Women's Music in Australia:

Space, Place, Bodies, Performance

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M.A. (Documentary)
B.A. Hons. (Communication Studies)

This thesis is presented as a partial fulfilment to the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University.

April 2015

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List of Illustrations

Statement of Authenticity

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled **'Women's Music in Australia: Space, Place, Bodies, Performance'** has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

The presented thesis is an original piece of research, and has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received during my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information, sources, and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee approved the research presented in the thesis: reference number HE26MAY2006-D04732 on 26 May 2006.

April 2015

Film Information

The submitted work comprises a written thesis and a creative component. The creative component is a documentary treatment for a film-to-be-made, working title, 'Rock On With Your Frock On' (pp. 245-283) and a short video (see trailer).

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Acknowledgements

This research is dedicated to those involved in the Australian women's music scene during the 1970-180s. It is my intention that your stories are recorded in good faith as an open resource. I would therefore like to acknowledge that the study would not have come into being without the generosity of all the people who gave time for interviews and/or permitted access to precious archival materials. I am grateful for the enthusiasm and no thanks can sufficiently repay the debt that is owed. A different round of thanks must go to my Principal Supervisor, Dr Maree Delofski for unwavering belief and whole-hearted support. An incredible amount of patience was needed to shepherd the work through substantial changes, particularly its final phase problems. Equally, I extend much gratitude to Associate Supervisor, Dr Nikki Sullivan for dedication, perseverance and commitment to reading drafts, structural problem solving and offering incisive comments. Thanks to Dave Mitchell for technical advice during the early stages and assistance with equipment. Outside the academy there are individuals who donated time to the project with the utmost belief. In the pursuit of film, my thanks extend to Stray Dags for a wonderfully generous fundraising effort and unexpected reunion performance. It lifted my spirits at exactly the right moment - if only I could put it into song. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by photographer Corrie Ancone for allowing access to an extensive personal archive and the hours spent on image restoration.

The undertaking of a project such as this takes its toll on life's practicalities. I am indebted to a Commonwealth APA Scholarship for keeping life matters ticking for a period of time, and for an opportunity to teach, I thank the Macquarie University Media Department and Dr Steven Maras at the University of Sydney. But above all, I want to acknowledge my family and amazing group of friends. This journey would have been impossible without you. For feeding me candidature survival tips with a clear thinking strategic mind, my heartfelt acknowledgments must extend to Jane Hobson.

Thanks for your generosity and irrepressible, wonderfully distracting footy friendship (go the Swans). Fiona Lange for your optimistic laughter, loyalty and hope, and the most dependable phone-a-friend-ship that I could ever want in life. To Mailin Suchting for a truly unexpected, brilliantly sustaining, indeed life-saving donation when my struggle intensified emphatically, I extend my eternal, humble thanks. In different ways, Sue Aujard and Annie Heath dug deep at key moments.

To both my parents, I am indebted for faith in higher tertiary education. Special mention must go to my mother, who cared for my father and his declining health during the writing of this dissertation. The depth of your generosity and concern for others shines like a beacon of unconditional love, which I am always learning and forever grateful. Much appreciation also extends to my brother and sister, Bruce and Carol Kennewell, who kindly thought to provide assistance when my partner was unwell. On the geographically closer home front and latter stages of the doctorate, my gratitude must extend to Robbie Cottrill, Steve Cottrill and Lorraine Carli, the extended Cottrill-Noss family, and for occasional dinners and conversation, Hill Logan, Amanda Rochford, Libby Jamieson, Vanessa Robertson and Adam Watson. Finally, for sharing the never-ending stories of 'badass' music, listening to the minutiae of my ups and downs, I owe an immeasurable, unrepayable debt to my partner Jane Cottrill. Your intelligent suggestions strengthened the work no end. A simple thank you, for rockin' my world with a melancholic passion for beastie guitars.

Abstract

During the 1970s-1980s, Australian women's music flourished at women's dances, feminist rallies, non-feminist pubs and clubs. Then it disappeared with hardly a trace. In the present day, the recordings of Australian women's music are difficult to find, as it was predominantly a live music scene. But why did over a hundred all-women bands emerge so decisively, then 'vanish' from view? Women's music in Australia was a spatial intervention, a paradigm shift at a particular historical moment. All-women bands, many self-taught, took to the stage for the first time and created music in a manner necessary, it was believed, for a political, socio-sexual revolution. In part, it is possible to show the influence of America and that the Australian scene actually tends to be understood in U.S.-centric ways. Yet the second wave feminist ideas and ideals that shaped Australian women's music were often fractured, sometimes competing. A closer examination, suggests there were conditions particular to Australia that enabled feminist lesbians and lesbian feminists to forge a distinctly local music scene; people drawn together around affinities, tastes, lifestyles and activities that were not intentionally singular or universal in their objectives. Although complex, music is an exciting vehicle for constructing subject histories. To account for the subjugated knowledges of Australian women's music, this inquiry deploys Foucault-influenced genealogy and maps non-normativity and relations of power operating on multiple fronts. The scene in Australia was relatively small; its spirited fight for survival was pragmatic, and at times, competitive. Mapping and formulating the histories of the Australian women's music scene makes a different type of contribution, a musicalised historicisation of feminism, gender and sexuality. It reverberates presence and offers unique insights into the embodied performances of public/private sexualities situated by time, space and place. The overlooked are re-performed. The past and present are imbued with potential for further understandings.

Figure 1. Women's Liberation House, Melbourne, (L-R) Sue Trayling, Vicki Bell, Theresa Jack, circa 1978

Figure 2. Chris Blades, Hotspots, circa 1985

Figure 3. Toxic Shock, (L-R) Fran Kelly, Sylvie Leber

Figure 4. Escargo Go, (L-R) Lesley Blackwood, Vicki Bell, Julie Grace, Jen Feray, Kathy Loosely, circa 1982

Introduction

On Friday 5 October 1973, a women's dance was held at the Ecumenical Centre in Fitzroy, Melbourne. An all-female 'rock group' called Mystical Miss played to two hundred women. According to a brief report in the feminist press, it was an enjoyable night with good music, no hassles, no pretensions and 'no wallflowers' ('Vashti's Diary' 1973, p. 14). A few months later, a tiny notice appeared in the *Adelaide Women's Liberation Newsletter* asking Screaming Heep, a newly formed female rock band, to make the journey from Melbourne to Adelaide to perform for a Women's Liberation Dance ('Screaming Heep' 1974). Using a clever word play on Uriah Heep, the short-lived Screaming Heep covered songs by the Rolling Stones and the Doobie Brothers and singer Robyn Youlten played her electric guitar. Early manifestations of Australian women's music, such as the above mentioned, can be traced to political ideas about space, place and rousing performances of cover songs. In 1975, the United Nations declared a 'Decade of Women' and International Women's Day celebrations attracted large crowds across the country (Arrow 2007, p. 217), which intensified the demand for music performed by women. In Adelaide, a four-piece feminist jug band called Shameless Hussies rewrote the words of some well-known songs, especially for the event. Singing 'She'll be coming 'round the mountain *if* she comes', Shameless Hussies 're-claimed' the amphitheatre at the Adelaide Festival Centre with music made on a homemade washboard, spoons and bones. The organisers worried unnecessarily about the crowd's lack of appreciation for the group's 'gay' material (Shameless Hussies 1978/79). In the ensuing years, Australian women bands continued to perform cover songs (whether re-written or not) and as confidence grew, the emphasis gradually shifted to original material. Thus, by the end of the 1980s, there were four albums (and four singles) of Australian women's music pressed on vinyl and eight studio recorded

cassette tapes of (mostly) original work (see Appendix C). All were self-funded. Unexpectedly, *Lemons Alive* by Stray Dags rated at number one, on the independent music chart, 1983. Despite these recording achievements, the creative entity that is discussed in this study as Australian women's music will be shown, for the most part, as a live music scene comprising of 120 (at least)[1] all-women groups performing in feminist-designated and non-feminist spaces and places.

Many 'underground' music scenes come and go with hardly a trace (Bennett and Peterson 2004). Yet such inconsequential, inconspicuous sites are fascinating because they reveal 'invisible' or rather different social, cultural, political histories in the clusters of people drawn together by their affinities for music tastes and distinct lifestyles built around various activities. At first glance, the Australian women's music scene seems to have 'vanished'. Its stories are not repeated in the way that conventional, mainstream music histories are remembered. Anecdotally, for example, when I suggest in conversation that this study investigates Australian women's music of the 1970s-1980s, I am generally met with assumptions about the well-known singers Olivia Newtown-John and Helen Reddy. After clarifying that the focus is on bands rather than singers, I usually receive another burst of well-intentioned prompts; Chrissy Amphlett of the Divinyls, Adalita of Magic Dirt or even Kylie Minogue. Undoubtedly, all of these performers should be recognised for their hard won achievements. However, my curiosities, and frustrations, relate to what is 'not-said' about the unheralded lesbian and second wave feminist groups that banded and disbanded in Australia over an intense fifteen-year period.

The histories of Australian women's music are negotiated stories, I argue. Examining narratives of feminism, Clare Hemmings (2005, p. 118) says 'all history takes place in the present, as we make and remake stories about the past to enable a particular present to gain legitimacy'. By proposing that Australian women's music is an object of discourse and something that can be discussed and analysed, I do not mean that it exists as a unified historical object and/or singular story. As Michel Foucault (1972, p.

[1] The number of women bands is open to further additions and omissions (see Chapter 1).

45) writes in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, objects are formed 'under positive conditions of a complex group of relations', which suggest multiplicity. Life is more complicated than replacing one story with another and 'even if we could fully correct the record, this does not account for the reasons *why* certain issues become part of an accepted story, and others fall by the wayside' (Hemmings 2005, p. 119). Historical exclusions are nevertheless effective when they appear to be commonsense, for example, everyday cultural artefacts such as music history documentaries often play down the role of the Women's Liberation Movement with little mention of women's music. Yet, if one digs into the past, as an archaeologist picks over the remains of bones, it is possible to show that 'music history' is not structured by universality or timelessness but comprises political processes that negotiate who is speaking and what counts as authoritative 'truth'. My purpose, therefore, is to examine the Australian women's music scene, including its music, not only as a problem of historical omission but also to look at how stories function as a series of relations to power and knowledge.

The investigation formulates the histories of Australian women's music as non-normative, examining its constraints, possibilities and the effects of mapping in the present day. The term 'non-normative' as deployed in the study is elaborated in the following (methodology) chapter. At this juncture, I want to clarify that my intention is to problematise the extant terms - woman, lesbian, feminism - and the dominant (women-identified and American-centric) narratives about women's music. It is not my purpose to simply re-align Australian women's music as queer, although present-day concepts and re-thinking are deployed (see Chapters 1, 3, 5). Queer is a contemporary method, as used in this thesis, of questioning and querying the hegemony of heteronormativity. Women's music in Australia was not exclusively made by or played for lesbians and lesbian-only audiences (see Chapters 3, 4), and sexualities tend to be fluid rather than fixed. Some women, for example, may have identified as lesbian at the time of women's music but not since (see Chapter 5). However, it is my intention to read women's music by and through foregrounding gender and sexuality struggles. One of my findings is that Australian women bands depended heavily on alliances with heterosexual women for survival compared to larger music scenes in other countries (see Chapter 4). Similarly, not all women bands in the study identified as feminist at the

time of women's music but they are included in this investigation because their negotiation of gender and (anti) relation to feminism and other lesbian/feminist bands, offer important insights.

Motivations

In the spirit of playful appropriation and irony, the emphasis on sexuality in this study means to draw attention to the apparent oxymoron of how a 'pervert' might speak with authority. Perverts struggle to claim authoritative History, which is usually about public events, not pleasure and desire (Berry 1997). In the narrative film, *Stonewall* (1995), for example, the character La Miranda makes a decisive departure from conventional history. Her pink drag queen lips, in extreme close up, remind the viewer of history's fiction. 'See there's as many Stonewall stories as there are gay queens in New York, and that's a shit load of stories baby. Everywhere you go in Manhattan or America or the entire damn world you gonna hear some new legend … Well this is my legend honey' (La Miranda, *Stonewall*). Taking a cue from La Miranda, there are probably just as many stories about women's music in Australia as there are lesbian feminists and feminist lesbians, and that's a lot. In this context, sharing the threads of my circumstances is intended to situate personal interests, inclinations and motivations. The Australian women's music scene was an exciting space and place, although as life often happens, I fell into it 'accidentally' without any real plan. In 1979, I crossed paths with a band called Razor Cuts and 'suddenly' found myself taking care of their front of house sound. It was a chance encounter that came about while living in my first all-women, feminist, share house. Typically, that youthful household in Adelaide generated an abundance of energy: sexual tension, discussion, sympathies, differences, social comings and goings. To this day, one of the women from that house remains among my closest friends. As low-income university students, we combined our resources and bought food every Saturday morning from the Adelaide Central Market in the heart of the city. We all studied at the local university and met other like-minded 'short-haired ladies' on campus. I attended my first International Women's Day street march and my dress code changed to comfortable shoes and loose fitting army pants with a crushed velvet hippie bag slung over my shoulder. To save money, I rode a

pushbike and we converted the lounge room into another bedroom. Classically trained violinist Kathy Bluff moved in to the lounge-bedroom, and as the story goes, she happened to join a feminist punk band tentatively called Razor Cuts. It made 'sense' to everyone when the band offered to play for the occasion of someone's birthday. It was their first performance in front of an audience.

I remember a warm December night in the back garden when the thrash and crash of Razor Cuts sent a delicious sensation through my body, a shiver that immediately enthralled: partygoers danced, adrenalin flowed and I gravitated to the sound gear. Audiences were excited about Razor Cuts. The local community radio station 5MMM invited the band to perform at the Tivoli Hotel, a well-known rock venue. A month later, they played with Dial-X (mixed band) at Flinders University Tavern. Things were just getting started when Bluff suddenly announced her plan to move interstate for a place in the Sydney Youth Orchestra. The rest of us decided it was a wonderful opportunity for a new adventure. In my (over) excitement, I bought a van for two hundred dollars because if you can't be in the band, you can 'participate at other levels, and that is what subcultures offer' (Halberstam 2006, p. 6). Driving due east into a bitterly cold night, it was the purity of hope that kept us warm. Our arrival in Sydney is now a distant memory (for me) of good and bad times. Strangers in a big city, we were quickly lost to all manner of excesses. I went with band members looking for gigs but after the initial high, things emotionally splintered and fell apart. One day, as I was driving along Parramatta Road (a main arterial road in the inner city), the brakes failed on my beloved van. Not long after that, the two key members of Razor Cuts, Judith Haines and Kaye Brown, made their way back to Adelaide. But by then, I had met Stray Dags and they were looking for a sound mixer. I took on that task and although it was not the only reason that I stayed in Sydney, it provided some of the impetus.

