ (1987) conception of a sphere of association, framed by organizational constraints emerging from human interaction, linked to the corporeal dimensions of co-presence and individuals needs for a social self. The ‘interaction order’ incorporates the body and emotions into sociology as part of an order consequential for yet irreducible to, structures and agency, but, Shilling asserts, is presently characterised by certain problems which reduce its general theoretical utility.
Chapter Five: Researching ‘Women’s’ Lives: Methodological Issues

In this chapter, I outline some key issues relating to the method, methodology and epistemology utilised in this study. Because feminist research is not only a substantive concern (it is also a political, epistemological and ontological concern), debates about methodology are simultaneously social, political and ontological arguments. Hence research methods accounts involve the intrusion of social and political reality into what was previously seen to be an exclusively technical and epistemological matter. Research, in this sense, also concerns the social and political investments that a researcher might have in a text, and is therefore as much about the cultural selves I bring to the research as it is about ‘others’. As such, I seek to integrate a kind of ‘reflexivity’ into the research process itself which recognises my own embeddedness in that which I have been studying (Middleton, 1988, 1993). This has entailed taking time to consider the fusion of ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that underpin my belief systems, and which have led me towards particular paradigms and social perspectives. This has proved a complex and often uncomfortable area to think about, but also an extremely challenging one. Decisions about the research methodology were shaped by and, in turn, constructed not only an epistemology, a feminist way of knowing, but an ontology, a feminist way of being in the world.

The issues that are discussed are important since they serve to inform the entire research process, thus affecting the type of empirical knowledge that it produces and the theoretical knowledge that is developed as a consequence of interpretation and analysis of that empirical knowledge. It therefore has very real implications for the ways in which this research contributes to the theoretical and professional knowledge of the subject matter, and indeed to ‘feminism’.

5.1 TOWARDS FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES AND EPISTEMOLOGIES?
If methods are the tools and techniques used to gather “evidence”, information and data, then our choice of method will be influenced by our position vis-à-vis methodology and epistemology; about how research does and should proceed
Post modernity has announced the dissolution of the 'grand narratives' (Lyotard, 1984), a perspective that has penetrated the very identity of social research, although it was only towards the 1980s that such ideas were considered in terms of their implications for a feminist epistemology. As such, over the last couple of decades, links have been made between methodological procedures and epistemological presuppositions, in ways that may inform feminist research. This focus on the nature of knowledge, implores us to acknowledge that no one method is superior, and that research ‘methods’ should be subject to scrutiny just as other critical inquiries are. Within this research I have adopted a qualitative life history interview method and agree that it provides us with some tools through which to explore and understand women’s lives. However, I do not believe that this defines the feminist method of social research. Indeed over the last ten years, the assertion that there is some universal ‘feminist method’ in social research has been subject to scrutiny (Kelly et al 1992a; Reinharz, 1992; Stanley and Wise, 1990). I share the view of Stanley (1997) in foregrounding methodological procedures themselves as worthy of analysis by feminism in academia. I see no place for advocating particular methods as ‘feminist’ or not, at this stage. I would reiterate however, that it remains important that we do not foreclose the possibility of using a variety of research methods, as long as written accounts of feminist research locate the feminist researcher within their research. Consequently, this notion of feminist methodologies (as with other critical theories) is less about selecting or prescribing techniques, but rather about critiquing the making and subsequent utilisation of knowledge. Later in the chapter, I return to the issue of the life history method itself, and the methodological and epistemological issues therein.

In chapter four I outlined the dilemmas and problems when ‘feminist’ research, an essentially modernist narrative, employs tenets of post-structuralist, or post-modern thinking, which ultimately rejects all universals. Detailed feminist critiques of epistemology have been similarly built up around these issues: Harding (1987) suggests a framing of the alternative positions as feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint, and feminist postmodernism. Issues of feminist standpoint and postmodernism will be explored, since they are highly relevant to the positioning of this study.
Chapter Five: Researching Women's Lives: Methodological Issues

Feminist standpoint theory has emerged as the epistemological underpinning of the political emphasis on the inclusion of “experience”, shifting the focus onto the experiences and understandings of women themselves. It endeavours to allow subjects to remain as actors and ‘knowers’, attempting to avoid the transformation of them into ‘objects’ of study, something that has concerned feminists for sometime. The data was generated from the experiences of a cohort of women, and as such, it could be argued rests upon a feminist standpoint position which allows them to voice their experiences and understandings. However, a feminist standpoint suggests that we can have access to a greater ‘truth’, a more ‘objective’ understanding via our inclusion of the oppressed. What is absent in this position is a critique itself of the need for our understandings to be ‘objective’.

Feminist standpoint theory tends to assume that oppression is unitary or that women identify primarily and foremost as women rather than as members of any other oppressed group within society. Debate abounds about this aspect of feminist standpoint theory, and remains a central and delicate feature of feminism. This is because they provide some of the most powerful and yet also some of the weakest and potentially problematic positions on research. On the one hand it has emerged as an appealing political utility, helping to develop a methodology that actually incorporates women’s experience, within some alternative but generally considered ‘valid’ epistemology. Moreover, it is seen to bridge some of the gaps between theory and praxis, by linking a theory of knowledge to the politicality and ‘reality’ of women’s lives and experiences. This link is vital since feminist research aims to illuminate aspects of gender relations, the interaction between the individual and society in the construction of gender, and the dynamics of power relations and in particular power inequalities between women and men (Personal Narratives Group, 1989).

However, on the other hand, this approach appears seems somewhat oxymoronic, since if we are starting from women’s experiences, this ultimately means that there can be no ‘universal feminist standpoint’ since to assume this, would be to conceptualise women as a generic category. Thus with an over-riding focus on some universal notion of womanhood, it potentially marginalizes other oppressive struggles that might be very compelling to a number of women. For example some women may
focus more on being 'other' as a member of the working class, and may feel more solidarity with working class men than with other women. Gelsthorpe (1992) notes 'women are never just women' - we have a class, a sexuality, an ethnicity, and all these affect our social situation and views. Feminist standpoint appears to have little to counter this charge, other than resting upon some construction of a hierarchy of oppression, a similarly problematic concept that employs a rather slippery concept of power as something that is possessed. Furthermore, the standpoint position reproduces the simplistic association of masculinity with men and femininity with women. Rather than breaking down these dualisms, standpoint theory ultimately re-balances it through the focus on shared womanhood. One of the liveliest debates in feminist writings is between some radical feminists who see 'woman' or gender as a super-category and those (such as Mohanty, 1991) who make the distinction between the category 'woman' and the category 'women'.

While notions of epistemic privilege have been used to account for the implications of categorical aspects of identities (such as race, class, gender, ethnicity) in the production of knowledge, this is a problematic notion because of its underlying implication regarding a "truer" representation being a "normal" outcome of this identity. Standpoint theorists’ claim to epistemic privileged us disavowed by the argument that the politics of location are important determiners of the nature of one’s inclusion in and impact on the research process, and ultimately the resultant representation.

In complete contrast to a standpoint epistemology, feminist postmodernists (FPM) reject entirely the notion of universals, or of the possibility of access to a single, objective form of reality of 'women's experiences'. This theory therefore opposes the whole notion of one standpoint, or the privileging of a female or feminine standpoint. FPM theory instead suggests that there are a variety of contradictory and conflicting standpoints, of social discourses, none of which should be privileged. In recognising the diversity of women as individuals, this ultimately means that there can similarly be a 'plurality of feminist standpoints' (Scraton and Flintoff, 1992, p.174). Given the theoretical positioning of postmodernism, FPM has seen no point in trying to construct some standpoint theory which seeks to give a richer, more truthful, authentic
of neutral knowledge, because it is taken that such knowledge does not exist (Hekman, 1990; Nicholson, 1990).

Once more, these debates expose the very tensions most acutely at the heart of feminist research. The feminist postmodernist approach has been credited a powerful theory for critically examining epistemology and practice. Moreover, it has brought insights into the nature of the relationship between knowledge and power, pointing out that power is not unitary or possessed. Rather, power is seen to be a process which is situated, concentrated and complex. In this sense, it moves beyond a standpoint theory which risks employing some notion of women as victims universally oppressed in some monolithic power. As outlined in chapter four, there is a great deal of debate as to whether ultimately this seriously undermines the political role of feminist research, since without some sort of epistemic unity it is difficult to propose political action. In terms of the implications upon our selection of and use of research methods, there have been concerns therefore that these theories may rule out some approaches which have a degree of political utility. Some feminists remain critical of this approach, dubious by virtue of its lack of ‘practical validity’, particularly in relation to women’s material situation.

5.2 POSITIONING THE STUDY
Through qualitative social research we try to make sense of the rich complexities, contradictions and dilemmas of social life. Studies addressing these issues have traditionally been positioned and critiques by methodological taxonomies (deductivism versus inductivism, holism versus individualism, realism versus idealism). In social inquiry none of these approaches are flawless. Moreover, consciousness of exclusion through ‘naming’ has become particularly acute. Feminist sociologists who reject the binaries of theory and practice, objective and subjective, and researcher and researched, do so because they believe that knowing is a political process (Ramazagnolu, 1992, p.210), and that these binaries encourage an elitist sociology which cannot produce ways of knowing which avoid subordination (Williams, 1993, p.582).

To reduce the research into any one side of these binaries in absolute terms, would disable an approach with is suitably flexible to the immersion in the research field.
Rather, I draw upon the approach of Stanley and Wise (1990) who use the idea of "fractured foundationalism" which they suggest enables the recognition in methodological and epistemological discussion of something of the complexities of social life which researchers grapple with, interpret and endeavour to explain. This rejects the use of idealist/realist binaries and instead recognises both the material realities and the grounding of social life and the interpretational and constructivist work that goes into inquiries as 'real facts' or 'real meanings'. Categorising our research in 'boxes' can cause us to overlook the complexities of what it means to be involved in a dynamic relationship between theory and research, in terms of our experiences grounded in the actual research process. As a feminist, I am committed to ways of knowing that avoid separation, questioning the taken for granted dichotomies around issues related to knowledge creation; in particular objective/subjective, reason/emotion, grand theorising/lay theorising and researcher/researched.

As I noted in chapter four, it might be more conducive to utilise a dual role, where we use postmodernist insights to continually critique the role of feminist research and the gendered aspects of mainstream research, and also utilise modernist ideas to advance feminism's political agenda: consensus is not, after all, necessarily a primary aim of feminism. The position here is thus; women are placed at the centre of the research, in an attempt to gain a more complex but balanced interpretation of their experiences (developing experiential knowing through dialogue) whilst simultaneously acknowledging the difficulty of identifying these women as women only, or primarily as women and therefore unifying their standpoint.

5.3 USING THE LIFE HISTORY APPROACH
In searching for an appropriate research method, I felt it imperative to employ an approach that would be sufficiently sensitive to the complexities of individual lives and social context. The approach used in this study is a life history method. However, it must be noted from the outset that in the context of a PhD study the scope for employing a life history in its enhanced form is limited. My aspirations for its use are modest in that I employ the rudiments of a life history strategy. Indeed, as Bertaux (1981, p.8) suggests, the life story 'need (not) cover the entire life span and all its aspects'.
Life-history research has, perhaps, been most thoroughly developed in women's studies, a field in which 'experience' as an object of study, and in-depth interviewing as a methodology, have been central (e.g. Park, 1991; Else, 1986). In the field of educational research, the term life history encompasses personal narratives (Knowles, 1991), individual and collective autobiography (Sikes and Troyna, 1991; Butt & Raymond, 1987) ethnographic biography (Goodson, 1989) and personal experience methods (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994). It was stressed in chapter three, that much research suggests that 'understanding the origins of student teacher perspectives is largely a product of understanding the impact of biography-those experiences that have directly influenced an individual’s thinking about teaching and schools' (Knowles, 1992, p.102). The life history is a useful medium through which to address these issues. I make no claim to originality in adopting this method of research in the study of teachers and acknowledge the work of Goodson (1981) Ball and Goodson (1985) Goodson and Walker (1991) Sikes and Troyna (1991) and others in refocusing on the life history and reviving it as a research method. More recently, it has been adopted by Templin et al (1991); Sparkes and Templin (1992); Sparkes (1995, 1996a, 1996b); MacDonald and Kirk (1996); Dowling Naess (1996, 1998); Armour and Jones (1998), and Brown (1999) in the context of Physical Education Research.

Sparkes (1995, p.116) suggests that the strength of the life history approach is its focus on 'central moments, critical incidents, or fateful moments that revolve around indecision, confusion's, contradictions and irony'. Sparkes argues that this gives a greater picture of life processes and gives a more 'ambiguous, complex chaotic view of reality' (cited in Hatch and Winsnieski, 1995, p.116). Self and identities emerge as 'processes' and as such, are difficult to analyse. In terms of gaining insight into the complexities of these constructions, it seems useful therefore to focus upon these moments of fragility when the coherence of a narrative or story that is constructed, is disrupted or threatened; what Giddens (1991) terms fateful moments, and Denzin (1989) terms epiphanies. These ‘critical incidents’ are taken to originate from biography, referring to an event or situation that marked a significant turning point or change of an individual (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Tripp (1993, p.24) extends these events to those that occur in the everyday life of the classroom. Events that are seen as critical by the individual may be indicative of the underlying trends, motives and structures, and may present teachers/women with a choice of at least two mutually
exclusive courses of action. Locating gendered social and cultural dispositions, and understanding the process they have experienced (biography) and interpreted (identity) may provide some insight into the construction of femininities within Initial Teacher Training. In this sense, the life history seemed most appropriate since it is able to capture and uncover contradictions, ambiguities, tensions and critical moments that influence the multiplicity of a life. As the sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) expressed it, life-history methods focus equally and simultaneously on ‘biography, history, and social structure.’

Life histories, biographies, narratives and autobiographies have also been credited with having therapeutic and transformational potential (see for example Plummer, 1995; Day Sclater, 1998; Ely et al, 1997; Finley and Knowles, 1995; Hickey and Fitzclarence, 1999) The issue of ‘narrative therapy’ (White and Epston, 1992) therefore caught my attention. I don't purport to be a therapist in these contexts, nor am I qualified to be such, however, I take therapy in this context to mean the consequential effect of being listened to within an interview context (Linde, 1993). Becker (1997) argues that for those suffering from ‘disrupted lives’ meaning can be created through story telling. Moreover, Opie (1992, p.64) suggests that there are at least three ways in which an individual may be personally ‘empowered’ through participation in a research project; through their contribution to making a visible a social issue, the therapeutic effect of being able to reflect and re-evaluate their experience as part of the process of being interviewed; and the generally subversive outcome that the first two may generate.

5.3.1 Life histories, Narratives and Gender identities
Traditionally, life history research has relied upon individualistic humanism, which valorised the ‘reality’ of personal experience, and the transparency of oral accounts. At the very least, I attempt here to take seriously the problems raised by such a configuration of ‘experience’, which would sit uncomfortably with the contemporary condition of post-modernity and the post-structuralist theoretical underpinnings of this research. The narrative of humanism present a humanistic self that is a meaning making, coherent and unified individual. This seems problematic in the post-modern world characterised by fragmentation, multiple and contradictory narratives, by globalization and post-colonial conflicts and by the questioning of modernist
epistemologies that traditionally provided the grounds for certainty and coherence. The assumption that a life can be captured and represented in a text ‘as it really is and was’ (if ever there was such a thing) or provide some window to the ‘inner self’ has therefore been increasingly questioned (Atkinson, 1997). It is now becoming generally accepted that a life history involves the (re)construction of storytelling as a social practice, where we draw upon wider cultural narratives and weave these into personal accounts. Rather than having some unproblematic unmediated access to some fixed and discrete past, the individual is taken as recovering and re-presenting this in traces and hints, in a process of re-creation, discovery and re-invention of the self. Several post-structuralist theorists (Davies, 1990, 1991, 1992; Scott, 1992; Weedon, 1987) have developed different accounts of subjectivity and identity that are fundamental to such perspectives of oral research, including the life history. Chris Weedon’s (1987) work, for example, has been important in setting out this post-structural relation between experience and language:

As we acquire language, we learn to give voice – meaning – to our experience and to understand it according to particular ways of thinking, particular discourses, which predate our entry into language (p.33).

In this sense, it is taken that a subject can only represent themselves in language by creating a ‘literary’ rather than a ‘literal’ figure that dis-figures or de-faces as much as it figures (Buss, 1993). Thus rather than a standpoint a standpoint epistemology (Harding, 1991; Stanley and Wise, 1990; Smith, 1993), of there being a unified representation where an identity is fixed and present prior to language, identity is constituted in the ‘engagement’ with language. Therefore the life history is not used here to try and record the life to capture the essence of some unified subject existing independently of its narrative production or textual inscription.

This research therefore involved addressing the narrativization of self identity of these women; the way in which self identities are constructed and displayed through the stories they tell about themselves. Whilst there has been some debate as to what constitutes ‘narrative’, they all share a fundamental interest in making sense of experience and constructing meaning (see Chase, 1995). Murray (1989) considers the telling of stories of a personal past as a means of identity construction and that ‘one must find a social identity – an honoured place in the social order, yet also attempt to
maintain a personal identity, in the sense of a biographical uniqueness’ (p.10). Thus what individuals claim about their life has a significant influence on the construction of self: ‘As individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives they engage in a dynamic process of claiming identities, selves and construction lives’ (Sparkes, 1999, p.18). The construction and telling of narratives therefore engages the individual in creating and constructing a particular representation of ‘self’ in a given social interaction. Gadamer (1986) argues that ‘language is the medium in which consciousness and the world are joined’ (p.3). The tradition of 'dialectical hermeneutics' represented by Gadamer shows the inextricable interconnection between understanding and language. Individuals structure narratives by different themes and therefore make selective use of categories, references and metaphors to support and lend more credibility to the type of character their narratives require. In essence the subject therefore comes into being because of the act of narrative. Thus in the textual inscription of a life, it is easy to see why some might read this as if it were referential of a life; true representations of a prior self where the past can and does appear as fixed and discrete told by a centered self. This is perhaps because what are changing and shifting identities appear as ‘fixed’ or anchored by the act of capturing of a narrative at a particular point in history.

My approach to life history was therefore closely aligned to the ‘socially theorized life history’ used by Connell (1992) to study the construction of masculinity in gay men, an approach which extends beyond the unstructured narratives of individuals into a theoretical analysis of broader social structures. This was partly in response to the perennial problem of methodological individualism which can occur when we focus too much on the individual and divorce personal experience from the wider discourses that shape them (Sparkes and Templin, 1992). I therefore attempt the delicate balance between the narrative itself, whilst pursuing a broader social analysis. This is partly assisted by the use of eleven biographies within the study, which enabled me to explore some commonalities (in terms of discourse) across a number of life histories (Sparkes and Templin, 1992). Within this framework, it is taken that the ways in which these women talked about their gender identities would be heavily influenced by the discourses about gender. These discourses were already present within their families, schools, sports clubs, PE lessons, and beyond, and the post-structural task.
was to attend to how each woman took up or resisted these discourses, and the influences upon their gendered identities before, during and after ITT.

It is through the engagement with individuals' subjectivities lived and expressed through the telling of a life, that the life history approach therefore appeared most appropriate in providing the sensitivity to cope with the key questions underpinning the research. I have tried to merge some of the key research questions, with more specific questions concerning the analysis of narratives. These questions are adapted from the work of Sparkes (1997, p.104) on 'the self' which provides some useful direction for the analysis.

**Figure 5.1 Emerging research questions and themes for narrative analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Emerging questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to narratives</td>
<td>How do these women, positioned differentially in a variety of social categories come to know and construct their bodies, and their sense of gendered selves? Do different people have equal opportunities to tell the same life story or are they restricted to separate spheres? How is it that they come to accept the same story lines for their lives, but reject others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The politics of story telling</td>
<td>What are the dominant narratives or stories that influence self-identity and structures the lives of these women? What are the politics of such story telling and narrative construction? What are the processes that lead some narratives to be privileged fore grounded and institutionalised whilst others are suppressed, marginalized or silenced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical moments in narratives</td>
<td>What are the key turning points, fateful moments or critical incidents in a life that stabilise, fracture, change or integrate the self? How do these women react and adjust to cope with such moments? Where and why do these emerge in the context of initial teacher training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives as a medium through which to challenge social reproduction</td>
<td>How can the oppressive dominant, traditional narratives and stories that reflect cultural trends and shape the life story possibilities be challenged? How are, or how can, alternatives be created that enable these women to alter the trajectories and experiences of their lives so that they can create novel body-self relationships, and also novel professional and personal narratives.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The concept of 'authenticity' (Dillabough, 1999) is drawn upon in uncovering the 'history, narratives, subjectivities, positioning and biography' that these student teachers 'as authentic individuals bring to the practice of teaching.' This formed a critical exercise since it is taken that if feminist strategies are to acquire a place in PE
then we need an understanding of what gender, gender differences and equality mean to this generation, and work with those understandings within an agenda for change. As Lawson (1983) suggested, if we have a better idea of who our teacher recruits are, and their beliefs, we might be better equipped to design, sequence and present a more equitable teacher education programme. The sense of self-identity is analysed here from the position of gendered stories that these women reconstruct about themselves as a result of previous, current and future-anticipated life experiences. These stories can then be analysed in terms of what Ginsburg (1989) refers to as story and plot. Ginsburg describes the story as the raw, temporally sequenced, or causal narrative of a life, 'the expected arrangement of a woman's biography according to Western narrative and social conventions' (Ginsburg, 1989, p.64). For example, the narrative that a woman is born, then married, then becomes a mother. The plot however, emerges from the 'unexpected twists in the narrative that draw attention to differences in the conventional story' (Ginsburg, 1989, p.64). It must also be noted that I was not searching for objective truths in these interviews, rather the focus on the meaning given to their various life experiences. As such, an appropriate research strategy seemed to be not to look 'for the falsehoods of their claims, but to the actual conditions of women's lives and the ways in which those conditions might generate the contentment the women express' (Anderson, 1981).

5.3.2 Methods of selection and data collection

Sampling proved particularly problematic within the study. My intention was to use purposeful sampling or criterion based sampling (Patton, 1990). Moreover, I wanted to engage in theoretical sampling (Burgess, 1982), a form of purposeful sampling that selects 'critical' cases by drawing upon criteria from the theoretical framework of the study. The sample were to be selected from female undergraduates who studied for a Sports Science/Studies Degree at an English University and then applied (successfully) to become a PE teacher through the ITT programme at the English University under study. I wanted a range of undergraduate female students, whose backgrounds presented distinct differences in terms of ethnicity, class, culture, sexualities, and background. It was difficult recruiting a sample for the study, and this was perhaps influenced by the nature of the study, which was longitudinal, and the time constraints and commitments that these women expected to experience by undertaking an intense teacher training course.
I did not identify as feminist, nor did I suggest that the research was primarily feminist when seeking participation. It was made clear that I would be analysing gender identities, but my deliberate distancing of the study from ‘feminism’ at this point was based on an intuition that some women might be less likely to volunteer. A cohort of eleven women volunteered to take part in the study. Whilst ten of these women were followed throughout their teacher training, one woman in the group was only interviewed prior to teacher training due to postponing her course because of illness. The altruism of these women appeared to be influenced by their strong intellectual beliefs towards securing ‘equal opportunities’ in their teaching; they were all support of women’s rights. Inevitably, this has had some bearing on the data, and it must be noted that this particular sample of women are not ‘representatives’ of a generation of PGCE students.

A longitudinal approach was adopted since it allowed changes in personal and professional narratives before during and after teacher training to be identified. Once the cohort had been selected, each interviewee was sent a ‘topics of discussion’ theme sheet to fill in. This encouraged them to prepare for the life history interviews by selecting key issues for discussion based on significant life experiences. These were studied prior to the first interview to give some structure and direction to the conversations which took place thereafter. It was also intended to provide some comfort to the participants, giving them some idea about what to expect from the interview. The first phase interviewing took place prior to or at the very beginning of ITT, with each interview lasting between forty-five minutes and two hours. The student teachers were also interviewed during and after their ITT. One participant who was particularly interested in the study met with me more regularly, since she found the sessions ‘useful’ for reflecting upon her practice. The interviews were thematic and open ended, and a list of general themes covered during interview can be found in Appendix two. The format and order of questions, delivery, pace, detail and variance in topics was structured by the nature of the interaction between myself and each participant, generating very different transcripts. The eleven women involved in this study were all white able-bodied women, aged between twenty and twenty four years old. All the women are referred to by their pseudonyms. Brief profiles of the women can be found in Appendix one.
5.3.3 Life history Interviews – Being friend, researcher, interviewer, therapist, feminist, stranger...

Interviewing as a method in qualitative and feminist research, has traditionally been rooted in a humanist notion of the individual – a subject who possesses knowledge, which if skilfully solicited can be uncovered by the interviewer. As such, talk in the interview is equated with lived experience and its representation (Denzin, 1994). Post-structuralism has influenced these methodologies, with a shift from interpreting what interviewees meant to communicate, as authors of their own life histories, to representing the multiple interpretations available to the researcher and other readers. These are important ideas to develop and retain – since it raises questions about the humanist relations between individuals, experiences and empowerment in terms of subjectivity, texts, and agency.

It needs to be borne in mind that there are multiple overlapping ‘versions’ of a life story that might be told differently in a variety of contexts. This rupturing of the singular voice or narrative, implores us to consider multiplicity, agency and structure and how it frames the content and narrative of stories in distinctly different ways. Thus the issue turns away from the discovery and representation of women’s experiences, to the ways in which these experiences, and my inquiry into their biographies, have been constituted within particular discourses. The challenge moves from accurate representation of ‘real’ experiences, towards a cautious discursive analysis of how these stories, the interviews, and interpretations provide an understanding of the construction of gender identities within the context of PE ITT. This is an on-going, and partial approach to inquiry, which captures an ephemeral account of a life at a given point in history, as Denzin suggests:

language and speech do not mirror experience; they create experience, and in the process of creation, constantly transform and defer that which is being described (p.296).

This raises new challenges for interviewing, whereby patience and sensitivity is required for open-endedness and possible complexity and ambiguity. The life history interview might thus be seen as an ‘interactional, contextual production’ (Denzin, 1989) whereby the role of interviewee becomes highly significant. Given the focus on
the subjective (re)construction of the interviewee, a priority for the dynamics of the interview, was that these women felt free to describe their biography without some compelling need to give the ‘correct storylines’ or say what they thought I might want to hear. Whilst this can never completely be eliminated, some efforts were made to counter situations where these issues may arise. I offered the participants the chance to select the time of their interview, whether or not I tape recorded the interview, and also reiterated that at any point they could have the recording, or the interview, terminated. I gave all the women the opportunity to choose pseudonyms and reminded them that their identities would remain confidential, that they were free to listen to the tapes at any point, and each interviewee received a copy of the subsequent transcripts. A further strategy employed, entailed returning to the women after interview, giving them a copy of the interview transcripts and discussing it briefly with them. If more time was available it would have been useful to discuss the implications of their statements (see Skeggs (1994) for a discussion of this type of practice) leading to type of reflection which, as is noted in chapter eight, might be a very useful pedagogical tool. Finally, the women were given the opportunity to have aspects of the interview void of use in publications or data analysis, if they felt that there were aspects of their life they later felt that they no longer wanted to be made public.

I want to further explore here the idea that as women we are united by some shared oppression. It would be naïve, and potentially distorting to assume that as a ‘woman’ I would share the same repertories for story telling as these individuals; whilst we may share the same occasion or situation, we cannot share the same experience (Hickey and Fitzclarence, 1999) and it is precisely this distinctiveness and detail in which an individual's life can be studied, which makes the narrative approach so appealing and valuable. With the benefit of hindsight, it is easier to see the multiple positioning taken place during the interviews, and as social interactions, no two were the same. DeVault (1999) challenges early feminist researchers on their assumptions of ‘women-to-women talk’ and ‘rapport’, illustrating with narratives from her own work how differences between women, such as race and ethnicity, operate to limit understanding and exchange.

It was clear how a number of gender identities were negotiated during the interviews, particularly classed and sexual identities. However, there were few moments in
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interviews where we talked about racism, and none of the conversations centered on becoming and being a ‘white’ woman. In this sense, there was a great deal communicated through the silences in these interviews. This is perhaps related to the issue of race and ethnicity being seen as ‘other’ to white women, and therefore see no reason to talk about it. The absence of these discussions, however, highlighted the concealment of the privileged subjects we take up as white women who narrate and listen to life histories full of reference to ‘being a woman’ yet void of reference to the intersection of race and ethnic privilege.

Interviewing is a dynamic social interaction in which multiple dialogues are conducted between multiple selves and as such, cannot simply be seen as repositories of ‘objective facts’ (Collins, 1998). Rather they should be understood as mutually constructed social events within an existential quality sui generis. Narrative as a form of communication is influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, the motivations of the teller, the audience, and the social context (Bruner, 1984, 1987; Gergen, 1994; Gubrium and Holstien, 1998; Linde, 1993). As such I have tried, where possible, to be self-reflexive and identify my own position within the research process (Coe, 1991; Richardson, 1992). Some of the research participants knew me as a student prior to my starting the research project. I was the same sex, and for many the same age, class and at a similar level in terms of my sporting past, as most of the women. Some of these knew much about my own life, and these interviews proved to be highly conversational, fairly relaxed, and yielded rich details about the interviewees’ life. However, this also meant that there was much assumed about my understanding of their own positioning, for example that I understood the problems that went with being an elite sports women; ‘you know what I mean’. Whilst life histories also have the benefit of ‘inter-subjectivity’ that is the shared understandings that are generated therein, I felt that sometimes a number of assumptions were made by the participants on my understandings of their experiences. This makes the interpretation and representation of that life increasingly complex. In latter interviews I attempted more fully, to draw out some of the implications and meanings of such statements, by prompting the women for further clarification.

I employed the strategy of sharing my own life experiences with these women. Researcher self-disclosure has become common feminist practice during interviews, in
an attempt to initiate a rich dialogue through collaboration and sharing. Bombyk, Bricker Jenkins and Wedenoja (1985) found that interviewers using semi-structured interviews noted that because of feedback from respondents, they had learnt to pace themselves and look for cues from the participants as readiness to know more about them. They suggest that the key to self-disclosure is timing, something which improved as the interviews developed. Of course, whilst this strategy served as beneficial to the production of these narratives, it also alluded to the delicate nature of the life history interview as a method of inquiry, since it is also possible to view this form of self-disclosure as a strategy of self-exploitation. Whilst there is always the danger that the interviewee may feel uneasy knowing life information about the researcher, or develop some caricature of them, the feedback from the interviewees suggests that this was a useful strategy.

At the end of each interview, I collected feedback from the interviewees on how they felt about the experience, what they would have changed, how I could have made them feel more comfortable or improve the interview etc. All of the women appeared outwardly happy with the interviews, with many finding them a useful period for reflection about their teacher training, something which they felt was lacking elsewhere.

Conversely there were a number of occasions where I came away from interviews bothered by the emotions that had been stirred. There were occasions where the conversations left a visceral imprint, and I could relate so strongly to what I was hearing. Moreover, there was immense guilt and concern at times when I left interviews worried that I had opened doors to situations that some women may have wanted left shut. One particular incident resulted in one of the women confessing a rather personal experience in her life, something which touched the emotions of us both. Although this confession took place once the tape had stopped recording, it showed the delicate nature of these interviews, and the need to consider the consequences of these women's lives; these are after all real lives, not just data.

5.4 SUPPORTING ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA
The emergent research design (Maxwell, 1996) provided the flexibility to refine the research design following emersion in the research field. This related in particular to
the experiential weakness of the life history, since on its own it does not provide access to direct social action, and so does not allow the research to compare discourses drawn upon in narratives about experiences with those during the experience as it happens. I therefore explored the possibility of providing ethnographic accounts of teaching practice environments. I was not interested in capturing versions of experiences as they happen (and this in itself is a contestation over the issue of valid knowledge). However, there were occasions where observing what was done in context, provided further insight into how gender identities were deployed in context. The observation work in this study was neither detailed enough nor thorough enough to move this study into a social anthropological methodological framework, but the additional insights it provided pointed towards the potential paralleling of life history work with other ethnographic approaches, particularly in relation to teaching practice. This is an area of collaboration which requires further investigation both in terms of a methodological approach to research, and also as reflexive pedagogical strategy within the context of ITT.

Consequently, mid-way through the longitudinal study, I felt it might be useful to observe these student teachers in their teaching practice environments. This was partly because I had asked the women to keep a diary of incidents, experiences, observations and thoughts on their training, but this was met with relatively no success, perhaps because of the time constraints placed upon them. An observation sheet was created to prompt me to look for key discourses and interactions during their teaching. These observation days took place during the main teaching block, providing an opportunity to discuss some key incidents taking place during teaching practice, with the participants.

This ethnographic form of data collection elicited some cultural knowledge about the environments in which these student teachers undertook their training. This also assisted in breaking down some assumed hierarchy between myself as researcher, and them as 'researched'. In these observational contexts I took a back seat as these students (quite confidently I might add) introduced me to their schools and their mentors and colleagues. This also provided an opportunity to interview student teachers at lunchtimes and free periods. These interviews were mostly conversational, and a copy of my observation notes recorded in a field diary were sent to each
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participant, and thoroughly examined at the end of each observation day. Factual observations (body movements, speech acts etc) or 'thick description' (Carspecken, 1996) were also supported by subjective inferences, mostly to employ some reflexivity about my presence in the field. I deliberately wore sports kit during these observation dates to make my presence as inconspicuous as possible. Whilst many of the school pupils questioned my presence, the general assumption was that I was there as a student teacher to 'learn the ropes'. This also appeared to help subsequent interviews in that I had a commonality with these student teachers, and many of the student teachers felt it much easier to consequently talk about their practice since I had been introduced to the significant people from their teaching practice.

5.5 TRANSCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES
All interviews were transcribed, and all notes from observation days routinely analyséd. My decision to transcribe interviews and write observations as soon after the event as possible was deliberate; this was an on-going process, a purposeful strategy so that I remained reflexive about the interview process and the research field. Being re-immersed in the interview transcriptions was therefore significant in influencing my perceptions quite dramatically. I recall leaving my first interview somewhat unsettled never really understanding or knowing why, until I immersed myself in the process of transcription. I suspect that much of this was related to some naïve expectancies about the interviewee's responses. It was in this first transcription that I begun to reflect upon my own understanding of agency and subjectivity. My obvious discomfort was in having to listen to the repeated caricatures of feminist as 'braburners', 'lesbians', and 'raving activists'. I expand upon some of these issues in Chapter eight, but for now it is important to stress that I heard some tales of resistance I was unable to hear during the interview. This raised some further issues; firstly that the interviewee did not go through a similar process of re-living the interview, and so a copy of the transcripts were subsequently sent out; secondly, this also help to make me aware of the questions that I could have asked, and so modified subsequent interviews accordingly.

I did not 'code' the transcripts in the traditional sense, since it felt like pre-empting the directions in which my interpretations might follow. Conversely, the idea of presenting long narratives untouched was neither practical nor productive in terms of
analysing discourse. Discourse analysis occurred at the level of micro-level of the narrative constructed, and the social level in terms of social positioning that these women engaged in. If we consider identity along the lines of Alcoff’s (1988) notion of positionality, a coherent identity can be considered relative to a consistently shifting context, to a situation that includes a network of elements involving others, the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions and ideologies and so on (Alcoff, 1995, p.451).

This way, the narration of an apparently stable gender identity, can be understood in part, as an effect of normalisation within discourse itself: in other words, a humanistic essentialist view of the self masks the way in which we are constituted in language and positioned differently depending on the discursive practices of gender, race, class, ethnicity etc. There were a number of differences within and across the narratives in the ways in which women talked about various experiences of themselves. A great deal of life history research has rarely accounted for such differences within, at and beyond the individual because it has relied heavily on the humanist, individualist assumption of a ‘coherent’ identity. My position here is that because post-structuralism rejects this humanist notion of identity in favour of a fragmented theory of subjectivity, it not only accommodates, but also implores us to analyse difference at a number of different levels. It encourages us to listen to specific, intersecting subject positions of women’s lives. But more than this, we are to look for the normative silences, and to consider how one might narrate a self through talking about themselves, but also through the narrating of a self in talking about ‘other’. Analysis of discourses has therefore tempered the risk that with only eleven participants, too much emphasis might be placed upon individual accounts, which could result in some humanist individualistic account of these lives.

The study is not post-structuralist in the sense of engaging in speech act analysis on intricate deconstruction of narratives. However, as I have outlined in previous chapters, I employ tenets of post-structuralism in this study, rather than appropriating it in the absolute sense. Thus I attempt to balance the analysis on individual subjectivity, with that of a social analysis of discourse. Of course there are some tensions with this approach, and the assumptions about fragmented identities or the
notion of the constitutive force of silence, render social explanations difficult. Sykes (1998) suggests that such tensions can be relieved, to a limited degree by:

Pragmatic feminist post-structuralist strategies such as simultaneously striving towards deconstructive overstanding in the theoretical long term, while opting for short term politics based on assumptions ‘as if’ identity mattered, selves could be known, and life histories told to one another (Riley, 1988; Sykes, 1996) (Sykes, 1998, p.92).

The following gives a brief outline of the main strategies involved in analysing the data, drawing upon the approach proposed by Carabine (2001: 281) This is not to suggest that these are liner stages, and it must be noted that this is an overlapping and iterative process, that took me back and fourth between data, analysis, theory and literature:

1. A thorough **reading of the data**, The analysis began whilst in the data collection phase. However, following completion of data collection, a thorough reading of all transcripts took place. This was an iterative process that involved trying to get a ‘sense’ of what the narratives were about, and also identifying the instances and occurrences and ways and means that gender was ‘spoken of’

2. **Identification of key themes – categories and objects of the discourse.** This entailed identifying the *particular* ways in which gender was spoken of. For example:
   - Gender as biological
   - The relationship between gender, reproduction and sports participation
   - ‘Woman’ as universal category

In practical terms, this meant noting down every instance where one theme was discussed (for example ‘femininity’, men, women), identifying the different contexts, the way the problem is framed, how it was presented and discussed and the solutions that were recommended. For example, this would build into something like the following:
   - Women (as able, as essentially passive, as lacking particular qualities, as participation as immoral etc)
• Equality (as having access according to biological pre-dispositions, as equal access, as ‘inclusive’)  
This involved analysing how each of these were ‘spoken of’ at particular times, and how these women came to position themselves and others against these storylines. This also entailed trying to understand how these meanings shifted across time and social contexts

3. Inter-relationships – To begin to explore the inter-relationship between key discourses. This entailed a process of cross-referencing, particularly where categories or themes are appear to be inter-related. For example, what ideas about sexuality, femininity, class, physical ability, performance etc informed the gendered discourses?

4. Identification of the discursive strategies involved. A discursive strategy refers to the ways in which a discourse is given meaning and force, and through which the object is defined. A device through which knowledge about the object is developed and the subject constituted. So it is the device here, through which ‘women’ are put into the discourse (on gender for example).

5. Identification of absences and silences – To look for what is not present or spoken of that you might expect to be, following other things that are ‘spoken of’. For example, if female performance is spoken of, is male performance spoken of or missing? What do these silences illustrate?

6. Identification of resistances and Counter discourses

7. Identify the effects of the discourse – How they are spoken into existence, subjectivities, practice etc.

5.6 THE NARRATIVE OF THE SELF: RESEARCH, PERSONAL IDEOLOGY AND REFLEXIVITY
The development of self-reflexive methodologies has resulted in an increasing fluidity in the boundaries between methodology, theory and representation. Contemporary discussions on the topic of researcher influence have been primarily in the fields of
anthropology, literary criticism, sociology and women's studies. The debate has ranged from a focus on the 'death of the author' subsumed into language or discourse (Barthes, 1977, 1982; Focuault, 1984); the textual properties of writers (Geertz, 1988; Stanley, 1993); the lived experiences and reflexivity of the researcher (Okely and Callaway, 1992; Reinharz, 1983); the emotionality of the researcher (Miller, 1991); the psychological healing involved in writing autobiography (Hooks, 1989b); the social location of the researcher (Miller, 1991; Stanley and Morgan, 1993b); the researcher's implication in interpersonal and societal power relations (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Okely and Callaway, 1992); and sites of the feminist researchers behaviour and analysis (Abbott and Wallace, 1990, p.27; Stanley and Wise, 1990c). 6

The previous chapters have outlined my positionality in terms of my commitment to feminism and tenets of post-structuralism, which no doubt permeate and influence the ways in which this research was conceptualised, conducted and interpreted. 'Poststructuralism' does not refer to any single body of theory or a methodology. Nevertheless, there are several general methodological points that can be made. First, researchers and theorists do engage certain techniques such as forms of discourse analysis and the critical reading practice known as 'deconstruction' in their investigative work. Secondly, as a logical consequence of poststructuralist theories of the centrality of language in the construction of meaning, the role of the researcher can be construed as a producer, rather than a finder of knowledge about the world. In this sense we can refer to the 'productivity' of research. Foucault (1980c) refers to the process of research as a 'fabrication'. The focus of this research was stimulated through my experiences of physical education and sport as a woman, shaping and driving the types of questions being asked. As such, I share the view of others (Harding, 1987, Stanley and Wise, 1983) that the researcher must be prepared to reflexively situate themselves within the research account, since their presence and involvement cannot be denied. By weaving this personal account into the research it may illuminate the 'conditions of it's own production' (Stanley, 1990a). Writing a narrative of the self of this sort within research must not be undertaken naively, and involved making clear how we arrived at the production of our text without engaging in narcissism and being totally absorbed with the self (Richardson, 1992).
Furthermore, acknowledging ones positioning does not eradicate the potential for contamination or reduce any privileges that I may bring, particularly in relation to the representation of a life (an issue I revisit later in this chapter). This act of naming does not diminish the potential to exploit and oppress and indeed an emancipatory intent is no guarantee of an emancipatory outcome (Acker et al 1983, p.431). However, I agree that we should no longer try to hide our political commitments or emancipatory concerns since they shape how we select, conduct, interpret and present our research (Stanley & Wise, 1993; Griffiths, 1998).

For many feminists, reflexivity involves far more than a passing nod to the effects of self as a researcher on the research material. Instead, a far more in-depth personal biography forms an intrinsic part of the research. The pre-existing views, values and experiences of the researcher are laid bare. Stanley (1990d) uses the term ‘intellectual autobiography’ which entails acknowledging that all research is a product of the experiences and views of both the researcher (the autobiographical component) and those involved in the research (whose biographies influence their accounts). This involved the careful analytic explication of the reasoning procedures used in interpreting and theorising about our data.

5.7 REVISITING LIVES – THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION
The representation of all these stories is not practicable here, instead key moments and positions from these stories are selected as indicative of the dilemmas faced by all the participants. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, the emerging narratives highlight the identities of these women as sites of complexity, occurring around contradictory struggles, forming the nexus of various subject positions, socially (re)produced in a variety of contexts. Although often implicit, the key features that emerge illustrate these women making meaning through the content and construction of telling their life story. Whilst these stories share very similar themes of process there is also much to differentiate them, particularly the content and discourse and their relative positioning to these. The difficulty is balancing the analysis of structure, which must not be seen as over-determining, whilst on the other hand, generalising from personal and individual narratives about such ‘structure in process’. Whatever knowledge is obtained through this analysis is always partial, and historically specific. Moreover, the data represents only a snapshot of a person’s life in the context of their
whole, and unfinished life. As much feminist research has shown, a gender identity is never a completed project (Pattman et al, 1998). Representation of these lives can and invariably will change with time. To this end, the analytic format that follows highlights several important themes that were embedded in these stories. This is in no way to imply that the stories exhibit the same exact qualities, merely that their narratives expose certain common narrative features. The issue of individuality/difference vis-à-vis process is, I hope, addressed through demonstrating the variation at the individual and collective level, around and relative to these key narrative features. Thus the diverse and unique narrative material that emerges is used to reflect on and critique gender identity formation as it is in continual construction and re-construction.

The variance in the lives of the participants is exposed in order to construct a more nuanced, less universal explanation of the process of becoming a PE teacher. As such it seems important to reiterate that these lives should not be read as being representative of a particular group, but offer unique perspectives, and descriptions of experience. Although I have tried to represent these narratives, their opinions, teaching experiences, life experiences etc., as fully and as representatively as possible, this, like all research-based narratives, remains partial and open. There will always be different experiences and perspectives that the interviewees did not experience or choose to tell us about - other stories to tell. Of necessity, I have therefore had to be selective, which inevitably raises some questions about the representation of these women’s lives.

The power of researchers writing to shape what it is the reader comes to know/take from the text has been well documented (Atkinson, 1990; Richardson, 1994; Sparkes, 1992, 1995). Critics of the life history approach suggest that despite the engagement with reflexivity, the desire to be participant oriented, or other moves towards a feminist methodology, a narrative analysis is simply another way of displaying academic prowess. By reconceptualising and displaying others’ lives, we are still using others as objects for our study, and this raises some epistemological and ethical concerns. Indeed, the move from personal life testimonies to wider life histories involves issues of methodological process and power. The progression from life story to life history involves locating the life story alongside a broader contextual analysis.
Are accounts of experience to be presented as knowledge, unmediated by the beliefs and potential biases of the researcher-as-analyst? What about the experiences of women who are actively hostile to other women, to feminists, or to other oppressed groups such as other ethnic groups, the working class, or lesbians? Are we to privilege these accounts uncritically? These are all critical questions which a researcher as cultural self has to engage in.

Whilst I do not believe that there is some sort of final, complete and objective reality, and I am aware that my own subjectivity as a feminist has affected the outcome of my research, I do believe in a compromise between a completely subjective, unique and creative account of experience and a partly reproducible, objective and contextualised understanding in which my subjectivity has been critiqued. In addition, the individual herself may not necessarily be the best interpreter of her own experience: 'individuals do not necessarily possess sufficient knowledge to explain everything about their lives' (Maynard and Purvis, 1994, p.6). Individuals may not have a full awareness of the systems that surround and constrain them, and as researchers, we perhaps have some responsibility to illuminate oppressive aspects of these discourses and systems using their experiences. This is no easy task; there are a variety of narratives embedded in these stories, leading us to ask 'which kinds of narratives work to empower people and which degrade, control and dominate?' (Plummer, 1995, p.29).

How are we to make judgements on these?

The women's characterisation of their experience is thus represented within my work, but it is placed alongside my analysis of it rather than superseding it. Gorelick (1991) argues that merely giving voice to women's experiences through the use of interviews, participant observation, and oral histories is insufficient because it does not uncover the hidden sources of oppression. She suggests that theory must provide an interpretive framework to make these relations more visible. Yet she astutely acknowledges that feminist researchers, like herself, are confronted by the same social forces, distortions, and limitations as respondents, and thus, feminist researchers may be less able to perceive their own relations of oppression, their common contradictions.
Chapter Five: Researching Women's Lives: Methodological Issues

I have not presented these narratives in original lengthy narrative format. There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, for purposes of anonymity some of the data cannot be textually represented. To do so, would be to ultimately reveal the identities of some of these women. Secondly, this is a purposeful choice based on the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis. Postmodernity is a condition which suggests the need to go beyond single dominant narratives into other modes of writing and presentation. By subverting the narrative convention of linear progression a space can be created that allows a foregrounding of gaps, exclusions, repositionings, and repressions (Kehily, 1995). The stories are thus presented as unfinished, non-linear stories, highlighting the fragmentary and discontinuous nature of their experiences. The story told is unfinished, open ended and playful.

The forms that these representations take is crucial, and I harbour a commitment to make these texts accessible to as wide an audience as possible, in a manner which avoids representing these women as merely 'dupes' in an sexist world; a writing which instead speaks of both sameness and difference, of complexity and contradiction.

5.8 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Feminist research is problematic, and as a critical device I believe it should remain so: there is no monolithic feminist position. As feminists, we can and should inquire into all sorts of women's lives in all sorts of ways - but whilst 'feminist methodology' has usefully critiqued the false dichotomy of politics and methods, showing us how politics are inextricably embedded in research, it would be a mistake to construct too prescriptive a model for ways of doing feminist research. What I hope I have illustrated in this chapter is that I do not support feminist research as a specific method, nor is there some simplistic model of likely or desirable outcomes. However, the framework prescribed is politicised in the sense of trying to examine the role of gender in society, and reflect on how we might avoid androcentric norms in our work. Much of the chapter has focused instead on the conflict in terms of epistemology. This is because I believe it provides us with a critical tool for analysing ways of producing and contextualising knowledge along the axis of gender, suggesting that other ways of looking at the world do exist.
Chapter Five: Researching Women's Lives: Methodological Issues

1 Methods are the tools and techniques used to gather evidence, information and data. Methods are the research practices chosen by the researcher, be it qualitative or quantitative methods. Methodology addresses theoretical questions about the study of research and how research is done. As Sandra Harding suggests in the introduction to *Feminism and Methodology*: ‘A methodology is a theory and analysis of how research does and should proceed’ (Harding, 1987, p.3). Epistemology concerns theories about knowledge construction by questioning whose knowledge is validated and what constitutes knowledge. It is the philosophy of knowing, the construction and authentication of certain forms of knowledge.

2 A great deal of feminist debate on methodology has centred around the issue of method. It was in the late 1970s when there were some attacks on particular approaches, caricatured as so called ‘male methods’ and viewed by some social scientists (male and female) as effectively synonymous with hard science, or quantitative approaches. It was at this time that this body of feminist social scientists insisted that the qualitative (especially the in-depth interview) should be a distinct feminist method.

Kelly, Burton and Regan (1994) note that the early emphasis of research on, with and for women which implied that a feminist method was face to face interviewing resulted in a feminist orthodoxy within the social sciences that remained unquestioned up until the 1980s. This political and intellectual positioning has been criticised for its separatist and essentialist approach in assuming that this can only be adopted by women and that it was only women that could be feminists. A further criticism is it fails to recognise those men that are reflexive in their research approaches.

3 Feminist empiricism is seen as a response to sex biases and prejudices that feminists believe are evident in the traditional research disciplines, challenging the androcentrism of the social sciences. Hawkesworth (1989) and McLennan (1995) discuss in some detail the notion of feminist empiricism. It could be argued (e.g. Stanley, 1990) that the development of empiricism is held back by its inclinations towards liberal feminism, and research based on this approach emphasises the identification and elimination of stereotyping, bias and prejudice using a research process that is deemed women friendly. This leaves the scientific enquiry that is responsible for much of these biases, unchallenged. What has developed in response to this problem is a more radical research approach that brings forward a feminist standpoint. Harding (1987) herself questions the value of this approach with attempts of reform ‘bad science’ simply by putting women into existing frameworks, rather than actually questioning the prejudiced assumptions that are constitutive of science *per se*. A more radical attempt to explore feminist knowledge, through shifting the focus onto women's experiences and understandings is needed, to allow subjects to remain as actors and knowers, avoiding the transformation of them into objects of study. Finally, feminist postmodernity is one variant of postmodernism which, along with other variants of it, is critical of universalistic grand theories, and rejects the existence of an ‘authentic self’. Its focus instead is on fragmentation, multiple subjectivities, pluralities and flux.

4 Whilst I would share some of Opies comments on the benefits of interviews to the interviewee, I would be cautious of uncritically using the notion of empowerment through these interactions.

5 This author claims that subjectivity, or the subjective experience of being a woman, is made up by the position women hold. This concept of “positionality” does not mean that the external characteristics of the context determine women just as if they were empty and passive containers. Rather, positionality means that identity is in relation to a changing context, to a situation that includes the network of elements concerning other subjects, economic situations, cultural and political ideologies and institutions, etc. Women are seen as part of a fluid and historicized movement and therefore as contributing actively to that context. Alcoff suggests that this external situation determines the relative situation of women (in a similar way to which a piece’s position on the chessboard can be seen as safe or risky, powerful or weak depending on its relation to the other pieces on the board). If women can be identified by means of the position they hold within this relationships’ network, a feminist movement would loosely be based on women’s’ relative position with a network. Thus, positionality involves two basic elements: First, the notion of women is a relational term that can only be identified within a given (constantly changing) context; second, the position held by women can be actively used as a localisation for the construction of meaning, a place out of which meaning is constructed instead of a place where meaning can just be discovered, implying some degree of agency. Alcoff therefore presents a dynamic where women make use of their positional view; a place where values come to be interpreted, negotiated and even construction, rather than a locus determined by pre-given sets of values.

6 Stanley and Wise (1990, p.23) locate five related sites of the feminist researcher's behaviour and analysis: in the researcher-researched relationship; in emotion as a research experience; in the intellectual autobiography of the researchers; therefore in how to manage the different 'realities' and
understandings of researchers and researched; and thus in the complex questions of power in research and writing.
Chapter Six: Narrative Analysis: “Women nowadays”

This is the first of two chapters wherein I present the life histories of a selected cohort of ten female PGCE students from a university in central England. The chapter focuses on the ‘web of gendered narratives’ (Benhabib, 1997) that these women tell about their lives prior to, and at the beginning of their teacher training, revealing the complexity of their gender identities. Chapter seven forms the second part of this analysis illustrating how these narratives are modified, challenged or reconfirmed as they enter the ITT contexts. As such, in drawing upon theories of identity formation and feminist theories, the analysis develops an account that is both structural and personal of the social construction of these women’s lives.

6.1 ‘ITS DIFFERENT FOR US’; GENDER, IDENTITY AND A ‘CHANGING SOCIETY’

THE (IN) VISIBILITY OF GENDER IN A ‘CHANGING SOCIETY’

All of the women in the study were born in the late 1970’s, growing up in the 1980s and 1990s. What therefore were the complexities of gender and class during this period? In this section I want to briefly explore the backdrop within which these women have grown up. A variety of studies detailing gender patterns, statistics, marital status, work patterns, legislation etc. has addressed the social conditions of the last two decades. There are some contrasting positions and pictures painted on what has been seen as a period of rapid social change. Novak and Novack (1996) suggest that this period appears to have been an ideal time for young women to come of age, and that we are witnessing an increased challenge to gender stereotypical work patterns and legislative changes in gender equality. One important social phenomenon of the 1990s has been the increase in the number of women living alone. The Office for the National Statistics predicts that by the year 2020 a quarter of all women will be single and out of 3.8 million women in their thirties, almost a million will be single or divorced (appeared in Sunday Times on 26th October 1997, cited in Walters (1999a), p22). First time marriages have halved while divorces have trebled. Between 1990 and 1995 alone, the estimated number of single parent families leapt by 27 per cent. Women who do marry are settling down later and later, childlessness has doubled in a
generation, and the number of women giving birth between the ages of 35 and 39 has leapt 92 per cent since 1981. The proportion of mortgages held solely by women has more than doubled since 1983 – (the number held by sole men is 20 per cent). Some suggest that these changes in society have brought a new materialism and realism (Francis, 2000) for women. The increasing divorce rate and the number of single parent families seem to have an impact upon some young women and girls (Francis, 1998) whereby one no longer has to ‘rely on a man’. This phenomena has also resonated and been reflected in popular culture, with these single women being categorised as ‘Bridget Joneses’ based on a character in a world Wide Best selling novel by Helen Fielding.

Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001), drawing on data spanning nearly twenty years, suggest there is a hidden price of middle class girls’ apparently effortless achievements – obsessive hard work, guilt, and devastating feelings of inadequacy. They also trace the labour market suggesting that it cruelly sets material limits on the hopes and ambitions of working class girls. It is worth taking stock here that Women today make up half of the worlds’ population, yet do two thirds of its work, receive only one tenth of its income, and own only 1 per cent of world property (Wolf, 1990). Sixty two per cent of people living in poverty today are women. Forty per cent of working women earn less than £150 a week, compared to ten per cent of men. Ninety-four per cent of an estimated million home workers in the UK are women; earning as little as 50 pence an hour for piece work in their own homes. Similarly, in two parent families it is now far more usual for both parents to work, even full time, than was the case even a decade ago.

Whatever our position, this period has brought increasing complexity. How such ‘social change’ is incorporated, ordered and given meaning, is significant to these women’s biographies; dealing with ideas of equality and inequality significantly shape these women’s understandings of their gendered selves. Moreover, whilst these issues were variously experienced according to their socio-economic position these remain the central framework through which they all attempted to reconcile their gendered personal and professional life choices and contradictions in their lives. This was a theme that emerged in their life stories about families, education, sport and PE. The influence of second wave feminism is clear in many of the narratives, with the liberal
Chapter Six: Narrative Analysis: Women nowadays

notion of equal opportunities appearing as a dominant discourse. As such, the intersection of the life history with the history of society is a key dynamic in illuminating the choices, contingencies and options available to the individual. Reference is made to social opportunities *across generations*, with most of the women making reference to the *lack* of opportunity for previous female generations in their family. This is a key point around which these women construct a strong sense of self, by responding to these conditions as wanting to achieve where their Mothers (or other members of the family) did not have the opportunity:

She didn’t go to university, she left at fifteen. I think she is very proud of me, the fact that I have gone on further than she had, but she doesn’t really know that much about it. (Robin)

Similarly Anne recalls an influential conversation with her Mother:

I think that when I was little I sort of asked my Mum ‘Mum what did you want to be when you were little?’ She wanted to be a primary school teacher, but she didn’t.

I think my Mum is just glad that I am going into something that I want to do. I think that she didn’t have the same opportunities that I have. I think that she respects me … or thinks that it is a good decision to find something for me that is secure because in theory it’s a secure occupation. (Christie)

Yes, My Mum didn’t have much chance of an education, she left school at fifteen, due to family circumstances, she’s very proud that both my sister and I have gone through. (Sam)

Walby (1997) suggests that there is an immense difference between the lives of younger women and older women, with younger women enjoying high degrees of success in the 1990s in both education and employment. Little wonder that some of these women (particularly working class women) see themselves almost as family pioneers in higher/further education, viewing their success as a potentially catalytic contribution to their wider family circle:

But in my family no one had ever gone to university... oh my cousin did but he was a few years older than me. (Anne)
Whilst many working-class mothers might be taking their place in the labour market, the gendered equalities within the home have not maintained the pace. Sam, who identifies as middle class, is aware of her Mother’s working class origins and how her (mothers’) Educational Opportunities were different:

My Mum’s got six brothers and Sisters, and my sister and I are the first to go to University. (Sam)

In evoking ‘Mothers who missed out’ they are able to identify constraint and position themselves relative to this. The result, in some cases, was the position of some triumphant culmination of the mother’s story, acknowledging the constraint, and taking individual responsibility to work hard to overcome this:

Yeah, I definitely had to work hard, I’m not majorly intelligent straight off... I have to work really hard to get where I want to go. (Robin)

On the education side of it it’s like these days you are just going to have to work hard just to get a job. (Julia)

Their association with the gendered nature of these societal changes is reflected in the different ways in which they talk about their mothers compared with their fathers. It was not uncommon for these women to identify sexist attitudes with male figures in their families. This was particularly the case with those women from working class origins, such as Robin and Christie, who felt that previous female generations in their family, may have been restricted by what they come to see as ‘sexist’ attitudes of males partners/family members:

I think I’ve probably learnt a lot about relationships, well I don’t have much respect for my Father unfortunately, probably because he is a little bit traditional in his approaches, topics and things that I wouldn’t really agree with. (Christie)

The relationship that went on between my Mum and my stepfather, very... very ... I mean like I say they have broken up now, divorced last April whenever it was before I went away and the main breakdown of that was because of my Step Fathers perceptions of what he thought that Mum should do ... and even though he and Mum were earning about the same amount of money he thought no he’s the male, he dominates the house and rules and if you don’t like it you can get out and find somewhere else to live and I think that has really effect me and it has
made me a lot more independent. (Robin)

My stepfather, he was very... he was my stepfather... at the time he was a panel beater in a factory, cars. He was the same, he left school at fourteen I think, and went into the navy so he was completely against me going up the education system, he thought I should leave and just get an ordinary job... my stepfather and the way he was I was actually not, I was never allowed to go out when... I was at home I was kept in. As soon as school finished I was kept in and that was it. I wasn't allowed to go out at the weekends and I didn't have social groups... Mum is very feminine, very... this is how females behave and this is how they react and my step father has definitely got a very,... a very definite picture as well. He is actually quite sexist I would say. (Robin)

6.1.1 Liberal individualism or female independence/self sufficiency

The narratives constructed around the issue of opportunity, are met with a very strong expression of individualism. Their sense of agency largely appeared to be underpinned by a belief that the resistances that they make are a question of individual choice. These dynamics are worthy of further analysis since one of the most salient and yet relatively unexplored areas of identity formation within education is that of the interpretation of 'agency' by teachers. Consider Christie and Robin, who are both clearly able to identify dominant traditional gendered story-lines within their families (and later elsewhere).