The scent of music is evocative but why follow it? On reflection, it may appear that the desire for a lesbian/feminist world (social, cultural, political) fuelled the energy and movement of my early twenties. I took on a 'man's job' of sound mixing without mentorship and worked in music for many more years than I ever planned or expected. Initially, sound mixing was not my primary income. To pay the rent and committed to

feminism, I joined a collective of thirteen women staffing a twenty-four hour crisis refuge for single young women. On the collective were Ludo McFerran and Celeste Howden, respectively the saxophonist and the bass player in Stray Dags. In my spare time, I learned to coax the dials on a mixing desk. Persuaded by the power of a singer's voice, I often accentuated the vocals. At a short course on sound engineering, I met John Bassett who owned a garage full of leads. He was knowledgeable, generous and Stray Dags hired his equipment regularly, although it was more than a little 'mysterious' and often challenging. In those days, we used 'W speaker bins' made by Jands to amplify the bottom end of the sound. W bins were big, black, monstrously heavy speaker boxes, and everyone groaned about loading them, even though it was the feminist thing to do.

At peak times, Stray Dags played, on average, once a week. We traveled by road to the Blue Mountains, and went on interstate tours to Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra and Brisbane. I always mixed for Stray Dags, occasionally for Hens Teeth and The Other Band. After the demise of Stray Dags, there was an all-female jazz-fusion band called Crash Cups, and I then spent a couple of years running a PA system 'full time', hiring it out to small hotels and Indie (mixed gender) bands including Tropical Penguins and Bedtime Stories. I quit sound when everyone seemed to go their separate ways but before stopping completely, I worked Reclaim The Night and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras cabaret nights in the early 1990s. Yet, in the chronological crush past youth, my experiences were given no thought until middle age, when I wondered if the echo of the past could write a new songline for the present. I started thinking about making a documentary film because lesbians are a 'taste public' and we 'wish to see aspects of our lives reflected in the films, books, music and other cultural goods we consume' (Stein 1994, p. 15). In turn, my fanciful daydreaming provided an axis for new research.

Themes of the Study

This investigation demonstrates twin foci that are identifiable and connected, theory and documentary film practice. Film was the starting point, and accordingly the work began as 'practice-led' research (Haseman 2006; see Chapter 5). Industry funding was

sought for the making of a film but not secured and the academic time frame did not allow further work on the production. Instead, I wrote a documentary treatment titled 'Rock On With Your Frock On' (see pp. 245-283) based on a series of audio-recorded interviews. I also expanded and applied a theoretical framework to the film's subject, women's music in Australia. This (unexpected) research pathway resulted in a back and forwards movement, an ongoing 'dialogue' between the theoretical considerations (methodology) and the creative work (method) with one informing the other. A reflective, detailed discussion of what happened to the film during the academic research pathway is presented in Chapter 5. The treatment or 'scriptment', as it might also be called, is included as embedded research after the references and before the appendices.[2] The documentary treatment is not a supplement; it is rooted in the research and provides another angle to the material. Writing a treatment for the film informed an exploration of the ideas developed throughout the thesis. In turn, the theoretical considerations shaped some of the creative strategies for the intended film. A scholarly context also developed thoughts about the research/film as a queer body of work with potential for making a public contribution beyond the parameters of the investigation. In general however, it must be kept in mind that the expanded theoretical deliberations of the study applied as a thesis rather than exegesis to the film's topic and themes (particularly, Chapters 2-4) would not have come about without the filmmaking practices and processes.

In these introductory pages, I first want to establish the overarching themes, aims and objectives of the study, and second to sketch some of the material issues. Specifically, there are two themes central to the investigation and explored throughout the work. These are (1) the Australian women's music scene is largely 'forgotten', and (2) where it has been written about, there is a tendency to conflate Australian women's music with the American experience. Merging the Australian scene with the American, as 'one and the same', is an investment (knowing/unknowing) in the universal and appears to 'erase' the local. A particular experience or sets of experiences are brought together in a universalised, generic whole. Thus, significantly different contexts are

[2] It must be noted that 'Rock On With Your Frock On' uses a different layout to the thesis. Its 'Courier' font is the script writing (film industry) standard.

homogenised and situated differences covered over. In other words, an inclination toward universal stories is problematic because universalities function to subjugate local histories and particularities are smoothed over in one unified story.

If the Australian women's music scene has disappeared with hardly a trace, its songs 'forgotten', why propose its re-appearance as an object of research and valuable inquiry? Australian women's music emerged at a time of mass mobilization and the liberation politics of the women's movement.[3] Regarded as a harbinger of change, women bands and women's music occupied a significant (if sometimes overlooked) role in some of the universalising aspects of second wave feminism.[4] Configured by and through second wave feminist ideas and ideals about independence from mainstream music, women band members interrogated 'dominant normative systems' and did not necessarily conform to the expectations associated at that time with commercial female musicianship (Burns and Lafrance 2002, p. 2). Effectively, lesbian/feminist bands in Australia were positioned and positioned themselves, as marginal and/or ostensibly 'outside' the music industry. In turn, this positionality enabled rigorous critique and the formation of a political discourse about sexist/nonsexist music. Women bands therefore came to represent more than 'independence' and/or freedom from the commercial aspects of music production and consumption. At the same time, the codes, conventions, institutional power/knowledges of the music industry both shaped and tended to 'fix' women bands to their feminist and lesbian/feminist positionality. Thus, even though Australian women bands found appreciative audiences, they were (and continue to be) particularly vulnerable to the disaffection with second wave feminism and to inflexible ideas about lesbianism, as I will demonstrate.

A Different Approach for Australian Women's Music

Presenting Australian women's music as an object of examination requires a sketch of the 'rules' by which it came into being and the way that music is documented and discussed. Generally, rock journalism describes music in terms of ongoing traditions

[3] See Garofalo (1992) for further discussion on music and mass movements of the 1970s.
[4] In the study, women bands are interchangeably referred to as 'lesbian/feminist' bands.

and/or unexpected flashpoints. Whereas tradition implies sameness and continuity, new music is measured against a background of something thought to be unchanging, permanent. A familiar trope in rock journalism is the 'underground' scene that 'explodes' from the shadows and takes the music industry by surprise (see, for example, Palmer 1995, p. 12). In turn, music revelations are regularly written up with familiar marketing catchcries, the 'definitive story' or the 'true story'.[5] The problem is that 'one true story' can never be the 'whole story' and therefore the whole story can never be told. Furthermore, authors bring subjectivity and bias, manifest through a selection of information on the basis of class, race, gender and sexuality. Australian music history is accounted for in books such as *Stranded: The Secret History of Australian Independent Music 1977-1991* (Walker 1996), *Blunt: A Biased History of Australian Rock* (Blunt 2001) and *High Voltage Rock 'N' Roll* (Eliezer 2007). Stories about music in Australia are also told in documentary films. For example, *Sunbury Rock Festival* (2002, originally 1972) is a feature length observational film that documents the colour and glory of the Sunbury Music Festival, which was held every Australia Day weekend 1972-1975. By contrast, the Australian women's music scene has not been documented (until now) and in spite of substantive evidence of more than a hundred bands (see Appendix A), music journalism says next to nothing about Australian women's music; very little to no writing exists and no films have been made. Feminist discussions and studies of sexuality are also found wanting.

Existing narratives of women's music are for the most part defined by American feminism. Maida Tilchen (1984, p. 287) describes [American] women's music as 'a network of records, record companies, live performances, production companies and music festivals' that thrived during the 1970s and 1980s; 'an unparalleled outreach tool, putting the words of lesbian feminism into regular record stores in many cities'. Toni Armstrong (1989, p.17) coined the phrase 'music by, for and about women' but not exclusively, which was later expanded by Cynthia Lont (1992, p. 242) to include 'financially controlled by women'. American women's music histories are dominated by its women-identified, radicalesbian, singer songwriters (see Chapters 2, 3, 4) and

[5] See, for example, *Girls To The Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution* by Sarah Marcus (2010).

women-owned recording companies, particularly Olivia Records. Established on the east coast of America, Olivia Records founded on the feminist principle of everywoman's ability to make music and idea(l)s about financial control for female musicians (Stein 1994, p.17). The recognition and financial success of Olivia Records is well documented (see, for example, Carson, Lewis and Shaw 2004; Gaar 2002; Peraino 2006; Whiteley 2000; see also Chapter 4).[6] Given its international reach, the influences of American women's music on the Australian scene cannot be underestimated and are elaborated throughout the study. However, one of the consequences of universalising, dominant accounts of second wave feminism is a persistent conflation of Australian women's music with American. Thus, it is necessary to draw attention to the effects of American-centric understandings of women's music and that the Australian scene requires its own mapping. In Australia, the numbers of women bands (and their recordings) are much smaller than America and there was never a dedicated women-owned recording and/or distribution company like Olivia Records. There was a brief appearance by Stray Dags on the independent music charts implying healthy sales of a record, but compared to America, women's music in Australia did not generate substantial monetary wealth, disseminate mass record sales, or have the depth and breadth of international reach. In general, Australian women's music was largely driven by the logics of local, live performance and did not (with the exception of Party Girls) revolve around fully-fledged business models.

One of the problems with live performance is that its historical traces can be difficult to locate, substantiate and ascribe value. The songs of Australian women's music are not readily accessible in the present day and it seems as if the material has 'disappeared' and/or is of little significance. However, on investigation, it is possible to show that Australian women's music can be evidentially traced (see Appendix C for a list of songs collected in this study) and that its historical remains are different, and remains differently, both to the commercial music industry and to American women's music. Thus, I argue, the histories of Australian women's music require a different approach.

[6] The (relative) wealth generated by Olivia Records and also Holly Near's Redwood Records and Pleiades Records owned by Margie Adams, was both unexpected and a source of political tension for feminists (Peraino 2006, p. 173).

Foucault's theories of power/knowledge and genealogy offer a sophisticated alternative, in my view, for mapping lesbian/feminist musicalities by and through discursivity (see also Chapter 1). Foucault (1972, p. 41) writes that the 'surfaces of emergence are not the same for different societies, at different periods and in different forms of discourse'. For example, how we talk about 'the frontiers of a book are never clear-cut beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network' (1972, p. 23). In the study, the parameters of Australian women's music are discussed within a grid of understandings: its relation to mainstream music, the relation of one song to other songs, the relation of Australian women's music to American, how the music is performed by musicians, the circumstances of production and consumption, and ideas about those terms at particular times. In other words, what is understood as music and how it is valued does not occupy a unified, determined space but is shaped by constraints and possibilities in relation to power/knowledges.

Politically, 'women's music' is a period-bound, uneasy descriptor, given that different cultures and different countries produce a range of specific contexts relevant to those eventualities. I argue that Australian women's music is a localised culture with a 'general politics of truth', a system of relations and a regime of truth (Foucault 1980, p. 131), characterised by a type of discourse (group of statements) sanctioned by feminist-designated events and happenings. The spatial interventions and paradigm shifts of second wave feminism breathed life into new music for women. At first it may appear that music was being used by lesbian/feminists to empower and transform a universally oppressed 'woman' and feminism sought to unsettle social roles and the gendered assumptions that supported them. Concomitantly, lesbians (and gays) were re-formulating categories of 'self', affirming identity, sexuality. A closer look at women's music in Australia reveals a '*system of its enunciability'* (Foucault 1972, p. 129), a set of materialised exteriorities and verbal performances that did not necessarily set out with a clear interiority of intent and/or a singular (politico-musical) objective. Analysis of the scene shows a '*system of its functioning*' (1972, p. 129), a multiplicity of theoretical and practical difficulties surrounding being a woman and a

lesbian; the doubling of gender and sexuality and 'the folding of one kind of space upon another' (Probyn 1995, p. 81), as this thesis demonstrates.

There is a particular social power associated with behaviour that is sexualised and learned at live music events, through the communication of body-to-body signals (Frith and McRobbie 1990). Hundreds of women (and many men) danced to the music of Australian women bands. On those occasions, musicians and audiences performed social interactions shaped by sexuality and sexualised behaviour. Yet for Rebecca Schneider (2012, p. 139), live performance, in the theatrical meaning of the term, appears to be continually lost in time, a cycle of performance-disappearance, that has particular consequences for establishing subject histories. Music performed live for an audience (similar to dance and/or theatrical play) reverberates for the duration of the performance and then that particular moment 'disappears' into thin air and only reappears in stories and memories and in associated ephemera that, for various reasons, may be deemed insignificant and unimportant. This inquiry draws attention to such 'insignificant' and overlooked performances, and the notion that historical processes are more complicated than simply establishing importance and/or including that which has been excluded. Charting live stage performances as cultural loss and/or impermanent temporality, even annihilation, as Schneider suggests, may elide the memories housed in oral storytelling, in bodies, and body-to-body communications.

This current research begins from the premise that Australian women's music is worthy of documentation and discussion because of its multifaceted relationship to historico discursive articulations of gender and sexuality. I argue that the histories of Australian women's bands are precious, due (in part) to their contribution to feminist battles and lesbian identities. In this sense, the investigation is similar to the extensively researched and well-made music history documentary *Radical Harmonies* (2002), which traces women's music in America as a culture deserving of celebration. *Radical Harmonies* makes the claim (in the words of the film's narrator) that lesbians 'led a cultural revolution' that came to be known as women's music. In my belief, the origins of women's music in Australia cannot be ascribed in exactly the same manner, singularly to lesbians, although similar to America, the Australian scene depended on

the commitment, effort and (volunteer) labour of lesbians and those stories offer an opportunity to acknowledge lesbian histories in all the meanings of the cultural category 'lesbian' (see Chapter 5, for further discussion of *Radical Harmonies*). The stories of Australian women bands are not simply evidential realities of lived experiences but part of a larger discursive effect and each discourse has the power to engender a plurality of meanings and say something other than what it actually says (Foucault 1972, p. 118). My divergence from a universalising feminist narrative such as *Radical Harmonies* is to acknowledge the inner workings of a local, particular rather than universal, women's music culture and expose the struggles that occurred in that scene. On that basis, I deploy a Foucaultian model of power and genealogy to map the discourses (texts, discussions) about Australian women's music, including those that celebrate and those that tear it down, to foreground and situate lesbians and the needs of lesbians, throughout but not necessarily and/or automatically at the centre of the stories. Foucaultian methods of genealogical analysis and his theory of power as productive rather than repressive gives rise to a different practice in order to account for the 'unaccountable' and the 'missing', or that which appears to be subsumed by world-view stories of feminism and music history. Mapping memories and ephemera as 'remaining traces' shows that marginality does not lack socio-political effectiveness. Australian women bands were constrained by the politics of gender and sexuality but did not lack agency or freedom. Lesbian/feminists in Australia pressed the limits of normativity, homogeneity and the commercial music industry but they lived and experienced gender and sexuality in a particular context. Thus, there is more that can be said about gender and sexuality and the experiences of women's music in Australia, which is the claim of the thesis.

Materials and Methods

The archeological 'dig' for materials took place in the first three years of the investigation and initially, my research imperative was to collect materials for possible re-use in a women's music history film. However, some information came to light very late and people continue to direct my attention to women band evidence. The primary materials were found mostly in private collections, outside public repositories.

Therefore permission to access and cooperation were needed from individuals holding those collections. This also meant that the search through boxes retrieved from 'hidden' places in garages, under beds and out of the way top shelves was done together with participants. Discovering treasures in private collections and sorting through historical documents is a nostalgic, emotional process. Owners were frequently baffled by my insistence on value and upon my arrival, the exclamation, 'oh but I haven't got much for you to look at' was repeated more than once. Invariably, 'not much' yielded rich fragments: rehearsal and demo tapes, published recordings, photographs, videos and film clips, band flyers, posters and press clippings. It is interesting that while not touched for years, the original materials of women's music has not been discarded. Some of the analogue tapes have lost vibrancy in their dynamic audio range but I was surprised how well the old audio/video formats have withstood time, given that strict preservation practices are generally not applied to privately held collections in homes.

It has been argued that the principles and protocols applicable to lesbian/feminist historical research may differ from other research. According to Ann Cvetkovich (2002, p. 110) sexuality is difficult to chronicle through traditional archival processes, given that the archival records of lesbians, women, feminists, are always already vulnerable to dismissal. Thus, the retrieval of material from privately held collections triggers a complex set of emotions to do with ideas about institutional neglect, which plays a role in establishing lesbian/feminist histories. For example, the woman band member of past decades whose music and musical self is not ascribed value, may account for the mixed responses of participants interviewed for the study; one said she felt like crying tears of joy and sadness at the end of our interview, another was skeptical and wary of the academic and deflected with wry jokes (see Chapter 5). Understanding lesbian/feminist histories as emotional and linked to the injury of exclusion helps to explain how they make a departure from conventional histories, since ascribing importance to the inconsequential is always already open to contestation.

Participants were very generous. For those with larger collections, the examination of materials was done on a separate occasion to conducting a recorded interview. To

avoid the removal of precious photographs, I purchased and traveled with a portable scanner, allowing extra time for electronic image acquisition. Most participants permitted the loan of recorded songs, although the management of old audiovisual formats presented a practical and technical challenge. Vinyl records, analogue audiocassette tapes and VHS videotapes, all required transfer to a digital environment both for examination purposes and re-use in a film to come. Thus, many long hours were spent in this manner. The material acquired may/may not be used in the film-to-be-made but transference to a digital environment was an efficient (albeit time intensive) method of analysing the data, and allowed the return of original items. The exception is the mid-1970s folk group, Clitoris Band. Access to their ephemera has been (and continues to be) of a different nature because many of their significant items have been lodged in public holding facilities. The National Film and Sound Archive currently holds an hour of unedited 16mm footage of the band, but in accordance with that institution's preservation policy it cannot be viewed on a film projector. I was only able to watch it once on a hand operated viewing mechanism. Unless the National Film and Sound Archive has a change of policy, the footage will be a major budget concern if it is to be acquired for re-use in a documentary film.

List of Bands: Which Bands, Why?

The field of research for the investigation was established by compiling a list of bands as the information came to hand. Drawing up a list of bands is a regular practice and always a source of debate. A list (rather than '*the* list') is subject to additions, exclusions, inclusions, although it might also be said that debating a list of bands is not an un-pleasant activity. Musicians tend to be a collaborative lot and to my delight, there was a snowballing effect of genuine interest in the project. Band members were located by word of mouth and existing connections chased up, but given the large number of people it was not possible to find 'everyone'. I began with the bands that I knew and radiated out from there. Approximately ten percent of the identified Australian women band cohort (with an average of five members per band) was contacted by telephone and/or email to explain the project. Notes were taken during a fairly extensive telephone conversation. From the initial contact, I then arranged a

home visit, which involved a recorded audio interview. Due to the enormity of locating (and interviewing) a large number of band members, no attempt was made to find venue owners. The research scope similarly excluded bands that may have played on the same bill. For example, Stray Dags played on different occasions with Aboriginal band No Fixed Address (all men) and a well-known electronic pop band from Western Australia called The Dugites, but the inclusion of these bands was constrained. The lack of an expansive representation of race (indigenous or ethnic) constitutes a further limitation for the period under examination (see Chapter 2) and there are no transgender band members. The interviews included one female band manager and one female sound engineer. Rock journalist Stuart Coupe was the only male formally interviewed. Not everyone contacted was audio interviewed and some declined.

Given that information on Australian women bands has not been previously gathered, I was torn, at the outset, between a narrow selection of bands and a survey approach. The investigation is not a sociological survey, nor is it intended as a step-by-step, how to create an all-female rock band (see, for example, Sly 1993). The decision to keep the band list as wide as possible was well fulfilled and before too long, I recovered a women band list originally compiled by Tina Harris of Stray Dags. In 1982, Harris applied for funding to coincide with the Women in Arts Festival (see Women in Arts Festival Program) to stage a concert of women bands that represented the 'nation' (or some states) of Australia. The concert was called Frock Rock and the historical evidence collected by Harris (for the application) was also used to promote the event. A supportive article written by music journalist Stuart Coupe (1982, p. 94) appeared in the mainstream press with the following claim; 'the [Frock Rock] concert organisers have researched the history of women's music and have come up with a list of 59 bands that have existed at one time or another'. This investigation has now expanded that original list (compiled by Harris) to 120 women bands between 1970 and 1990 (see Appendix A). The names of Australian women bands reveal something about the style, attitude and mood of the time and illustrate that in some situations, the act of naming a band was an activist tool, a method of agitating for change, a means of putting the principles of feminism into practice (Arrow 2007; Gaar 2002); for example, when Toxic Shock first formed they called themselves Girl's Garage Band. The seven-piece group

then (fairly quickly) changed their name to Toxic Shock in an attempt to draw attention to the possible link between the toxic shock syndrome and the use of tampons.[7] Other band name examples are Barbies Dead, Domestic Dirt, Escargo Go, Foreign Body, Hotspots, Nice Girls Don't Spit, Screaming Jennies, Shameless Hussies, Sheila, Sticky Beat, The Ovarian Sisters, Tokyo Rose and Zelda Swang.

Geographic differences matter to an examination of Australian women's music (see Chapter 2) and one of my objectives was to represent each capital city. To be considered a 'scene' usually requires more than one band. For example, a women band contributed to a national women's music scene but may have been the only lesbian/feminist music group in the area at any one time, particularly in the smaller cities of Hobart and Darwin. Although Melbourne is often regarded as the epicenter of DIY, avant-garde, experimental and independent music, the list of women bands shows that the metropolis of Sydney produced just as many women bands as Melbourne (the two cities are similar in population size).

Sydney	39	Canberra	05	Darwin	03
Melbourne	32	Brisbane	04	Hobart	02
Adelaide	30	Perth	04	Lismore	01

A more unexpected finding of the national breakdown is the relatively high number of women bands that emerged out of Adelaide compared to larger cities. Historically, Adelaide's reputation for music success stories consolidated during the 1970s with the emergence of (male) rock bands Cold Chisel and The Angels. The city was in a period of growth and with easy access to performance venues it became known as 'Arty Adelaide' throughout the leadership of State Premier, Don Dunstan, until he resigned office in 1979. Adelaide's community radio station 5MMM also played a role, as did artistic, pro-women, spatial initiatives established in the early to mid-1980s; such as the Bakery women's performance space and the Adelaide Women's Art Movement (WAM), which was a space for feminist artists, feminist publications and staging feminist

[7] The song 'Intoxicated' by Toxic Shock makes the following statement in the lyrics, 'The money they spent putting men on the moon/And all they can offer us is feminine protection/Care free-care less/Toxic Shock'.

events. However, there is no single, contributing factor that can easily account for the high number of women bands that emerged out of the city of churches (another colloquial name for Adelaide), other than its political response to mainstream music.

The parameters for the study's band list rest primarily on being comprised of female instrumentalists (including singers) and as having some type of grassroots relationship with the principles of feminism and the women's movement. However, an idiosyncratic characteristic of (second wave) feminism is a tendency to acknowledge (therefore count) all of the women that might have played for an audience, even if it was just for one night or a special event such as a fundraiser. In other words, during the 1970s and 1980s, feminists believed it was a major achievement, given the lack of historical precedent, for women to have formed a band in the first place. The problem is that counting a one-off band tends to 'inflate' the numbers and as this research developed, I became aware of the 'inflation effect' and the possibility that the numbers of Australian women bands might be skewed. Wary of the inflation effect, I placed 38 band names in Appendix B. This represents additional information sourced by Jean Taylor (2009; 2012) and comes from personal experience, word of mouth, and information from posters held by the Victorian Women's Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archive. Nevertheless, in the context of the current study, including this additional information is an attempt to acknowledge the fleeting, passing, the momentary and transient. Women bands that came together for a special occasion, and/or played a few gigs and then vanished, still contributed to the architecture of the women's music scene in Australia. The Appendix A includes some short-lived groups but in general indicates the women bands with substantial profiles and recorded songs, and it is these evidential traces that are discussed in close detail.

The criteria for inclusion and the decisions about which bands, and on what basis, became slightly more complex when considering that women bands were prone to line up changes similar to any music group, and individual members played in more than one band. For example, Celeste Howden played with Stiletto before joining Stray Dags. Stiletto was often perceived to be lesbian/feminist because they played feminist events, as Janie Conway (2008) reported in her interview, but because the line up

consisted of three men during its life, I have omitted that band from this study's list. I have also excluded the Melbourne band Scarlett because the group's members fluctuated frequently and two men regularly appeared in their line up, however, radical feminist historian Jean Taylor (2009, p. 242) includes and counts Scarlet as lesbian/feminist. By contrast, Escargo Go's line up consisted of women for most of its life, and I have included them, although they actually had a male drummer for a short time when they could not find a woman. It should also be noted I have included the commercially oriented Party Girls (see Chapter 4) because (in my view) the group illustrates the complexities of the women's movement and second wave feminism. Overall, these processes demonstrate the contingencies of lesbian and feminist designated music and the complex problems of creating a list of bands on that basis.

Before presenting the chapter overview, I want to briefly mention some variations in the system of referencing. Interviews are cited in the written work using the participant's last name and the year of the interview. Not all of the research interviews have been quoted but they are a primary source of data, listed as Appendix D. Note that Janie Conway is now Conway-Herron but her stage name was Conway and appears as such in the thesis. Catherine Mitchell signed the consent form as Mitchell, which is the name that I have used when referring to her interview. However, in her twenties, Mitchell adopted the name Mystery Carnage as her preferred appellation. Stray Dags credit Mystery Carnage on their recorded music and the discussion of music in the thesis does likewise. The written work also draws on some articles that were published either anonymously or without indicating the author's surname. For some feminists, avoiding surnames was a tactical refusal of patriarchal bloodlines. Where there is no known author for a press clipping, the headline of that article is cited and the references are listed in the same manner. In the thesis, I draw on the work of Jodie Taylor and Jean Taylor. Different dates, and page numbers mostly distinguish their work but when it is not clear, their names are cited in full. Appendix C is a discography of the recordings made by Australian women bands in the study. Song lyrics do not require the author's name in the body of the text, but it is made clear to which band the song originated.

Chapter Outline

The thesis chapters are loosely premised on the overarching subjects of power, space/place, bodies, music - and film - production. Chapter 1, 'Rethinking Women's Music' outlines the study's philosophical methodology for mapping subject histories and rethinking assumptions about Australian women's music. The chapter commences with a summary of Michel Foucault's theory of power and sexuality, particularly his objections to the repressive hypothesis. I then outline the Foucaultian genealogy that I aim to deploy in order to counter the universalising tendencies evident in narratives that overlook women's music in Australia. Following that, the chapter examines the norms of music constructed by and through history documentaries and other writing about lesbians and music. Surprisingly, Jodie Taylor's (2008; 2009; 2012) musicological account does little from a queer perspective to defend the histories of Australian women's music. Chapter 2, 'Spatial Interventions: Second Wave Feminism and Women's Music in Australia' makes the argument that women's music comprised political interventions in gendered (music) space and its practices of spatialisation and spatial intervention were both planned and unplanned. The women's movement in Australia provided the impetus toward the establishment of separate and single-sex spaces through grassroots activism, identifying gender imbalances, separating into autonomous spaces and asserting agency. Music played by women was required at women's dances, and accordingly, many (but not all) women bands started in this manner. Yet the materialisations of women bands were not always done with a collective mentality and/or in a politically cohesive manner. To 'unblock space' and historical fixity, I apply translocal social geography to the spatial practices of women's music. Through a network of private/public sexualities, it is possible to re-read the political and personal agency associated with Australian women's music in everyday places as well as second wave feminist-designated spaces/places.

Chapter 3, 'Performing Social Worlds: Everyday Life, Sexualities, Music' situates women's music as problematic performances of perversity, rather than in/visibility. At a time of a political push to transform understandings of same-sex relations, the women's music scene in Australia was influenced by radicalesbianism, or what came to

be known as 'political lesbianism'. Some (but not all) women bands used this approach to contest the patriarchal heterosexuality of mainstream music as concerns for lesbian visibility intensified. Yet this form of 'women-identified' women's music did not eventuate in the same way that it did in America. An alternative approach to the Australian context is to re-read women's music as performances of non-normative sexualities, embodiments, social relations, queer kinships. From this perspective, it can be seen that Australian women bands 'queered' life (in the sense of making strange heterosexual normativity) and produced different articulations of family and social worlds that may be relevant to conceptualisations of queer in the present day. The argument presented in Chapter 4, 'Making Musical Selves: Production' is that women's music in Australia was a search (knowing and unknowing) for a distinctly Australian sound, dependent on local needs and interests. Dominant narratives (including feminist and queer) have rooted women's music in a set of universal ideas and ideals about separatist folk music played on acoustic guitars to women-only audiences, a radical feminist rejection of commercialism. Women stepped onto a music stage, many for the first time, using do-it-yourself techniques. Yet, Australian women bands largely (not solely) played electric amplified music. They did not all play 'soft and quiet' and there were many disagreements concerning styles, aspirations and methods of playing. Exercising the power of powerlessness, women's music became a technique for experiencing oneself in relation to others, in relation to mainstream music and to other feminist lesbians and lesbian feminists. This chapter shows that Australian women's music was a commodity with a different type of capital, a technique for producing sexualities, gendered musical selves, and a type of 'Australian' sound.