Definitely independent, it forces you to be independent... um... I don't know if that is particularly because I am female or not... In the way that my Dad treated my Mum. Not necessarily the way that they treated me, because they did just let me get on with my own life in the way that I want and there was no real... I didn't feel that I was ever letting them down, or not living up to their expectations... but probably in the way in which he treated my Mum I perhaps did [find it problematic] [...] I think because Mum was kind of so reliant on him that will make me the opposite... yeah I don't want to be in the situation where I am reliant. I supported myself the whole way through University, they gave me nothing. I don't get very much grant so it's literally... I've done everything. I mean when I came to University I had a partner, but I wouldn't rely on him. Even though he started to work and that, I refused to rely on him which was... I mean it probably causes a bit of friction so I would rather avoid it. I don't want to be the sort of... how would you describe it... the pathetic female? (laughter) You know, whatever the stereotypes are. (Christie)

On the one hand, these women find this ‘narrative of agency’ as appealing. Above, Christie utilises this as a resource to refute the position of femininity being presented
by her family. The tendency here is to frame their family life in terms of making choices, and trying to overcome restriction, as Robin typifies ‘I think at the time I did [feel restricted], but actually now looking back at it, it didn't stop me doing what I wanted to do’ (Robin). Moreover, whilst their negotiations are not always successful, they are ostensibly making space to manoeuvre, and are reflexively resisting particular social categories creatively engaging with, and routinely resisting the norms of gender. These women define and engage with the choices they had available to them, engaging in what Giddens (1991) terms the reflexive ‘project of the self’. The notion of individuality, freedom and choice, and the principle of upholding individual rights and responsibilities were prominent in these accounts:

My parents have always instilled into me make your own choices and stick to them. (Sam)

But I think that [sport] was just something that I got involved in for myself rather than because I was influenced. (Claire)

I think I probably behaved [like that] to rebel against what my stepfather is like. (Robin)

...you know to go to Sunday school in a nice little dress and I just rebelled against it totally. (Emma)

Mum will sort of put in the odd joke about, you know, where's your boyfriend kind of thing, but it's all taken with a pinch of salt because if I turn around to them and say Mum I don't want to get married, I won't do it because you want me to... (Sam)

Well it [sports participation] started a lot earlier than that I guess, right back to primary school when I started going against the grain. (Claire)

Sam goes as far as to suggest that this was the discourse through which she took herself up during schooling;

The way I react best to people is if you tell me I can’t do something, I'll do it to prove... not to say that you know, I am not allowed to do that, but...(Sam)

The importance of this narrative strategy in women’s lives is, according to the Personal Narratives Group (1989), the site that it provides for women to contrast self-image and experiences with dominant cultural models. These are in many ways
compelling stories positioning these women as strong, independent, almost female rebel-heroines who resist dominant gender expectations by ‘not following the norms’. Here’s the paradox: these self-representations as ‘rebels’, although compelling, seem to mask the conflicts unavoidable for women who struggle against gender norms. Whilst the masking of conflicts results in these women feeling empowered, and might on initial interpretation be construed as resistance and agency, the irony is that both these positions threatened to erase female subjectivity by reproducing masculinist discourses and humanist subjects of the self. In essence the self-representation of rebel functions simultaneously to reproduce dominant gender norms and contest them. Their belief in this autonomy and agency also constrains them to constitute themselves as rational, unitary and non-contradictory. I have begun therefore to view these aspects of the narratives as sites where struggles occur to actively construct a gendered subjectivity.

This symbolic and normative association with the notion of freedom from constraint appeared to underpin a common belief that women were free and equal with men to explore the opportunities of ‘equal opportunities’ in practice. Talk about ‘women’ was commonly constructed in the form of a progressive narrative where the lives of women today were once again compared more favourably with the past. What emerges is a belief in women as previously disadvantaged, who have now ‘emancipated’ themselves, and that the ideal of equality has been realised, alluding to the heralding of the present status of women as an arrival – some culmination of historical process. Some of these women do not believe that being a woman has made, or should make, any difference to either who they are or to their life choices, particularly in a society that now provides them with more opportunities, as Louise stresses ‘I would like to think that in my life the people that I socialise with, or work with, I want them to treat me equally the same as a male counterpart’. Claire suggests that throughout her schooling ‘I think whether you were male or female I think it was just to achieve the best you can. I didn’t see any real distinction about how far you can go.’ Sam comments that she had not felt restricted within her family and that

To a certain extent, but I think because my sport is football... Nobody's ever said you, Mum and Dad have never said you shouldn't play football because you're a girl. That's never been a point that's come across. They've always been sort of, if you like it then go ahead. They're quite
supportive of whatever sport I do.

I think they [women] are [oppressed] actually in some aspects, I don’t think you see it in England but when you go abroad you see it. (Sam)

I would say that in some situations that being female is a disadvantage but in others it can be a sort of, well get on better, find it easier. (Julia)

Similarly, Louise suggests that oppression is still evident in society, but that;

 […] I mean views have obviously changed and people now recognise that most families can’t survive without two people going out to work and that seems to be, I mean people do seem to be coming around to that way of thinking (Louise)

I think it depends where you are and what context it’s in. I don’t really think that they are now... not really. I mean it's definitely a male dominated society, but I don't think that they are oppressed. I think people can take this too far sometimes (Fiona)

Unsurprisingly, these women gain some sense of empowerment through this belief in entitlements for women and girls. They did not want to see themselves as victims of discrimination, to do so, in Christie’s words would be to feel like a ‘pathetic female’. Moreover, in positioning themselves as such, would be to dismantle the bigger narrative of generational change and feelings of self-determination. They cherish the idea that men and women are equal, and hence feel so aggrieved by the way in which their previous generations of females have been treated:

Yeah the only place that I have felt oppressed is at home with my step-father. I have never come across it anywhere else, which is probably why I resent that so much. (Robin)

However, this ‘gender-neutral’ position at times appeared to fundamentally separate them from the social world and partially prevent them from seeing the ‘multifaceted and fluid nature of their own experience, drawing tight boundaries between the self and possibilities’ (Davies, 1993, p.20). Consider Fiona’s comments ‘I think my Brother gets more freedom or definitely used to ... but no [I haven’t felt restricted].’

Gendered tensions (whilst at times not transparent to them) appear to arise from these positions since they imply a notion of liberalism; rational actors who are free and disembedded from ‘gendered arenas’. The result in some cases is the collapsing of the complexities of their identities that are mediated by larger social structure, and
particularities of difference, into a liberal rhetoric of ‘we are all free to explore opportunities’. Is it that a discourse of equal opportunities among young people, which presents gender discrimination as a thing of the past is blinding them to continuing gender inequality (see Volman and Ten Dam, 1998; and Francis, 2000)? Or might we consider these as narratives that allow them to construct their decisions as not merely complying with dominant ideologies but as active subjects writing their own story? I reiterate, there are many ways in which we might interpret what’s taking place here.

6.2 “I'M NOT A FEMINIST, BUT THEN...” (CHRISTIE): Popular feminism, post-feminism, or no feminism?

Although this study is not about feminist identity or consciousness its mediation in terms of gender identities means it is an unavoidable topic. Moreover, since all of the participants were emphatic that being a woman should not make a difference to their available life choices, this issue of feminism was conspicuous by its absence. Indeed the ideas of feminism, or identifying as a feminist were as Emma comments ‘not something I had thought about’ whilst Claire comments ‘It doesn’t bother me, it’s not an issue that bother’s me, I’m not about to start lobbying.’ The propensity for young women to espouse opinions compatible with a feminist viewpoint yet at the same time lack any identification with feminism is not new (Budgeon, 2001). Their stories capture the central themes relating to young women/teachers and their assessment of gender relations; that conditions for women have changed dramatically; that young women now enjoy a wider range of choices about how to live their lives; and that they have the right to self-determination. In co-existence however, are a number of conditions which restrict women’s lives, thereby making resistance an issue of ongoing relevance.

Significantly, the solutions put forth by the women revealed a tendency to attribute responsibility for a solution to individual women rather than identify with a collective political movement. Only two women identified themselves as a feminist (although vague) and whilst they varied in their feminist values, there seemed to be a coherent reasoning behind others rejection of feminism. For many, to engage in a feminist discourse was to be associated with disadvantage, or to draw upon a position of ‘victim.’ Whilst recognising some areas of inequality, they do not recognise themselves as the subject ‘woman’ of feminist discourse. These women were able to
identify a number of inequalities emerging in relation to family life, education, employment, sports, and male privilege, appearing to reflect feminist ideals. Most prominent, was their desire for gender equality in sport and PE. Given this, why was the opening disclaimer 'I'm not a feminist' necessary? To arrive at an understanding of how to situate these comments, it seemed necessary to look at the feminist discourses available to, and appropriated by these women. Skeggs (1997) identifies one brand of feminism that is available to young women, that of 'popular feminism'. This is a form of feminism that in the 1980s became separated from the professional and academic feminism, its main feature being that it could be marketed. The term 'post-feminism' has been conflated with this popular form of feminism:

...it is the ability to pull out the individualist aspects-such as sexual power, autonomy, respect, self-esteem-of feminism and make them marketable which has helped to generate... contradictory effects. These aspects give feminism a popular front which provides selective appeal and reaches across class and race divides by speaking to the desire to be autonomous, powerful, confident, glamorous, and so on. But while it does this it detaches feminism from the social and the systematic. It reduces feminism to the solitary individual and linkages across difference and distinction and any sense of collective responsibility are made invisible (Skeggs, 1997, p.144).

The discussions throughout these life stories revealed a fundamental commitment to individual ideals of justice and fairness, and thus appear as expressions of this individualistic form of 'popular' feminism. The appropriation of this discourse seemed to rest upon its appeal to draw upon the ideals of feminism, but locating the solutions to the inequalities highlighted, by focusing on the rights of individualized choice. Moreover, the discourse also assumes some level of emancipation from traditions and conditions of domination as already achieved enabling these women to distance themselves from the position of 'victim' or 'disadvantaged' and develop their self-actualisation.

I think if you say that you are a feminist then there is all that negative comments or opinions in people's minds. I wouldn't say that I am a feminist although I have been described as it. People say oh Christie is on her feminist run again, just because I might question a referee. How long do you play? What do you mean how long do we play its football we play 90 minutes... I hate that question. As captain if the referee asks me and there was anyone nearby they'd be like 'Oh no, Christie is going
to get on her feminist point'. I wouldn't say that I was a feminist or even that I knew that much about feminism ... I just ... know what I value. But then I know it's probably not his fault, inexperience with women's football, and it may be a genuine question from his point of view. But... oh ... I don't know ... I suppose I'm not a feminist but then ... (Christie)

As Faludi (1991) states ‘saying one is ‘not a feminist (even while supporting quietly every item of the feminist platform) seems the most prudent, self-protective strategy’ (p.58). Much of this distancing appeared to be related to a caricature rooted in second wave feminism, no longer appearing as relevant to these women’s lives. Moreover, these images were mitigated by meaning making from key events in the participants life stories such as Sam’s who recalls a critical life moment in the rejection of a feminist discourse and identity. Sam begins recalling this moment by describing a well known feminist academic as one of the ‘weird one... that we’d sort of go... mmm’;

Yes, and we used to say, oh here we go another man bashing session again. She would just come out and reel it all off. She had this brilliant way, at the beginning of the session she's say like this isn't going to be a man bashing session and we'd all look at each other and go 'yeah right' (laughter)...I think we very much saw her as a raving feminist. I mean I don't think, have you met her or seen her ? ...she's quite an overpowering character, you know you see her straight away, and she always used to dress in sort of flowing dark clothes and all her hair. She would just come in and say things like ...er ... oh my Husband, but never mind we're finished now, or my son he does this and it's not good. You think, oh, I don't want to put a foot wrong because she'll shout at me. There's a lot of jokes about [her] you know, ...raving feminist... Yes, because she always, I think one of her lectures she was talking about equality and she just took it, and most of the football team were friends together and we were all in the same lectures. I remember sitting down after the lectures and us saying you know that wasn't equality she wanted, she wanted women to be better than men in football. We would think well no it's a completely different game. I think quite a few of us would quite happily stick our hands up in the lecture and go actually no we disagree with this. But not to the extent that we don't want equality, she took it that stage too far.

There is a clear rejection here of the version of equality being offered by Sam's lecturer, perhaps because of the personal risk and stigma attached to the identities that go with these positions:
[...] I think lots of people would see a feminist as anti-men. It could be I don’t know, really stereotypical gay women. Women’s rights and that sort of thing... it’s seeing things from a woman’s point of view.

Sam comments that ‘I think in terms of, for me the word feminist, I don’t really like the word...it’s a bit too in your face but I haven’t a problem with equality, there’s a difference I think.’ Similarly, Christie suggests:

I believe in some of the issues but I also think that sometimes it can be taken to an extreme as soon as you mention feminism and I think that is just the same as male... I don’t think we should go over the top and end up with a situation like we have now with male dominance. I think the fact is that we want it to be equal, we are all equal and that's it. (Christie)

The ambiguity they have to manage therefore is trying to offset their identities from feminist labels, whilst maintaining a ‘system of equality’. The paradox emerges in that they stand by their convictions that equality should and does exist, and therefore reconcile such ambivalence by creating narratives of acceptable and unacceptable feminists. Acceptable feminists being those whose ideas, behaviours and identities are not too threatening (after all why should it need to be threatening in a gender fair culture?!). Unacceptable feminists are labelled over the top, radical or not really wanting equality but inequality in favour of women (‘she took it too far’).

I wasn’t even aware of what a feminist was and I thought they were all lesbians and thought that females ought to be better than males, not just equal and as far as I am concerned I just want them equal... It's like the women playing football and things like that, I don't have a problem with that at all. But I don't want women to play football against men, I want women to play football against women, and that will just take a lot longer to develop. (Claire)

I think people can take this equality too far sometimes.’ (Fiona)

These women therefore reflexively manage their own gender identities through these narratives, off-setting stigmatised positions of feminist whilst trying to maintain a desire towards equality. As such they identify boundaries of tolerable feminism, marginalizing those who move beyond as ‘radical’ or ‘lesbians.’ Faludi (1991) documents how feminism has been blamed for everything from mental depression to meagre saving accounts from teenage suicides to eating disorders. This reaction against feminism (Faludi, 1991) along with the elaboration of a so called post-feminist
feminism have made for increasingly difficult opportunities to identify as 'feminist'. With such a negative image surrounding feminism it is no wonder that many of these women distance themselves from it.

I'm probably not a feminist...because I spend my whole life going around with blokes and I seem to have adopted their attitudes. I use their language... I suppose sometimes I stand up for birds (laughter) ... see I've even used the word birds there. Yeah I suppose sometimes in my actions I try to sort of dispel myths about women's football and things like that. Sometimes I'm like oh I can do this too, I can climb this mountain. I get offended sometimes when you get oh are you OK, do you want a hand? (Julia)

This has serious implications for the ways in which ideals of a 'feminist pedagogy' might be received, an issue I expand upon in chapter eight. Encouragingly, Christie, Robin and Louise all suggest that their educational experiences of 'equality issues' helped them to understand more about the social construction of gender, feminism and equality in physical education. These women all took University Degree modules related to these issues;

Yeah, you do, like the smaller issues come into and you do see the smaller issues that come into and you do see the issues that their looking at rather than this whole thing about feminists and what they're typically like, and you do get down to the details. Yes, I do agree with a lot of what is said about more equal opportunities and things...(Louise)

These themes are fundamental to the gender identities these women construct, and emerge as significant in relation to their biographies. In the remainder of this chapter, I draw out how these discourses operate in relation to their understandings of their sporting and educational biographies.

6.2.1 Investing and excelling in sport and PE; Consolidating self-determination

I've always been into sport since I was really young where I used to be doing something every night of the week, you know, when I was a child. (Louise)

These student teachers were all sports performers who when compared to other women in the same age range might be described as members of an elite group; they have all chosen at least one activity within which they have excelled and from which
they have gained some sense of self and social identity. Furthermore, they all appear to be competent all-rounders demonstrating a higher than average skill in a wide range of physical activities. For all the women, sport and physical education provided them with satisfaction and enjoyment and was therefore highly valued, and proved influential;

I think it was because I enjoyed it [sport] so much and because I was feeling the success of it and I just wanted to get better. (Sam)

Oh yes, it was something that I was good at, successful and then it just all continued, successful and so that's why I kept going really. (Louise)

Yeah I think it was because I enjoyed it so much and because I was feeling the success of it and I just wanted to get better and I just had this vision of how I wanted it to be, or how I wanted to play and that's what I wanted to achieve. (Robin)

Yeh really enjoyed it (PE) all the time. (Anne)

Yes, I thoroughly enjoyed, I was achieving so I enjoyed it. (Claire)

Many accounts suggest that sport as a pathway, helped to foster a sense of identity that drew primarily on physical activity, skills and dispositions, which as Louise suggests made her ‘the person I am today.’ Robin suggests that if ‘she wasn’t involved in sport’ then she would ‘probably be quite a different person.’

I didn't know what the future would hold for me in rugby with regards status in the team but that's the way I chose to go and I don't regret it. *It has just taken over part of my life [...] I suppose it was a bit of change because I knew that I would have to stand up and just yell at people and I suppose ... yeah... that is when I first started getting voice... I was always really quiet but not when I was playing sport. I was just wild so ...* (Anne)

Similarly, Christie comments:

Yeah, I think that when I was just getting into county trials I was very very insecure and I've been told all the way through that I lack confidence, but I think that having achieved something, and then having it recognised... but then I suddenly thought hang on a second you've just got to push yourself. You've just got to get in there and do it and that is because of what I saw other people do around me. So I forced myself to be, I don't know, I forced myself to come out of the corner I suppose and actually talk. Instead of just thinking something I used to say it. (Christie)
All of the women demonstrated all-round ability in a number of physical disciplines and all had a strong background in sport and PE. Sport formed a strong part of early recollections with many reporting that they or others recognized their ability from an early age. For some, these early recollections involved significant others that were male. For many, it is possible to refer to the inculcation of a competitive sports habitus. However, their narratives suggest that this habitus took a decidedly gendered pattern, describing themselves as ‘tomboys’ or ‘one of the boys’, preferring ‘male activities’ or ‘male company’, creating a masculine type capital:

I mean in the past I sort of went through this huge sort of tomboy phase, and like I was really competing with my Brother for Dads attention. Like football I was always trying to get him to come and watch. But my Brother was kind of the elite performer and yet Dad really pushed him and he didn't really want to do it whereas I was full of enthusiasm but didn't have the skill... Yeah Mum was very encouraging to start with, but sort of battled against it and eventually got myself into a club and stuff. Sport in that they let me go to training and they gave me lifts here and there but they didn't sort of push me into the football. I didn't feel that I got as much encouragement as my Brother. He was certainly pushed but that may just be because he was better and Dad thought that he could get somewhere with him. (Julia)

Within secondary school many of these women experience ‘traditional PE; mainstream ‘female’ appropriate activities in gender segregated PE environments;

No. In my last year of sixth form they had one of the teachers did start one. But the Head Of Department was like ‘oh no I'm not having any girls do that’. The whole curriculum was like netball for girls and football for boys basically. You did your traditional sports and you liked it.... but I didn't and I argued. (laughter) ... which probably didn't get me anywhere. (Julia)

The gendered nature of their school PE is something which some of the women were not only aware of, but also perturbed by, acknowledging that these narrow experiences provided them with only stereotypically ‘feminine’ experiences. Whilst other women were exposed to other gender identity resources through their participation in a wider spectrum of activities and physical culture in extra curricular activities, Robin and Emma continued to invest in these ‘traditional female’ contexts. At the time of interview, teaching practice was imminent, and this prompts them into connecting the
self, pedagogy and the gender order (Brown and Rich, 2002) in considering whether they possess sufficient resources for teaching;

Yeah it was the netball, and I only did hockey once and although it's not my fault I am beginning to regret that now. I only ever did hockey for about 7 weeks in the first year and we never did hockey ever again until A-Level, which has become quite a disadvantage to me now. But no, we never did football or cricket or rugby or anything, but at the time I didn't mind, but now....

Robin makes reference to the embodied physical expression of herself in 'other' (gendered) activities, where particular movements, language, dispositions and ideas come with involvement and experience. With the benefit of hindsight, Robin suggests that the absence of these ‘lived’ identity resources might be problematic; that she may not possess sufficient alternative gender identity resources in the form of ‘other’ gendered experiences including internalised subject knowledges, communication skills and alternative narratives of the self (see Sparkes, 1999) to achieve all that she wishes to as a teacher.

6.3 BECOMING A SUCCESS OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION RITUAL; ‘BEING DIFFERENT TO MOST GIRLS’

Many of the women understood their PE experiences as differentiated not only between the sexes but also within them. As such, many describe these experiences as setting them aside from the vast majority of ‘dis-interested’ girls that they undertake their physical education with:

They [friends] sort of plumped out whereas I sort of carried on with sport and they just sort of lost interest, so I found that I lost my close friends. They were still friends but not as close as they were. I used to spend a lot of my dinner times and after school just doing sport. So I went through a time when I didn’t really have any close friends. I was either practicing sport or I was just spending time with them but not excessively so. (Emma)

Robin found that many of her friends had begun to ‘bunk off’ PE and she felt fortunate she was able to reconcile these differences;

there wasn't that many, I mean literally there must have been about three of us by the end of the year [sixth form] out of about sixty that actually
ended up doing PE on a regular basis, which is quite a minority I think… I always seem to get on with loads of people anyway and they always knew that I was the one who was quite good at PE and they didn't mind me carrying on playing as long as I didn't interfere … so and so is blagging or whatever. If I just left them to get on with what I was doing then they would just leave me to get on with what I was doing, which was quite nice. (Robin)

These women construct themselves on an understanding of feeling different from other girls and women through their physical education and sports experiences. In some cases this results in them openly displaying their distance from other women, and collude in associating femininity (or anything effeminate) with non-participation;

The groups really started to form by the GCSE year where the divides really started to form between those that were sporting and those who were ‘slappers’ and there was a distinct divide… I suppose my best friend Mary, was the most feminine, good looking and yet was a very good tennis player and quite a good hockey player... I mean the girly-girls wouldn’t turn up if it wasn’t raining or anything like that... Whereas those that really were achieving were there getting stuck in, getting dirty, whatever the weather getting really passionate about it. (Claire)

Others draw on similar language in positioning femininity negatively with particular sports, or non-participation;

But I think it was the male teachers really that were the problem at the school when it came to gender, and one in particular would just not allow girls to do anything, other than your typical girlie sports, netball, and things like that. (Louise)

This is a sometimes-patronising discrimination that has all kinds of implications for collective action and stereotyping later in life, not least, the ways in which it reconstructs an oppressive gender dualism. Accounts of PE experiences highlighted an emphasis on the individual, implicitly positioning peers that did not participate as ‘failing’ to exercise an individual choice. At its extreme, this involved expressed hostility and frustration at girls’ lack of involvement in PE:

Yeah there was nothing really. It was, once I went from mixed sex lessons in my middle school to single sex lessons in my upper school and, I suddenly, there was another girl who was one of my closest friends. She ... it was sort of me and her in every lesson and everyone
else sort of didn’t give a monkey’s. It’s difficult to play any sort of game situation which is what I remember at that sort of .. key stage 4 is games games games. I don’t remember doing much else, perhaps swimming. It’s very difficult to play when there is only two out of a class of twenty-four, and ten are not doing it because they don’t want to break their nails. It was pretty poor and I’m sure it wouldn’t pass OFSTED now. (Christie)

Yeah very few of the girls chose to do it [sixth form PE] and it was me and a couple of lads really. (Louise)

I recognise here the deep investments I myself had made in these narratives, which allowed me to re-write my own story. I had dealt with my own devaluation of being female by becoming what I saw as ‘more male’ by similarly being evaluative of passive forms of femininity, of equating non-participation with femininity, of being ‘girly’. In listening closely to these stories there was the stark realisation that this contributed to my own erasure, the negating of my own identity.

Sam found it frustrating that she had to work with ‘those sorts of people that can’t even catch a ball’ in PE classes. What is pertinent here is that these women find success, enjoyment and fulfilment in what is on offer at school in a culture of physical education which clashes sharply with the culture of an emphasized and heterosexual femininity (Scraton, 1987, 1992). They view themselves as successes of the PE system, and draw upon the benefits, enjoyment and success that they found came to them quite ‘naturally’ as Fiona comments:

So I’ve never found it [PE] hard, but that’s co-ordination...
Well I remember [sport] at school, there was never once where I didn’t want to go out and play, it didn’t matter what the weather was like, I always enjoyed PE.

Sam understands this dynamic as a fundamental distinction of her Physical Education experiences:

PE lessons were always a good laugh, partly because they set us from the first day we walked into the PE department, they set us immediately. They said if you’d played any sport before go down that side and if you haven’t go down that side. Immediately my friends, because my friends were sporty people anyway, you were always with your friends in PE and it always helped because the PE teachers were very relaxed, very laid back, so PE was great fun. (Sam)
Moreover, many of these women were good all-rounders, and found success in many games related sports. It is no coincidence that apart from Emma, who has a fundamentally different sporting biography, many of these women steered away from gymnastics and dance:

It [PE] was very games oriented. I managed quite successfully to miss out gym and dance... I crushed my foot in the second year which meant that I was out for six weeks, and I was gutted about this, but then I realised it was six weeks of dance, so I was quite pleased. (Sam)

All these women, apart from Emma, describe sporting environments that have not provided them with the types of skills and identity resources found in more aesthetic activity areas such as gym and dance. Indeed many of the women have occupied male dominated and oriented social spheres, where particular forms of masculinity, PE and Sport, exclude aesthetic activities and associations with femininity. Sport and PE are thus prime arenas in which they construct identities which resist the 'norm', and consolidates their need for self-determination. Indeed, some find pleasure and empowerment through challenging traditionally male orthodoxies.

'Women's rugby'. I don't play women's rugby I am just a woman that happens to play rugby. Yet people will see it... like people will never say oh you play men's rugby? That's not an issue. Yeah I mean the amount of people that don't think that women should do it... never mind all the stereotype gay images that it gets. Which yeah you do get in other women's sports like hockey and netball, sports like that... it's made it more exciting I think... It was something different ... something that not many people have the chance to do... It was a male sport so it was ... just to be able to say to people that you say rugby just waiting for the reaction it's like nothing else... you say to people you play hockey and it's like oh right and you say that you play rugby and you just wait for some sort of reaction. But I play it because I enjoy it not because I am trying to get a reaction... Yeah I mean people have been ... I mean when you tell them that you play rugby you automatically think oh what must they be thinking of me? Which makes it a lot more interesting... I actually find it quite interesting to find out what people think of me and it doesn't matter what they say ... I can just ... they've got their right to an opinion. I've heard lots of ignorant opinions about women playing rugby and you just laugh at them because there is no point in trying to educate ... well I wouldn't want to waste my energy trying to educate them. They've got their opinion and it's hard to change people's opinions. (Anne)
6.4 'IN THE SPORTING SENSE I DON'T FEEL INADEQUATE... IN THE SPORTING SENSE NOT AT ALL' (CLAIRE, INTERVIEW EXTRACT); An exploration of body-self relationships

Before starting their teacher training these women were all too aware of the negative images associated with their participation in particular sports. The power of the lesbian label is a recurring theme in these women's narratives. Sam recalls a critical moment with her Mother, who was concerned about her involvement with football:

Well, it was quite amusing this summer actually because one of the friends at the church in [a town] rung my Mum up, and they'd been having problems in the church with er.. a young girl who'd gone off to [a university], went and played football and came home and told her parents that she was a lesbian. My Mums friend, and whatever, hadn't really heard of this sort of thing before and was you know, thought that every footballer was a raving lesbian. Anyway Mum sort of said to me is it true Sam? I was like well you do see it, but I'm sure you see it in every walk of life Mum. So that was quite amusing because my Mum was like suddenly eyes open. But then it was like you know Sam, when you think of all these women footballers do you really think you should be doing it? (Sam)

Moreover, these women were aware that in becoming a PE teacher, they might be targets of homophobic suspicions;

Really the only time that it became an issue for me was when before I came to do my PGCE I was talking to one of the directors of the PGCE at [my old University] and he said to me 'would you like to come for a mock interview?' I said 'yes that would be really helpful'. So we had this interview and then he threw in this question 'how will you deal with being stereotyped as a lesbian as a PE teacher?' I hadn't even thought about it and I didn't have a clue what to say and that was the only time really. I've never had a problem with being thought of being masculine, or being accused of being masculine. But, I did see how people would say oh the girls that play rugby they're the masculine ones, and the girls' football team. (Louise)

I think it might be a problem, given my general knowledge of the world at large, but not my own experience. But I think the boys are always one for doing that, I mean if they see a female PE teacher not married then of course she's got to be lesbian (Claire)

Many of these women drew upon an awareness of the existence of 'stereotypes' of lesbians in sport, others stated that they knew lesbians in sport, drawing on caricatures themselves of their own PE teachers:
the lady that was there before, I can't say she was stereotypical because she was married not single, and she wasn't particularly butch. She was hard and aggressive and a lot of the girls I remember used to call her a bitch and they thought she was very hard and aggressive, she wasn't butch looking but she was quite ...(Christie)

In her approach yeah, but then she probably did quite need to be, you know...So yeah I was aware there were different ... to start with I think I felt like that they had two different types of PE teachers so that they could teach their own sort of specialisms. I didn't really see it as teaching across the whole lot. I kind of figured she get on with her, ... and that's kind of what happened until they, until Miss Smith left and then I suppose and she was left to get on, and whether she was a little stand back because she hadn't taught it for a long time, I don't know. But yeah I didn't really see them teaching the lot. (Christie)

Louise uses this ‘stereotype’ in which to position her own PE teacher relationally;

She was actually very feminine, and I think that helped because despite being at a Catholic school and despite the majority of beliefs I think many people still thought of PE teachers as single, a bit, you know ... strange (laughter). My first PE teacher was a complete dragon (laughter), she was married and she had kids in the school but her whole appearance was just terrible

We had a very feminine lecturer at college but everyone always said 'she's a lesbian, you can tell'. This was really unfortunate because I got on well with her and I thought she doesn't fit in with any of the stereotypes that people give and I just couldn't see how people came up with this. (Louise)

Robin drew on similar positions;

OK, female PE teacher was a very good canoeist which was sort of really different and that put her in a different light for some reason, because she wasn't a netballer or she didn't play tennis, she was a canoeist so that was sort special. But she wasn't feminine as in you would imagine, or the stereotypical view of feminine is like long hair, slim figure, wearing gym skirts. Whereas she had short black hair, not plump... but you know physically well built... and she was always wore tracky bottoms. So ... but we all knew that she was engaged to be married so... (laughter). (Robin)

These ‘stereotypes’ have been well documented by others (see Griffin 1992a; Squires and Sparkes, 1996; Woods, 1992). Harris and Griffin's (1997) research suggests that these perceptions are widespread, used to devalue female physical educators, because
they can then be dismissed as 'not real women' and regulated to marginal status. An 'us and them' division appeared important in maintaining distance and cultivating particular representations of the self within their narratives; highlighting that they were 'aware' of these images and simultaneously distancing themselves from them. This use of developing issues through narratives about others, particularly about the behaviours of 'other women' is a projection strategy through which to discuss these issues without jeopardizing their own identities or fear of social sanctions such as personal attack.

6.4.1 Towards a dialogue of difference

in patriarchal societies we cannot escape the implications of femininity, everything we do signifies a compliance or resistance to dominant notions of what it means to be a woman. (Weedon, 1987, pp.86-87)

As Butler (1990) suggests, the differentiation between the masculine term and the feminine term, is accomplished through the 'practices of heterosexual desire'. Thus the more successfully we constitute ourselves as male or female, especially in terms of heterosexual desire, the more we believe that the product of that constitutive work is natural. As such, the presentation of particular traits as 'desired' might be seen as an attempt to project some fixed essence of heterosexual femininity. Keeping the boarders firmly drawn through the construction of binary difference, particularly in relation to physicality, was a narrative strategy employed by many of the women. These contradictions, were however largely constrained within and by more powerful discourses of hegemonic heterosexual relations which defined masculinity as that which is strong, independent, muscular, tough, physically skilled, and femininity as fragile, nurturing, passive and physically generally less able than males or as Sam comments 'I always think masculine strong, and feminine not weak, but kind of soft, floaty, nice.' The reflexive management of embodied femininities therefore was a key aspect of their maintaining a gendered difference.

Many of the women, were concerned with the conflict that sport participation caused in relation to their embodied femininity, learning legitimate ways of being, following the gender positions that they experience;
My Mother especially, would discourage me from ... well if I said I was going to aerobics that would be fine but if I said I was going to the multi gym and said hey Mum guess how much weight I'm lifting then she was never very impressed and would always say be careful or say don't start to look all butch and masculine. (Claire)

Some were active in holding on to certain aspects or 'signifiers' of their femininity, concerned that outside of a sports context they might lose legitimacy to feminine identity, constructing the appropriate surface presentation of the self (Goffman, 1969). Having been 'positioned' in particular ways, many come to interpret events, themselves and others, through familiar story lines and embodied images that they then take up as 'their own'. Whilst they are not always given direct descriptions or exemplars of precise constructs of femininity, they draw upon a number of rules (or narratives) learnt through bodily discourse; images of appropriate clothing, body shapes, facial expressions, movements, behaviour.

Yeah, and I like big groups, I like the team situation, I like that sort of thing, and I suppose partly I wouldn't say I was stubborn but I wasn't going to let that stop me. There's no way, if anything it probably drove me on to be, to want to do, you know, more. Although I did stop [throwing] because they started to, once I got to about sixteen they wanted me to do weights and I didn't want to do them. I didn't want to be Fatima Whitbread... Which is probably the only thing that I actually ...then suddenly, I mean football and that I carried on but with [throwing] for some reason as soon as sort of weights ... very ... I suddenly just stopped. They kind of said that weights was the way to improve and carry on. I suppose I got to the point where I wasn't really improving and then I sort of stopped really. (Christie)

The key insight emerging here is that dominant gendered body narratives shape not only how these women understand themselves and others, but shape who they can and cannot ‘legitimately’ become, pointing to the various interconnected forms of sexism in the women’s experiences of their bodies. In many ways, their references these women make to their bodies might be seen as stories about their ‘exchange value’ (Featherstone and Hepworth, 1993) and the expression of certain desirable social symbols about social identity: Slim, white, heterosexual bodies.

Consequently, within their narratives we see issues of social reproduction and change in both the narrowest and broadest sense of the words. As Kenway (1994) suggests we
should do, these women, through their active participation in particular activities, are experimenting with a variety of ways of being female, and as Wright (1996b) suggests finding ways of empowering themselves to feel confident and skilled in using their bodies in particular practices. Their narratives draw attention however, to disjunctive transitions which represent sources of dissonance between cultural codes, social processes and making individual transformations. Whilst many are laying cross-gender foundations, they are uncomfortable that they are taking too great a ‘risk with their gender identities’ (Kenway, 1994) with some of the things they might say or do.

6.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL YEARS AND WANTING TO STAY IN THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM; EARLY PEDAGOGICAL POSITIONING

The extent and nature of sporting experiences and the type and quality of physical education received as pupils figured strongly in the life stories and emerged as significant reasons for wanting to become a PE teacher. A common feature in many of their accounts is the intimation of a strong bond with PE teachers who substantially influence them as pupils. In this way, they become ‘inducted’ (Paetcher and Head, 1996) into the teacher’s world, as Anne describes:

She [PE teacher] was ... lots of people didn’t get on with her because she was strict and she wanted everybody to like PE and couldn’t understand or found it hard to understand why people didn’t like it and was not that nice to people who didn’t put the effort in. But I never had that problem with her at all and obviously she got on really well with me, she knew I liked it ... especially... well ...I wouldn’t have been like teachers favourite or anything but I got on really well like that which I know she didn’t with lots of other people. (Anne)

The special relationships they develop as successes of the PE ritual consolidate their experiences of being different to other girls in the PE class;

My teachers definitely encouraged me to do more PE perhaps than the others’. (Robin)

My PE teacher was the person who took a couple of us to the club, I was the only one who stuck at it and was committed, the others just dropped by the wayside. (Claire)
Chapter Six: Narrative Analysis: Women nowadays

Many recalled that the teachers’ way of being with the children influenced their decisions to wanting to become teachers, expressing a specific desire for a specific way of pedagogical knowing, of accessibility, informality and firmness which they regarded as more likely in physical education. PE teachers were commonly named as an influence in the career trajectories of these women, guiding them towards particular universities and initiating the idea of the possible career in PE and sport. Anne claims that her PE teachers were influential in her career choice to the extent that ‘no one else would have influenced me that way.’ There are some clear ontological connections between these women and their former teachers, connections that encourage certain embodied sensibilities, dispositions, and pedagogies over others. The specifics of these connections warrant further study in itself, something which would require long term study over a number of years. There is only scope here to acknowledge that there are some links constructed with key others.

6.5.1 ‘I’m just the sort of person to go in and challenge that...’; early ‘inclusive’ views of Physical Education

These women, as soon-to-be PE teachers, have spent a life time excelling in PE and sport, and as such, make strong identity investments in these social systems. Hardly surprising, therefore, that they all share an emphatic desire to now return to these contexts and ‘make a difference’. Indeed at the outset of their teaching training all of these participants held (and still hold) inclusive views of physical education and expressed a concern to be a teacher who could provide equal opportunities in all its forms (not just gender), in their work. Several emergent features in these positions/of these personal and professional narratives are worth highlighting here.

6.5.2 ‘It worked for me’; the social reproduction of desire and practice in PE

Their achievement in sport not only makes them ‘enthusiastic’ about sport but also consolidates their convictions of being able to generate change within Physical Education. Indeed in drawing upon the ‘narrative of agency’ they understand the opportunities they had in sport and PE as significantly better than available to the previous generation. As such they take responsibility for maintaining this ‘system of equality’. Whilst these women highlight the ambiguity that sport causes them in relation to their feminine subjectivities, it is significant that they all ultimately resolve this conflict by drawing upon introspective discourses of the ‘self’; that no matter
what, they find *enjoyment* and *satisfaction* through PE and sport. As such they take the
system in which they have found success as fairly innocuous⁶:

I just feel that I had a really positive experience as a pupil, and I'd just
like to give that back really. I think that PE sometimes isn't given enough
recognition and I'd just like to develop children, and that's what I believe
that PE can help children develop, it's very good for building moral and
working within a team and it can give you a lot of attributes that you can
use in so many different situations in life. I just think that it should be
made a subject that pupils can enjoy. (Louise)

I feel that sport is a valuable commodity, you know. Something that I've
learnt a lot from and would like to pass on, I've got a lot of experience in
it... I mean I would like to take all the good points, all the bits I really
enjoyed and found interesting and obviously carry on with those and try
and develop on the other aspects. (Claire)

Great importance is given to ‘passing on’ the positive experiences of this system to
other generations of girls and women. Whilst the precise nature of the values,
knowledge and experiences that they want to pass on vary according to the ways in
which they position their own identities, they share a commonality in their perception
of wanting to offer something of themselves in their teaching. As such there are key
embodied links between self and social identity. The data raises some interesting
points in terms of a discernable social reproduction of desire and practice, moving
from teacher to pupil, not just cognitively, but embedded in the habitus and body-self
relationships. The ‘passing on’ which these women talk of, refers to their own
experiences of elite sport, competition, enjoyment, the motivation for a physically
active lifestyle, independence, social skills. It is difficult to disagree with these well
intended aims for their teaching, and moreover the depth of these ideologies are
evident, in the embodied emotional aspects of these dispositions, in what feels
important to them to teach. All of this implicitly informs their approach to teaching
PE.

As soon to be Physical Educators they believe they should develop a pedagogy that
focuses on motivating students *into* this system. Indeed one of Sam’s specific aims
prior to teaching practice was to encourage ‘more girls into sport’ and planned to do
this through ‘the fun aspect that always *worked for me.*’ This also features strongly in
Fiona’s early teaching aims:
Chapter Six: Narrative Analysis: Women nowadays

Yeah, if I went into teaching and if I had influence I'd definitely try and make it so that girls sport has the same status as boys sport, I think it's coming about more anyway now, it just takes time... so that. I think it's important to get the kids out there doing it... (Fiona)

These stances are ‘intellectual’ and ‘liberal’ positions of equal opportunities applied to physical education. As a cognitive intellectual position believing in gender equality and inclusion represents very positive and personal stances. However, the central perception of their role is to facilitate access and opportunity as key objectives, rather than address the nature of gender power relations itself, and therefore on occasions over looking issues of social values, and cultural and gendered expectations.

Um ... yeah I think in my middle school the chap there, I would definitely put as one of the main reasons that I teach. I think that when I got onto Upper School there wasn't one female member of staff that moved on that was actually very good, that actually ran clubs and stuff. As soon as you left that was it, it disappeared. So she possibly would of had more of an influence but she left so I was left with a kind of very weak female member of staff that wasn't very good.. that didn't run any clubs or anything. But the guy in middle school yeah definitely, just giving me lifts. I mean the only reason that I got any county standard representation was because of him. To start with it was javelin and he used to coach me and he took me to the trials once, he knew my Dad wouldn't give me a lift. And then when I actually went to my next school, they didn't let me know about basketball trials that were going on and he actually did, I was still in contact with him, and he actually, there was a few of us in fact that had gone on to the school and he took us all there. Without that I probably wouldn't have got into [the university] because I wouldn't have had any representation as well. So I appreciated that once I kind of realised I needed

Their belief in the realisation of gender equality implicitly positions ‘girls as the problem’ within Physical Education;

_Girls_, I still feel that you've got to overcome this problem with PE, so many girls just don't want to do exercise. That is still a problem in school and I haven't got the solution but I'm sure it's something that we've got to work on really. Because boys are typically a lot more active and I think they're a lot more, they're skill levels are a lot better as well. One thing that does annoy me slightly, is when girls get taught netball from an early age because their spatial awareness is quite poor when they get to secondary school and they have to do hockey and other things like that. Whereas boys go in and start at a much higher level, for example in
hockey, because of their knowledge of football.

Early experiences of girls 'bunking off' (Robin) PE seemed to have made their mark in their interpretations of gender and Physical Education;

I think the way it was taught ... lets see .. looking back on it now, definitely girls got a way with not doing PE, but now that I think about it... Because there would just be notes coming left, right and centre or they would just not be turning up and nothing was done about it. Whereas with the lads they would really put pressure on and it was like 'no no' you're actually going to get some kit and you are going to do it, you're not going to mess about, and you're going to do it properly. (Robin)

The difficulty, as they see it, is motivating these girls into the current system of PE, rather than assessing that system. Claire’s narrative appeared to be heavily invested in this position, meritocratic in orientation and similarly emphasising the need to develop the elite performer:

PE is very basic, obviously much lower level... I think it should be used to let people learn about themselves, learn about competition... I mean competition is essential, but it’s not about winning and being arrogant, it’s about getting better and you know, competing against people... I mean another thing you’re responsible for yourselves in PE lessons. Yet I think I’m quite a perfectionist and I think this is probably a flaw ... I like the idea of having graded PE so that the better ability ones can go on... I don’t care about how bad someone is as long as they are trying. It’s when people wont try and just give up and that I probably get quite frustrated and for people then to just want to bunk off all the time. (Claire)

Whilst such idealistic beliefs might be common among beginning teachers across a variety of subjects, the embodied, practical, experiential nature of Physical Education makes these investments particularly acute.

6.6 SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

As various others have pointed out (e.g Buchman, 1989; Crow, 1987a, 1987b; Lacey, 1977; Lortie, 1975; Mardle and Walker, 1980; Munro, 1987) these students have established a range of assumptions about what makes a 'good' teacher, successful lesson, and a position of equality through their own schooling experiences. Viewed
this way, the lives and identities that these women bring to their teacher training, position them, not simply as products of a period of professional socialisation but as knowing subjects whose sense of self is implicated in the pedagogical process. How these disparate experiences are compared and contrasted, problematised, and therefore confirmed, modified or challenged within ITT forms the focus of the next chapter – i.e. how the subjective experience of the student teacher is interpreted within specific socio-historical settings.

Collectively, the life histories suggest that there seems to be a range of personal/professional situations in which these women would seek to act differently, or present their femininities differently. Coaching, extra curricular sport, mixed classes, a variety of physical pursuits, relaxing with friends, time with family, time with partners, socialising, schooling, are just some of the many key experiences within which these women make a selective reordering of their femininity. All of these have provided a clear impetus into the perceived necessity of acting in certain gendered ways within the classroom that they later testifying to performing (chapter seven). Their sense of self draws selectively on a variety of femininities that they feel compatible with in certain circumstances. These are different modes of being which they reflexively draw on to present the self in different performative contexts of their lives: perhaps partly to satisfy the gendered expectations of the audience and themselves.

1 These single women have been categorised as 'Bridget Joneses' after Helen Feielding's Novel which has been a publishing sales phenomenon. The Bridget Jones of the title is in her thirties, drinks too much, smokes too much, works in the media and desperately wants a boyfriend. The novel headed the best seller lists for months and was made into a film. Whilst the character is in some ways reductive, obsessed with her weight gains and her own shortcomings (she despairs of but glories in her uselessness) there is also much that women can relate to in more fundamental reasons. She has a good job. She has her own flat. She is young, single, attractive but can't quite believe that she got there without a man part of it. Whilst the character is presented as ostensibly desperate, she also has a very specific set of criteria of what she looks for in a man which she simply isn't willing to compromise. She may be searching for a little male approval in her life, but there's also some sense that she's actually in a very powerful position. Perhaps this is why so many women in their thirties have been buying this novel.

2 Cited in Walters (1999b) – These figures are based on the new earnings survey, they cover gross weekly earnings of employees, full time and part time, on all rates, whose pay was not affected by absence.

3 research carried out by the National group on homeworking, reported in Huws (1996) Home Truths: Key results from a National Survey of homeworkers, Leeds, National group on Homeworking).

4 Giddens (1991) theorizes that the reflexive project of the self, whereby in late modernity individuals are increasingly forced to reflect upon and negotiate an expanding range of diverse lifestyle choices in constructing self identity. Such reflexivity is a determinant characteristic in the transformation of modernity leading to a 'post-traditional' society in which individuals are increasingly freed from the
social forms of industrial society. The more society is modernized, the more subjects acquire the ability to reflect upon the social conditions of their existence and change them (Beck, 1992). The resulting individualisation translates into a condition in which the subject reflexively constructs his/her own biography. There is a shift from the socially prescribed biography constrained by factors such as gender and class, to a biography that is continually self-produced (Beck, 1992, p.135). This construction is not an optional matter but one in which choices must be made across a wide range of areas including ‘decisions on education, profession, job, place of residence, spouse, number of children and so on’ (Beck, 1992, p.135). Within late modern social conditions, identity is therefore an ongoing project which demands the active participation of the subject.

The meaning of post-feminism continues to be debated. Some writers suggest that post-feminism is actually a form of anti-feminism (Such as Susan Faludi (1991) and Marilyn French (1992)). More recent work by younger feminists such as Naomi Wolf (1990; 1993) and Katie Roiphe (1994) have been critiqued for constructing post-feminist positions and encouraging a ‘backlash’ position. Such work is seen to be fundamentally flawed, but also as contributing towards a hostile climate for feminism, and creating the wrong impression that gender inequality has been eradicated. A further concern being that women will pursue individual freedoms at the expense of a collective female identity, with problems constructed as individual and not collective ones. The response to this from a number of younger feminists has been to suggest that older feminisms are no longer appropriate and remain to prescriptive in the complex conditions of postmodernity. Brooks (1997) for example argues that postfeminism is not anti-feminism but an expression of a stage in the constant evolutionary nature of the feminist movement. Furthermore, others suggest that as a conceptual framework, it encompasses the intersection of feminism with a number of other anti-universalistic movements such as postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism. Thus, it has been argued that the central focus of postfeminism is to engage in critical interrogation of the foundations of feminism. Furthermore, those engaging in this discourse suggest that the term ‘post’ is not mean to signal the end or the overcoming of oppressive relations, but rather the semblance of a an ongoing process of transformation in the feminist movement.

In the context of Physical Education Bennet et al., (1987) suggest that the ‘liberal feminist influence has been to create increased access for some women to an anti-feminist basically flawed system’ (p.370). These women draw upon such liberal positions, where the systems themselves are rarely perceived as problematic; ‘access’ to these practices, institutions and systems is taken as the main focus for change, taking the social system (PE) which they are trying to gain access as to a fairly innocuous. Both academia and educational initiatives in schools or educational systems seem to have embraced the idea of equal opportunities where calls for equality are derived from what education makes available in terms of content, access, resources and opportunities. This liberal feminist position is concerned with equal access to the male symbolic order, drawing upon a perspective which suggests that women are socialised into ‘gender roles’ rather than being mapped out by biology. As such those advocating this approach suggest that given adequate provision, legislation, opportunities and informed attitudes, issues of biological difference can be eradicated. A number of feminist scholars have expressed concern that concern that there are serious limitations to liberal democratic ideology of ‘equal opportunities’. See chapter two for a full critique of liberal positions of equal opportunities. The primary concern of liberal approaches to equal opportunities is with equality of access to valued social and cultural goods /opportunities - such approaches stop short of providing a critique of elements such as patriarchy, opperssion or domination through which those goods are given value in the first place. By contrast critical approaches to equal opportunities retain the belief in equal access but question the nature of the opportunities we have access to.

Supporting the meritocratic view of achievement and non-achievement as a central aspect of Physical Education
female teachers and small girls are not unitary subjects uniquely positioned, but produced as a nexus of subjectivities, in relations of power which are constantly shifting, rendering them at one moment powerful and at another powerless' (Walkerdine, 1981, p.4)

The women introduced in the previous chapter all completed their teacher training. During and after their main teaching practice period within a partnership school, the life histories collected revealed a number of continuities and discontinuities within their narratives, identities and subjectivities. The exploration, which follows in this chapter, derives not only from the life history data, but also from observation field notes of the teaching practice school environments within which these women undertook their training. As suggested in chapter four, these observation periods elicited further detail about the environments in which these women were constructing their professional (and personal) identities.

7.1 PRESENTING A PROFESSIONAL SELF

When a beginning teacher enters a school for the first time, she [sic] enters more than a building; she enters a culture of teaching that has evolved in response to school structure and wider cultural values that establishes what is the appropriate teacher role. To function successfully within the school, the beginning teacher must come to terms with this role and the values that sustain it. (Bullough, 1987, p.83)

During teaching practice, all the women identify conflict between the presentation of self as a PE teacher, and a variety of more personal identities of the self. This conflict encompassed a variety of social dimensions which will be explored in this chapter. Let me begin by reiterating that these women clearly care about the children they are teaching and endeavour to do the best they can in any situation. However, what they can do to achieve this, takes place inside a number of ontological, structural limits of social context. They are, as Bullough comments above, engaged in a complex interplay within which the meaning of an ‘appropriate teacher role’ is central. The semantics of ‘appropriate’ are particularly relevant in the case of teacher training whereby these student teachers are judged on a set of criteria in order to qualify.
Many researchers have found that student teachers start from a somewhat simplistic idealistic position in their aspirations for their teaching, and then go through a period in their early experience of teaching when they feel very vulnerable, find it necessary to focus on personal survival in the classroom, and, though not abandoning their initial ideas put them 'on hold' (Furlong and Maynard, 1995, p.79). Many of the women claimed that the 'progressive' ideals they held were in contrast with many of their actual experiences during their teacher training, where their intellectual orientations towards 'equality' did not always find serious place with mentors in practice institutions. The possible consequences of this in practice, is the creation of a 'condition under which a reflexive approach to professional development becomes impossible' (Carr, 1989 p.5), as Christie found, in that she was encouraged to think about things in terms of 'teaching, planning and management' but not in terms of 'differentiation'. Indeed as a part of a practical strategy the focus on these aspects has a practical plausibility about it, a point alluded to in practical terms by Christie:

...there is always this pressure in the back of your head that that's not the way that teacher does it in that lesson so ... you know you are going into a lesson if they're doing a lesson observation, they're watching you, that they're not going to like that then you end up doing it the way that they do it, even though you'd like to try it your way, you know ? I think personality comes through but then there are some things that you just have to do' ... 'but that's part of PE ... that's always been there, and why I don't know? I think you have to be Head of Department to change it, or go to a revolutionary school! (Christie)

A number of these women alluded to the strategic aspects of this, using the metaphor of acting, or as Emma Comments 'its like a driving test, you do what you have to do to pass, then you pick up your own habits later'.

I think it will be different when I am a full time teacher in my own school. Like the discipline and control thing. I don't just like shouting at them at telling you will do this and you will do that, and they're quite keen on that here. I think you should explain to them why, they'll learn better that way anyway. But you know, it's not what is pushed here. I would prefer to do it my way but often you can't, like with PE kit, I don't see why they should have to go in kit that they are cold in, but I can't change that here. I suppose I don't entirely feel part of it here. The staff are quite old anyway so it's quite a close group here and a lot of the teachers kids come here and like in the staff room here I'll often come
and sit in this room (a separate room) and eat my lunch. There is usually another student here. (Fiona)

Like other PGCE students, these women look for discursive and embodied cues for legitimate behaviour, through their own social experience, observing others, and mentors council. Ultimately, in their own teaching, they reflexively, and perhaps strategically, manage their ‘selves’ accordingly, with various aspects foregrounded at different moments; a process which becomes a pedagogy in itself. The metaphor of teaching as acting, is a compelling view with regards teaching PE, not least because the body is so obviously on display. Moreover, this is particularly compelling during teacher training or early phases of teaching because it is a case of survival.

It must be noted however, that these women simultaneously remain somewhat uncomfortable with such a Dramaturgical model of teaching, since they take up particular positions they are not entirely at one with. Whilst there was a variety of pedagogical advice and mentoring experienced and recalled by all the women, there were some extreme examples referred to. Some of the ‘survival’ advice offered by teachers and mentors in the student teachers’ practice coalesced with notions of professional autonomy and agency which required ‘interpersonal relations that are distant and emotionally detached’ (Davies, 1996, p.672). Consider the advice given to Robin, by her mentor in her practice institution;

You’ve got to treat them like dogs. I talk to them like I do my own dog and that’s the way that it has got to be because you’ve got to get them in a position whereby you’ve disciplined them, you’ve got control and they’re ready to get on and learn. That’s what they are there for. You have to remind them of the fact that we’ve all got to do things that we don’t want to do but that’s the way it is sometimes. You need to go right.. you over there bang (points). You need to take a teacher centered approach. (Mentor, Robins teaching practice)

Robin is teaching girls’ tennis. The class begin to complain that they are too cold at which point Robin’s mentor takes over ‘Right girls all of you over here... now I am only going to tell you this once...understand? Stop acting like wimps. This is a PE lesson and you will learn. That is what you are here for, to be educated. Do you understand what I am saying? It is only a bit of rain so stop being pathetic, stop talking, start listening and start working’. (Robins’ teaching practice school. Observation notes)
Now it has to be borne in mind that this attitude and use of language may not have been typical of this teacher's approach to teaching, nor endorsed by some University Tutors on the PGCE course. Indeed like all observational extracts, what is lacking here is a stronger sense of context and history of relationships and the meanings to the participants involved. There is something problematic about the 'observational moment' as narrative not least because it is so devoid of emotion, of the relationships that have built up over time. So, the most awesomely didactic teacher (on the surface) could in the pupils' perspective be amongst the best teachers, the softest and most popular. However, what can be said about these interactions, is that Robin had clear misgivings that the narrative being presented in these institutional contexts did not match that of her own personal identity. After the above events, Robin commented to me that she felt most uncomfortable with this approach and indeed the way in which her feedback was delivered to her, in front of other male colleagues who were in the staff room at the time. Similarly, Anne’s narrative alluded to the emotional aspects that are embedded in their misgivings about their mentors advice:

When I had my mentoring meeting I said I am having trouble with this group, I don’t like them and I don’t look forward to taking them. I said I had to tell them off at the start because I had give one boy the basket of balls and said make sure that nobody takes out any of these balls. Yet on the way there were balls being hit across the fields, lobbed around, and these were like hard rounders balls so you can imagine the potential disaster. I had another go at them and said you can’t do that, or whatever. She [mentor] goes to me ‘how did you tell them off?’ and I sort of said to her what I said and whatever and she was like NO how did you tell them off [raises voice]? She wanted me to re-enact how I’d said it. I felt so on the spot, I said I’m not doing that. She really upset me. (Anne)

Anne’s mentor is referring here to the selective presentation of mood, gesture, stance, words, etc. all of which however, contains a broader symbolic meaning which is open to interpretation by various parties; mentors, teachers, student teachers, pupils. Of course the difficulty here is trying to distinguish between what is a contextual or personal ideology laden with cultural value, and what are no more than necessary aspects of classroom organization for the purposes of teaching. After all, most teachers remain, by necessity, preoccupied with interacting in ways that maintain classroom control. However, the manner of interaction (confrontational, authoritarian, didactic) being suggested in order to achieve this is traditionally associated in wider
Chapter Seven: Narrative Analysis: The Positioning of Femininities Within and Through Teaching PE

society with a distinctively dominantly masculine approach. Some of these women make good steps to achieving control in this way (although often reluctantly) and see this as a position open to any gender. This is a position full of dilemmas. As will be shown in the next section, these women may take up this approach, and challenge the stereotype of it being a ‘masculine’ approach, but in doing so are often judged against embedded gender dualisms. Others, who had a clear idea of a gendered differentiated way of teaching before they even begun their training, find acting the disciplinarian is a narrative they feel neither confident nor willing to engage with. However, whatever the pedagogical position here, what can be concluded is that these episodes appear as ‘central moments, critical incidents, or fateful moments that revolve around indecision, confusions, contradictions and irony’ (Sparkes, 1995, p.116) for most of these women. Each story contained a deep ambivalence towards teaching which seem to reveal the contradictory subject positions these women were negotiating at the time of their teaching practice. Put another way, these are key moments in becoming a teacher, which influences and draws upon their gendered identities.

For Robin, and others, who were uncomfortable with instrumental, detached techniques, teaching practice was constructed as an experience fraught with difficulty, due to the dissonance between personal and professional narratives:

Things have gone badly, and I kind of wanted to wait until nearer the end before you came to visit actually ... because I’ve just had a few problems, like control and things like that. Tutor A came in to assess me and I burst into tears at the end of it because I just felt as though I was rubbish you know, ... I mean tutor A actually gave me really good feedback. I think the problem was that I had a few difficulties with things like discipline and so then what with having tutor A, and you think of they’re this great expert ... it can be quite daunting. (Robin)

Observing and talking to Robin it was clear to see that she was, and wanted to be, a reflective, caring and enthusiastic teacher, but whom nonetheless has this professional identity displaced. Robin is expected to reconfigure her approach towards something much ‘harder’ and in keeping with the institutional culture of the Department. Where efforts were made to adopt a socially more critical perspective, these women claimed to find themselves on the margins (Devis-Devis and Sparkes, 1997, p.148) and were positioned as weak disciplinarians, lacking control, and unprofessional:
I think her [Robin’s] biggest problem is she is too nice... she needs to be firmer with them [the pupils]...

Robin’s weakness is her lack of discipline... now compare her to our other teacher. Now she’s a brilliant teacher, and I mean she will absolutely grill them, there would be no messing with her and the end of the day that’s what it’s about isn’t it ... it’s about acting isn’t it?

...because at the end of the day these are my kids, and once Robin has gone I have to pick up the pieces.

(Senior Male PE teacher at Robin’s teaching practice, observation notes)

Certain aspects become defined as successful and appropriate and become selected for use over others in the teachers ‘tool-kit’. The constant use of a limited set of tools ensures that their application and operation becomes routinised and taken for granted (Sparkes, 1991). Consequently, Robin, and others are denied the opportunity to display and develop other dimensions of their own teaching identities and forge alternative ways of fusing these with practical pedagogies. It may ultimately mean that for these women, they participate in their own exclusion and silence their gendered voices (Pagano, 1990). In spite of their intellectual intentions for ‘equality’ the participants felt they could not express their anger and frustration to protagonists of more traditional instrumental approaches, since it was these same individuals that they so desperately needed to call them -‘professional’, ‘able’ and ‘competent’. This encourages student teachers to strategically accept the prevailing conditions as given, unalterable, and beyond criticism (Sparkes, 1993, p.108). Indeed an unsanctioned challenge was viewed by some teachers, both male and female, as feminist political activism (and as such laden with stigma) and was seen to push beyond the teacher education professional practice boundaries. As Sparkes (1991) suggests, ‘those teachers who contemplate affecting change in the dominant culture might have lots to lose...that is challenging the teacher culture can have lasting consequences within the micro-political matrix of the school for those involved (p.14). Therefore the dominant culture of teaching is reinforced and maintained while educational conservatism is encouraged (see Sparkes, 1989, 1991).

Many of the participants therefore directed their frustrations towards themselves, critiquing their ‘professional competence’ (these forms of reflection were encouraged,
see Sparkes, 1993), rather than the wider educational discourses, and they reflexively manage their own gender identities accordingly:

There's one girl that is particularly open with me, opens up, tells me things. I think in a way I have got the wrong attitude and I'm not being as professional as I should be. I want to be a friend, a supportive person, but I have to concentrate on my role as teacher. I want to be a friend, a supportive person, but I have to concentrate on my role as teacher... you know as a professional. (Anne)

Things have gone badly, and I kind of wanted to wait until nearer the end before you came to visit actually... because I've just had a few problems, like control and things like that. Tutor A came in to assess me and I burst into tears at the end of it because I just felt as though I was rubbish you know... I mean Tutor A actually gave me really good feedback. I think the problem was that I had a few difficulties with things like discipline and so then what with having tutor A, and you think of they're this great expert... it can be quite daunting. (Robin)

I'm quite laid back I think. So I suppose, I am conscious of the fact that I've got to work on... I mean I'll have to teach year ten mixed groups which will be a big challenge because the lads are very very in your face and the girls just happen to be quiet. (Christie)

...apprehensions have got to be discipline... I'm worried that something awful is going to happen and I won't be able to discipline. (Fiona)

Like other PGCE students, they have had to learn quickly, 'what works' and what doesn't for the development of their pedagogies and qualifying as a teacher. For these women, and doubtless others, they find themselves caught in a series of double binds, which has some implicit gendered implications, not least for the ways in which they differentiate by gender.