Chapter 5, 'Queering Histories: Writing A Film On Australian Women's Music' is the concluding chapter of the study and offers a dialogue between the preceding chapters and the film activities that took place during the academic pathway. There are a number of interdisciplinary complexities associated with writing a documentary film, re-reading feminism and re-interpreting women's music in Australia. Returning to the film/research method and practice-led processes introduced in the opening pages of the thesis, this chapter offers a fuller reflection on the theory/practice nexus, the movement between research and writing a film; the film/research that began with film

practice and changed direction (toward theorising the content of the film), the emphasis on research interviews, and the challenges to do with sexuality. The discussion also outlines the principles of realist documentary films adopted by liberationists (gay, lesbian, feminist) during the 1970s-1980s and how those approaches might influence documentary production in the present day. I reflect on the tasks of film funding, pre-visualisation, script writing and the making of a short video. These film/research activities bring together a type of re-performance of the past and the potential for further performances in different sites and social spaces. The past is not envisaged in the traditional (patriarchal, heteronormative) sense of the term but as a contemporary writing of queer, feminist histories through appearance-disappearance-reappearance. The following chapters also draw strength from that possibility. On the one hand the study is an idealised queer/feminist project with the 'emancipatory potential' (Butler 1986, p. 41) of transforming personal agency. It is a reiteration of the hope of many female musicians that at least one other girl, woman, sister, mother, daughter will get up and play music. The other is a yearning for lesbian and feminist histories. To date, the histories of Australian women's music are not written or documented anywhere else, which makes this study a unique contribution.

1

Rethinking Women's Music

Introduction

This chapter presents a methodological framework for rethinking women's music on the basis of the account described in the Introduction. Commencing with the theoretical concerns of the study, the chapter sketches Michel Foucault's genealogical approach as a way of mapping histories and activating knowledges. Formulating histories is an encounter with power/knowledge, the logics, codes, conventions and organising structures of institutional mechanisms. Thus, I explain Foucault's model of power before outlining genealogy, and more particularly, his claim that power is productive and not necessarily repressive. Foucault's model of power also gives rise to a different kind of political practice to that which is often associated with universal feminist imperatives and the claims that unrecognised, lost or 'missing' female artists, authors are an effect of gender and/or sexual repression.

Conventional (music) history achieves its dominance by masking over that which does not conform to established expectations and it is my contention that the authoritative, universalising history constructed by and through music documentaries contributes to entrenched ideas about Australian women's music. Therefore following the theoretical, methodological framework for the investigation, I present a précis analysis of the documentaries *Long Way To The Top: Stories of Australian and New Zealand Rock and Roll* (2001) and *Love Is In The Air* (2003). Here, it may be noted that one of the initial imperatives of the study was to examine existing documentaries for the purposes of making a new film and to analyse modes of production and so on. The obstacles encountered in making the proposed film are detailed in the final chapter of the thesis. Although the film was not made, some aspects of the film practice research/method

have been retained. The current chapter concludes by turning to other forms of writing in order to query the assumption that a history of women's music in America is universally applicable to the Australian context. Dominant feminist narratives about American women's music tend to smooth over the cultural differences, complexities of other countries and other narratives. Whereas rethinking women's music as heterogenous and fragmented, rather than a singularly definitive story, opens an important space for the discussion of neglected, situated experiences.

Power and Social Ordering

To re-think and re-map the second wave feminist notion of oppression in relation to women bands, I draw on Foucault's theory of power and sexuality, and social ordering. Power is central to an analysis of Australian women's music given what was believed about women's oppression and 'powerlessness' at the time of women bands. Concurrent with the rise of capitalism in Western societies during the nineteenth century, came the concept of Victorian 'prudery' and a discourse about the repression of sexuality, or at least this is how the past is widely imagined in the present. However, in *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault (1978) investigates Victorian discourses of sexuality not so much to disprove repression as a fact but to establish that sexuality, far from being 'unmentionable' was increasingly the subject of a variety of discourses (*scientia sexualis*) from the nineteenth-century onwards. *The History of Sexuality* challenges three widely shared assumptions by asking; (1) 'Is sexual repression truly an established historical fact?' (2) 'Are prohibition, censorship, and denial truly the forms through which power is exercised in a general way?' (3) 'Was there really a historical rupture between the age of repression and the critical analysis of repression' (1978, p. 10). Foucault studies history as a multiplicity of haphazard jolts, discontinuities and his critique of 'the repressive hypothesis' proposes that 'silence' and prohibitions around sex during the Victorian era were actually accompanied by an explosion of discourses; 'an incitement to speak about it and to do so more and more; a determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it spoken about and to cause it to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail' (1978, p. 18). Through this process, sex became 'not something one simply judged; it was a thing one

administered' (1978, p. 24). By Foucault's reasoning, the censorship of sex connects to a larger discourse aimed at social regulation that takes place within the entire social body (in schools, the family and so on). Human welfare, existence and survival are shaped by social regulations and the way power/knowledges about sex and sexuality circulate in and through discourse.

Foucault's meaning of discourse and discursive practices suggests that human language structures human thought and knowledge. Indeed he says, 'it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together' (1978, p. 100). Discourse is everywhere and it is impossible to imagine human life outside language, it constitutes ideas about truth and shapes courses of action. Yet, if discourse is both the instrument and the effect of power, as Foucault (1978, p. 101) says, what is meant by power? Is power something we can acquire? If so, what do we do when we have it? Is power equitable with repression? In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault identifies two schemas for analyzing power, a mechanism of repression (Reich's hypothesis) or a warlike clash (Nietzsche's hypothesis) between forces. Foucault's (1978, p. 16) preference for conceiving power as a relationship of force, and thus the Nietzschian hypothesis, is based on the notion that the reversals in political systems, the shifting balance and disequilibrium can be interpreted as a continuous conflict of confrontation. Rather than understanding power in terms of a 'top down' hierarchy, which implies a repressive mechanism, Foucault sunders power from oppressive interpretations and conceives it as ubiquitous, running throughout all social relations and economies. Dispersed and localised rather than situated in any one dimension of social life such as class and gender, power acquires 'power', according to Foucault (1978, p. 92), as a 'multiplicity of force relations' that are operationalised and exercised.

> Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere … power is not an institution, and not a structure … it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. (1978, p. 93)

On this model, power is not a stabilised entity, it is 'a strategical situation' that is neither outside nor exterior to the social body but a weblike system of relations that

are inseparable from other relations. As an interconnected network, a set of relations that cannot be separated from other relations, power is within them; a continual interplay of forces in which struggle and confrontation are always contributing to the conditions of possibility (1978, p. 93). Relations of power and their effects are therefore both interior and exterior to economy systems, knowledges and sexual relations, and 'major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations' (1978, p. 94). Accordingly, Foucault (1978, p. 100) suggests that discourse is the site where power and knowledge come together as a multiplicity of possibilities. Individuals within this schema are constituted by and through power relations, without a central or localised mechanism of repression that determines or fixes subjects in a certain manner. Through subjectification, individuals are the result of power exercised on them and individual subjects may also themselves exercise power by resisting either as a mobilised group and/or as individuals.

Second wave feminists argued that power is situated in gender. In important ways, feminist discourses about power opened up necessary political questions to do with women's legal and social position, emphasising that power is a primary concern for women because women have suffered a lack of it (Kimball 1981). Accordingly, feminists pushed for legal reforms and significant social changes. A detailed discussion of second wave feminist interventions in the so-called gendered space of music and what was done to overcome women's oppression premised on this type of thinking is presented in Chapter 2. Fundamental to the concept of women's oppression is the notion of one group dominating another, a 'top down' mechanism of (class) repression as some feminists conceive it (Marxism conceives class similarly). In this framework, men and women are grouped together along the lines of binarised gender and the realities of material life are invoked as setting limits for women on a model of repression. For example, feminists such as Nancy Hartsock (1990) believe that gender places all 'women' in one minority group and men occupy the dominant patriarchal 'class'. For these reasons, Foucault's theories of power came under close criticism from some second wave feminists, who suggested that he is a man wielding power according to the dominant gender class and whose theories came into being concurrent with the critique of patriarchal dominance that emerged from the women's movement.

Given the second wave feminist tendency to favour clear battle lines formulated on the certainty (it was believed) of a binary gender model, and the actuality, materiality of female lives, some feminists interpreted Foucault's theory as failing women (and power) because power cannot, as he tells it, be delineated exactly in this way. Thus, Hartsock's (1990, p. 170) view is that Foucault's concept of power is apolitical because he suggests that 'power is everywhere, and so ultimately nowhere', which leads to abstract individualism. How then, she asks, can subjects be politicised as 'women' and 'men' and as disenfranchised 'workers' and so on? Yet, second wave feminist assumptions that all women universally lack power were problematic. A critique such as Hartsock's, overlooks, in my belief, Foucault's detailed questioning of power's effects and the political, philosophical, discursive interconnectedness of the material to the non-material. Foucault's (1984, p. 85), theory of power is not problem free, but throughout the remainder of his work, he continued to theorise power in terms of competitive discourses, the 'endlessly repeated play of dominations', which led him to conceptualise power as productive and inextricable from life. In my view, the underlying strength of Foucault's premise rests on; (a) norms, normalisation, normativity and the processes of social ordering; (b) power as inextricable from the forces of resistance; (c) conditions of possibility and what may 'open' in that space.

The 'normal' becomes attached to norms by and through processes of normalization. Following Foucault's theory, normativity can be defined, as 'a field of power, a set of relations that can be thought of as a network of norms', says Jakobsen (1998, p. 517). It is actualised through a wide variety of social, cultural, political organisations and practices, from the complexities of the health system, laws about marriage, banalities of television and family sitcoms, to the production, consumption of music and the formulation of histories. Rather than rescuing Australian women's music from historical invisibility premised on the oppression of gender, it is my belief that a Foucaultian model of power offers an appropriate, alternative analysis of women's music as a series of conflicts and warlike clashes. On that basis, this investigation accounts for the subjugation of Australian women's music (its knowledges and histories) by tracing a set of battle-like relations to the norms of the mainstream music industry and in different ways to the women's movement.

At this early stage, the interviews conducted for the study must also be mentioned as part of the analytical approach because they are a primary source of evidentiary material supporting the argumentation of the thesis. In general, the research interviews suggest (second wave) feminist understandings of gender oppression, but they also exemplify Foucaultian ideas about power, sexuality, social ordering, and (music) norms. For example, singer Catherine Mitchell of Stray Dags reports that doing a press interview exposed invisible processes of normalisation.

> People would say what does it mean to be in an all-women band and I would say well everybody asks me in a way they would never ask guys in an all-male band because that is the invisible norm … as soon as you have an all-women band by its very existence it has broken some rule about what women are capable of and or where their place is and therefore it's a radical act. (Mitchell 2008)

The point about 'otherness' or freakish curiosity to the norm is discussed in the chapter on music production (see Chapter 4). However, similar to Mary Celeste Kearney's (1997) excellent paper on American riot grrrl music, my objective is not to reveal the true nature of 'women's music' bands in Australia but to analyse the various ways they are culturally, popularly understood and the processes by which they are 'put into discourse' (Foucault 1978). The thesis therefore aims to rethink the discursive links between music, gender and sexuality. It suggests that women bands in Australia made a departure from the norms of gender, being both enabled and constrained by the political ideals of second wave feminism, and gay and lesbian liberation. Some women came to feel secure in a politico-cultural attachment to the marginal and from that position exercised the 'power of powerlessness' (Foucault 1997). Therefore, the investigation is not a search for a repressed historical 'truth' but charts the contingencies of a scene that involved socio-politico music performances, the acts and activities of a significant number of people at a particular time and place.

The second part of Foucault's theory of power, sexuality and social ordering that I propose to apply throughout this thesis is a methodological practice that might be called 'activating perversity'. As I have stated, the histories of lesbian/feminist bands in Australia involve a set of relationships between sex, gender and sexuality. Dominant narratives have suggested that sexuality prevented women's music from crossing over

to mainstream music (see Chapter 3, 4). To explore these ideas further, I activate perversity by and through the deployment of (Foucaultian) histories of sexuality and social ordering, and the exploration of perversity, defined as the 'turn away from what is right, good, proper' (*Macquarie dictionary*, 1987). First, it is necessary to examine the histories and the social processes by which the norms of sexuality are established. Second, to look at the politics of sexuality that influenced women's music and the ideals associated with the (possible) subversion of gender/sexuality.

The hetero/homo binary and the normal/abnormal logic associated with hegemonic systems of power/knowledge and constitutive effects can be historically traced, according to Foucault, as a form of discursivity and social ordering. We are a society harnessed to ideas about the proliferation, preservation of human life, he argues, and thus sex and sexuality. To study the development of social ordering as a discourse aimed at obtaining sexual 'truth' - *scientia sexualis* - Foucault turned his attention to the 'scientification' of sex and the medical discourses of Victorian sexologists. In the nineteenth century, population growth accelerated, and as Foucault tells it, so did anxieties about social behaviour. Fascinated and preoccupied with various maladies and afflictions thought to be associated with lewd, degenerate behaviour, Victorian ideas about homosexuality conjured the possibility of unrestrained masturbation by any person, which was regarded (and still is by some) as improperly connected to a pleasure principle and not to the production of new life. Deploying a field of medical rationality and scientific deduction, Victorian sexologists conceived a model of sexual normalcy/deviancy, as Foucault writes: in so doing, 'the homosexual' was (accidentally) brought into being as a subject and scientific fact.

> As defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form … The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. (Foucault 1978, p. 43)

The homosexual became both a classified personage with a categorical name and also understood (inextricably) as a deviation from the heterosexual norm.[8] At the same time, Victorian society put 'into operation an entire machinery for producing true discourses' concerning sexuality 'as if it suspected sex of harbouring a fundamental secret' (1978, p. 69; see Chapter 5 for a discussion of confession). However, given that the homosexual subject came into language as a 'life form' by and through contingent concerns for human reproduction, the homosexual cannot not be explained simply or fully as a result of authoritative power exerted by one group of people over another. To restate Foucault's (1978, p. 82) point: the clinical reasoning and the medical model of rationalisation and the logic exercised by a fraternity of scientific practices may be analysed as a 'positive technology of power'. In this sense, Foucault argues that sexuality is not something innate, which is repressed by oppressive social mechanisms, but rather it is a discursive effect of context-specific systems of power/knowledge.

The scientific discourses of sex had enormous social impact. The forces of medical investigation, and the subjectification and rationalities embedded in scientific reasoning, generally conceived homosexuality as degenerate and/or biologically innate. Equipped with the hetero/homo binary and new concepts of normalcy/deviancy, Victorian society began to feel threatened. Human subjects named as homosexuals, perverts, sexual deviants, inverts, blurred the natural order and the corresponding social order. In turn, the search for causes and cures of homosexuality intensified, as did punishments. This is not to say that same-sex relations did not exist prior to homosexuality coming into language through the scientification of sex and the discourses of Victorian doctors. Rather such relations flourished in many social spaces and cultural practices, but were not seen as expressions of innate disposition or as a 'species type'. There is not space here (or need) to detail the viewpoints of prominent Victorian sexologists and their competing ideas about the possible causes and cures of the homosexual's deviation from the norm (see Sullivan 2003 for further discussion).

[8] In 1860s Europe, Karl Ulrichs and Károly Kertbeny both agitated for the rights of the homosexual. Ulrichs opted for public declarations of his sexuality. By contrast, while Kertbeny coined the words *homosexual* and *heterosexual*, he published anonymously and believed sexuality to be a private matter (see Kennedy 2002; Lancaster and di Leonardo 1997; Oosterhuis 1992).

But it is important to this study that the classification of homosexuality (and heterosexuality) is relatively recent, and that sexualities have traceable histories.

Since the Victorian era, heterosexuality and homosexuality have become intimately entwined in one's sense of self and its legacies are still evident in the present day (Jagose 1996). Arguably, the question that continues to haunt disciplines, such as education, religion, health and the judiciary, is whether sexual 'deviation' involves a willful turn away from all that is considered to be 'right' in a socially constructed norm, or whether sexuality is best understood as biologically determined and natural. Explanations that seek to attribute homosexuality to a prior condition or event (biologically innate or psychiatric) are usually based on the hope of finding a workable treatment for those (heterosexuals and homosexuals) who want to be rid of the possibility of homosexuality within one's self and in everyone else (Greenberg 1997). For example, in the celebrated American documentary *Word Is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives* (2007, originally 1977), Whitey Fladden and Nick Stokes recall painful periods of hospitalisation during the 1960s and 1970s. Sanctioned therapy was administered to Fladden and Stokes with the aim of eliminating homosexual feelings. For different reasons, the political argument against unfair treatment towards homosexuals has sought to establish a biological, genetic disposition - the notion that sexuality is not a choice but innate and therefore natural - over an individual's 'will to be'. Thus, the case for same-sex human rights has also been reinforced by and through ideas about what constitutes 'natural' sexuality. Medical professions have now, purportedly, stopped looking for a cure. However, the treatment and intervention for homosexuality remain highly active with plenty of time, money and energy invested in a 'gay gene' search to ascertain 'normalcy'. In political, social and cultural settings, individuals continue to struggle with sexual identity, internalised homophobia and self-hatred. Many seek psychiatric counsel, therapy and/or religious reparation, looking for causal explanations, though one has to ask why this might be, if not to eliminate it.

It is often difficult to think about sexuality as historically constructed. Yet Foucault (1978, p. 105) argues that sexuality is the name that can be given to the hetero/homo binary, the 'historical construct … a great surface network in which the stimulation of

bodies, the intensifications of pleasures, the incitement to discourse' is linked to the production of knowledge/power and as something other than universal, essential, natural. Foucault's theory of sexuality points to a binary that configures a hegemonic public founded on discourses and processes concerning the privatization of sex, the sexualisation of private personhood and a narrative about the normalcy of heterosexual life (Berlant and Warner 1998, p. 559). The reproduction of life, attests Michael Warner (1991, pp. 7-9), is a form of 'repro-narrativity', which upholds the idea that our lives are somehow 'made more meaningful by being embedded in a narrative of generational succession'. As Sullivan (2003, p. 85) says, 'systems of power/knowledge constitute and regulate the sexual field, producing specific identities in order to serve particular ends, most notably heterosexual reproduction'. Heterosexual 'normalcy' involves so many normalising practices, disciplining regimes that actualise norms and normativity (not always about sex), founded on the so-called rational thinking of commonsense, that heterosexuality tends not to self-interrogate (Berlant and Warner 1998, p. 557). Yet, heterosexuality is much more than a concern for the continuation of the species; it is a relation to a homo/hetero binarised self, and self-normalcy, based on the (moral, ethical, political) idea(l)s of generational transmission. Thus, subject histories of inclusion/exclusion need to be examined.

Sexualities within the Australian women's music scene were socially constructed encounters, performed, enabled and constrained by ideas about binary social ordering, as this thesis demonstrates: one's potentially subversive yet regulated, binarised, sexual self provided (in part) the momentum for embodied, politico-socio relations around music. For example, Kaye Brown (2006) of Razor Cuts confirms that for her music is 'sort of sexual, you've got to like the same things'. In other words, there was a strong connection, for Brown, between the activity of making music and sexuality.

> In jamming you don't know where the other person's going but you're enjoying what they're doing, and isn't that a description of sex. It gets a bit blurred for me because music added a dimension to my relationship with Jude [Haines] … the fact that we were creating such fantastic music drew us together and we were together by the end of the band … our relationship drove a lot of our music. (Brown 2006)

Australian women's music as both political intervention and sexualised space is discussed throughout the next three chapters. Not all women interviewed for the investigation draw the linkages as Brown does (see also Chapter 5). However, the thesis illustrates the overwhelming emergence of new 'life', new ideas about sex, gender, sexuality that flowed on to social relations with multiple intensifications and experiences: a shifting perception of one's musical/politico/binarised/sexual self that unfolded during the time of women bands. The study demonstrates the Foucaultian premise that whatever is being exercised, and/or enforced, as normalcy/deviancy will always be met with opposition and a refusal to accept or go along with those exerting power. Yet understanding norms is complex, because as Berlant and Warner (1998, p. 557) write, 'to be against heteronormativity is not to be against norms. To be against the processes of normalisations is not to be afraid of ordinariness'. Women band members in Australia negotiated the ordinariness and normalcy of everyday life, the multi-layered, multifaceted public/private struggle, which (in part) constructed and was constructed by a politico-musical context during the period examined. In my view, Foucault's interpretation of power as a technique, a technology for life, opens the possibilities for understanding sexuality as complex networks of conflict, rather than a system of (gender, sexuality) repression. Power produces new activities, he contends, new thinking, and even new 'life', for example, the homosexual as a subject. This analysis of women's music in Australia proposes that social, cultural and political reversals may be possible. At the same time such processes are themselves also open to the disciplining regimes and assumptions associated with norms and normalisation.

Sexuality, Power, Politics

Over time, the epistemology of sexual deviancy constructed in Victorian medical discourses gave way to a political demand for legitimacy. Homophile groups of the mid-twentieth century, particularly in Europe and America, campaigned for human, civil rights using available knowledges of sexuality. The Homophile Movement as it came to be known, promoted the integration and assimilation of homosexuals. In actuality, homophile groups diverged between those who believed the principles of sexuality should be confined to the institutions and the structures of private life and those

believing they are a matter for public discourse (Jagose 1996, p. 31). These tensions intensified sharply during the period that we now refer to as the Gay (and Lesbian) Liberation Movement, when a new set of ideas emerged about liberating one's homosexuality. Whereas homophile groups advocated reform and assimilation, liberation suggested a 'distinctly gay identity' (1996, p. 31) and 'proud to be gay' became the new rally cry for 'openness, defiance, pride, identity - and above all self-activity' (Weeks 1977, p. 185). Liberationists attempted, individually and *en masse*, to break from earlier medicalised models of homosexuality. However, many questions continued to revolve around the notion of sameness and similarity to other human beings and/or the ways in which assimilation obscures differences.

During the 1970s-1980s, ideas about assimilation and liberation intensified binary hierarchies of good/bad homosexuals. For example, *Stonewall* the film, offers an exploration of period-specific anxieties and whether 'homos' should be nationalistic, upstanding citizens wearing particular clothes, having particular kinds of jobs and so on.[9] This system of social regulation and the problems that it caused can be seen in the lives of women band members who are discussed throughout this investigation; assimilationism tended to connect to music aspiration (although not always), whereas for some, liberationist idea(l)s tended to link music with the politics of sexuality. Brown (2006) confirms that in Razor Cuts 'the message was freedom to be lesbians, to be women … and we were prepared to scream and shout for that'. Jazz musician Sharon Jakovsky (2008) of Zelda Swang, reports that for her being in an all-women band was about music and 'a lot to do with my sexuality and being in a lesbian environment was great … a vehicle for learning'. But others remember differently and the process of discovering what is possible to do and say, as a music group, is incredibly complex. Marian Webb (2008) of the Budgies says that none of the women bands that she played in were actually all lesbians. Thus, there were various experiences and many individual viewpoints of sexuality within the scene.

[9] *If These Walls Could Talk 2* (2000) is an example of a narrative film that explores the way in which lesbians in America responded to each other's clothes and behaviour during the 1970s.

Assimilation generally assumes that tolerance can be achieved by recognising sameness and making differences invisible through incorporation, integration and social inclusion on that basis, hence being indistinguishable from others (Sullivan 2003, p. 23). Assimilationists may advocate politically for better treatment of homosexuals by placing an essentialising, normalising emphasis on sameness, however, assimilationists tend to agree that homosexuality is actually a private affair. Graham Willett (2000, p. 70) says that the 'consenting adult' is crucial to assimilation, which assumes homosexuality is a 'matter for individual conscience rather than public policy'. Arguing that sexuality is nobody else's business is one way to reassure heterosexuals that homosexuals are not a threat to the social fabric. Yet, as Nikki Sullivan (2003, p. 23) suggests, assimilation does not ultimately attend to difference and different needs. The problem with the assimilationist view of sexuality is that it remains behind the closed door of the bedroom: 'private' subjects may lack political agency. In turn, to regard oneself as a biological accident engenders pity and endless victimisation.

The new political imperative of the 1970s-1980s was to experience homosexuality as something positive based on pride and celebration. Gay liberationist methods drew on social change models used by the women's movement and feminist consciousness-raising (Jagose 1996, pp. 37-38), which insisted that personal experiences be recognised as authoritative. Liberationists turned away from assimilation in the belief that homosexuals were oppressed as a category (class) of human being, similar to the women's movement's notion of female oppression. The idea and idea(l) of liberation offered 'the promise of freedom' (Sullivan 2003, p. 31). Implicit in the concept of gay and lesbian liberation is the notion that certain acts and actions may be performed that automatically guarantees freedom. Thus liberationists focussed on coming out about one's homosexuality, thinking that it could (and would) ensure that outcome. For this reason, documentary films like *Word Is Out* were replete with excitement. In the film, Pat Bond who is ex-army women's corps, says, 'I'm coming out now, right? Here I am on television. Big white face on the screen saying, 'yeah, you know, I'm gay' (Bond in *Word Is Out*). Coming out during the gay and lesbian liberation era, took the form of literal declarative statements, such as, 'I am lesbian' (and still does, although identity

categories have expanded). Declarative same-sex statements combined eroticised kissing, holding hands in public, which felt revolutionary and (ideally) not shameful.

Coming out is defined by an epistemology of the closet, says Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990, p. 3), and 'closeted-ness itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech acts of silence, not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularity by fits and starts'. In other words, if the closet is where it is assumed one is vaguely protected, the processes of coming out are structured by what one says, who has authority to speak and when it can be spoken (1990, p. 3). This type of thinking operated in the lives of women band members, which became apparent during the research interviews conducted for the study. For example, in 1974, prior to the formation of Clitoris Band, Theresa Jack and (then) lover Penny Short were studying at university, training to be teachers. Routine student evaluation assessed individuals as 'fit to teach' and included questions about sexuality. Emboldened by feminism, new politics of sexuality and student activism, Penny Short 'came out' during her evaluation. She was advised to 'keep quiet'. However, Short had already published a poem about lesbian love in the student magazine (see 'Victimisation by Education Deptartment' 1974). The two women were also 'reported' for kissing each other on university lawns (see *Witches and Faggots, Dykes and Poofters*). Re-called for re-assessment, both Short and Jack subsequently lost their scholarships, which triggered the abandonment of their (potential) teaching careers. During her interview, Jack (2008) says that she had a sense of things changing politically for lesbians and 'we were part of that, but it was hard for me personally'. The experiences of these two women also illustrate that the open declaration of one's homosexuality can be used negatively, exposing individuals to punishments, surveillances and regulations, which in turn engender forms of self-hatred, internalised homophobia. Coming out and identity (being) does not necessarily line up with behaviour (what one does, how one acts) in the social world.

Foucault's critique of repression proposes not how things should be but that it is necessary to resist that which is insufferable, and in turn to develop strategies for action. Yet, according to Foucault, liberatory logic misconceives power, as something that can be acquired, seized, shared, given and taken away within an individual. In an

interview titled 'The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom', Foucault (1997, p. 282) explains his wariness about the underlying principles of liberation and the risk of 'falling back on the idea there exists a human nature … imprisoned in and by mechanisms of repression'. Putting it another way, if individuals are always constituted within power relations then sexuality cannot be conceived as something extra-discursive, repressed and in need of liberation. Following Foucault, David Halperin (1995, p. 30) argues that the structuring principle of coming out can be re-interpreted as a form of resistance rather than liberation. Through political resistance and the language of an organised movement, gays and lesbians developed ways of acting and speaking with authority, which brought these identities into public awareness.

In general, the historical trajectory of non-normative sexualities might be summarised as a narrative of establishing sameness through identity and diversity, which then moved on to difference, fragmentation and gender performativity. Similar to the women's movement's strategies and focus on gender, the legitimacy of gay and lesbian identities was a preoccupation for much of the 1970s, whereas during the 1980s, identity was problematised and the focus shifted to 'questioning the homogenising tendencies of identity before endeavouring to capture these in a more fluid idea(l)s' (Lloyd 2007, p. 7). But as Clare Hemmings (2005, p. 115) suggests, things are not always decade-specific, nor clearly delineated. There is also a danger in oversimplifying areas of thought (such as gay and lesbian and/or feminist) and smoothing over the contests in meanings that are different at different times. This may lead to 'flattening' history (2005, p. 115). In this inquiry, gender performativity is deployed where it is relevant and appropriate to the theoretical framework (see Chapter 3 in particular). This is an attempt to draw out the detail of the thinking, the rise and fall of contests and the investments that are made at particular times. I also indicate past-present linkages.

Mapping Histories

The account of power, sexuality and Australian women's music that I discuss, is characterised by a tension between past and present. Its central concerns are with personhood and subjectivity; people making, performing, consuming music at a

particular time and in a particular place and space. Thus my interest in 'selves,' people's sense of self and their relation to others, and how that might be shaped by gender, sex and sexuality, has given rise to a methodological question of how to 'do' the histories of a person (Rose 1996). Objective and so-called universalising histories are founded on the precepts of Humanism and the idea that each individual human subject possesses a conscious, knowing, unified, rational self (Weedon 1987, p. 21). The human-centred philosophy of reason, purpose and modernity, have been the cornerstones of Western thought for many centuries. A knowable essence of human nature is at the heart of the humanist tradition, the dictums of a 'real world'. It is within this model that the values and concepts of justice, beauty and truth are derived, from an underlying transcendent, metaphysical order that is pre-cultural, extra-discursive and apolitical. To reach a state of enlightenment, rationality is privileged over emotions, spirituality and organised religion over the material, and the objective over the subjective (McNay 1992). Unenlightened human subjects make steady progress from a place that is unemancipated and therefore 'dark', toward freedom, equality, prosperity, rationality and peace (Brown 2001, p. 6). On the basis of a linear progression from a place of darkness to one of enlightenment, and in an effort to reveal something about being human, societies and cultures fashion something known as (universal) History in many disciplines. History as an institutional practice and influential discourse, systematically shapes the past into a timeless and seamless arrangement of facts, events, stories, occurrences, a type of coherency of the self that becomes natural and given: the more uncontroversial it appears, the more objective.

By contrast, Foucault's genealogical methodology makes a departure from universalising, historical narratives about the ontology of human being. People have histories constituted within a historical framework, and for Foucault, the achievement of such subject histories necessitates a genealogical approach. A few years after *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault wrote a paper titled 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' where he developed a theory of power and genealogy, based on an understanding of power as a warlike clash, a continuous series of conflicts and confrontations rather than a mechanism of repression.