7.2 ‘OUTSIDERS-WITHIN’ THE CLASSROOM? Facing the gendered double bind of teaching PE

The struggles which take place over standards and ensuing professional identity, become conflicts over the definition of world and society: the denial of discursive space within which disagreement and negotiation can exist, becomes an exercise in domination of particular cultural values, and therefore potential exclusion. Such regulation of practice also regulates identities and a 'teacher's suitability for the job is questioned when slippage of and failure to uphold the social norms that regulate teacher practice come to light' (Schick, 2000, p.302). Australian evidence (Down, et
al. 1997; Smyth & Shacklock 1998) has indicated that those who ‘succeed’ are likely to be those in possession of ‘valuable’ (policy enhanced) skills. Social constructions of who can possess those ‘skills’ also seemed laden with cultural value and are worthy of further analysis. The double bind for many of these women was that they were being encouraged to take up instrumental, dominant and authoritarian positions within their pedagogies, yet were at times positioned as unable to achieve this because of their gender. This was particularly acute with male mentors and teachers. Exposure to both subtle and more perniciously overt forms of sexism were heavily cited in the women’s descriptions of their practical training, as Emma recalls:

Well my first one the mentor was a man and he was very basketball based and he didn’t like it that I wasn’t, and I was a girl. I think he treated me very differently to my teaching partner who was a boy and who was very football orientated because he was very football orientated as well... I don’t know if it was more responsibility, but much more sort of open with him and more approachable with him particularly... I just thought because I was girl. Like he gave me four of his basketball classes knowing that I had no basketball, previous basketball at all, and that made my life hell really because I had basketball to teach everyday of the week and I didn’t know anything about it and he knew. I mean fair enough he said ‘well yeah you need to do it’ but I don’t think I should have been thrown in that situation like that. (Emma)

When I asked Emma if she had discussed how she felt with her mentor she replied ‘No I don’t think I could have done. He laid down the law’. Whilst there was a heavy emphasis on rationality and instrumentalism as necessary aspect of professional autonomy and agency in teacher training, many of the women described situations where their ability to achieve these elements of teaching were constantly questioned:

In phase one... I got the impression that I had to prove myself more because I was a girl, rather than my partner. He [mentor] sort of expressed a little bit of that. (Emma?)

Some stories point to the ways in which as women, they were ‘positioned’ in relation to identity narratives related to reproductive capacity, femininity and domesticity. Louise recalls being told by her male mentor in her teaching practice school that ‘they (female student teachers) just create extra work within the department’. These were salient issues for most of the women in the study:
I don’t know, in many ways I feel more of a hindrance ... I even felt like I was in the way (Robin)

I’d give as good as I got. He’d abuse me... (Louise)

Yeah they [male and female PE teachers] just don’t mix at all. They just... completely separate. I would get a lot of banter from the blokes. I’d only go down there a couple of times, just to get the keys off him or something. (Christie)

Well some of the males were quite sexist in their opinions and I mean they weren’t sort of too shy (laughter) about telling us what they thought. Especially in like department mentor meetings like perhaps where the girls and the boys had to share facilities the men always thought that they had more right to facilities than the women did and we always had to shout our case because we were invited to the meetings just the same as everybody else would be... And the boys will play cricket and the girls have to go and do something else, if the boys haven’t got the facilities to play cricket then they (the girls) have to move. (Emma)

Subtler positioning was masked by the use of humour, as in the following conversation that took place in the PE office of Robin’s practice institution:

Having been introduced to the department I briefly explain my role, the purpose of the research and how I will be shadowing Robin throughout the day.

ER: Yes Robin is kind of my guinea pig today

MALE MENTOR: What a guinea pig she is too!

ROBIN: I have my moments

MALE MENTOR: Oh when are they then? When was that – your moment? (laughter)

(Observation field notes)

What happens to the teaching and femininities of these women when faced with such sexist views? Once again, there is evidence of conflict between the various parties involved in the teaching process, all assuming and expecting a variety of gendered positions. The frameworks these parties draw on provide a number of different meanings, and this is readily observed in the ways in which ‘teacher as mother’ is interpreted. For many of the women, being called a ‘Mum’, particularly by their pupils, was a complement, and a reflection that they had been able to engage in the child-centred practices they so clearly sought after, as Anne maintains:
I mean Kate (teacher) has got a really good relationship with them (the pupils), she will react but they really respect her. You know.. she’s like a Mum really. (Anne)

For these women, this is a position related to parental quality, emotional sharing, and the maintenance of strong relationships with pupils. But there was strong evidence to suggest that others, particularly male mentors and teachers, appropriate this term ('women teachers as mothers' (Casey, 1990, 1993)) in constructing a caricature of women’s professional identities as strongly tied to domestic work, the private sphere and a 'softness' which contrasted with what is expected of a PE teacher:

Kids can look after themselves, it's often an excuse to Mother them sometimes... With me they know that they haven’t got a hope you know, the more they whinge the longer they stay out here, but with someone new like Christie, a little bit softer, then they'll often try it on. (Mentor, Christie’s teaching practice)

During an observation day at one of the student teacher’s practice institutions, I observed such dynamics taking place between a male mentor and a female teacher:

Male mentor: Women!
Female teacher: Yeah well without them you wouldn’t be here so don’t mock
Male mentor: Yeah whatever... Are you like this at home? Do you have to get hubby to do everything?
Female teacher: I certainly don’t ... no! I have the kids to look after you know, I do the housework and I come here and work... we all do our fair share.

(Observation field notes)

There is a subtle but noxious double bind here – the students want to be caring sensitive, affective, all the qualities of a good parent/mum. However, if they are to express (or be allowed to express) these qualities, they (that is to say the ‘traits’) are invariably stereotyped and positioned by gender. Whilst this doesn’t appear to dissolve the participants’ agency for exhibiting alternative forms of identity in their
teaching, it does narrow its scope and likelihood, largely because it is not awarded the same institutional legitimacy as other approaches. If these women do adopt such positions, there is the risk that others will draw upon biologically determined gendered dualisms to code them as ‘feminine’ and by default ‘passive’ and ‘weak’. These social dynamics seem to offer ontological identity security, alongside ontological identity risks, for the participants, in relatively equal amounts. All of them remained aware of such caricatures throughout their training, and consequently there is evidence of a selective re-ordering of their femininities within different social contexts, as Emma alludes to in practical terms ‘I had to prove myself more because I was a girl’. As previously shown, this is the impetus for reflexivity and displaying or doing what is expected of a PE teacher:

I had to take athletics on a Friday afternoon [...] it had been raining for like three weeks, so we had to take the lesson indoors, so the next two lessons had to be indoors as well. It was an all boys group and I was taking them and some people were saying to stay in, and so I was torn between should I take them outside because I’m supposed to not treat them as wimps, is it safe?... and I couldn’t decide in the end so I went outside with them and did some running ... it’s the thought of what are they going to think of me?... If I keep them in are they going to think oh you are treating them like babies? (Robin, my emphasis)

Particular femininities are therefore foreground in order that these women can become legitimate, respected members in this social field. There is a strong interplay between reproduction and change taking place through these women as they take up gender positions in multiple and contradictory ways, simultaneously accommodating and resisting them. Moreover, as in Robins case, these dynamics were accentuated when it came to teaching or interacting with boys, something which is explored later in this chapter. Some of the women recalled stories of male teachers and mentors who took it upon themselves to ‘look after’ the women, tacitly questioning their competence:

This year has been really tough and I can’t wait to finish to be honest. It’s been tough...It’s been tough in some of the lessons because, like... my male supervisor he will often say things in my lessons in front of the children and it kind of undermines my authority... I’m quite aware that what he [mentor in teaching practice] is doing could be quite damaging. I’m not actually that keen on the approach that he takes, he tends to keep butting in... he is always there... [the pupils] clocked that he was telling me to do it, like I didn’t know what I was
doing... The thing is that he didn't even give me a chance. I had this one lesson really sorted and I wanted to go in there and really show him, to really prove to him. (Robin)

Of course this might simply be the approach that this mentor takes with all his students. But the collective interviews with Robin revealed a very strained relationship with her mentor, which she felt had much to do with the fact she was female, and her desire to take a more child centered approach. Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) suggest it is still the bourgeois male teacher or student who is honoured with the title 'rational being' because it is he who is 'endowed with reason' (p.200) in the purest sense. Elsewhere (Rich, 2001) I have explored how these dynamics are supported by a liberal democratic discourse, and contribute towards particular forms of professionalism within teacher education. These dynamics are mediated by the overtly physical nature of PE. As student teachers they were being actively encouraged to develop identities that drew on confrontational, authoritarian and didactic pedagogical approaches, wherein control and discipline were also emphasised. These elements however, were all associated with hegemonic masculinities, as Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) suggest:

At this stage of Western History, hegemonic masculinity mobilises around physical strength, adventurousness, emotional neutrality, certainty, control, assertiveness, self-reliance, individuality, competitiveness, instrumental skills, public knowledge, discipline, reason, objectivity and rationality (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997, p.21).

The narratives suggest that many students, teachers and parents therefore saw men as being 'natural' disciplinarians. Once again, this is something that all the women remained acutely aware of, even if their precise reactions to these caricatures differed:

I think one of the things that I did find, I had one day where everything went pear shaped, it all went horribly wrong. It was two little lads, we went on cross country which is great fun because we all get to go running (sarcastic tone). There were these two boys and it seemed whatever I said to them I could not make them do what I told them to do. They were just like yeah miss, whatever, yeah, yeah, yeah. It really drove me up the wall. I dragged them into the office at the end I said oi you and you come with me, because I didn't really know how to deal with it, its quite lax with discipline. So I dragged them in and said to Dave can you sort them out, and explain why they should have to do
what I say. I kind of came out of that and thought oh that was good I had to take them to Dave and it looked like I couldn't handle it. (Sam)

The reactions of these women are perhaps not surprising given that they are being trained in contexts where many of the male teachers/mentors seemed to perpetuate the construction of men as ‘natural discipliners’ in order to better achieve a construction of ‘hard’ or ‘hegemonic’ masculinity. Male teachers ideologies and pedagogical styles are often constructed to demonstrate their masculinity (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 1996) and in terms of teaching, that means making explicit forms of discipline and control (Beynon, 1989). These elements can be starkly observed in Physical Education, where male teachers in particular it seems, often uphold and practice the ideal type of the disciplined body (Delamont, 1998). Sam recollected the following advice from the male mentor in her first teaching practice school:

He [male mentor] sort of said to me well you want to watch my discipline, the kids wont do that because if they swear I get them to get down and give me ten [press ups] (male mentor from Sam’s teaching practice). (Sam)

Some male mentors felt it essential that they ‘intervene’ and threaten pupils who misbehave in women’s lessons:

I’ll often help them out. Like this afternoon, Anne’s teaching partner, Sue, has the lads for Softball so I’ve tried to help her out there by having a word with the lads. I said to them hey look lads Sue has got her tutor in from University today and so make it look good for her. If you play up she may get kicked off the course, you know? So I kind of told them to just watch the language and be nice. (Male mentor, practice institution)

The pressured environment of the classroom means by necessity having to gain control, and often to act proficiently and quickly, and so there may well be occasions when such intervention is a necessary part of the mentors’ job. There are incidents however, where such actions appear to be ‘socially loaded’. These issues are not peculiar to women. Indeed it needs to be qualified that many men and boys are also restricted by these dynamics. Male PE teachers might also be denied opportunities to show and develop other aspects of their teaching identities (see Brown 1999). However, as alluded to in the above comments, there are some clear gendered expectations about who can take up these roles which appear to have added cultural
meaning for women. For men, the fusion of dominant masculine selves and their teaching pedagogy is a legitimate and expected resource, however, women face the bind that they are expected to be instrumental, dominant and authoritarian, yet they are ultimately constrained by patriarchal discourses of femininity (Wright and King, 1990).

The emphasis on control and dominance once more brings back in the social and emotional body and its agency. There are certain gendered interactions that are sometimes being presented, albeit in occasionally subtle ways, as unobtainable to women, even though they are simultaneously expected to achieve them. The fear of not attaining these positions, because of their size, voice, gesture etc is a strong concern for all the participants, as Emma indicates:

> Well I did sort of find a conflict with discipline, especially if I was taking sort of groups of boys who were known troublemakers, they did tend to think oh 'she's a bit short, she's alright, she knows nothing.'

(Emma)

Emma positions herself as 'other' when I asked her how she copes with these issues, suggesting that if a man couldn't gain control, then she certainly couldn't:

> You just get on with it. You know, my mentor was saying they're a bad bunch so don't take it personally you know. No one can control them. ... you haven't got the physical stance over them that a male PE teacher might have.(Emma)

As the women progressed through their training there was a heightened awareness of the body-self relationships, with their bodily identities emerging as visceral imprints of their biographies. In other words, how their bodies had been shaped, trained, and developed and their social experiences in the past were now the pedagogical tools they had to draw upon. For some, this might be problematic because their habitus simply does not provide them with the expected tools; the gestures, bodily experiences, voice etc to do what is expected of them. Moreover, the celebrated and overtly embodied nature of the subject of PE makes student teachers' knowledge of themselves as 'females' more transparent in the encoding of their bodies. Davies (1989) suggests that:
The process of bodily inscription works from the idea to the reality; what one is able to be is constrained by the idea of what one might be and this is particularly the case in the division between males and females (Davies, 1989, p.15).

'The idea of what they might be' (ibid, p.15) is therefore circumscribed by their own and other's perceptions of what it means to be female, potentially precluding certain forms of relationship, within the context of ITT PE:

There were probably issues mainly with discipline. If I was a male student I might not have had the problems, as if I was... as if I am female. Just like you're saying to the lads, particularly like year nine, ten and eleven, give me that hockey ball now and they might not give it back. Whereas with a male if they'd have said it, a bit more firm, then they might have handed it over straight way. (Robin)

There is a tension here between, on the one hand, their narratives which suggest an ability to challenge dominant norms, to be what they want to be, and the constraints that society, and social and cultural institutions place upon such actions, and more importantly the expectations of who can take such actions. This is not merely a cognitive issue, but one which is played out here in a strongly embodied manner. This is not to suggest that these attributes are only available to men, but since they are taken as in-culturated tendencies, articulations and representations of masculinity, they clearly are an ideal practice which has a material effect; the social exclusion of particular gendered subjectivities.

It would be misguided, however, to portray these women as 'passive' 'weak' or afraid or unable to engage in disciplinary techniques, or authoritative pedagogies. This is not a one or the other scenario. Their femininities are subjected to constant reflexive re-ordering in response to the situations they encounter. In some situations these women are complicit, in others, the very same individuals exert their voice and challenge the stereotypes. It would be a narrow view to have emphasized them as disempowered subjects caught up in a male dominated world in which they are powerless to do anything, but that which is complicit to gender dualisms which they are neither aware of or have any control over in challenging. However, there are clearly occasions when
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dominance, instrumentalism, and rationality are being presented as a relation of identities. Put a different way, it becomes a process of construction of the ‘other’ and the ‘same’ as an oppositional and hierarchical relation which is heavily gendered. Although this is only one discourse, of the many that were present, it has some extreme implications for the construction of gender, and indeed presentation of femininities within these contexts.

7.2.1 The interplay of pupils gendered expectations with teachers femininities; the gender dynamics of interaction

These gendered dynamics were not the preserve of mentors/teachers alone. Collectively, the life histories alluded to a complex interplay between the expectations of teachers, pupils, mentors, students teachers. Social expectations and cultural frameworks, regarding class, ethnicity, sexuality and ability, heavily influenced these interactions, and emerged as significant. Through the ‘hidden curriculum’ of schooling, these pupils also have access to some cultural understand about teaching, and what it expected of teachers and their interaction. Some also have a clear gendered expectancy that influences how they act with particular teachers, as Christies comments show:

I haven’t taught much mixed, in fact none here. There was one basketball lesson but there was something like two girls and twenty-four lads and the thing was these two girls had opted for basketball because normally this male teacher would be taking and they assumed that he would just let them sit out if they moaned enough. But I did actually have some problems within the class. Like I turned around and this one guy had picked up these I think it was cricket stumps and he was pretending... pretending basically to toss himself off and I thought ‘oh my God’ you know? Now what are you supposed to do in that situation? I thought well there are two ways of handling this- I either throw him out and really make a point of disciplining him or you know just sort if joke about it. I think I tried to laugh it off and that kind of thing by saying something like ‘that’s a bit optimistic isn’t it?’ .... Another time some lad pulled some other lads shorts down, it’s that sort of behaviour that you’re not prepared or trained for, and I don’t know if the way I react is the right one. Another time a lad was walking out and I said to him where are you going and he said ‘oh I’m going to drain my lizard.’ It’s just not appropriate, but then you have to be careful how you deal with it. Another time, I think the first time when I went into the group I walked in and they wolf whistle - which just isn’t on and I was really angry to be honest with you but I tried not to show it. I was wearing a white top, and perhaps it was because it was a little tighter than I normally wear,
and I had my hair down. I mean this was the real lads group anyway, like the real ‘meatheads’ – that’s what they call them... (Christie)

The stories suggest that there are commonalities in the dilemmas student teachers face when teaching male pupils. In dealing with these dynamics, their gendered life worlds become more transparent to them as individuals, and the reflexive management of their subjectivities and bodies, becomes not only a process of individual identity construction, but a matter of ‘survival’. All parties involved clearly recognise the body’s potential to act as a resource and provide symbols about self-identities (Shilling, 1993). The body becomes a vehicle for expressivity’s, which at the same time is locked in a particular power/knowledge game about gender and body image.

As with male teachers, some of the boys felt the need to intervene. Consider the dynamics taking place in Jill’s lesson on Cricket with an all-boys group:

One participant is playing around with the equipment to which Jill shouts ‘listen if you aren’t actually going to join and behave properly then you can go and sit out?’ At this point, one of the particularly vocal boys in the groups shouts out in front of the group ‘I’ll sort him out for you Miss’. Moments later another boy shouts out ‘We’ve got two dickheads at the back here’ ... Another occasion Jill is demonstrating a throwing exercise... one of the boys throws the ball back during this demonstration, another boy in the group shouts ‘that’s not the way you do it Miss, he can’t do it, he’s got it all wrong’ Jill replies ‘excuse me can you listen to me please?’ (Observation field notes)

Jill felt that ‘discipline is more the thing... you know to get their respect’ with the older boys in classes, and that ‘you have to set a standard.’ Robin recalls similar experiences when teaching boys:

I had all boys groups and I remember once I took this all male group for the first time. It was a year eight group and they were playing hockey and the teacher said go and get them started in a game and then the teacher said they know what they are doing just be there and sort of ref. They [male pupils] were like oh great we’ve got Miss we can mess about. We don’t want Mr.S because that means we’ve got to work hard, Mr S makes us work hard. And so ... you think hold on just a minute. There’s something there about the way they like female PE teachers, and they think they can get away with it. (Robin)
Awareness of these dynamics raised a concern for these women to once again display the right identity ‘expected’ of a PE teacher and has an inevitable impact on how these student teachers begin to develop their teaching pedagogies and identities. Pupils are a key influence in the participants’ presentation of self, choice of identity, and pedagogical action. Pupils, particularly males, were cited as both acting out and presenting stereotypes to teachers, imploring the teachers to confirm or challenge the social construction of gender through their pedagogies:

7.3 RESOURCEFUL BODIES: Gaining Credibility Through Sports Performance
The pedagogical expectations of assuming a dominant approach, along with the gendered (and perhaps sexist) expectations of mentors and pupils placed upon these women, provide the impetus to once more draw upon selective aspects of themselves. Many of them believe that presenting themselves, as the ‘able athlete’ is a way of gaining credibility, control and legitimate capital in these social contexts:

Yeah the height thing can be a bit of a problem, like in basketball I had to do two lay ups and a couple of three pointers before I could even get them [male pupils] to listen and ‘yeah she can play basketball’ (Christie)

Similarly, Sam drew on her sporting biography in managing relations with male pupils and mentor:

In my second phase tutor group I got on better with the boys. I think it was because I ran football and I set up the football tournament for the lads. When they know that you play football it’s like oh wow Miss you play football. When they see you play football...Yeah...a bit of respect. (Sam)

He [mentor] saw me playing football a couple of times or saw me do demos and expressed surprise at my ability to do them and I just thought well I am a PE teacher. (Sam)

These women are making positive steps in presenting alternative body-self-other relationships. What is interesting, is that these methods are predominantly deployed when interacting with males (pupils and mentors). Indeed, the selective use of these practices appeared to depend upon the children they were teaching and how they might react; indicative of some level of reflexivity, and the awareness these women have of their multiple selves. The data demonstrate that these women have an
understanding of the various performances expected of them, and active in managing their identities in these social contexts.

The sports biographies of these women do enable them to push the boundaries, expressing many of the physical dispositions associated with hegemonic masculinities; ability, competitiveness, physical skills. It is significant however, that these very dispositions are those that could also inform a didactic, authoritarian pedagogy. Whilst many of these women do not wish to develop such approaches, they do feel some compliance to do so for the purposes of their training, and yet hold onto a narrative wherein they perceive themselves as unable to develop these modes as women. It seems therefore, that dispositions, which might be generic and necessary to a variety of situations, come to be selectively employed in only some. That is, these women feel comfortable in displaying them in some social contexts, and not in others. There appeared to be two common features contributing to this. Firstly, some of these women have biographies within which they have experienced an increasingly legitimate participation in contact sports, or what have traditionally been seen as 'masculine' sports. In this sense they are familiar, and comfortable, with pushing the boundaries of acceptable body idiom, use of space, presentation of the body, but within the confines of what is an increasingly legitimate setting for such displays – the sports context. Why then are these features so alien to them when presenting them in a pedagogy? In the context of sports performance, the gender boundaries appear as more open to transcendence, and employing these dispositions appears more comfortably to these women. The second feature is, as has been alluded to thus far, that these women face a very complex interplay of gendered expectations within the teaching context, involving pupils, teachers, mentors and the University. Much of which confirms their earlier convictions that there is a gendered differentiated approach to teaching, based on biological differences. This is not to say that such expectations disappear once these women demonstrate themselves as able athletes. Christie, (herself a footballer) recalls a critical moment in her narrative where she found herself caught up in the relational dynamics of gender positioning by pupils when she taught boys football:

I don't know whether they had no respect for women or whether it was women sports people, whether it was because I was female teacher or
whether it was because I was a sporting female, but they had very little respect for me even though I probably could sort of, you know, in terms of skill wise been a lot better than any of them. (Christie)

Christie's reaction, to demonstrate herself as a competent performer, has consequences for the relational dynamics of this educational situation, and is typical of the active positioning and the double bind that is central to this discussion; as a competent performer Christie implicitly challenges the masculine stereotypical orthodoxy of males play football better than females, if she does not, she reinforces it:

I took an all-boys football group, and it was quite interesting the way that they [the boys] reacted. One of the balls rolled over to me, and naturally I did take a flick and then a few keepie ups and you know that was it, you know all the lads were like Miss do you play football? And I had my women's football top on, and then the lads started taking the mick out of one of the other boys in the group saying Miss is better than you. (Christie)

Therefore, whilst these appeared as constructive ways through which to gain credibility in 'male dominated' physical activity arenas, such pedagogical positioning were made more problematic by the gendered, institutional, and structural features of their teaching environments. In challenging the orthodoxy Christie has to assume gender positions that places her in a double bind. To gain credibility, she has to demonstrate the same set of values and practices that would qualify as a 'good' male performance, thereby aligning herself with a more masculine position and becoming complicit to the set of values and practices that subordinate alternative gendered identities she wishes to play a part in changing. In other words, her feminine physicality is defined in relation to and comparison with male standards that become an implicit benchmark. Male pupils are likely, as they did here, to compare themselves with a 'women' rather than a competent performer ('Miss is better than you').

7.4 TOWARDS SILENT COMPLICITY
The presentation of femininity was also an influencing factor in how these women coped with sexist attitudes and inequality of others within schools. In a number of stories, the difficulty of transferring cognitive beliefs into practical action is revealed,
showing the pressing and real influence of the institutional gendered culture of schools:

There was one bloke there [male PE teacher] and he was very funny and he was a good laugh but some of the comments that he made to the kids were very derogatory, you know one of the lads had a buckle on his shoe and he was calling him a... I can't remember what he called him now... a dancer... he was saying oh you look like a... I don't know if he actually called him a poof but it was some term along that line. And I'd think I don't really think you should have quite put it like that and they make some comments to me about, you know, football, of what do you know about football. And just... I'd give as good as I got for a bit and then I'd just be like oh carry on... (Christie)

These responses demonstrate the direct and personal nature of challenging gender inequality. If Christie challenges the gender order operating in this situation, she risks being stigmatised and if she does not she reinforces it by accepting a form of authorized complicity. The following, extract reinforces this dilemma;

To be honest I've been amazed by some of the stuff that I've heard at the school. I mean the other day, there is this one teacher, a male, and he is supposed to be one of the best teachers in the school. Anyway, we were all in the staff room and they've got exams on at the moment and this guy was talking about the fact that when the kids sat at their desks, during exams, the girls skirts like come up and he was going on about the fact that he could see the girls knickers. They even call them slappers and things like that, and you know its just not appropriate but everyone laughs, everyone joins in and that's it... how are you supposed to fight that? I really want to just walk out of the room but then it would just be the case that the tables would have been turned around onto me and I would be the one to look bad, you know?

These behaviours, which ultimately objectify women, it might be argued, perpetuate sexist norms and, demonstrate a deep-seated acceptance of misogynist attitudes as natural (Nayak & Kehily, 1996). The presence of such heterosexist discourses makes the stakes high for women and others speaking up in these contexts. We can wonder how many other teachers in these staff rooms felt the same way as Christie, but also chose silence? (although it must be noted that some silence can be powerful). Misogyny and homophobia are closely intertwined (Epstein, 1997) with male teachers using females to not only demonstrate their own heterosexuality and masculinity, but also contributing towards the policing of sexual identities of women and girls (Davies,
1984; Halson, 1991). Many of the women told similar stories of such harassing practices with male teachers objectifying women and girls. These ‘silences’ typify ways in which these women dealt with the ambivalent discourses and practical pedagogical solutions that follow, and are indicative of subtle but systematic marginalisation. Crucially we must ask, what does it cost these young women for speaking their minds and for challenging the status quo? Ultimately this meant being positioned as ‘feminist’, something, which, as explored in chapter six, these women were active in distancing themselves from. Engaging in a traditional feminist discourse is acutely problematic when faced with the complex subtleties of gender positioning in everyday practice within schools. As such, some of these student teachers believe that it is better to conform than risk being asked questions, or face accusations, about their gendered identities. There are strong regulating mechanisms in place (for body shape, presentation, clothes, lifestyles), in line with dominant forms of sexuality, which act to condone and condemn particular corporeal presentations and workplace behaviours (e.g. Clarke, 1997; Macdonald & Kirk, 1996; Sparkes & Templin, 1992).

But the choices these women make here, remain strongly mitigated by social stigma: pressure to comply is real and acute. However, whilst reflexivity comes to the fore, the underlying gendered nature of these choices is not always apparent to the participants.

Where efforts were made to debate or challenge sexist or inequitable behaviour, the women made sure they were not too vociferous about their feelings for fear of how their reactions would be interpreted.

I just found it difficult to sort of approach him and say look can we sit down and talk about this and on occasions when I did say that, the couple of occasions where I did say that have a chat, I found it very difficult to talk to him (Robin)

Christies remained concerned about the ways in which similar incidents occurring on the University based aspects of the course were dealt with:

Yeah there are always your few dominant idiots that do overpower and for some reason the lectures don’t seem to say anything too. I mean I
know that we are adults and like there are a few like one lecturer who wouldn’t jump down your throat and make you feel like a child, which I didn’t think was right either. But there were times that some of the laid back teachers or lecturers that I like that are good, they would miss things or wouldn’t speak to someone if they were doing something that was blatantly just rude or obnoxious or overpowering and they wouldn’t be saying ... maybe they figured that some of them were big enough to stick up for ourselves. But, it’s difficult with some people. (Christie)

By saying or doing nothing, these lecturers (in)actions legitimise the strong gendered messages conveyed in these contexts, and makes the development of an alternative position and challenge towards inequality more difficult for those women who would seek to challenge these gender regimes:

It’s just that sometimes because you know that you’ve got to work with them on the rest of the PGCE for the rest of the year it’s not worth it. I think that isn’t fair, you just think oh I can’t be bothered to you turn around and ... I mean you tend to say something and you just get a reaction and you’re alright but then you think well surely the lecturer should back me up. Yeah that’s it, rather than ... you do feel a bit you know, if you stand up for it... and then there’s the little cliques that you know if you say something they are just going to get at you. It’s like the lecture that we had on equity, a lot of people wouldn’t have said anything just because they know everyone else is going to say ooh to what you said. You know that’s going to ... and so you either say something or you don’t. (Christie)

Christie’s reflections allude to the need for a more diverse repertoire of gendered embodied, experiential and discursive identity resources and professional support to assisting in laying broader cross-gender foundations, to feel more comfortable in what she, and others, would like to say and do:

... you know and I think maybe the way they stand there and say it is fair enough but I think in my opinion it would be better to reinforce within actual lectures to see lecturers actually reinforce it so that when one of the idiot males, which it normally is, makes a rude and sexist comment, it isn’t taken as a joke. Yeah ok fair enough laugh at it but then say hang on a minute what effect might that have had if a lad said that in your class? And what could you do about it? And then just ok you can’t just keep doing it but there are so many opportunities where you think and you find yourself saying it. (Christie)
There are other important questions emerging from these insights. If we are to encourage teachers to address inequality, how then might we begin to differentiate between heterosexist practice and heterosexual discourse? Moreover, the question remains; how much, when, where and in what form? These are all areas of institutional culture that need addressing in the future.

7.5 DEPLOYING GENDER AS PEDAGOGY: Reproducing gender dualisms

Although these women position themselves intellectually as supporting equal opportunities, in teaching, their strongest dispositions are those that guide them strongly towards differentiating by gender. In the previous chapter, it was shown that whilst these women were strongly motivated to securing equal opportunities for girls in PE, as pupils they were frustrated with their non-participating peers. There was an obvious continuity in their narrative that emphasised their belief that as Physical Educators they should develop a pedagogy that focuses on motivating students into this system. Once more, a popular feminism was prominent, where the emphasis was on self-determination and the exercising of individual rights.

The need to distinguish between boys and girls as ‘groups’ reaffirmed earlier narratives that emphasized a dialogue of gender difference. Gender identifications are dichotomised in this process of resolving what is assumed to be the problematic nature of gender difference within physical education:

Its difficult to play games when there are only two out of a class of twenty-four, and ten are not doing it because they don’t want to break their nails. (Christie)

As the stories developed, the more subtle form of gender positioning was revealed, perhaps highlighting the longevity of biological assumptions. Boys and girls were perceived to have different and complementary (Wright, 1996) physical capabilities, with these differences polarized along the lines of patriarchal assumptions about femininity and masculinity:

Jill is taking athletics, a year 7 girls group. By the end of the lesson there are a number of relay races set up... At the end of the lesson Jill comments to me ‘It’s difficult because the lads would really love something like this, they’d really get into and enjoy it. I find it quite
frustrating sometimes. (Observation field notes)

The problems with girls and boys vary because I found a lot with the girls it was Miss it's cold we don't want to be here, whereas with the boys it was 'this is boring, we want to do something like, lets do contact'.... The girls were nice but to a certain extent some of them were a bit screaming girls. Very sort of going through that twelve, thirteen year old phase. You tell them off for something and it's just ha ha ha (Sam)

Whilst these women might indeed be accurate in describing some of the girls' attitudes, the gender order is tacitly supported by their representations of this resistance. Many narratives throughout the training continued to be permeated by a liberal discourse that emphasised the aim of motivating girls into PE. Disadvantage is recognised by these women, but the solution posited is to encourage these girls to exercise their individual rights and overcome these barriers, and ultimately rests upon a discourse of liberal individualism. Accordingly, some perceive the need to interact differently with boys and girls, and that there was a time and a place for different approaches and identities to be displayed:

Mainly by trying to say you know it's boring because you're not getting involved and mainly by trying to change the tack and increasing their involvement in the lesson. I went from my expectations being they can do this, to little practice, little practice, little practice. So I figured out that was the only way it worked with the girls. (Sam)

Whilst these efforts are laudable, the use of oppositional gendered criteria to position themselves and their pupils only serves to reproduce the polarised stereotypes currently predominant (Vertinsky, 1992); positioning as subordinate or marginal those very pupils that these student teachers are so clearly committed to include and motivate.

Whilst these women held inclusive and intellectual positions of equal opportunities, they construct these girls as 'unitary' subjects, uniquely positioned as disadvantaged, rather than multiply located. Consequently attention is focused more on individuals rather than social structure and thus depoliticises the central question of power and control in explaining gender inequalities. Ultimately, the complex discursive, embodied and textual practices that underpin the Physical Education experiences are seldom considered. In adopting these classic liberal equal opportunity approaches
pupils are positioned as ‘being socialised’ and pupils’ reactions and responses are subsumed under some system of cause and effect. Thus, where, despite their efforts to increase opportunities, girls still do not participate, some student teachers not only become frustrated but also revert back to biological explanations, and evaluative comments:

The thing is that even if you give the girls the option, they won't want to do things like cricket. (Jill)

Their actions therefore reinforce a silent and subtle gendered status quo to the students and other teachers. These stories point to the need for a broader repertoire of gendered identity resources to facilitate the transference of cognitive desires of ‘equality’ into practical pedagogies.

7.5.1 Inducting girls into Physical Education; the continued narrative of liberal individualism

The aspects of the participants’ narratives, which emphasised a humanistic discourse of liberal individualism, continued throughout their training. Sampson (1989) has argued that such discourses of individuality conveniently pathologize ‘failing’ individuals, locating the fault in the individuals while concealing contributing social factors. It was not uncommon therefore for comments such as Sam’s to emerge, who suggested to another teacher ‘Carly’s alright, she’s talented so she gets on with it.’ As relatively privileged students in teacher education, it is difficult for some of these women to empathise with those girls disinterested in PE:

But that’s just a weakness of mine, I can’t teach children that don’t want to be taught. I just have a crap attitude about it. (Anne)

Many of them enter the course having never been unsuccessful in learning a new physical skill, unable to imagine what it’s like to be overweight, unable to comprehend how it happened that many girls lack interest in physical activity. The narrative of associating non-participation with an ‘emphasized’ femininity was sustained throughout the training period. Those less co-operative and able were often characterized in terms of patriarchal definitions of femininity or as ‘girlies’. It is not uncommon within these forms of feminism to see girls who do not make ‘non-
traditional’ choices as ‘beyond the pale’. Robin suggested that she felt that she was being encouraged to ‘push’ the girls a lot harder into Physical Education:

I’ve been taught in my role as student teacher to always press that little bit harder. Whereas you know, ‘why aren’t you doing PE?’ well ‘I’ve got a bad back’ and now it’s like ‘well why haven’t you been to the Doctors? What have you done about it?’ You know... to keep pushing to give them a bit of a hard time to make it that it really is an issue, so that they might think I can’t be bothered to go through all of this... (Robin)

The voluntarism of such a view denies the terrific struggles in which these girls have to engage. Given the unique relationships that these women developed with their own teachers, as pupils, it was hardly surprising that many of them felt that they should become good ‘role models’:

I think it provides a good role model if I can get out there and teach Rugby. (Sam)

I mean I had a great relationship with my PE teacher and I felt instantly when I went into teaching, I knew what I had to do and what I shouldn’t do because I can remember a bad PE teacher and a what I had at school as well. Just from the two different teachers I could see which approach was more effective, which helped. (Louise)

Moreover, the need to be good role models, seemed to be related to the value that these women placed on exercising individual rights. The reliance on role models, assumes that the visibility of change through the exceptional changes in individual power relations, might provide solutions to gender inequality. Great importance is given to ‘passing on’ the positive experiences of the PE system to other generations of girls and women, thereby drawing upon and corresponding with, individual life biographies and self/social identities. Whilst claiming that as ‘role models’ they are to act in the best interests of the girls, often they see ‘best interest’ as encouraging girls to enter these PE contexts in their current status, and to help them fulfil their potential. In Jill’s teaching practice school, Jill and a mentor are discussing a ‘talented’ girl in the school. Jill’s mentors states that ‘she’s [the pupil] just such a good all-rounder, it’s just trying to get her to do it though...’ These women come to judge their teaching by how successful they are in ‘passing on’ these aspects of Physical Education.
On the one hand these women are complicit to the status quo, and on the other there are modifications in the nature of gender that these women are reconstructing, and perhaps even the nature of gender and feminism into which they are investing. Some of these are subtle, others more obvious, but both forms are significant shifts in the intellectual and embodied resources that these women bring with them to the teaching of PE. However, most of these changes remain locked within an individualistic framework, and for the large part, the move towards a more inclusive and democratic social situation in the PE class still remains a far off goal. Despite this, these are some fundamental dynamics that are worth highlighting as empirical evidence of change.

7.6 'STORIES OF' OR 'STORIES AS' RESISTANCE? LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC NOTIONS OF AGENCY AND THE GENDER POLITICS OF 'RESISTANCE'

Where does all of this leave us? It would be easy to assume that teachers are merely victims of oppression, pressing them into a process of reproducing particular practices and discourses. But a deeper analysis suggests that the positions taken by these women might be viewed as the unintentional consequences of human agency (Giddens, 1984) as carried out by knowledgeable actors who behave reflexively in the contexts of their lives. As previously stated, many of the concerns these women had about social issues and gender equality, did not find any serious place with mentors and teachers in practice institutions. There are also obvious tensions between the self and social and the contradictions this throws up. The critical question emerging from these life stories therefore, is how these women resolved the tension between negotiating the system, and compromising their own values? This critically leads to a consideration of key aspects of agency and resistance in these women’s stories.

A number of student teachers, mentors and teachers in practice institutions alluded to the language of instrumentalism, invoking ideas of ‘freedom’ a ‘detached political subject’ and ‘autonomy’ and as such formed an unrealistic abstraction (Weir, 1997) of what these female student teachers could achieve in practice. These ideologies imply that all teachers can, and indeed should, acquire the necessary freedom to act ‘politically’ in their own name if they extract themselves from ‘social experiences’. As such, despite the exclusionary practices they experience, the women are still viewed, and view themselves, albeit in the abstract, as ‘free and equal’ to men to explore the possibilities and opportunities of liberal democracy in practice.
As white heterosexual, middle class men we are initiated into particular privileges within modernity, for reason was to be identified with masculinity. So it was that modernity was largely cast within men's terms, though it was presented as a universal aspiration that was open to all. (Siedler, 1997, p.96, my emphasis)

The prevailing discourse that they should be rational, instrumental actors encourages them to search for a unitary and singular ‘voice’ in their professional narrative, although the very complexity of the embedded self means that such expression is a difficult task. As Hall (1992) suggests, if we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or ‘narrative’ about ourselves’ (p 277). I don’t sense however that these subsequent narratives are ‘comforting’ since for many of the women it resulted in ambiguity, contradictory subjectivities and complexity. This notion of separation of self from experience in the search for a political and professional identity exposed a gendered tension that underlies the traditional conceptions of rationality. It assumes that as a detached self one is in a position of independence (no longer intrinsic needs for others). Weir (1997) suggests that this strong liberal characterization is an unrealistic abstraction. It further assumes that women can acquire the necessary freedom to act politically in their own name if they can detach themselves from their social contexts; much like the liberal individualism that permeated the key storylines of their biographies. The focus on teachers as rational actor or pivotal reform agents rather problematically assumes a separation of self from experience, and moreover, actors who are disembedded from ‘gendered arenas' denying the social elements of identity formation.

The forms of agency these discourses are endorsing are those for unconstrained action in practice, confirming the earlier sense of agency that these women presented in their biographical narratives. In some ways, they come to know, construct and understand themselves in relation to the same narrative feature that figured so prominently in their life biographies. Moreover, maintaining these subject positions involves less contestation for women. The freedom to be ‘oneself’ in these teaching contexts emerges however, as a freedom to present oneself within certain parameters. They learn to teach within rather than against a number of traditional gendered dualisms and discourses. Being themselves becomes a difficult task, when faced with the pragmatic
expedience of 'best practice', the institutional culture and expectancies from a number of parties of what is assumed of the PE teacher. But the story does not end there; if it did, we would end up with a somewhat misguided interpretation and understanding of 'resistance' or 'challenge' in these contexts.

7.6.1 Narratives as resistance

The narratives produced within these life history accounts are multi-faceted, complex, and diverse embedded in meaningful relationships between active subjects. An initial reading of the women's stories point to accounts that report little in terms of the practical actions' they carry out to challenge gender inequality in Physical Education, or school. When I began interviewing my initial reading of resistance implied some practical opposition to dominant norms; their stories of resistance in this sense are rare. However, the importance of these narratives is not solely in the representation of practical experience, but the recognition of the symbolic, and its potential influence on actual forms of behaviour. Whilst many of the women were beginning to feel that they could not change institutions, and often the people that work in them, they simultaneously construct narratives that emphasise that this does not mean that women are without agency or need to comply with dominant gender expectations. By the end of her training Robin had begun to decentralise her role as change agent:

I would like to think that I could do something about it but I think it's ... you've got to have an awful lot of people doing something about it, in huge quantities for a long time. This is a huge issue, which has been raised in the school that I have been in just now. They come from a very working class background and there are definite male and female stereotypes. Females do not do physical activity, they don't go red, they don't sweat, they sit down and ... I don't know... write stories or whatever.

... it is shocking that it still exists but it would be absolutely impossible for me to try and change that because it's not going to happen. (Robin)

Robin alludes to the political work necessary to change the landscape in which she was to work. The dispersal of power emerges as critical here, and Robin points to the need to establish communities that are pivotal in developing collective investment in social change. This relational understanding of change, in which power is decentralised and dispersed, posits alternative epistemological frameworks from which she can constitute acts of agency.
They ultimately have to justify why, despite their own values, they choose to stay in these contexts and contribute to sometimes, oppressive practices. By suggesting that they had 'no other choice at this stage', they can still construct a self-image as an active subject. In essence, they reify these professional discourses, whilst simultaneously disrupting it through the telling of their fiction (Walkerdine, 1990) (that they had no other choice). Most of these women make sense of their complicity through a future anticipated change when they move into their own full time teaching position:

The problem is it's not your school, you don't feel like you have the right to sort of challenge things. So in that situation it was firstly incredibly difficult anyway to go against the whole group of people, and then you don't feel like even if you wanted to, that you should.

I think when I am in my own school, full time job, I will be in a better position to challenge things like that, I mean at the end of the day it's pretty offensive to any woman, and yet there were so many women in there going along with it. The thing is because it is said as a joke, then you're the one that is seen to be spoiling, the bad one, if you try to challenge it. But I guess in your own school...(Christie)

So a big difference... But I think the second practice though I think you reach a plateau and you feel you haven't... I mean you have progressed other wise they would be saying that you haven't... but you just feel like you can't go any further in that school Yes, because you are still a student and you need to have that job for yourself in order to develop professionally again. (Emma)

Thus whilst for the large part, their narratives are caught up in liberal individualistic frameworks, they simultaneously engage in a number of other narrative strategies to author themselves as active agents within and against the essentializing discourses of teaching. These narratives allow them to construct their decisions as not merely complying with dominant ideologies but as active subjects writing their own story. In this sense, they are simultaneously resisting and appropriating dominant gender discourses.

you've got to move with the times otherwise you will end up turning into one of these teachers that you always moan about. Stuck in the same ways. (Anne)
Chapter Seven: Narrative Analysis: The Positioning of Femininities Within and Through Teaching PE

These narratives constructions appeared important in recapturing the sense of self which clung to a particular form of agency, and in maintaining a position which represents the 'good teachers' still that they claim they want to be; thereby legitimising and stabilizing the identities these women were (often uncomfortably) investing in. They actively pursue ways in which to negotiate these power relations in ways that would not erase their own sense of self.

These narratives involved a strategy of displacement. As Trinh Minh-ha (1991) suggests 'displacing is a way of surviving', for in displacing ourselves 'we never allow this classificatory world to exert its classificatory power' (1991, p.21). Whether these women have more recourse, opportunity and ability to enact these storylines in full time teaching remains to be seen, and could provide the focus of future research. The point here is that these women create these stories, and are creating future roles for themselves that go beyond the dominant stereotype. These may prove to be real, or they may prove to be fictions (Walkerdine, 1990). These constructions, albeit fictions, create the visions they wish or hope to enact, and as Native American novelist N. Scott Momaday has written, 'Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves . . . . [We have] consummate being in language' (p.167).

What is interesting here is that these women are creating a space through which to negotiate the conflicted gender terrain of becoming a teacher. The creation of future space in which they feel they will achieve what they set out to, is reflective of the dissonance they experience between the self image as an agent of change, the beliefs embedded in a patriarchal society and the expectations of becoming a 'professional'. In this sense, the women believe that their professional identities are safe, first and foremost, and that their subverted gendered identities can be reclaimed. This reclamation is perceived to be legitimated by the idea that as a fully qualified teacher, in their own school, they would feel more 'empowered' to challenge inequality:

So I mean hopefully I can go in and make a difference but you know it was an old department so I'll be going in new, as an NQT (Emma)

Non-unitary subjectivity therefore emerges as vitally important in the process of resisting gender norms. For these women, their multiplicity becomes a powerful
resource for reconciling their contradictory positions. Moreover, images of women teachers as change agents, as actively pursuing and enacting their own philosophies or beliefs about teaching, are rare. As I listened to these stories more carefully, I could hear the women (even by the end of their training) constructing a gendered differentiated approach to teaching; a belief in differences between men and women's pedagogical approaches. Anne for example, still felt that there was some ideology of PE teaching being a male profession:

I suppose a very small percentage of it is that it is still seen that a PE teacher is male for some reason. (Anne)

Others were aware of the differential approaches that they had seen during their teaching practice:

You always get the older teachers in the group, especially males for some reason, the females didn't do this so much, but they just went out and played a game for an hour. Whereas the women did something a bit more constructive!

One lesson she [female teacher] came in and she had been motivating them the whole time, encouragement, enthusiasm, and it was a completely different approach. With the men it's 'boys you will do it, and with the girls it's like come on lets do it together...In the second phase school the men again were very much come on stop being a wimp, lets go out and do it... (Robin)

Perhaps the decision to continue to construct narratives based on wanting to develop more 'child-centred' approaches not only reflects their own values, but also resonated more closely with, what they saw, as female subjectivity, than the more detached, instrumental approaches. In this sense, these narratives function to avoid the potential erasure of female subjectivity when they moved into ‘male defined’ approaches. The investment in the discourse of equal opportunities, a child centred discourse, and the narrative rejection of the instrumental approaches they were investing in highlight sites of conflicting subjectivity. Here, the engaging of hegemonic norms functioned in some ways as a form of resistance. Engaging in the narrative of a child focused approach (whether they achieve it or not), within the context of a highly gendered profession, allowed some of these women to reconcile conflicting images of 'butch, authoritarian' with dominant social constructions of passively enacting women's
natural nurturing capacity. The construction of these narratives seem to provide, in Giddens's (1991) terms 'ontological security' derived from the teaching environment; alternative story lines appear as too threatening in the establishment of a sense of self.

Following Giddens (1984) we might view these student teachers as not being mechanistically shaped by their socio-educational environments, but as exerting their agency in response to them. They reflect upon the ambiguity of making identity investments in the very discourses of 'individualism', 'meritocracy' and 'technocratic rationality' (see Tinning, 1990) which at times suppress their pedagogical creativity. They actively engage in a reflexive process of their sense of personal and professional selves, juxtaposing 'what type of teacher do I want to be?' against 'What kind of teacher do I have to be?' For many, having recognised these dilemmas they systematically reinvest in the humanist narrative of agency as a central aspect of 'self', allowing them to cling to storylines evident in biographical narratives. They engage in the maintenance of a moral order through which the patterns of power and desire they have taken up as their own.

1 Any interpretation is difficult, and I wish to reiterate it is a delicate, and perhaps always subjective task, to make these distinctions. Indeed it is not uncommon for student teachers and their mentors to focus on issues of classroom management, survival and control, rather than the learning interests of the child, especially in the early phases of training. I would maintain that discourses of progressivism and scientific efficiency can be both liberatory and oppressive at different times, and both are implicated in, and central to regulating normative gender identities (Walkerdine, 1990).

2 For example, many women, particularly in the primary sector, may be reinstated into education as 'mother' or 'guardian' constrained by identity narratives related to their reproductive capacity. See also Casey (1990) and Steedman (1985)

3 Delarriont (1998) draws upon Franks (1990, 1991) work on the 'disciplined body' an ideal type based on responses to four issues; other-relatedness, self-relatedness, desire, and control. Delamont revisits data collected in 1978 at a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 12 – 18. The 'leotard lesson' was a double period in the girls changing room which she observed in the first week of autumn term. Delamont cites the initial encounter between forty twelve year old girls and their physical education teachers. Suggesting that the teachers were holding up the ideal type of the disciplined body to the class. Delamont provides four ways in which the body was being disciplined in the Physical Education class.

1. The techniques and skills of the different sports to be learnt at the school
2. The power of the hegemonic gaze of the male and the need for modesty in adolescent females
3. The differentiation of physical education from ordinary school and home life, and the internal differentiation between physical education activities
4. The inevitability of the biological process of the life cycle controlling female behaviours and lives
Chapter Eight: Discussion and (In)conclusions: Rethinking Gender, Subjectivity and Agency in Initial Teacher Training in Physical Education

This thesis has built up a picture from the life stories of ten female student teachers of physical education, revealing the complex and multi-layered processes of identity construction in which each has been engaged. These identities should be understood as social products developed within specific corporeal, socio-cultural and historical contexts. As such, these women’s lives are unfolding narratives, wherein they are not unitary beings but individuals who experience the multiple and contradictory positioning of everyday life. Consequently, like Clarke (1998b) it seems appropriate to reiterate that throughout this study, I have been searching for understandings, rather than absolutes. The multiple and often contradictory subject positions taken up within these narratives precludes a single interpretation of the life histories of these student teachers: A single interpretation of a life history seems not only impossible, but to suggest that I can provide some final interpretation of these negates the very complexity, which enriches our insight. It would have been all to easy, but potentially distorting, to interpret the narratives in a simple but well used explanatory framework of sex role or any other socialisation theory. Something much more dynamic and complex was happening in these contexts, which aspects of post-structural thinking have made visible. These women take, assign and assume multiple positions in various ways throughout various interactions not only across a life history but also across one day, and even across single conversations. Post-structural theoretical tools made visible the shifts not only in interpretation, but also in the living of life that comes about with the taking up of a new discourse. The resultant text is a mimesis of the fragmentary and discontinuous nature of the experiences of these women. A text where meaning spills over, where identity is continually in process of being constructed and the self presented as a collection of different and disparate voices.

Of course this raises a key question; how to reach some form of conclusion without engaging in distorting interpretations of these narratives, or re-treading the path back towards humanism is a key dilemma with which I continue to grapple. I do not intend to try and posit any final ‘truths’, rather to engage in, and extend, the discussions
surrounding the theorising of gender, resistance, and agency within teacher training in Physical Education. Due to the reflexive on-going nature of post-structuralist theory an interpretation can never fully be accomplished, and thus raises some questions and concerns for practice. Whilst I don’t believe that we can make any crude generalisations or suggestions for future practice based on the findings of this research, there are some messages emerging through these narratives, which, at the very least, we need to consider.

8.1 MULTIPLE VOICES: NEGOTIATING, CONTESTING AND (RE)PRODUCING DISCOURSES OF FEMININITY/GENDER

As described in the theoretical framework of chapter four, I have found the concept of discourse invaluable. It accommodates and explains the contradictory positions and expressions that these women produced during interaction and the way in which their power positions shift and change according to various social situations, allowing for a dynamic picture to emerge. The stories these women created were fashioned from the processes of social interaction they engaged in. Significantly then, the struggle to understand how these individuals negotiate their way through these diversities during teacher education needed to take into account the prior conceptions of self that they reflect. One of the benefits of the life history (over other forms or oral or ethnographic research) has therefore been the focus on the different phases in the lives of these women, not only as teachers, but also as girls, as students in the PE class, young adults, women, athletes, and sexual beings. Occupying these positions was more complex than a mere role; people might know the role, might find themselves in that role, or in relation to that role, but we cannot know everyone’s personal understandings and sets of emotions connected to ideas of particular roles (e.g. woman) developed out of their own experiences. For example, those who develop their particular concept of teacher in anticipation that they will become one, might develop differently from those who know they will never be positioned as such. Each individual brought with them a subject history with attendant emotions and beliefs, as well as knowledge of social structures with their attendant rights, obligations and expectations.

That said, there was a great deal of similarity in the backgrounds and life experiences of these women. A strong case could therefore be made for further life history
research about PE teachers with more diverse linguistic, racial, sexual and physical identities. Moreover, it was very difficult to not reify the dual focus of heterosexual and lesbian (particularly since these were the binary opposites around which these women were constructing their identities), and it seems important that in the future we work with those who identify themselves as 'bisexual', 'queer', 'transgendered' or 'transexual'.

Whilst these women were variously positioned by their gender, they also actively positioned themselves as they experienced and displayed a multiplicity of identities. The modes of self representation embedded within the narratives illustrated how they emerged from these contexts not as some relatively fixed unitary 'end product', but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participated. In the process of constructing gender identities, a variety of discourses were drawn upon simultaneously, often conflicting with one another (Parker, 1990), and a number of common discourses concerning gender relations can be reconstructed from the stories told by the women in this study. Much of the data supported the findings of Francis (2000) that people draw upon different discourses on gender at different times. A compelling example was found in the apparent ambiguity between their convictions of the need to secure equal opportunities (the construction of the sexes as equal or the same), whilst simultaneously drawing upon an essentialised discourse of gender difference, presenting men and women, boys and girls, as behaving differently or having different abilities. The research has therefore illustrated the ways in which equal opportunities (and perhaps other equity discourses) co-exist, sometimes uncomfortably, with discourses of gender difference and anti-equality discourses. Furthermore, it also suggests that equal opportunities discourses do not effectively challenge or combat discourses of gender difference (Francis – primary school work and Francis, 2000; Davies, 1989, 1993). A number of feminist scholars have expressed concern that there are serious limitations to liberal democratic ideology of 'equal opportunities', founded upon the socialisation model and popularised in the late 1970s (Bacchi, 1990; 1987; Birrell, 1988; Grosz, 1986a, 1986b, 1988; Hargreaves, 1990; Jaggar, 1990; Scott, 1988; Sullivan, 1990). Within the model of equal opportunities women's equality is measured against the capabilities and abilities of men. The rhetoric of 'sameness' associated with the call for 'equality' is problematic in that 'the point of reference between men and women
'is always man' (Bacchi, 1990, p. x). Feminists' critical of the 'equal opportunity' approach, (which draws upon the liberal democratic theory of the ability of women to be the same as men) assert therefore that within such a model any gains might well be counterproductive since such a version of equality is based on an unacknowledged male norm.

8.2 Continuity and Change in the Constructions of Gender within Physical Education Initial Teacher Training

Hearing these women's narratives was a visceral experience, as I could feel the emotion and guilt that they were expressing based on a personal commitment to a moral position implied in their choices, and oriented towards wanting to either change or pass on something in and through PE. As Davies (2000) states 'It is the discursive placing of responsibility that makes us, in a legalistic sense, agents by default' (p.56) and I reiterate, that these women had the best intentions is not in question here. However, most of the women had a strong affiliation with the PE system, and assumed that it must be at least in some ways meritocratic; why else would they have 'succeeded' thus far and why else would they want to become part of an education system which, according to many respondents had served them so well. Hence, they came to feel a great deal of moral responsibility for sustaining and further improving this condition.

The fragments from the individual narratives are illuminating in themselves, but together these stories formed some key insights into dominant gender constructions within PE ITT. Whilst the study was not directly concerned with pedagogical debate, the process of knowledge production in these localised socio-educational settings was important in as much as it was implicated in the subjectivities of a generation of female physical educationalists. During teaching training there is variable positioning in the 'myriad of power relations at the micro level' (Sawicki, 1991) of interaction. Individual student teachers bring with them personal qualities, complex histories, and social positioning that mean a straightforward totalizing fit with any one discourse is unlikely. However, identity positions are also mediated and inflected by the set of 'local' structural, institutional and individual factors within the microcosm of teacher education. As such, my interest lays in problematising the nature of intellectual, embodied and political practice, in as much as it has gendered consequences for the
socio-educational context of Initial Teacher Training. Theorising the gendered process of becoming a female PE teacher therefore provided insights into the manifestation of gender inequality in the reproduction of educational knowledge.

During their teacher training, all the women stated that they wanted to be the ‘best they could’ and acquire ‘appropriate expertise’ to further their ‘professional identities’. As ‘soon-to-be experts’ they were expected and wanted to provide the educational experiences that met the needs of their students, but within a constantly changing social landscape. As Kelly et al (2000) suggest, in the processes of drawing upon other forms of expertise in a bewildering environment of competing claims to tell the truth about teaching and learning in PE, processes which promise some certainty in the face of contingency are actually deeply implicated in the manufacturing of this uncertainty (Giddens, 1994a). Moreover, the process of such knowledge production is not merely some representation of a transparent reality that exists outside the discourses through which they are represented and constructed. Articulations of good pedagogy in PE are constructed by various experts in ‘centres of expertise’ (universities, schools, clinics, government) (Rose, 1996) grounded in the pedagogical debate about what constitutes good teaching in PE. As Kirk (1992) argues, it is the sort of ‘self-evident’ truths that attach to signifiers such as ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘true’, ‘false’ ‘teaching’ (and gender, equality, equity, I might add) that need to be rendered problematic. In extending this agenda, the research has highlighted some epistemological aspects of these issues, in as much as the conditions that enable particular visions of ‘good pedagogy’ in PE to function as ‘truths’ appear as subtly, but deeply gendered. Moreover, the rhetoric associated with these positions, namely the modernist constricts of objectivity and neutrality, work powerfully to enable such discourses to function as timeless, asocial and apolitical ‘regimes of truth’ (Foucault, 1980); to appear as natural, self-evident and necessary. Absorbing the dominant discourses in the discipline of PE involve becoming part of networks of discursive power (Foucault, 1977) and as such the spaces for these women to resist were ontologically and socially restricted and contained, since the bodily and gendered nature of physical education created particular pressures for their survival. As the narrative chapters have revealed, there is some dissonance between what these women wanted to achieve and experiment with in their pedagogy, and the values embedded in the current ways of working during teacher education; between the epistemology and
ways of knowing that are taken for granted in the classroom. These women's stories therefore identified 'conditions of possibility' which are influenced by educational discourse.

In particular, wider discourses on teacher professionalism and the 'modern' teacher appeared to support, inform and legitimise some of the gender inequalities that took place during the micro-politics of everyday teaching experiences. Chapter seven revealed how the concept of 'inclusion' drawn upon by some key figures within the teacher education context (particularly mentors and teaching colleagues)\(^1\) drew heavily upon a notion of citizenship in the liberal state in which women as 'other' is incorporated, but within an epistemology which privileges 'public man'.\(^2\) It was shown that such phallocentric knowledge forms and the socio-cultural relations and structure which express and justify them, therefore enables and sustains the differential valuation of particular gendered subjectivities at the levels of patriarchal and sexist educational knowledge within teacher education. Their 'otherness' translates at the level of social practice into exclusion and subjugation. As revealed in chapter seven there were occasions where these women were dialectically 'positioned' against identity narratives related to reproductive capacity, femininity and domesticity.

The 'de-gendering' of these training contexts raises some important issues regarding the equality debate and the public sphere. As Sullivan (1990, p.174) suggests such proposals of 'de-gendering' are premised upon a liberal discourse that posits the uncomplicated extension to women of the rights males enjoy in the public sphere. Sullivan further warns that moves to de-gender the public sphere may privatise and depoliticise issues of particular relevance to women, effectively relocating issues bearing on women's sexual difference in the private sphere. The heavy emphasis on these dynamics inevitably contributed to the re-representation of gender dualisms in educational thought and practice, and assisted in endorsing particular forms of masculinity as the 'norm'. Particular diversities are therefore silenced in these 'liberatory' discourses. Consequently, these training contexts do not appear to provide adequate recognition of the multitude of potential teaching identities in physical education, and consequently, as incapable of comprehending the gendered tensions to which they give rise. It is worth noting that all the women in this study are
successes in the sense that they ‘pass’ their course, but remain caught up in the subtle but subordinate positioning by their gender. By remaining and adhering to what is expected of them as student teachers, the management of the ‘professional’ and ‘personal’ self for many became a complex process. As such, there is no simple revelation for gender equity in these contexts. These women are multiply constituted subjects for whom the interplay of embodiment, discourse and practice produces a conscious and unconscious struggle. The complexity of difference and division within these regulations is important since there is no simple materiality, no correct behaviour which these women can unequivocally achieve.

What emerged from considering the combinations and permutations among these binaries was a strong sense that masculine power and privilege was re-produced in this site but that it had to be worked against a multitude of contradictions. The method of assembling binaries and then closely investigating the relations of power and knowledge which are negotiated around these binaries demonstrated that patriarchy is not a monolithic category. There are always gaps and slippages in local sites; including the potential for allegiances with men who may feel equally powerless and alienated. The political importance of this for feminist educators is that there is space for positive intervention on the part of teachers or curriculum planners, provided a sufficiently sophisticated account is available of how forms of social differentiation occur in specific sites.