> Genealogy rejects indefinite teleologies … genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things … its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues to secretly animate the present, having imposed predetermined form. (Foucault 1984, p. 77)

Teleological narratives associated with metaphysics are often found in the field of biological science and have been used to explain the origins of the universe, based on the evidence of end goals and the belief that purpose and design are part of nature. Here, aims, actions, intentions are determined and guided by the movement toward a 'natural' final objective. The metaphysical account, of which Foucault is critical, is characterised by concepts of reality as a set of abstract and unchanging universal structures, which we can come to know and on which we can base our knowledge of others, past and present. The task for the study is to engage critically with the discourses that shaped what was possible and not possible for Australian women bands at the time of their existence, against a problematic of not wanting to universalise or re-naturalise History through the re-telling of a story as singular and true.

Genealogy in the Foucaultian sense is a technique for investigating the interior/exterior-isation of 'being human' and constitutes truth/knowledges by and through the relationships that human beings have with one another and with themselves. Rather than the self that emerges through a process of enlightenment to discover the true self, genealogy accounts for a 'contingent self'. The Foucaultian genealogist takes the individualised, interiorised, totalised, psychologised understanding of what it is to be human (Rose 1996, p. 129) and delineates sites of problems, struggles and conflicts without necessarily resolving outcomes. Implicated in a genealogical domain, the body is 'the inscribed surface of events' (Foucault 1984, p. 83). Political theorist Wendy Brown (2001, p. 27) writes, 'genealogy exposes the power of the terms by which we live; it does violence to their ordinary ordering and situation and hence their givenness'. Rather than a singularly progressive 'history', Foucaultian genealogy reconfigures sites of political agitation and politically exploitable openings into 'histories'. It takes a different approach from objective History by searching for the politically exploitable fissures without claiming an omnipotent God-like position and capacity (Brown 1998, p. 42). Investing in a Foucaultian genealogical approach to

formulate the histories of Australian women's music, which this inquiry does, is not a search for universal origins or the truth of the past. Instead, it consists of critically analysing the past in specific, situated ways, and for example, attempting to unsettle and query what is all too often taken as given and as true.

In order to reveal what cannot be shown in the broad, brush strokes of universalising histories, the genealogical model of analysis focuses on knowledges that have been excluded and the localised minutiae of subject histories. Central to the work of genealogical criticism is the reappearance of subjugated knowledges. Moreover, it means identifying ways of knowing and being that are rendered abject by institutional histories, the metaphysical logic and rationalities that support them. Foucault makes this clear in his historico-political discourse of war and 'truth' functioning as a weapon.

> When I say 'subjugated knowledges' I am … referring to a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as non-conceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity. (Foucault 2004, p. 7)

Subjugated knowledges are those, which have been rejected or considered too local and too specific to be deemed of any significance and/or value instead of becoming established and widely recognised. Systemic social organisations and stratifications rely on the normative and normalising processes of hegemony to maintain law and order, particularly along lines of class, race, gender, and sexuality (bourgeois, white, male, heterosexual) and function by excluding certain subject formations or abjecting certain blocks of knowledges. The disciplinary practices of History prioritise fact as scientific and true, claims Foucault (2004, p. 7), and in order to achieve the truth status of the stories it tells, History must disqualify, mask over other knowledges that might compete with and therefore destabilise the 'facts' of the past. This masking over constructs official, authoritative histories as unquestioned and in doing so shores up a set of normalised subject positions, and normalising values, beliefs, at the expense of others. The narrativisation of History as singular and knowable also depends on the constitution of competing interpretations of the past as either true or false. In other words, History tends to tell a timeless story as if it is nowhere and everywhere,

whereas genealogy involves acknowledging situatedness, the perspectival character of knowledge, experience and perception.

Genealogy is an instrument. It is a technique for discovering and illustrating that truth and being do not necessarily lie at the root of all that we know. As poststructuralism acknowledges, histories are contingent upon positionality and involve complex processes of interpretation, judgement, evaluation, which are often hidden from view. Foucault's genealogical approach is attuned to the role of critique and interpretation, and according to Wendy Brown (2001, p. 100), depicts local histories as an 'embattled emergence - something that must fight for place and, more specifically, must displace other conventions of history in order to prevail'. In turn, the Foucaultian genealogist 'must be able to recognise the events of history, its jolts, its surprises, its unsteady victories and unpalatable defeats' (Foucault 1984, p. 80). Given the omission of Australian women's music from music History and (some) feminist and queer narratives, a genealogical approach is integral (in my view) to this inquiry. Formulating the histories of Australian women's music is a fight for place, a need to 'rupture' entrenched, universal ways of thinking. Foucault's (1980, p. 118) genealogical concern reveals how the 'effects of truth are produced within discourses, which in themselves are neither true nor false'. Everyday ideas about commonsense rely on universality, self-evident objectivity and that which is believed to be given is informed by making a distinction between true and false, whereas the interpretive analysis of genealogical critique is premised on histories as the continual reproduction of the true/false division. Exploring the (Australian women's music) histories of human beings through Foucaultian genealogy - subjectification rather than objectification - aims to expose the assumptions of self-evidentiary truth/knowledge. Yet criticism and interpretation do not have to conclude what has to be done in the future or establish an unbroken continuity with the past.

Mapping the past as problems, errors and failings of the human self and the human body, reveals competitive battles for knowledges where truth and power are in a '*repeated play of dominations*' (Foucault 1984, p. 85). Discourse, knowledge/truth conceived as relations of power, warlike battles for domination at certain times and in

certain places, suggests that histories can be wrested away from temporality, the structured ordering of 'timelessness' and the singularity implicit in objective, universalising History. However, there is neither logical bearing, nor anything to infer that what happens in the past determines what is done in the future, what is valued and what is discarded, which in theory opens the possibility for subjugated knowledges to reverse and transform themselves. Since genealogy does not necessitate outcomes, or resolve what is 'true/false', its space of possibility aims to avoid the predetermination implicit in political proscriptions associated with party-based politics. Nevertheless, Brown (1998; 2001) argues that Foucault's genealogy to map subject histories can be read as *genealogical politics*, a discursive space for political thought, judgement, and possibilities. Foucault (1984, p. 81) insists that genealogy does not establish conclusions (origins or futures) in a logical and linear progression, hence it 'does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of the people'. If histories are haphazard there are no destinies and no foretold outcomes. But as Brown (1998, p. 37) eloquently points out, the combative space of history is soiled with grime. Genealogy, she writes, 'promises dirty histories, histories of power and subjection, histories of bids for hegemony waged, won and vanquished, the *endlessly repeated play of dominations* rather than histories of reason, meaning or higher purpose'. Given that histories are 'dirty' as are the mechanisms of their structures and organisations, my contention is this project is perversely invested in the grime of competing stories with 'no higher purpose' other than mapping histories considered too far down the hierarchy of music history to qualify as important.

Genealogy is necessarily political and political processes grapple with the logics of power, the entrenched regimes of rationality. The spaces opened by genealogy are also discursive. Foucault (1978, p. 101) writes, 'discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile'. Foucault's genealogical methodology offers a spatial ordering of historical forces and emergences that are (in the process) loosened from prescriptive solutions tied to truth. If power is 'everywhere', as Foucault (1984, p. 88) argues, genealogical methodology introduces the concept of 'effective histories'. The totalising logic of history is effectively replaced with the randomness of accident and 'discontinuity - as it divides our emotions,

dramatises our instincts, multiplies our bodies and sets it against itself' (1984, p. 88). Genealogical perspectives strive to perform de-naturalisations (ruptures) and understand histories as perpetual states of confrontation, domination, a struggle of forces and conflicts between different blocks of power. On this poststructuralist model of power, agency and political action are not clear-cut, which shakes the optimism of the liberal project. Navigating the past as effective histories, in which power is everywhere, may heighten anxieties, but it also introduces questions and re-considerations. Effective histories may or may not dislodge hegemonic truth, they offer potential. It is my contention, therefore, that it is possible to expose the ways in which habits of thinking are malleable enough to allow new thinking about Australian women's music, and Foucault's studies on sexuality and power/knowledge provide the theoretical scaffolding for such a task.

Norms in Film: Australian Music Documentaries

The formulation of Australian women's music histories is an encounter with the organising structures, institutional mechanisms and logics of power/knowledge that have kept its stories out of popular consciousness. It is my assertion that the cultural history constructed by and through music documentaries contributes to perception of past, present, future. Thus, more than forty American, British, Australian music documentaries were researched specifically for this investigation and given my intention toward film production, music documentaries continue to fascinate. These texts illustrate what is thought to be normative music history. Here, I want to concentrate on the Australian landscape. Accordingly, I have selected *Long Way To The Top: Stories of Australian and New Zealand Rock and Roll* (2001) and *Love Is In The Air* (2003) for close examination. These two music documentary series (both directed by Paul Clarke) are explicitly gendered in their titles. *Long Way To The Top* evokes men and struggle, whereas *Love Is In The Air* suggests girls and love.

The six episodes of *Long Way To The Top*, each one-hour long, are a fast-paced ride through a long list of songs. The documentary series comprises extensive archival

footage from the television program *Countdown*[10] supported by interviews filmed for the series. A (male) voice-of-God narrator builds a grand tale of rock and affirms Australia's ability in past decades, to produce talented musicians achieving local and international success. *Long Way To The Top* takes its title from the AC/DC song 'It's A Long Way To The Top If You Want To Rock n' Roll' off the album, *T.N.T.*, which was released in 1975. 'Episode Four' chronicles the mid to late 1970s through 1981, and for me, it is the most infuriating. Titled 'Berserk Warriors', after the song by Mental As Anything, the beguiling narrator explains the formula of the *Countdown* show, which played an integral role in showcasing music at that time: 'the recipe was simple. Inject groups of attractive bare-chested males into a crowd of young, adoring females, and stir' ('Episode Four', *Long Way To The Top*). Woman as a 'fuckable body and admiring fan' is both a rock discourse and a familiar site of feminist analysis. Feminist studies have suggested there was a tendency, prior to the organised women's movement, for women to adore (male) musicians rather than be in a band. Sociologist Mavis Bayton (1993, p. 177) writes that 'women have been largely excluded from popular music making and relegated to the role of fan'. Music scholar Norma Coates confirms the feminist view that rock music of the 1960s-1970s depended on hero worship and adulation by female groupies (particularly teenage girls). 'The display of unbridled heterosexual masculinity, and sexuality, was a crucial part of the rock myth, and worshipful female fans are important for its maintenance', writes Coates (2003, p. 67). The female groupie is an abject, marginalised subject but necessary for the consumption of rock music as a mass product. Characteristically 'in thrall to the image of her rock beloved' (2003, pp. 71-81), the screaming female fan, normalises rock culture by adoring masculinity.[11] According to Bayton (1993, p. 178), female subject positions changed when 'feminism gave women the necessary confidence and support to make the transition from fan to performer'. Given the dominant imaginary and marginalisation of women bands, it is necessary to acknowledge that these understandings of female subject positions are tied to the current critique.

[10] *Countdown* was a weekly television show made in the Melbourne studio of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). It ran from 8 November 1974-19 July 1987. See *Countdown: The Wonder Years* (2006).
[11] See Coates (2003); Ehrenreich, Hess and Jacobs (1992); Johnson (1992) for further discussion.

Long Way To The Top appears invested in a celebratory, straight History and tends to affirm the domination of men in the music industry rather than critique the norms of gender. The 1970s was 'like going to war with your mates' says Les Grock of the Australian glam band Hush that formed in 1971. Against the backdrop of the Vietnam War and its accompanying turmoil, the stench of sweat and beer and cigarettes in pubs was rough and tough, and suited 'a new generation of angry young men' who turned up to listen ('Episode Four', *Long Way To The Top*). Billy Thorpe says that he went from a suited (Beatle style) boy next door to 'every mother's nightmare' (*Long Way To The Top*). He grew his hair long, took LSD, played heavy guitar, and with the Aztecs produced a classic hit, 'Most People I Know (Think That I'm Crazy)'. The early and mid-1970s were actually characterised by twin music styles - pub rock and glam - accompanied by a range of anxieties about masculine bodies. In 1972, David Bowie released *Ziggy Stardust*[12] a few years before the end of the Vietnam War. The 'glam' influences of *Ziggy Stardust* were wide reaching, including the Australian bands Hush and Skyhooks. In the vein of Bowie, Skyhooks' guitarist Red Symons painted his face white with heavy eyeliner. Skyhooks wore flamboyant jumpsuits (making the most of colour television) and drew extra attention to themselves with elements of theatrical effeminacy. However, while glam bands were generally associated with androgyny, many performed with bare-chests on display, re-asserting biological sex. Other musicians, such as Doug Parkinson of Captain Matchbox jug band, claimed that they were not 'fashionably attractive' (see *Long Way To The Top*) and did not fit music's norms of masculinity. *Long Way To The Top* was immensely popular and to great acclaim, launched a highly successful tour of the featured musicians. Remembering songs from one's childhood is a pleasurable activity that sparks emotion as only music can. But for this viewer, *Long Way To The* Top is also a source of irritation. Except for brief mention of Judith Durham of the Seekers and Little Pattie, it is clear by the end of the fourth episode of the series, that there will be little mention of chart topping women. It is a glaring omission.

[12] The full name of the album is *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars.*

Love Is In The Air is the sequel to *Long Way To The Top* and comprises five loosely themed episodes that chart the rise of the Australian pop song.[13] The second episode 'She's Leaving Home' is dedicated to female singers and was a response by the filmmakers (in part) to criticism.[14] Written by Claire Hedger and narrated by Toni Collette, the episode begins with the story of Pilita Corrales, who is credited as the first woman to record in Australia. As the episode progresses through a long list of female singers achieving success measured by chart ratings, sale of records, profits, it becomes apparent that many women contributed to the growth of Australia's 'home-grown' pop song but do not claim authorship of their work, which is suggestive of a minority place in music History similar to other minorities, for example, the unpaid black artists of Motown. In Australia, music industry executives believed women needed to travel overseas to prove their marketability and managers pressured singers to seek international success early in their career. Diana Trask signed with Columbia Records in America. A decade later, in 1974, Olivia Newton-John had her first number one hit in the United States with 'I Honestly Love You', which crossed over from country to pop.

Olivia Newton-John's light singing style and conservative demeanor offered a mirror of 'wholesome' femininity, that executives deemed ideal for mass audiences. Attractive and unassuming, Newton-John's career had taken an upward turn when her friend Pat Carroll who already had a hit by the time she was eighteen, joined her in the United Kingdom where the two teenagers performed as a duo in nightclubs. While Newton-John stayed to pursue solo work, a visa expiry shortened Carroll's trip, and on her forced return to Australia, Carroll decided to marry and raise children. Subsequently, it was Newton-John rather than Carroll, who became the celebrity star. In another twist, Carroll's husband John Farrar was Newton-John's producer for a while. Both women were interviewed for the *Love Is In The Air* episode, 'She's Leaving Home' and in a revealing moment Carroll talks about motherhood and standing to one side, watching her singing partner rise to fame. As a viewer, I feel compassion for Carroll when

[13] 'Episode Four' looks at the career of 1980s pop princess Kylie Minogue, which was also the making of music mogul Michael Gudinski and Mushroom Records.

[14] Anecdotes about *Long Way To The Top* emerged during the study. A participant recounted that she emailed the producers after 'Episode Four' broadcast to inquire/complain about the absence of women. The email reply from the producers rationalised 'that's how it was back then'.

Newton-John remarks, 'she [Carroll] has been very supportive of me … she has a wonderful voice and she could have done it' (Newton-John, 'Episode Two', *Love Is In The Air*). Even though Carroll's life happiness is apparent when she speaks, her story reinforces the difficulties of combining music and motherhood (see also Bradby 1993). Undoubtedly, Newton-John faced similar life difficulties along the way but her hardships of such nature are not revealed in the film.

Love Is In The Air frames female singers (and their significant financial gains) with hetero-love; we see a boy kissing a girl in the title sequence.[15] As a homogenous history of popular music, *Love Is In The Air* reinforces the idea of heterosexual normativity within the music industry, where heteronormativity implies 'structures of understanding … that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent - that is, organised as a sexuality - but also privileged' (Berlant and Warner 1998, p. 548, n. 2). The female singers in the film do not appear to transgress the gender norms of the music industry; they do not perspire or look messy on stage. The exceptions are Renee Geyer, the well-known 'difficult' woman, or industry equivalent of the caustic 'bitch from hell', and Debbie Byrne who had a public battle with drug-addiction. Otherwise, the line-up of singers in the film suggests a story of female musicianship that is neither disruptive nor misbehaving. The film minimalises the context and influence of the women's movement, which is curious given the importance that the film places on Helen Reddy's story. 'I Am Woman' by Reddy became a women's movement anthem and in a politico-music crossover, transformed the singer into a celebrity. *Love Is In The Air* confirms 'I Am Woman' was co-written with Ray Burton, which may undercut Reddy's music credibility both for some feminists and (male) music historians. Yet the film does not (and perhaps cannot) explore the deeper complexities of the song and its originator.

Second wave feminism had an uneasy relationship to mass-produced music and media. An interesting analysis by Michelle Arrow (2007, p. 218) suggests that Helen Reddy came to stand for the 'feminine feminist' and captured some of the tension between 'conventional media images of [heterosexual] women and feminist images' of women

[15] 'Love Is In The Air' is the name of a 1977 disco song by Australian singer John Paul Young.

in music. When 'I Am Woman' became a commercial success, Reddy was visibly pregnant and in press interviews she went to great lengths to insist that women's liberation was compatible with heterosexual marriage. According to Arrow's (2007, p. 219) research, Reddy was aware of the 'whispers' about her sexuality and responded by publicly stating 'they can't accuse me of being a lesbian with a belly out here'. The claim affirmed Reddy's conservative perspective of liberation, and revealed a deep-seated fear of being read as a lesbian, considered undesirable for an aspiring young music star at the time. Arrow attests that Reddy's statement was also probably 'designed to address media stereotypes about feminists and was reassuring to those women not involved in the organised feminist movement'. In turn, Reddy's articulation of womanhood split her from the women's movement's lesbian/feminists by positioning herself (and being positioned) as an outspoken, yet approachable feminist with ordinary hetero marriage difficulties (2007, p. 219). Reddy's declaration also relied on the assumption that lesbianism precludes pregnancy (see Chapter 3). The broader complexities of Reddy's pregnancy, motherhood and music are not discussed in 'She's Leaving Home' or any other episode of *Love Is In The Air*.

The women's movement's is effectively smoothed over in *Love Is In The Air* and summarily condensed to Helen Reddy's song of praise for an 'invincible woman', the disaffection of Germaine Greer and the sentiments of an ambitious soap star, Abigail, who says, 'I'm proud of being a woman and a feminine woman, and I'm very anti-Women's Lib' (Abigail, 'Episode Two', *Love Is In The Air*). In five episodes, *Love Is In The Air* devotes a total of thirty seconds (real time) of archival footage to all-female Australian bands. We see a four-piece group called Peaches performing 'Substitute' by the Righteous Brothers. Margaret Britt from 1960s pop group the Vamps is on lead guitar. The thirty seconds of Peaches is followed by a sequence of songs about love and waiting for the ideal man, beautifully sung by women. Aside from the possibility at this edit moment for additional inclusions in the film, too little is seen of Peaches in their fantastic slinky bodysuits, plunging necklines and electric hair. But the documentary 'opening' is already sutured over and Australian women's music comfortably excluded.

Other Writing on Lesbians, Feminists and Music

Two recent accounts of lesbians and music in Australia have influenced my thinking during this study. The first is a scholarly account of lesbians and music by Australian queer musicologist Jodie Taylor. The second is Jean Taylor's social and political history of the women's movement in Victoria, Australia. Together, although for different reasons, these discourses demonstrate, in my view, the importance of a genealogical approach for mapping Australian women's music histories. Situated in the discipline of musicology, Jodie Taylor's interesting work explores the dissonance of 'lesbian music' and the constructions of lesbianism in relation to mainstream music. Drawing from her scholarly dissertation and a case study of queer music in Brisbane, Queensland, Taylor (2009, p. 49) published a paper that sets out her intention to 'highlight the multiple strategies, politics and fractures in the history of lesbian/queer music-making'. In order to historically account for and situate contemporary music as queer, Taylor (2009, p. 51) makes a casual observation that an online search for 'lesbian music' returns no 'hits' for Australia. Taylor concludes that lesbian/feminist music of past decades is 'non-existent' in Australia and is unable to cite any bands. Instead, she discusses 1970s-1980s American women's music.[16]

US-centrism is an underlying and powerful force associated with the histories of women bands. Taylor (2009, p. 52) discusses American singer songwriters, Chris Williamson and Alix Dobkin and suggests their 'lesbian music is rooted in womyn's music traditions', which 'tended to homogenise lesbian identity, downplay female sexuality and to redefine lesbianism as sensual rather than sexual experience'. Throughout her paper, Taylor relies on the word *womyn* to universally describe *all* women's music. Effectively, Taylor's use of the separatist meanings of 'womyn' and (implied) opposition to 'male music styles' keeps all women's music and band members attached to 'gender rigidity' as a set of ideas, and the effects of homogeneity. Binarised gender differences become too rigid for future generations and riot grrrls are freer than musicians of previous decades, as Taylor tells it, to explore flexible, playful forms

[16] In *Playing It Queer*, which is a book version of Taylor's (2012, pp. 149-174) dissertation, the same narrative is repeated.

of self, embracing a range of femininities. In this narrative, the past is tied intractably to essentialism and lack of playfulness, which 'proved problematic for future generations of women … riot grrrls rejected prescriptive performances of gender, critiqued normative constructions of the feminine and promoted flexible forms of self-identification' (2009, p. 52). Gender was an important political focus during the women's movement era, yet women bands, I argue, negotiated complex, often contradictory, explorations of self. In my view, Taylor's narrative is a linear version of history (Hemmings 2005) replacing one way of thinking/being with another. By contrast this study attempts to show that a '*womyn's music*' narrative is a universalising view that is actually based on American histories of women's music.

The deployment of 'womyn' to refer to *all* women's music, elides the differences between bands and band members, if done so without signaling the problems and/or political intentions and objectives. The intentional use of 'womyn' to describe and generalise women's music also shores up queer arguments. For example, the *womyn*-orientation of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (Michfest) has excluded transgender women from attending the festival over many years. Feminists, transgenderists and queer theorists have both defended and criticised the festival's womyn-born-womyn policy (see, for example, Browne 2009; 2010; Halberstam 2005; Prosser 1998). The differences between separatism and separate spaces are elaborated in the following chapters (see Chapter 2, 3). For the moment, I want to make an early point about how 'womyn's music' narratives function to cover over the differences between Australia, America and other countries.

This investigation is indebted to the invaluable insights of American women's music as indicated in the Introduction. However, it is my contention that many all-women bands formed during the period discussed in different countries and different cultures, yet those bands are often historically misrepresented or not represented at all. For instance, Gayle Wald (1998, p. 599) writes that Shonen Knife, an all-female Japanese pop-punk rocker band that formed in Osaka 1981, has had to negotiate 'Western patriarchal discourses that insist on positioning them as the exotic representatives of an idealised girlish femininity', a cute Asian cartoon act. In Britain, a 'Women's

Liberation Music Archive' website was launched in 2011. The site works against US-centric narratives by re-presenting digitised women's music, photographs, memorabilia and information of women bands in the UK and Ireland, including the London Women's Liberation Rock Band. Interestingly, the British archive includes 'contemporaneous music-making by women who may not have identified themselves as feminists at the time but whose activity nonetheless both happened within, and contributed to, the context of the changes being brought about by feminist politics'.[17]

What constitutes typical feminist music and/or queer music is always open to question. For some theorists, music imbued with strong vocals, a political message, and performed on an acoustic guitar represents the personification of 'feminist music'. Sociologist Mavis Bayton (1993, p. 185) writes 'it was easier to specify what women's music was *not*: loud, noisy, driving cock rock. Thus so-called female music had to be lighter and softer'. Ideas about the gender assignment of 'female' to feminist music ('male' to non-feminist) and the second wave feminist disagreements and departures from that ideal are presented in the chapter dedicated to music production (see Chapter 4). In other words, 'softer' music equates with a feminist (and female) alternative to masculine music (Bayton 1993; Kearney 1997). From a queer perspective, Jodie Taylor (2009, p. 51) historicises women's music as a 'predominantly folk sounding, singer songwriter style that is associated with lesbian music … articulated its message through folk music styles because folk was already … considered 'softer' less aggressive and therefore less masculine'. Revealing some of the problems of both feminism and queer, Taylor goes on to describe Bertha Control - an all-female Brisbane band that formed in 2003 - as a 'curious bricolage', a queer approach to music.

> [The] band's sound … incorporates elements of funk, reggae, ska, rap and occasionally punk styles, thus situating the band queerly within the discourses of typical feminist music production and also within the dominant styles of queer cultural production *as funk reggae, ska and rap are not genres traditionally associated with either feminist or queer cultures*. (2009, p. 54, my emphasis)

[17] See *Women's Liberation Music Archive: Feminist Music Making in the UK and Ireland 1970-1990,* available from http://womensliberationmusicarchive.wordpress.com [accessed 14 March 2012].

It is possible Taylor means to say that in terms of pure music theory and/or musicology, feminism and queer cannot truthfully lay claim to any particular origin of music styles, but she does not make the point explicit in the above statement. In my belief and perhaps out of tune with the (pure) music theories of musicology, what is important but not made clear by Taylor, is that lesbian/feminist bands in Australia, appropriated, plundered, raided, borrowed, twisted, inflected and paid homage to multiple music styles - a bricolage - in their writing and performances of music.

Overall, this investigation has also found that (most but not all) women bands in Australia played electric rather than acoustic music. As they were learning, bands performed a hybrid, sometimes quirky mixture of punk, reggae, blues, ska, disco, funk, rap, pop and were drawn to the different meanings and codifications in those styles. In the mid to late 1970s, The Ovarian Sisters borrowed from Irish folk music (see Chapter 2 for a discussion on folk bands). But many bands such as Stray Dags, Toxic Shock, Foreign Body, Barbies Dead and Razor Cuts cannot be described as demonstrating any particular loyalty to folk or any other style. Given this, to make the claim as Jodie Taylor does, that lesbian/feminists do not have histories of writing and performing funk, reggae, ska, rap is, in my view, somewhat erroneous. This is an important point because it sets up a premise about aesthetics and the styles of music that feminists, lesbians, queers performed in Australia. I am in agreement with Taylor (2008, p. 238) when she concludes her scholarly dissertation by saying that queer music 'is not distinguishable by sound or genre, but rather queer music and musical performance exhibit a multiplicity of sounds' that draw on 'a variety of queer and sometimes non-queer musical histories'. Yet, her article on lesbian and mainstream music suggests that the more recent band Bertha Control is queer because it is situated on an imagined 'outer' edge 'distinct from the local lesbian establishment' (Taylor 2009, p. 53). It is both perplexing and worrisome if the vicissitudes of lesbian becomes antithetical to queer. My reading is that Bertha Control's song 'Escape'[18] exemplifies prominent vocals and reggae-influenced drumbeats, reminiscent of 1980s women's music. Therefore, in my belief, it seems that in some music situations, queer has less to do with musical

[18] See http://www.myspace.com/berthacontrol [accessed 18 July 2011].

ability and style and more to do with dramatizing the social context, the contingencies within which the music itself is performed, received, discussed and understood.

What is queer about music that is referred to as queer and/or lesbian? Music described as queer is not itself a music genre. How is it possible then to read and interpret music by and through sexuality? Broadly speaking, queer musicology refers to the work done by those committed to bringing queer thinking to music production, listening and theory. The queer musicology objective to denaturalise long held institutional arguments about music has yielded two notable collections of essays, *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (Brett, Wood and Thomas 1994) and *Queering the Popular Pitch* (Whiteley and Rycenga 2006). In these works, queer theory has been used to analyse classical and popular music, opera, German cabaret and disco as well as women's music. Music has lagged behind other scholarly disciplines with respect to the theories of gender and sexuality, which partly accounts for the surge in interest since the early 1990s. For example, Philip Brett (1994) argues that music in the guise of talent is a tool for social control. He deftly separates 'musicality' from 'music' and deploys Eve Sedgwick's (1990) epistemology of the closet to bring non-normativity to music criticism. Queer musicology is often but not always by queers and it is not just a matter of coming out of the closet. For Sheila Whitely and Jennifer Rycenga (2006, p. xiii), queer musicology is an exploration of 'the ways in which queering has challenged cultural, social and musical structures, subverting the gendered heterosexual bias in popular music by invoking a different way of listening, a *queer sensibility*'. Theorists continue to debate whether music is transcendent and exists non-specifically outside language, or if it can be understood through discursivity and sociality.

In the landmark work, *Listening To The Sirens: Musical Technologies of Queer Identity from Homer to Hedwig*, musicologist Judith Peraino (2006, p. 252) argues succinctly for the 'deployment of queer identity': music is the vehicle and queer is a technique for questioning. In her early work on American women's music, Peraino (1992, p. 25) made a claim with a sophisticated, erudite nod to urban folk and black female musicians, that regardless of the music idiom or style, women's music adheres to the 'fundamental axiom of folk music'. However, in later work, she revises that American women bands

(such as Chicago Women's Liberation Rock Band) began the 1970s by covering well-known rock songs as an appropriate medium for a feminist message. American women's music then shifted to (and was dominated by) 'softer' singer songwriter folk music (Peraino 2006, p. 158). Nevertheless, Peraino is describing an American scene and its trajectories. The Australian women's music scene contrasts the American scene, I argue, in a contextually specific way. Folk singer-songwriters did not dominate, and the trajectory of cover songs-folk music-electric music was convoluted with some Australian bands openly reacting against folk (see Chapter 4), instead rooting their sound in a mixture of blues, British punk and ska, and power rock. However, my quarrel with queer is not so much to do with queering music itself but the way queer can sometimes ignore lesbian identities and histories, while claiming and appearing to be always already championing the local. If at times, I pick up slightly different frequencies to musicology, I nevertheless concur with those who believe that music notes themselves are never completely detached from context, discursivity and sociality, and the bodies producing the music.