8.3 A GENERATION OF ‘NEW WOMEN’? THE PLACE OF FEMINISMS IN TEACHER TRAINING IN POST-MODERNITY

At the centre of recent changes in the organization of economic and social life has been a perceived increase in the importance of the individual, and particularly of individual choice. Choice itself has come to seem an imperative, or ‘a compulsion’ (Beck 1994: 14): for Rose (1989, p.227), ‘the self is not merely enabled to choose, but obliged to construe a life in terms of choices’. The influence of second wave feminist ideals is clear in many of the narratives, with the liberal notion of equal opportunities appearing as a dominant discourse, heavily reflected by their belief in a ‘right to choose’. The narratives constructed around the issue of opportunity, are met with a very strong expression of individualism. Their sense of agency largely appeared to be underpinned by a belief that the resistances that they make are a question of individual
choice. Many of these women felt that to draw on a traditional feminist discourse was to run the risk of incorporating disadvantage into their identities, and rupture a powerful sense of self-determination. These women, as ‘high achievers’, were disinclined to associate with a group that would be seen to be ‘lagging behind’ since it ultimately undermines the carefully constructed sense of agency that is integral to their identity narratives. The taken-for-granted status of feminism is its strength and its weakness; a sense of an injustice or inequality and the continuing oppression of women can feel like ‘old hat’. As such there was a propensity for these young women to espouse opinions compatible with a feminist viewpoint yet at the same time distance their identification with feminism, (confirming the findings of Budgeon (2001)). Moreover, the narratives also revealed a tendency to attribute responsibility for a solution to gender equality with individual women rather than identify with a collective political movement. Feminism, or a Women’s movement becomes a crutch for vulnerable women rather than a channel through which to build on their achievements. Women making choices or experiencing difficulty in their training, blame the obstacles and problems they encounter on their own failure – so increasing their sense of guilt and helplessness, coming to judge themselves in terms of personal fault. What starts as a movement for pursuing equality – gradually turns into a self-improvement movement.

As such, these stories have captured some fundamental shifts in the place of feminisms in post-modernity or high modernity. Certainly it appeared that these women appeared to enjoy a wide range of choices about how to live their lives and believed in the right to self-determination. Important aspects of their sense of self have been derived from their roles as sports performers. Some stress that from an early age sport had given them ‘inner strength’ and ‘self-worth’ and thus followed a career in it even despite hurdles such as middle class parental objection. However, in co-existence were a number of conditions restricting these choices, and these (re)emerged in the context of teacher training. Resistance to such restrictions emerge as a key issue for all the women, and I suspect, will remain an issue of on-going relevance as reflexive individuals.

Their concerns about being stigmatised as a man-hater, or victim like complaining feminist are understandable given the backlash against feminist discourses in the past
twenty years (Faludi, 1991). As suggested in chapter six, an individualised popular feminism appeared as more accessible to these women. The appropriation of this discourse seemed to rest upon its appeal to draw upon the ideals of feminism, but positing solutions to the inequalities highlighted, by focusing on the rights of individualized choice. It would be all too easy to interpret this as a 'post-feminism' which was apolitical, and attractive to these women because it contributes to a belief that gender equality had been achieved, and thus conclude that it contributes to engendering complacency. However, complacency is not something I would associate with this group of women. Moreover, it would appear inaccurate to say that these women are guided entirely by an engagement with a liberal individualistic ethic in the pursuit of individual goals. Their narratives allude to a number of scenarios in which they actively position themselves in conflictual relation to others who seek to define them on the basis of their gender: In telling these stories they revealed how they practice resistant identities. This is not the collapse of feminist politics, but more that the notion of choice as a fundamental right is so embedded in their thinking, suggesting not that feminism has become a marginal discourse but has become an engrained and basic part of the ways in which women make sense of their lives. As Janice Winship suggests, and I would concur, it is not simply 'that the feminist case has been won', but rather 'that it goes without saying that there is a case' (Winship, 1985, p.37). Moreover, according to Winship, this is largely due to the way in which 'with the 'success' of feminism some feminist ideas no longer have an oppositional charge but have become part of many people's, not just a minority's, common sense' (Winship, 1987, p.149). I don't therefore see these narratives as a break with feminism, but rather indicative of the ways in which, as Winship suggests, the 'boundaries between feminists and non-feminists have become fuzzy' (Winship, 1987, p. 149). Indeed the power of feminist discourse remains even when the interpretive frame-work in question may well be derived from a brand of post-feminism (Budgeon, 2001). We are reminded through these narratives that gender is such an implicit part of our lives that 'you wake up every day meeting the gender question, so you don't even notice it' (Bateson, 1989, p.44)

Moreover, in placing these feminisms in their political and social context, to assume that these re-definitions of feminism are simply 'not-feminist' would be to suppose that the politics, feminism and the New Right political conditions of the 1980s and
1990s (heavily influencing teacher training) is some universal reference point. This essentially forecloses an understanding of the ways in which the popular, political and the critical intersect. Furthermore, it would be to assume that there is some authentic feminism, located in the past, by which we should judge new emerging feminisms; a somewhat grandiose and dangerous position in post-modernity. What then, can be said about the emerging feminisms and gender identities in these contexts?

The narratives of self-identities constructed by these women, appeared to entail the simultaneous use of both, to borrow Giddens (1991) terms, ‘emancipatory’ and ‘life politics’ style of feminism, particularly in the ways in which gender inequality was defined as a collective problem, but with an individual solution. The feminism drawn upon by these women within their teacher training, and their outside lives, is located in between two political frameworks incorporating both emancipatory themes and the ones more explicitly concerned with individual choices. That these women appear to draw upon aspects of traditional and ‘new’ or ‘post-feminism’ appear to be characteristic of postmodernity, and both ‘emancipatory’ and ‘life’ politics. The participants’ interpretation of feminism as a political collective, drew upon a modernist position, driven by the imperative of freeing human social life from pre-existing constraints, translating into a political position that was concerned with liberating groups and individuals from conditions that limit their opportunities; The right to opportunity and choice is a central feature of these women’s’ narratives and there are occasions where these women perceive gender inequality as a problem that affects individual life opportunities. Feminism, as an emancipatory discourse has its origins in modernity and a liberal notion which emphasises universal rights to equality. However, as social conditions have moved into post-modernity, as noted in chapter four, increasing differentiation renders the notion of universality problematic. The right to self-determination remains central, but prescribing in advance how to live or make choices becomes near impossible. Subsequently, these women espoused many of the values of a feminist movement, but were engaging also in what Giddens refers to as ‘life politics’. The means to self-actualization is a central issue for life politics (Giddens, 1991, p.288), and the decisions that one must confront in reflexively producing a narrative of self-identity. However, as a politics of lifestyle options, the goal of self-actualization and the rights of individualized choice assumes some level of emancipation from traditions and conditions of domination as already achieved. As
highlighted in earlier chapters, these women felt it empowering to believe they were liberated from historical constraints, and draw upon self-actualisation and individual choice. However, it seems important here to draw out some of the potentially negative implications of these identity constructions.

The forms of agency expressed within these narratives have some affinity with the humanist forms of agency being encouraged within the teacher-training context. The type of agency being encouraged, was in a form synonymous with being a ‘person’ (Davies, 2000) and interchangeable with freedom, rationality, autonomy and moral authority. Agency in this sense assumes an agonistic relationship between the self and other and between the self and society. Individuals are conceived as being in relation to something external to themselves called ‘society’ which acts forcefully upon them and against which they can pit themselves. This emerges from a liberal humanist masculinist (middle class) tradition (Benson, 1990) in which humanity is assumed to be intricately connected to agency, meaning the power to choose and make decisions in relation to one’s own life. That citizens often do not have the social and material conditions and resources to fulfil these desires, hardly detracts from the ideological strength of these hegemonic positions. This became a consistent feature of a number of discourses, and was achieved and experienced as natural features of a person, even though we might come to interpret this agentic notion of self as actually derived from the structure of discourses itself (cf. Butler, 1990). The rational aspect of the individual is assumed to be in control of this process, as Benson (1990) elaborates; the humanist idea of agency as rational control of oneself with the emotional non-rational being defined as non-self. He points out how problematic this is in so far as he claims it is essentially a masculinist and elitist definition. What is assumed, he points out, is that the choices this ‘rational self’ will make are those that are approved of by those who are squarely located in and powerfully positioned within the dominant discourses. What makes them masculinist and elitist is that these definitions of agency fail to acknowledge or recognise the normative interactive nature of agency. The ideals of democratic theory are clearly an influencing factor but contradict with the day-to-day practices of institutions, schools and culture. Indeed this discourse encourages women to maintain the coherence of contradictory identities. However, as has been illustrated, this is problematic and liable to destabilise when it is made up on many different fragments and personal experiences. To this end, this has been useful in revealing the
nature of individualism within which these women felt their moral responsibility and consequently remained critical of themselves and their actions, rather than the wider discourses through which they were subjected: their tendency was to attribute success and failure to individual effort rather than to systems which incorporate a discriminatory view of gender appropriateness and value.

This is not to suggest that the forms of feminism these women engaged with were complicit to a humanist form of agency within which they are simply oppressed. Rather, that these could be engaged in by themselves and others in complex and contradictory ways to uphold a number of gender inequalities. This is not to refute the possibilities that popular feminism might bring these women, indeed as Giddens (1991, p.207) suggests, self discovery does not necessarily equate to a celebration of individualism, but can signal a major transition within late modernity as a whole. As represented Figure 8.1, whilst this is a complex, contradictory and diverse process, some key dimensions and discourses drawn upon in these constructions have been identified.
As was suggested previously, these women appeared to lack the narrative resources through which to verify and feel comfortable with their alternative gendered identities and embodied dispositions. Whilst many are laying cross-gender foundations, they are uncomfortable that they are taking too great a ‘risk with their gender identities’ (Kenway, 1994) with some of the things they might say or do. Moreover, the context of teacher education does not provide sufficiently inclusive environments that recognise and legitimate these positions, and in some cases challenges these
innovations through the employment of oppressive gender dualisms. What are the possibilities therefore of opening up a further dimension through which to provide the means to explore and develop the narrative, embodied and experiential aspects of gender identities? What strategies can be developed within and through teacher education if we are to assist in this reflexive project?

8.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION: EDUCATIONAL THEORISING AND TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY

It has been shown that in these women’s lives, contradictory discourses do function simultaneously: but the question of feminist strategies in education demand we take a step further. The disruption of oppressive gender polarities, cultures and the discourses perpetuating them has for some time been identified as important, although ways in which this could be done remain far less clear. So, what can be said about the practical implications for educational theorising and the move towards more reflexive forms of ITT?

The complexity of difference and on-going change points firstly towards the need to move beyond a feminist discourse that focuses solely on ‘inequality’. My qualification is that teacher education and educational research need to embrace more explicitly and centrally a framework which assesses/considers further, the role of gender in the formation of a variety of teacher’s identities. That is, to move beyond the notion of a de-gendered, ‘disembedded’, and decontextualised notion of the [PE] teacher (Dillabough, 1999). Of course, this will not resolve all the problems and inequalities identified thus far, and those within this study. However, it does offer a feminist sociological response to the instrumental, rational conceptualisations of PE teacher endorsed in some of these teacher education contexts, moving towards a social and political analysis of the development of identities. The recognition of the dialectical nature of teachers identity construction, is a useful starting point from which to develop a number of intervention strategies.

Although the notion of challenging and deconstructing the gender dichotomy is not a new one, there is less said in suggesting practical ways in which to go about this. Indeed research evaluating which strategies and materials are effective in deconstructing oppositional constructions of gender at the level of teacher training and
schools is urgently needed and recommended as an area of future research. That said, the findings point to areas of consideration related to the *ontological* exclusion occurring within these context, these would seem to include:

1. Maintaining a culturally relevant feminist agenda relative to on-going understandings of current generation’s constructions of gender
2. The move towards a post-structuralist understanding of agency within physical education Initial Teacher Training
3. The promotion of the engagement with, and reflection of personal gender positioning
4. The need for support and intervention strategies within ITT to encourage experimentation and modification to gender identities (including both gendered narratives and embodied dispositions).

The approach advocated here is premised on the qualification that real change happens at the deep level of the subjective self (see Sparkes, 1990). I would add however, that the onus of change does not rest upon student teachers themselves. If we are to move towards ‘subjective dimensions of change’ (ibid) then this synthesis of intervention strategies must be approached holistically: they require professional support, and change at a number of different points, beginning perhaps at the outset of Higher Education courses and permeating all aspects of ITT’s structure, practice and policy, as shown in Figure 8.2:
8.4.1 Maintaining a culturally relevant feminist agenda

My first point is that if we are to move towards an ontological strategy of change within ITT then in practice this requires continually and systematically addressing how these women make sense of their worlds and the discourses available to them. As Oliver and Lalik (2000) demonstrate, a learner’s view of the world needs to be understood if it is to be informed (Oliver and Lalik, 2000). Traditional feminist accounts of inequality remain important overviews in any attempts at social change within education, potentially too functionalist, essentialist and universal to provide
significant empowerment at a personal subjective level. Moreover, the empirical findings would appear to reflect Sparkes’ (1996b) observation that individuals in post-modern society are subjected to the need for constant identity maintenance and change. As such, producing a feminist agenda within ITT that is taken as a permanent absolute ‘best practice’ seems detrimental if we are to continually engage student teachers with culturally relevant agendas: the complexity of positioning in a variety of feminist discourses alone pays testimony to this.

The traditional dichotomy of Feminine Vs Feminist would no longer appear to adequately capture the complexity of these women’s identities (McRobbie, 1993, p.409). Moreover, given the contradictory nature of these identities pitting old feminisms against new feminisms, and engaging in debates about which is a more appropriate representation of our current generations does not seem particularly relevant. Indeed for many, the engaging in both aspects was a source of empowerment and pleasure for these women. It seems more constructive to relinquish these categories, and instead accept these as areas of continual ongoing contestation and change.

This provides potential to address the problems of ‘difference’ and the difficulties faced in any notion of identity politics. The women in this study resisted gender inequality but without asserting some clear identification with a feminist identity. These emerging fluid constructions point towards new feminist identities with their own concerns related to post-modernity, but also with an affinity with traditional second wave feminisms (and indeed many of the women borrowed aspects of these more traditional emancipatory discourses). They may mention values associated with second wave feminism, but they are also eager to explore their own culture, to create a feminism that makes sense to themselves and their peers. These are all issues currently being debated following the rise of third wave feminism⁴. The complexities of what feminism is and who can be a feminist prompt a whole range of difficult questions; can one be conservative and a feminist? Can one buy pornography and be a feminist? How do we address the multiplicity of women’s reactions to gendered images; those that may feel oppressed by it, others revelling it, those women that contribute to or create them, and those that simply ignore it? Can a woman dress in a certain way and
still be a feminist? Whilst there is not scope to address these and similar questions here, they usefully illustrate the point that older caricatures may no longer be relative.

Whether or not we see these positions as incommensurable depends much upon our own theoretical position: I would agree with Hirsch and Keller (1990) that the continued goal for feminism here should be to learn to practice conflict constructively. Can we create a solidarity without putting pressure on women to behave in certain ways, but neither lose sight of our collective goals? Similarly, whether or not we see these identities as post-feminist rests largely upon our understanding of that discourse. Whatever our feminist agenda within education, it seems to remain important that ITT at least encourages an engagement with a critical interrogation of the limits of second wave feminism, and leaves open the goal of understanding the multiple ways in which student teachers might become ‘feminist’.

The points I am making relate to the need to remain cognisant to an ontological strategy which addresses how female students make sense of the world and what resources and meanings they have access to. This means interrogating what seemingly abstract terms such as ‘gender’ ‘equality’ ‘feminism’ actually mean to individuals as an on-going project. Peeling back these layers of meaning might provide further insight into the limitations or possibilities of a variety of feminist pedagogies in Physical Education and this is precisely why ‘gender identity’ is significant in the sociology of education.

What can be suggested at this point in time, following the exploration of the meanings applied by the women in this study? Whilst I can not make any generalisations about the identities of these women via-a-vis other student teachers of Physical Education, there are some points that are worth stating about the implications for how we might further consider the variations and processes of identity construction within teacher education. Firstly it seems important at this stage that we devise methods for addressing the gender dichotomy with student teachers, but without discounting the importance that traditional gender discourses hold for many of these individuals and their sense of identity. Secondly, attempts to convince students of the necessity of ‘emancipation’ may be counter productive, if they already consider themselves to be emancipated. For these women, the idea of the need for ‘emancipation’ carried with it
the ‘baggage’ of being positioned as ‘victim’ and threatened to rupture a lifelong narrative of self determination, of which they remained protective. Instead of presenting new story-lines, it seems imperative that we work with student teachers in deconstructing traditional narratives about gender and construct alternative ones that are compatible with the strengths of their own views of gender.

The challenge as I see it is to understand identity as neither a cloak that can be put on or taken off at will nor an iron cage in which the individual is trapped forever. We cannot therefore arrive at any finite certainties about these feminine subjectivities, identities or locations, nor can the trajectories of difference be subsumed under some generalized other. It is evident that boundaries of gender are fluid, and to this end we must continually seek to understand the issues of difference, and the discourses engaged in during the construction of these differing identity construction, at particular historical moments in time. Political struggles based on the universalisation of any particular difference (be it gender, social class, race) will always be tenuous as it relies on the effective silencing of diversity (inner diversity). While this may signal the end of striving for some fixed notion of liberation, it opens up a wider range of possibilities for coalition around more short-term goals (Flax, 1987). Such a social reformulation of social struggle offers a tangible praxis through which critical pedagogy might effectively operate.

This form of progressive politics would involve working through possibilities rather than consolidating gender dichotomies; perhaps working towards a theory of the female-embodied subject in a more relational manner, considering its positionality (Alcoff, 1988) and conflictual and emerging history. In focusing on the negotiation and coalition of differences, we need not see those subjects with particular differences as suffering from ‘false consciousness’ for example when they reject a feminist version of emancipation based on some universal notion of the category ‘woman’. This picture would be very different to the interpretation that failed attempts to encourage student teachers to find some shared descriptor of ‘gender’ as the failure of feminists or teacher educators, or that other descriptors such as social class might be more salient for particular women. Instead we might begin to interpret conflicting narratives of the self, as done so here, as the very articulation of diversity and difference. The idea that we cannot fix femininity, or ‘women’ as a group, provides a
further dilemma regarding the totalising effects of the use of the term women vis-à-vis its potential political and conceptual use, and subsequent points of consideration would seem to include: Where and how is it helpful to treat girls/women as a single unitary category? And where and how is it important to focus on differences among girls? (Yates, 1990, p.40.)

Whilst there are dangers in using terms like ‘women’ because of its totalising effects, it was suggested in earlier chapters that neither could we completely reject it. Indeed ‘women’ formed an important basis for the political and conceptual work that has developed through this thesis. There are occasions in the accounts of these women where the term women or girls was strategic in terms of what happened at staff meetings, or in vying for resources for girls’ opportunities. However, post-structural thinking reminds us that some essential, generic understanding of gender might further consolidate the discourses that deny the subjectivities of women from a variety of positions (of varying ethnicity, sexualities, socio-economic status). Continual work is needed which studies the gendered diverse experiences of differently positioned women over time, in relation to the ‘gender regimes’ and hierarchies (Connell, 1985, 1990) of socio-educational contexts.

8.4.2 Towards critical post-structuralist agendas

As a feminist I don’t fear that post-structuralism necessarily results in a lack of intentionality or agency. On the contrary I believe that it offers possibilities for reconceiving the subject, resistance and agency in more complex and powerful ways. (Munro, 1998, p.29)

In reifying and extending this reflexive approach, it seems necessary to develop a feminist form of theorizing about teacher identity that cuts across crude gendered distinctions, thereby providing a theoretical basis for assessing the complex ways in which teacher identities are formed through everyday practices. Consequently, I want to explore here the possibility of a re-vision of pedagogical relations that considers gender as an integral aspect, influenced by structural discourse and embodied subjects.

The first aspect of this concerns complex and contradictory ways in which these women construct themselves as subjects, while simultaneously disrupting the notion...
of a unitary subject. These insights provide new ways to think about subjectivity, resistance, power and agency within teaching Physical Education. Although a liberation narrative for social change disrupts the traditional notion of teacher’s compliance with dominant gender expectations for entering teaching, this counter-narrative can also simultaneously function to reproduce a masculinist narrative of independence and autonomy: i.e. the individuals change (women entering male orthodoxies), but the plot remains deeply gendered as ‘male’. Grounded in enlightenment notions of ‘change’, the ‘individual’ and ‘progression’, these women were at times reproducing the notion of the individual as autonomous and change as linear and public. The very discourses that they were drawing upon therefore functioned to exclude their own experiences through its limited definition of change and resistance. Most of the women made reference to not being able to offer practical resistance to sexist traditions during their teacher training, be this through their pedagogy, standing up for themselves, or even teaching a broad range of subjects. However, to interpret this as a lack of resistance by these women to sexist practice, would be to reproduce the masculinist narrative of the autonomous individual and in effect, reproduce the very modes of oppression of which I am critical.

Herein lies the key dilemma: what becomes of resistance and its corollary agency when there is no universal subject; an issue already debated amongst feminists (Bartky, 1990; Sawicki, 1991; Hekman, 1995; Munro, 1996). My position here is not that there is no subject, but rather a leaning towards further interrogating the understanding of ‘subject’ and its relationship with femininity and agency.

For feminists, resistance is a slippery construct in which we grapple with the need to claim a position as a subject, resisting our erasure, while recognising that the very appropriation of subjecthood reifies the category of subject that has been essential to patriarchy (Gilmore, 1994; Jacobs et al, 1995.) (Munro, 1998, p.30).

Upon initially hearing their stories of rejection of feminism, and the discourses within which they were positioning themselves, it is sometimes difficult to gain a sense of ‘resistance’. However, the focus on their narratives was not merely about what they could or did achieve in these practice institutions. Rather, it was to focus on how and why they tell their stories, and what they tell, all of which became significant in understanding narrative forms of resistance. I did not hear tales of revolution, of their
radical changes in the teaching of Physical Education. Their narratives however, still embodied their vision, and in acts of naming, the agency they had for telling, constructing and shaping their lives was revealed.

Teacher education should therefore look to encourage student teachers to gain a sense of oneself as one who can go beyond the given meaning in any one discourse and forge something new. This could entail combining previously unrelated discourses, the invention of words and concepts that capture a shift in consciousness that is beginning to occur, or through imagining not what is, but what might be. In this sense, their subjectivity is a dynamic process, and as such at times rewrites ‘resistance’.

The forms of resistance evident in these stories were often unconsciously implemented. These more subtle forms applied especially to the ways in which they constructed notions of the self in spite of dominant assumptions within the teaching practice institutions (and beyond) about women as ‘passive’, ‘powerless’ or ‘incapable’. In this sense resistance was being enacted through narrative strategies, often tacitly. The situated and often contradictory nature of gender relations speaks to the various ways in which these women experience their gendered selves across time and space. They engaged in various narrative strategies that suggest complex forms of resistance and complicity. These involved deferral, actively defining themselves as agents of change (through the narrative of agency), complicity to gender differences, and the active negotiation of new gender positions.

The simultaneous appropriation and rejection of a number of discourses (discourses of gender difference, equality, and various professional discourses) functioned not only to displace gender norms but to also keep in flux the effects of traditional dominant discourses so as to displace them (Munroe, 1998). Whilst at times they invoked gender dualisms, in keeping their subject positions in flux and moving back and fourth into the margins, naming and re-naming, they were at times active in subverting and decentralizing dominant relationships. Foucault (1987) emphasises ‘occasions’ for conducting ourselves as particular kind of subjects. In other words, the ways in which these women conducted and related to themselves is tied both to the situationally specific constraints in which they find themselves and the historically specificity of
particular technologies of the self in which the imperatives to relate to oneself as a particular kind of person are formed.

[...] the way in which a subject constitutes himself [sic] in an active fashion, by the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in this culture and which are proposed and suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social (Foucault, 1987, p.122).

Thus the production of subjectivity is not free in the absolute sense of inventing new subjectivity of one’s own accord, even though the individual may take an active role in engaging in self-fashioning practices. Often their intellectual aims of equal opportunities and visions of practice were not actualised once in these teacher education settings, and their self-perceptions of themselves as people who can create change, as reform minded women are not enacted or affirmed. Despite this, they cling to the same narratives throughout their training, in which they position themselves as a unified self in some discourse of individualism. Their adherence to these storylines might itself be taken as a form of resistance in which through their narratives, they continue to position themselves as they choose. Resistance therefore emerges as neither static nor in all instances monolithic, but something deployed at various times and locations. Moreover, these insights also provide compelling evidence of the potential for intervention strategies that might work at that very level of narrativity. I would suggest however that we must implement these strategies cautiously and not romanticise about either their potential for change or the likelihood that student teachers and the teaching/educational community will adopt them. Indeed for many of these women, they remain framed within a humanist discourse in which ‘action spoke louder that words’, and such narrative resistance did not find any serious place with these student teachers, at least not in this time and space. I reiterate, this is perhaps indicative of current understandings of agency, power and resistance, where such alternative forms of resistance have traditionally been ignored where resistance is understood as public (read, male). Time, literally, will tell, as they progress from novice to accomplished teachers, what will become of such agency.

8.4.3 Beyond Assimilationist views of Inclusion

That these women did not see such strategies as resistance, points to the need for teacher education to forward a form of agency not as freedom from the discursive
constitution of the self, but the capacity to recognize that constitution and to begin, if they so wish, to resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted. Agency emerges here not solely as a phenomenon that is simply concerned with the exercise of freedom in the struggle for political status of change within education, but as itself a bounded and gendered construct existing in relation to other social structures and human relations. The data suggested that the liberal democratic discourses within these teacher education contexts, combined with the micro-politics of everyday practice, worked to sustain an assimilationist view of ‘inclusion’ that does not, and perhaps cannot, recognise the value and legitimacy of diversity and difference (see also Rich, 2001). I wish to reiterate here that in no way am I suggesting that any of these discourses are solely responsible for the gender inequalities reported. However, wider discourses on teacher professionalism and the modern teacher appeared to support, inform and legitimise some of the gender inequalities that took place during the micro-politics of everyday teaching practice experiences. Agency in this sense is spoken into existence remaining a fragmented, transitory, discursive position. In other words, within current ways of thinking, as a humanist construct, agency was a readily attainable position for some, and near inaccessible for others. The discursive production of oneself or another as an agent requires the appropriate storyline, and for women caught up in traditional roles, it also requires the availability of discursive practices that allow them to be seen as other than that fixed role. As Schick (2000) contends ‘the norm of teacher is accomplished by a set of practices and discourses marked by identities within race, gender, class, sexual orientation’ (p 301). Whilst this is not to suggest that there is a coherent, homogenous subject identity who can stand as the universal teacher, the data illuminate how the social category of white, middle class male, has been organized so that it seems natural, taken for granted and useful in the performance of ‘teacher identity’.

Critical post-structuralist perspectives are therefore a key point of departure in disengaging the concept of agency from this humanist version within teacher education. The move away from the traditional concepts of dis-embedded, instrumental, rational self, towards a pro-feminist conceptualization of teachers identities as un-essentialised and shifting in response to varying contexts (Tsolidis, 1996) would assist this project. Furthermore, as Dillabough (1999) suggests this avoids the trap of equating difference with marginality and allows for an
understanding of teaching as an act of social mediation and reflection in which difference sits at the centre of an identity rather than lurking on the margins. As a consequence, this begins to challenge the binary conceptions upon which much inequality is built, and further assist in deconstructing the normative masculine subject which is valorised and against which others are measured. Dillabough's (1999) account is instructive here, drawing attention to the need for educational researchers (and policy makers I suggest) to consider women (and male) teachers political identity not as a 'rational' entity but as

a complex subjective and multi-faceted phenomenon which is embedded in the tension between the desire for political agency and the necessity for mutual recognition (see Benhabib, 1997; Weir, 1997) in diverse and social contexts (Dillabough, 1999, p.388)

The need to understand teachers as people in a holistic sense ‘people who have a past, present and aspirations for the future’ (Sparkes, 1993, p.118) is integral to this approach. As is the acknowledgement that teachers are political (Ginsburg et al., 1995), not apolitical, detached, pivotal reform agents in the educational market place. Sparkes et al (1990) argue for teacher education programmes to make explicit the micro-political nature of teaching. Reinforcing such critical post-structuralist perspectives in Teacher Education remains an ambitious but essential project if we are to move towards ‘inclusive’ and ‘equitable’ agendas.

This would ultimately entail positioning these student teachers as bounded individuals with some degree of political agency. This view stands against the now dominant view of the ‘disembedded’ professional as an ‘object of knowledge, or as a passive and de-professionalized object or discourse (the ‘professional’) whose identity is merely reconstituted through neo-liberal political forces’ (Dillabough, 1999, p.387). In this, we can begin to ‘view teachers as political agents who reveal and act upon their differences through a shared and meaningful process of critical reflection’ (p. 388). To this end, these women’s political identities were not some rational entity, but complex, subjective and multi-faceted in the nexus of tension between the desire for political agency (the desire for equal opportunities, to change something in Physical Education) and the necessity for recognition and acceptance in particular social contexts such as their teaching practice institutions. Further research is needed here, focusing on the

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ways in which others, as student teachers, and teachers, reconcile the multiple and
often contradictory and conflicting gender identities in the struggle to engage in
politically motivated educational practice.

8.4.4 Reflexive Gender Identities: Reflecting upon the taking and assigning of
gender positions

The work of Davies (1989,1993) and other educationalists (eg Salisbury and Jackson,
1996; Wing, 1997; Yeoman, 1999) demonstrates the possibility of getting young
people to think critically about constructions of gender in the classroom and wider
society. Yeoman (1999) found that exposure of pupils to ‘disruptive’, non-traditional
texts and critical reading activities can help to challenge dominant gender discourses
and to open up alternatives. Increasing the women’s awareness of the discursive
constitution of the self as contradictory (including claiming the ‘irrational’ elements of
our being rather than disowning these aspects of one’s subjectivity), is one step
towards accessing other ways of knowing and to powerful ways of being that are not
the result of normative judgement from within the dominant discourses made by those
positioned as ‘agentic’ within them. It seems a subtle balance for Teacher educators
could therefore be to encourage student teachers to understand the discursive
constitution of individuals and that they are authors of their own multiple meanings,
identities and desires, to the extent that they take on up as their own, particular
discourses. Davies (2000) underlies this point by making the case being an individual
involves both the appropriation of the words of the collectives of which one is a
member, and the collective appropriates the individual at the moment the individual
speaks (Davies, p.61). A dual sense of appropriation (Henriques et al, 1984) takes
place where the women

use subjectivity to refer to individuality and self awareness- the
conditions of being subject- but understanding in this usage that subjects
are dynamic and multiple always positioned in relation to particular
discourses and practices and produced by these- conditions of being
subject.

‘Agency’ within this perspective thus becomes the freedom to recognize multiple
meanings leading to the understanding that no discursive practice, or positioning
within it by powerful others, can capture and control one’s identity. Theory might thus
serve as a resource for understanding and guiding change, and assist in unlocking the
inevitability of their positioning, whilst being aware of the enormity of the constitutive power of the discursive practices through which their selves are constituted. Student teachers might then begin to recognise themselves as discursively constituted and at the same time, push the boundaries of their own subjection. As Davies (2000) suggests ‘one explores the limits of subjectivity in order to find the ways of moving beyond those limits’ (p.9)

For the individual, freedom from normalizing forms of individuality consists in an exploration of the limits of subjectivity. By interrogating what are held to be necessary boundaries to identity or the limits of subjectivity, the possibility of transgressing these boundaries is established and, therefore, the potential of creating new types of subjective experience is opened up (McNay, 1994, pp., 145-146).

Emphasising the discursive constitution of a particular individual as having presence (rather than absence), and as having access to a subject position in which they have the right to speak and be heard, would be a central feature of this process. Agency therefore becomes intricately related to an authorship, in the sense of taking up particular ways of speaking, being and writing that disrupt current discourses, invent new, and break old connections. In understanding the discursive construction of oneself, these women could then begin to move beyond those aspects of rationality that controls, dominates, and negates feeling or emotion. Recognising themselves as gendered beings drawn into the historical process of gender construction, is one of the many possibilities open to them in the process of re-embodiment.

Also women themselves might not easily shed the patterns of neither desire nor the interpretive frameworks that they have taken up as their own as participants in the everyday world. I would agree with Francis (2000), that teaching people post-structuralist theory does not mean that they will want to deconstruct the gender dichotomy in which all of us have much of our sense of identity invested. As chapter six revealed, it is also imperative that we bear in mind the importance of traditional gender discourses for others and their own sense of identity (see also Francis, 1998). As such, relinquishing biologically grounded conceptions of gender in favour of more developed conceptual understandings of gender as a social construction, legitimated through the status quo of gender power relations in society in the form of gender order, is no easy task for these women. Chapter six illustrated how a successful
construction of gender can ensure that their peers saw these women as ‘normal’. Successful gender constructions rested on an assumption of behavioural dichotomy between girls and boys, women and men, and where they adopted non-traditional positions this potentially ruptured the security of traditional gender constructions of others. That successful gender constructions rest on an assumption of non-traditional positions potentially disrupts the security of a gender order for others around them. This danger was seen to be the motivation for the ‘gender role maintenance’ that many of these women were and continued to be subject to, whereby others around them policed gender constructions through peer acceptance or rejection (Davies, 1989). Many of the women alluded to the danger and consequences of being relegated to ‘gender margins’ and ridiculed or ostracised by peers when taking up non-traditional positions, supporting the findings of Davies (1989b, 1993) and Francis (1998). As such some identities appeared as unavailable subjectivities (Walkerdine, 1988) due to the specificity of the situation, and some boundaries and borders of gender identity are constructed, regulated and controlled.

Immersion in dominant gender discourses is apparent in the fact that many of us view particular expressions of masculinity and femininity in boys and girls/men and women, not only natural but also appealing. We need to encourage student teachers as encompassing in our beings both sides of any dualisms, thus dismantling the dualisms themselves. It is therefore imperative that student teachers are not given the impression that deconstructing current gender constructions is about role reversal. As Davies (1993) has pointed out it is important that we ensure that these practices of reflexivity are not merely reconfigured into an alternative binary oppositional gendered framework in which asymmetrical power relations between men and women stay in tact. This is not only a limiting premise, but in itself might create gender backlash (Faludi, 1991). It should be stressed that gender deconstruction would enable both sexes to experiment with more identity positions than is currently the case.

8.4.5 Experimenting with embodied identities

However, the research has also highlighted that there was some sense of materiality, embodiment and feeling that goes beyond some conscious reflection of ones positioning in discourse. The effect of being positioned differently within new
discourses can bring about observable dramatic personal changes, but there can also be deep resistance to such changes. I understand identity to be contingent and founded dialectically and relationally. In this study it is relational to the context of physical education, and thus partly formed and created in response to a particular set of corporeal circumstances. Since the body learns to interact in certain ways, then these ways may need more than access to new discursive practice to change them. If, as we have learned through feminism, the story of domination begins and ends with the body (hooks, 1989; Frank, 1991), we might be left wondering, following these women’s stories, where in their experiences they are having the opportunities to raise much less address, issues that they connect with the body? Therefore, embodied dimensions of the self need to be addressed, to aid the interpretation and application of sociological insights by individuals. There have been a number of calls from educators and researchers in Physical Education towards offering adolescents opportunities to explore their own experiences of their bodies and critique the body in popular culture (Armour, 1999; Kirk and Tinning, 1994; Kirk and MacDonald, 1998; Oliver, 1999; Oliver and Lalik, 2000; Tinning and Fitzclarence 1992; Vertinsky, 1992, Kirk & Claxton, 2000; Gard and Meyenn 2000). I see no reason why this agenda should extend to include student teachers of Physical Education. Wright (2000) proposes that Physical Educators need to look to forms of movement other than sport to find alternative perspectives on the body. There was evidence in this research to suggest that some female PE teachers are bringing with them a broader range of embodied experiences to draw upon. Ironically however, these experiences were often judged within a discourse of traditional gender difference leaving stark fragmentations about the validity of one’s embodied dispositions. Moreover, the context of teacher training remained gendered in despite some of the possibilities of interpreting the National Curriculum for PE differently in terms of what ‘activities’ might be important to have expertise in and experience of (Penney, 2000). That is, many of these women brought with them alternative dispositions to their teaching, but the expression of these dispositions was at times for some, a process fraught with difficulty. As such, much professional support will be required if student teachers are to be prompted into engaging and expressing alternative embodied dispositions. Moreover, it is incumbent that teacher educators might begin to engage in similar practices or alternative embodied dispositions in order to provide supportive and comfortable environments.
8.4.6 Professional support within reflexive forms of ITT

Access to new discourses however does not undo or overrule ‘the other’ as we supposed it would under the principles of logocentric thought. Whilst these women may find new ways of presenting their identities, other might still constitute them in terms of a humanist discourse; a holistic approach therefore seems necessary. Work by Wing (1997) and Yeoman (1999) has shown that deconstruction in the classroom implicates the teachers’ roles as crucial, and it would seem that similarly, in the context of teacher education, much professional support would be needed from teacher educators. Whilst this thesis collected the narratives of women, as a feminist I believe that the data and analyses that were generated, are of importance for both men and women, boys and girls, by potentially allowing them to take up more flexible subject positions than is currently the case, and thus circumventing the more repressive aspects of traditional gender positions. In attempting to challenge dominant gender constructions, the ‘objective’ stance of teacher educators and mentors, which was highlighted in chapter seven will be inadequate. Much professional support is needed and student teachers will require more than a few token gestures to set them thinking about these issues seriously. It will involve them reflecting upon their own biographies and gendered positions. Indeed Smeal et al (1994) point to the ‘enormity of the task and the gulf that exists between feminists theoretical interventions and the cutting edge of feminist praxis’ (p.42). Since student teachers will have much invested in the maintenance of gender difference, it will therefore require a pro-equity approach to encourage them to begin to question their assumptions.

Moreover, I would suggest that in both epistemological and pedagogical terms, this reflexive process could not be sufficiently addressed through ring-fenced approaches (for example seminars or gender equity focused modules). Rather, this approach should be an integral part of the teacher education curriculum. It can for example emerge as a theme of citizenship, particularly given the intricate relationship with agency that has been highlighted in this thesis. Again, this will require much professional support and is as much about the silences within these training contexts, as it is about what is being voiced. In her work on anti-racist strategies, Epstein (1993) has shown that if a teacher allows racist or sexist comments to go unchallenged in discussion it can have the effect of legitimising these remarks. She also maintains that pupils will see a teacher’s supposed neutrality as a fallacy. Epstein suggests an
approach whereby the teacher explains his/her standpoint at the beginning of the discussion, encouraging pupils to share their views and explaining that there are no right or wrong answers.

That we find particular expressions of masculinity in boys and men and femininity in girls and women ‘natural’ or appealing, highlights our own immersion in dominant gender discourses. For teacher educators to acknowledge this would be a key starting point— they can then begin to understand the strength of the forces we are attempting to challenge in deconstructing gender constructions and the risks involved for student teachers when engaging in these often original ideas and concepts. This might require a further exploration on how the social works on the body, and how the body works in and on nature. Where sexist comments are made, these are then discussed and questioned. As emerged in these narratives, these women have much invested in the maintenance of gender difference, and thus supporting these women to reflect upon their gendered positioning will require a pro-equity approach in teacher education. Furthermore, it means that these women will require an alternative discourse with which to replace the construction of gender polarity (Francis, 1998).

8.5 PRACTICAL METHODS OF INTERVENTION: LIFE HISTORIES, JOURNALS, AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

We are products of our time in ways we don’t realise until we look back (Hall, 1996, p7)

Pedagogues who wish to contribute towards more critical reflexive forms of ITT cannot afford to ignore the biographical experiences that student teachers bring with them into PE ITT programmes if we are to move beyond the rhetoric of reform and relate courses to them in meaningful ways. For the women in this study, identity resources in the form of key experiences, discourses and embodied practices and dispositions, play a key part in valorising, positioning and thereby reproducing certain forms of femininity (and therefore, relationally, masculinities) in their PE classes. In encouraging women (and men I would suggest, although they were not the focus of this particular study) to focus upon their narratives, teachers will begin to examine the consequences of their practices and those of the school as contributing to the social construction of gender. As Giddens (1991) argues, motivations for our actions often
lie beneath reasons and are often, partly, unconscious to the individual. To this end, I would agree with Sparkes (1999) that life history work, which promotes critical reflection, has much to offer in these contexts. Reflecting over our own narratives might be the medium through which we interrupt or transform hegemonic links between biography and practice. As Davies and Banks (1992) comment:

Individuals who understand the process through which they are made subject are better positioned to resist the particular forms of subjectivity rather than cling to them through a mistaken belief that they are their own, that they signal who they are. (Davies and Banks, 1992, p.4).

These methods offer a useful antidote to the more traditional feminist approaches to gender relations that position women and girls as disadvantaged and passive- instead, constituted by social order and yet active subjects that can work against it. Through the reading of their own or another’s narrative, it is an invitation to listen for the disjunctions, inter-discursive gaps, and to address those constraints on women’s stories regarding, for example, achievement or equality. Such inter-discursive gaps might constrain women’s stories about achievement or equality. Inconsistencies and contradictions underpinning particular story lines therefore become useful in problematising what appears as normal and given, and for encouraging a situated awareness of one’s gender. Through the recounting and reflection of life stories, individuals are involved in the claiming of identities: as individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives they engage in a dynamic process of claiming identities, selves and constructing lives (Sparkes, 1999).

These lived understandings of gender are micro-political, serving not only as an identity resource, but a potential avenue for change, as we begin to consider the types of alternative discursive, embodied or practical experiences we would need to challenge the secular legitimacy of gender inequality. The telling of stories participants assumes some individuality; the production of difference. However, through telling their stories and listening to others, individuals might begin to recognise the ways in which these stories are also cultural productions intersecting and overlapping with others stories. In examining the ways in which they have taken up discourses as their own, this encourages engender a more detailed recollection of their own stories. When other’s stories are opposite, one can begin to recognise the
contradiction in their own stories, thus not simple linear explanations of 'truth' but as complex lived experiences. The argument that teacher education should be concerned with questions of equity and justice, developed through strategies which stimulate critical reflection, has been advanced with some vigour (Smyth, 1989). There are a number of methods through which we can encourage students to engage in these reflexive processes, and these might include the following:
Figure 8.3 Methods for developing a situated awareness of gender within Teacher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Purpose/Benefits</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal Writing</td>
<td>Student teachers keep a journal in which they reflect upon the knowledge’s and experiences of teacher training. They are then encouraged to make connections by positioning themselves relative to these experiences.</td>
<td>As Emig (1977) and Fulwiler (1980) argued, journaling is tentative, exploratory, and allows students to think around the edges of issues. Through this medium, student teachers can confront confusion, as well as articulate points of relative certainty. A useful way through which to connect the abstract with the everyday/experience. The use of students' metaphors of teaching as a basis for reflecting upon their underpinning assumptions, and how these can inform solutions to teaching dilemmas, has also been advocated (Bullough, 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept Mapping</td>
<td>Student teachers must establish connections between bits of given information, in a visible medium. This might also be extended to relating concepts with experiences (of self and others) to help make sense of these.</td>
<td>Concept mapping can stimulate students to demonstrate relationships among concepts, and perhaps could include their own experiences. Can demonstrate relationships between old and new identities and exposure to tools/theories of deconstruction within the students’ own narratives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life histories/Autobiographical work</td>
<td>Narratives and biographies, as well as reflective essays focusing upon student teachers own experiences as students (Gore &amp; Zeichner, 1991; Wellington, 1991; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Ross, 1989).</td>
<td>Student teachers can search for critical incidents, and begin to unpack their own social positioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Representations of life experience</td>
<td>Video diaries, photographs, songs, poems, collages, artwork could all serve as powerful additions to textual representations of life experiences</td>
<td>Dimensions of embodiment, emotion and sensory experience may be difficult to express through standard texts/writing. These mediums provide potential for alternative representations and expressions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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There is also scope for some collective sharing of these methods wherein student teachers share journal entries, creative pieces, or biographies with one another. This might take place through classroom discussion or electronically (e.g. a discussion...
forum) by facilitating greater access to each other’s writing. The electronic medium fosters greater dialogue, which in turn helps students to suspend premature closure and to rethink or re-explore certain concepts. This suggests that the medium (and the degree to which it fosters social interaction) is possibly as significant as the learning tool. While the above strategies all have the potential to encourage reflection, we need more research on the successes of each of these approaches, to demonstrate that particular kinds of reflecting are taking place, (Smith & Hatton, 1992; 1993). Further, there is a need for longitudinal studies that follow students into their first years of teaching, again to assess the ways in which reflective approaches are being retained, developed or lost.

Such narrative interventions provide opportunity for considerable advances in raising awareness about the social significance of our gendered selves in teaching (Jackson, 1990). They might also provide the medium through which to think about taking alternative courses of action. These methods need to be implemented cautiously, since we must take care to ensure that such forms of self-reflexivity are not premised on the idea of making connections with realism and issues of authenticity: privileging experiences as a transparent window to some ‘real’ culture. Ormer (1992) draws some caution to the ideologies underlying such intervention. She contends that ‘student voice’ as it has been conceptualised in work which claims to empower students, is an oppressive construct. One, which she argues, perpetuates relations of domination in the name of liberation. A rethinking of ‘emancipatory’ discourses is needed- since calls for ‘authentic student voice’ contain realist and essentialist epistemological positions regarding subjectivity. Similarly Gore (1992) identifies a number of issues with ‘empowerment’ – an overly optimistic view of agency, a tendency to overlook context, an overly simplistic conception of power as property, the theoretical pronouncement of discourses as liberatory, and a lack of reflexivity. Moreover, we must be cautious to not assume unrealistic expectations of what these things might achieve in practice. What of the contradictory patriarchal structures and discourses? Or the Sexual politics that structure the classroom (Lewis and Simon, 1986) within which we may be asking young female student teachers to reveal their personal life histories to older male (or perhaps female) academics? Democratising the ITT classroom, encouraging marginal groups to make public what is private might not alter the gendered structural divisions and institutional inequality these women
experience; keeping their feminist politics in check, re-aligning themselves to ‘professional pedagogies’ etc within a patriarchal system that is writing their positions and possibilities for them. A language of critique might well help female (student) teachers of PE understand the process of masculine and feminine positioning. To capitalize on these methods however, we need more inquiry about these attempts within particular sites and discourses shifting from issues of power and subordination to issues of multiplicity and contradiction. Moreover, these approaches will need applying to male student teachers since re-constituting women’s thinking whilst leaving untouched men’s is a bit limited and not very relational.

Calls for students to speak in the name of their own ‘liberation’ and ‘empowerment’ must therefore be continually scrutinized. Teacher educators concerned with changing the unequal power relations must continually examine their own assumptions about their positions, those of their student teachers, and the meanings and uses of ‘student voice’, power to call for students to speak, and the often unexamined power to legitimate and perpetuate unjust relations in the name of student empowerment. Creating spaces to support resistance remains an important pedagogical project. We need to avoid the propensity to impose all our views on these student teachers, and thereby replace existing oppressions with yet another oppressive process that denies them the opportunities to develop their own agency (Macedo, 1994). By itself, instructing how to think, speak, what to believe, how to act, how to resist oppression is insufficient means for developing reflexivity. Assisting these women in developing what Maxine Green (1988) refers to as the dialectic of freedom, might be more beneficial. That is by helping them to notice political, social and cultural obstacles in their lives, imagine alternative possibilities and work together to create those possibilities.

I don’t wish to sound idealist about what we might achieve here. One of the difficulties for those teacher educators who wish to support resistance in women’s lives is learning to locate that resistance. Often the resistance that appeared in the conversations with these women appeared in subtle and perhaps poorly elaborated ways. Much of the resistance was enmeshed within oppressive conversations. Teacher educators confronting these issues often do not have time to examine in detail gender theory, nor do they have time to devise their own ways in which to apply such theory...
in their classroom practice. Moreover, teachers are only human and, although it is part of their job to avoid favouring some pupils at the expense of others, it is inevitable that their values will largely reflect those dominant in society when it comes to deciding what is attractive or appealing (Francis, 2000).

8.6 REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE HISTORY METHOD
As well as proving to be a powerful tool for reflection, the life history has emerged here as a research method through which to gain access to lived experience within socio-educational contexts, and its wider connections. There is certainly a need to develop lengthy longitudinal studies, and in particular address what happens to the reconstruction of the gendered self and social identities as student teachers move into full time fully qualified status.

My use of discourse analysis and positioning theory has alluded to the complex challenge of approaching empirical interpretative research within education informed by tenets of post-structuralism whilst trying to retain some emancipatory position. This was particularly challenging since the life history has previously been positioned and used as a humanist, and modernist research method. This has contributed to challenging the humanist notion that ‘identity’ has tidy individual boundaries and that a life history can be told without reference to ‘other’. One of the most challenging aspects of this work was making interpretations on silence, absence and othering, and remains a key concern for the future of the life history as a method.

The life history method has, in these contexts, generated ‘sensitising concepts’ and contributed to the development of conceptual frameworks and theory building. These stories provided great insight into the social contexts within which they were produced. The counter narratives produced by these women, accorded to the suggestions of the Personal Narratives Group [PNG] that

Women’s personal narratives can thus often reveal the rules of male domination even as they record rebellion against them’ Many women’s personal narratives unfold within the framework of an apparent acceptance of social norms and expectations but nevertheless describe strategies and activities that challenge those same norms’ (PNG, 1989, p.7)
In a post-positivist and post-modern society, old research orthodoxies are contested terms, and the door is ajar for new interpretations based on the criterion from the disciplines of literary and the arts assisting in the creation of ‘stories that enrich our imaginations, help us to see wider and further’ (Plummer, 1995, p.171). Further research is needed which critically engages in how we might analyse or judge (if we ever can) narratives, and alternative representations of life histories. Alternative representations can convey experience in powerful ways perhaps not possible through the ‘realist’ narrative. Post-modernity is a condition which suggests the need to go beyond single dominant narratives into other modes of writing, for example collage and montage, given that no one narrative, such as the narrative of progression, can account for the diversity and multiplicity of human experiences. Collage or montage are possible means of writing biography differently, in a decentred way, by a decentring of self and time. There is certainly scope for moving the boundaries of literary convention with the social study of gender and Sport and Physical Education. For example, I could have written myself into the data as another participant, thereby including my own life history within the research. Moreover, I have alluded to the aspect of embodiment, emotion and sensory experience as central features of these women’s experiences. Expressing these positions are difficult, and points towards the need for alternative mediums through which to represent participants’ ontology. It is only recently that alternative forms of media have been utilised to enrich life history work. Within the subject of Physical Education, where the body is central, there is great scope to explore the integration of other types of representation and analysis which involve images and sounds forming a ‘visual ethnography’ (Pink, 2001). Video diaries, photographs, songs, poems, collages, artwork could all serve as powerful additions to the textual representations of ontologies. Moreover, whilst there was not scope in this particular study, it would seem beneficial in the future to interview the influential figures in the life histories of student teachers. No matter how much data is collected in future studies, it is recognized that the analysis of literary and other productions and interviews only touches a small part of student teachers’ complex subjectivities and identity constellations, and requires inferences on the part of the researchers. Like the narrative of this research, I suspect that future research is less conducive to producing well-supported answers than it is to eliciting thoughtful questions. As far as the women in the study are concerned, I believe this research made a modest contribution to raising their awareness about the complexity of gender.
issues, but it does at least highlight the potential of the life history as both a research and pedagogical strategy.

8.7 A CONCLUDING REMARK

It terms of a textual representation, it is time to bring this narrative to an end. As a story, this is a premature closing, as there remains much more that could be said about the narratives of these women and the implications alluded to. However, as a text, it remains necessarily open to interpretation by the reader, and its finite consequences and direction, unfinished. The personal experiences of others have meshed with, and been mediated by, my own interpretations. Moreover, those interpretations, and the subsequent articulations in a text, have been influenced by a number of key writers and theorists. There are no finite absolute resolutions here, only a number of key messages about how we might begin to think about the complexities of gender, experience, identity and social reproduction within the contemporary educational landscape.

1 Not everyone within the teacher education context drew upon this concept, nor was it all embracing, absolute or employed in all social settings. However, it seemed important to highlight the consequences of this discourse since, as the empirical work suggests, it was realised in an institutional form of micro-politics through potentially oppressive strategies, practices and relationships. I wish to reiterate here that in no way am I suggesting that any one discourse is solely responsible for the gender inequalities reported.

2 Indeed Luke (1992) suggests that female citizenship is not equivalent to the concept of citizenship in liberal discourse, but it is this discourse within which these women are positioned and make sense of themselves.

3 The meaning of post-feminism continues to be debated. Some writers suggest that post-feminism is actually a form of anti-feminism (Such as Susan Faludi (1992) and Marilyn French (1992)). More recent work by feminists such as Naomi Wolf (1990; 1993) and Katie Roiphe (1994) have been critiqued for constructing post-feminist positions and encouraging a 'backlash' position. Such work is seen to be fundamentally flawed, but also as contributing towards a hostile climate for feminism, and creating the wrong impression that gender inequality has been eradicated. A further concern being that women will pursue individual freedoms at the expense of a collective female identity, with problems constructed as individual and not collective ones. The response to this from a number of other feminists has been to suggest that older feminisms are no longer appropriate and remain to prescriptive in the complex conditions of post-modernity. Brooks (1997) for example argues that post-feminism is not anti-feminism but an expression of a stage in the constant evolutionary nature of the feminist movement. Furthermore, others suggest that as a conceptual framework, it encompasses the intersection of feminism with a number of other anti-universalistic movements such as postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism. Thus, it has been argued that the central focus of postfeminism is to engage in critical interrogation of the foundations of feminism. Furthermore, those engaging in this discourse suggest that the term 'post' is not mean to signal the end or the overcoming of oppressive relations, but rather the semblance of a an ongoing process of transformation in the feminist movement. Janice Winship has defined post-feminism as a popularized, de-politicized, common-sense version of feminism (Winship, 1985, p.37; 1987, p.149).
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4 See Faludi, 1991; Kamen, 1991; Hodgeland, 1994; Findlen, 1995; Walker, 1995; Trioloi, 1996; Heywood and Drake, 1997; Else-Mitchell and Flutter 1998; Whelehan, 2000; Budgeon, 2001; Bulbeck, 2001; Harris, 2001; Long, 2001. 5 From a post-structural position, knowledge is always provisional, open ended, and relational, and I would not want to adopt some preferential pedagogical position, to do so would inevitably lead to 'closure'. We cannot claim 'single strategies for pedagogies of empowerment, emancipation and liberation' (Luke and Gore, 1992, p.7). Rather, the findings in this thesis, I hope, will contribute to an on-going debate, one which will expose the gendered manifestations of 'liberal complacency' (Luke and Gore, 1992, p.8). The challenges and forms of interventions which are generated, can only be provisional, due to the historical specificity within which the form of feminism underlying these trajectories. This does not mean that we should do nothing, and indeed this research does have implications for classroom activity. But no simple interventions will solve the forms of gender inequality evident in this study, overnight, since we are talking about a political and social struggle. Interventions are part of that struggle, but we need to move forward with more radical steps.

6 There are multifarious factors that contribute to their oppression and marginality within the teaching and other contexts, and thus it seems important that we read these lives within the context of many interconnecting and damaging 'oppressions' (see Dewar, 1993; Pharr, 1988).

7 Ginsburg et al. (1995) suggest that what educators do occurs in a context of power relations and distributions of symbolic and material resources and what action (or inaction) educators engage in has political implications for themselves and others. Everything educators do in and outside their workplaces is dialectically related a) to the distribution of structural and ideological power used to control the means of producing, reproducing consuming and accumulating material and symbolic resources and b) educators actions (and inaction) are constrained and enabled by such relations of power and resource distributions. Casting the notion of educators and politics in this way means that educators are political actors regardless of whether they are active or passive; autonomous or heteronomous vis-à-vis other groups; conservative or change oriented; seeking individual, occupational group, or larger collectivities' goals; and/or serving dominant group, subordinate group, or human interests.

8 Interpreting gender deconstruction as role reversal was something which Davies (1993) found children (primary level) had a tendency to do. Further research is needed at all other levels of education and wider society.

9 Davies (1993) comments on the ways in which apparently non-hegemonic forms of masculinity are written into and over the more powerful hegemonic masculinities, with new discourses of masculinity being reworked to become the old. For instance, many attempts to address educational reform for boys are grounded in what Cox (1995) terms the competing victim syndrome. The effects of such approaches, which set boys' interests against those of girls, is to reinforce oppositional differences between the former and the latter (see Kenway 1995; 1997; Yates, 1997). Moreover, these approaches are not based on the adequate theorisation of power and disadvantage (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1995).
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Appendix 1

Biographical Portraits

For purposes of anonymity and confidentiality, the information detailed in these portraits are purposefully kept brief, so as to avoid not revealing too much about their identities.

Anne
Anne is white, 22 years old, and English. Currently concentrating on the sport of Rugby, although has been a competent performer in a range of sports. She had little experience of dance and other 'aesthetic' activities before beginning her training. She is from a small town. Anne claims she is from a 'working class' background.

Christie
Christie is white, 21 years old, and English. She has been playing football since a young age, where she played on the 'boys' team at school. Christie is a competent performer in a number of other sports, although lacked experience in dance and aesthetic activities. She is from a reasonable sized town, where she attended primary, middle and 'upper' school. Christie identified as come from a strong working class background.

Claire
Claire is white, 21 and English. She has been an international in a number of team sports, although lacked experience in both aesthetic activities and rugby, football and cricket. Claire is of middle class origins and attended comprehensive school.

Emma
Emma is white, 22 years old and Welsh. Emma has an extensive background in the Sport of Gymnastics. She also had experience in dance and aerobics, but identified a lack of experience in sports such as football, rugby and cricket. She is from a small village. Described herself as 'working to middle class'. Attended an 11-18 comprehensive school.

Fiona
Fiona is white, 22 years old and Scottish. She has an upper middle class background, and attended private boarding school. Fiona is a competent performer in music as well as sport, where she was an international Lacrosse player. Fiona had no experience of football, cricket or rugby before beginning her teacher training.

Jill
Jill is white, 24 years old and Welsh. She is an international swimmer, as well as being a competent performer in a number of other sports. She had little or no experience of football, cricket, rugby and dance before beginning her teacher training. Jill is of middle class origins, and attended primary and comprehensive schools in Wales.

Julia
Julia is white, 21 years old and English. Although not specialising in any particular sport she has a strong interest in a range of different activities from football to outdoor pursuits. She lacked experience in the more aesthetic activities such as dance. Julia had a Christian up-bringing which remained very important to her. Julia grew up in a village, where she attended primary, middle and High school. Julia intimated that she had ‘working to middle’ class origins.

Louise
Louise is white, 21 years old and English. She is an elite level rower and has although also a competent all-rounder. Before beginning her training, Louise lacked experience in hockey, rugby, football and cricket. From a town. Has a strong catholic background. Identified as middle class.

Robin
Robin is white, 23 years old and English. She has been playing Netball and Basketball since she was a pupil at school, identifying these as her specialist sports. Robin had no experience of rugby, cricket or football prior to starting her teacher training. Grew up in a large city, attending a number of state and community schools. Robin described herself as working class.

Sam
Sam is white, 22 years old, and English. She specialises in football, although has a wide range of sports skills and interests. Attended mixed state schools (choosing not to attend grammar school). Identified as middle class. Lacked experience in dance and other aesthetic activities prior to her teacher training. Her family has a strong connection with the church, where she spent much of her time growing up taking part in church 'activities' such as football.
Appendix 2
Themes explored during life history interview

These themes were used as a guide during interview, to ensure that some general themes were covered. As these emerged through the conversation (often sporadically and with overlap) they were crossed off the list.

INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING AND GENDER IDENTITY

PHASE 1

NAME :
PSYDEONYM :
AGE :
DATE :
TIME :

Remind/inform the participants, in relation to following:

Background of research
Can stop conversation at any point
Conversation not interview
Any questions before we begin ?
Would you mind if I tape record the discussion ?

The Research :
Motivations for research.
Motivations for telling their story.
Anything they hope to gain from telling their story.

Family
Background - Careers / hobbies
Class - effects upon the expectations on you
Who has influenced them
Their experience of growing up as a girl.
Definitions of way to act as a ‘girl’ as growing up
Importance of sport/academic in the family
Differences by Gender - Brothers / Fathers
Significant family events

School
Friendships
Studies/Exams
Gender dynamics of schools
Problems/memorable moments
Teachers/teaching styles they remember/enjoyed, perhaps even try to emulate?

Sports Experience
Physical Education
Gender dynamics in classes
Conflict
Feelings towards other pupils
Do they notice/remember any differentiation between the boys and girls PE curriculum and its delivery?

Sport
Standard achieved in sport / general sporting background
Events that may have influenced them into taking up sport competitively
Sport-femininity conflict?
How do they understand/experience their bodies in sport?

Outside of School
Extra curricular groups/hobbies
Influences growing up, media, religion etc
Role models

Undergraduate years
Why attracted to course/University
Styles of lecturing they found particularly stimulating or suitable/ oppressive or not enjoyable.
Any lecturers or styles they have tried to emulate
Key experiences
University Clubs

Gender Issues - Experiences as a female
Terms associated with masculinity/femininity
Gender conflict/constraints
Perceptions of women in society
Feminism
Groups/structures they have felt constrained by
Involvement in groups, projects or courses concerned with equality
Read any feminist literature
When and under what circumstances they decided that they were or were not a feminist?

Current - PGCE course
What or who has influenced them into wanting to become a teacher?
Something they have always wanted to do?
Family opinions of them teaching.
Aims/Objectives
Apprehensions
Being a ‘female’ teacher – any problems envisaged
Their views on female PE teachers
What have they learnt – social values/messages in departments
What (if any) are the expectations they have of girls and boys behaviour and attitude to physical activity / PE?
How they define the differences between sport and PE
AT END OF INTERVIEW:
Anything they would have changed
Enjoyed / disliked
The use of forms initially to think about themes they might like to discuss