Outside queer musicology, there are scholars and authors writing about queer music, particularly in the fields of sociology, anthropology, history and journalism (see, for example, Carson, Lewis and Shaw 2004; Gaar 2002; Marcus 2010; Raha 2005). In contradistinction to queer musicology and with a different political objective, historian Jean Taylor (2009; 2012) chronicles the activities of the Australian Women's Liberation Movement in the state of Victoria. Her two self-published books, *Brazen Hussies* and *Stroppy Dykes*, are painstakingly researched 'encyclopedias' that respectively detail the 1970s-1980s from a 'personal is political' point of view. Consciousness raising groups, the Abortion Law Association, Women's Action Committee, childcare groups and trade unions make up a timeline of political action and activism recounted by Taylor, including conversations with women's movement activists and the author's personal stories. Australian women bands are mentioned with enthusiasm.

> It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway, the womyn's dances were almost without exception lesbian dances, organised by and for lesbians. There were any number of womyn bands (again read lesbian bands) that played live music at womyn's dances over the years … Raelene Citizen and the Outskirts, Scarlet,

> Clitoris, Polytix … and my personal favourite Nice Girls Don't Spit … womyn's dances lead into, although they were by no means replaced by, the highly popular and well attended annual Women's Balls. (Jean Taylor 2009, p. 242)

This is the first description (that I am aware) of Australian lesbian/feminist bands published in a print-form narrative. Taylor portrays the scene as *'any number of womyn bands (again read lesbian bands) that played live music at womyn's dances*' and goes on to detail numerous bands, balls, dances. Here, Australian women's music is once again placed into discourse as 'womyn', although for different reasons to Jodie Taylor's queer account. From a radical feminist perspective, Jean Taylor (2009, p. 13) notes that 'the language of the 1970s was immediate and gusty' and her research sets out to 'pay tribute to the revolutionary but largely unrecognised work that lesbians did back then'. Taylor's important texts do the historical work of visibility and acknowledgement. At the same time, she deploys 'womyn' presumably to liberate an oppressed 'woman' through the erasure of 'man' in the word. Thus, Taylor's account of Australian women's music is harnessed to a radicalesbian strategy, which nevertheless problematically assumes that all women are (or should be) working toward being lesbian and/or overturning patriarchal oppression (see also Chapter 3).

The two lone descriptions of Australian women's music that I have mentioned, demonstrate contrasting political positions and generational perspectives, yet both conceive women's music in Australia as uniform and monolithically separatist. Jean Taylor's older radicalesbian approach acknowledges the existence of women bands in Australia but retains the clear-cut battle lines of the past and the possibility of everywoman's potential lesbianism as a political objective worth defending. Queer, by contrast, has always been available for alternative meanings and its appropriation is highly dependent on individual use. Jodie Taylor's youthful omission of Australian women bands is masked by a queer invocation toward sexual, social diversity. But despite this apparent celebration, her queer troubling of music excludes rather than unsettles lesbian histories. Throughout this inquiry, the problems with Jodie Taylor and Jean Taylor's texts that I have outlined gradually intensified my sense of urgency to pursue an alternative framework. Thus, I argue that the Australian women's music scene was perversely multifarious. Lesbian/feminist bands came into being through

processes of opposition, agreement, resistance, struggle in relation to normative music and second wave feminism, illustrating that sexuality involves experiences according to time, place and culture. On that basis, this study makes a substantial investment in accounting for Australian women's music as a political engagement with the relations of power that are operationalised on multiple fronts.

Situating Australian Women's Music

In summary, it can be said that Australian women's music is situated and understood in the present day by and through ideas about its commercial failure, radicalesbianism, separatism and subsequent lack of historical value. Commercial 'failure' tends to be associated with women's music around the world (see, for example, Stein 1994). But I contend that Australian women's music is characterised differently from other places, given the way that Australia has been (and continues to be) particularly subject to the cultural domination of America. Historically, Australia has had a tendency to follow and/or respond to America and during the women's movement, Australia was undoubtedly influenced by American feminism/s and international events[19] and there are many cultural, political, positive similarities to America that can be mapped in Australian women's music (see Chapters 2, 3, 4). Yet due to population differences and the contingencies of Australia's economies and music markets, the Australian women's music scene is nuanced in its own way. Historically, Australia has also fought soul-searching battles with self-criticism, self-deprecation and ideas about its so-called 'cultural wasteland', a sport-obsessed nation mired in suburban mediocrity devoid of 'high culture' and intellectual stimulation (Squires and Davies 2004). The Australian context is underpinned by histories of self-ambivalence, lack of self-promotion that compounded during the 1960s when young aspiring music artists (both men and women) were pressured to travel overseas to establish their success (see *Love Is In The Air*). Therefore, in addition to a feminist critique about mainstream music, the

[19] For example, a parade held in Sydney, 24 June 1978 was intended as a commemoration of America's decade earlier Stonewall riots. But police made numerous arrests (Sullivan 2003) and from that night onwards things turned. After a period of heated clashes, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (parade, party, festival) eventually emerged, as we know it today, with myths and legends. Lesbian/feminists took part in these public events, which is documented in the film *Witches and Faggots, Dykes and Poofters*.

Australian women's music scene was both cognisant and subject to a set of cultural measurements always already different to other countries.

Australian women's music did not successfully crossover to the commercial mainstream and some might say this was a constraint of sexuality, similar to America (see Stein 1994). But generally, in order to 'fail' there must first be some type of recognition of one's existence. The predominant view of American women's music suggests that it was marginal and did not achieve the type of 'mainstreaming' that some lesbian artists have experienced since the 1980s, particularly Indigo Girls, Melissa Etheridge and k. d. lang, who have enshrined 'their status as lesbian musical icons' (Taylor 2013, p. 40). I concur with Peraino's (2006, p. 167) different view that early women's music in America did achieve a (relatively) 'mainstream' level of commercial success. Nevertheless I elaborate that the same realisation of women's music did not necessarily occur elsewhere. Mainstream music is a value-laden categorisation (see Chapter 4) and material wealth is not the only reason for the domination of American women's music, but it is one of the elements at play. Subsequently, I argue, the success of American women's music has generated forms of recognition through historicisation, journalistic and scholarly attention (see, for example, Armstrong 1989; Gaar 2002; Lont 1992; Peraino 2006; Petersen 1987; Quimby 1997; Stein 1994; Whiteley 2000) that has not eventuated in Australia in the same manner.

Situated by politics, Australian women's music histories cannot be told without acknowledging (similar to American women's music) the substantial contribution of radicalesbianism. There is an important distinction to be made, however, between identity and the political views and the strategies deployed by lesbians in women bands. Women in lesbian/feminist bands were obstinate, intractable, headstrong and self-willed but their lives were often contradictory. Individual band members may have identified as radicalesbian in interesting, challenging ways. But I am doubtful, as an undisputed historical fact, that the majority of Australian women bands actually called themselves radicalesbian or identified as 'womyn' at all times. Therefore describing the women's music scene universally as 'womyn's music' diminishes the multiplicity of political viewpoints, the diversity of individual artists as well as the bands within the

scene. Rather, I argue that women's music in Australia was constrained by the politics of sexuality and this limit has been demonstrated by its lack of historicisation.

Finally, this study is situated in relation to present day queer studies of music and theories of performativity, which require brief mention at this point. Gender performativity theory is deployed strategically in the thesis (see Chapter 3, in particular) to re-interpret the way that women bands performed (exteriorised and materially embodied) sexualities and stylised their bodies on and off the music stage. It is similarly used to analyse social relations and queer kinships. Applied to music, second wave feminisms tended to construct and rehearse notions of gender in terms of biological determinism (Solie 1993). Thus, for example, it was believed that an all-female group performed music reflecting the 'uniqueness of one's experience as women' (Petersen 1987, p. 205). In contradistinction, gender performativity offers an alternative way of thinking about subject histories and modes of existence in accordance with the dispersion of exteriority (Foucault 1972, p. 125). Gender performativity enables a critique of selves acting in gendered space/place and shows that acts of repetition both materialise and legitimise gender and its plasticity, the non-verbal habits, behaviours, manners and the way one 'does' one's body through all of the bodily gestures and codifications that human subjects enact (see, for example, Butler 1990; 1993; Jagose 1996; Sullivan 2003). In the present day, my investigative resolve has intensified around the reality that Australian women's music histories continue to be largely ignored. Mechanisms of marginality function on multiple levels, and the logics of power/knowledge that contribute to subjugation must be examined. Thus, I argue for a re-interpretation of Australian women's music and that its histories are heterogeneous, perspectival and dependent on time and place.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the methodological approach of the investigation. It shows that a Foucaultian theory of power and genealogical framework, offer an alternative approach to analyse Australian women's music, and the problems with entrenched ideas about its existence. Foucault's theory of power is a way of rethinking oppression

and gives rise to a different practice for understanding subjugated knowledges. A genealogical perspective aims to release women's music from the timelessness of a universal story in order to illustrate the heterogeneity of local histories, and that the 'disappearance' of Australian women's music is an effect of power/knowledge rather than simply attributable to the repression of gender and sexuality. A discussion of music documentaries illustrates the way that women bands in Australia are routinely excluded from the codes and conventions of music history. Other (feminist and queer) writing shows that queer champions the local, but it too can overlook lesbian/feminist music histories. A closer examination reveals that the Australian scene is actually omitted in favour of American women's music histories and/or is written about as separatist singer-songwriter folk music. The founding principles of Australian women's music may be similar to America in that the scene was oriented toward second wave feminism. But there is an Australian situatedness that can be traced and a local set of relations in play concerning sexuality and gender of which more can be said. The following chapters examine the Australian women's music scene as a series of conflicts and contests: political interventions in gendered space, performances of public/private sexualities in everyday living, and reformulations of (musical) selves. The study will also consider the possibility of transforming subjugated knowledges through the development of a film narrative and that re-performing Australian women's music as a social and historical archive beyond the film has particular insight and value. Constructing histories of Australian women bands is a present day fight to defend their consequence. It is a battle for 'how and why particular knowledges, practices, identities, and texts are validated at the expense of others' (Sullivan 2003, p. 47), which is, of course, a political battle.

2

Spatial Interventions: Second Wave Feminism and Women's Music in Australia

Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that women's music in Australia comprised active interventions in gendered space in a range of interrelated ways. In the previous chapter, I discussed power as a set of relations, a continual interplay of forces in which struggle, resistance and confrontation are always contributing to possibilities. Drawing on Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, I suggested that women's music illustrates something more complex than powerlessness because individuals are both subject to and subjects of power. In this chapter, the focus is feminism and spatialisation. The aim of the current chapter is to further illustrate the complex relation that women bands had to power and knowledge. During the period associated with second wave feminism, women's music was one of many responses to (sometimes competing) ideas about gendered space. Ordinarily we tend to conceive of space as impartial and having little effect on us. People go about their routines and rhythms of everyday life without giving much thought to the space, the intricate fabric, the organisation, the effect on others and the effort required for life, as we know it, to keep ticking over (Thrift 2006, p. 143). We behave and conduct ourselves according to commonsense assumptions and ideas about what constitutes life and living; teachers teach in a classroom and musicians perform on a stage. But the spaces of human activities are never neutral. Space is, as Lefebvre (1976) notes, political, dynamic and shifting. Human geographer Nigel Thrift (2006, p. 139) elaborates on this claim arguing that space is made up of things brought into relation with one another in a continuous process of encounter and lessons produced through such encounters. Thus, following theorists such as Foucault and

Thrift, I attest that space is not a passive arena or container in which things happen, but rather, space shapes and is shaping.

Interrogations of commonsense notions of space began in the twentieth century. By the 1960s, second wave feminists came to see space as gendered and developed in-depth critiques of what they identified as the public/private dichotomy. In general, feminists placed a great deal of emphasis on the male/female binary and regarded public space as patriarchal and male dominated. However, feminists actually took a number of different positions in relation to gendered space. The liberal feminist view was that public/private space could be 'de-gendered' (or re-gendered) if men and women inhabited space on equal terms, and a process of change could be reasonably achieved in this manner. Underlying the liberal feminist view was the assumption that all human subjects are fundamentally the same and therefore 'by nature' equal or at least have the potential to be equal. On the basis of assuming that men and women are fundamentally the same, liberal feminists argued for equal rights, equal opportunities and a legal system reflecting such equality. From the liberal feminist perspective, the differences between men and women are learned, therefore not innate and, 'universal rationality, and good, careful reasoning' (Marinucci 2010, p. 129) was all that was (believed to be) needed to establish social justice and equality in public/private spaces. In this sense, second wave liberal feminism envisaged a type of activist reclaiming of space, including a repopulation of the private space of the home, the equal sharing (with men) of household tasks including childcare and other domestic responsibilities.

Radical feminists took a different view of space. The spatial strategy of radical feminism was to sever relations with men, premised on the belief that men and women are fundamentally, biologically different from each other. According to Sheila Jeffreys (2003, p. 147), radical feminism critiqued gender as a problem of male-dominance and female-subordination, which cast doubt on the possibility of equality by suggesting the public world was set up for 'male advantage'. Radical feminists argued that women were better served by setting up their own 'uncontaminated' separatist spaces. Thus, separatism and separatist spaces were developed to the exclusion of men and masculinity, although it was actually a type of 'political sidestep'. It can also be seen

that different strands of second wave feminism developed various responses to what feminists considered as the gendering of space and these different positions had divergent socio-political effects. Liberal feminism and radical feminism both aimed to (universally) dismantle and/or move beyond patriarchy but are often narrativised as discreet and distinct from each other. Applied to music, the different strands of feminist thinking during the 1970s-1980s determined varying courses of action, as this chapter demonstrates.

Close analysis of the Australian women's music scene in the period on which this study focuses shows that the practices of spatialisation and spatial intervention were not clear-cut but 'messy', interrelated encounters. At first glance, feminism may appear to have embraced universalising gender arguments about the traditional spaces/places of music production and music performance (stages, rehearsal rooms) and the assumption that (in general) these were not readily and/or easily available to women (see Douglas and Fletcher 1979). Feminist accounts of gender, post-1980s, have tended to reiterate similar claims (Bayton 1993; 1998; Coates 1997; McClary 2002; Whiteley 2000). For example, Mavis Bayton (1993, p. 191) writes 'feminism has been a major force in getting women into popular music making … and given women the confidence that they can be music makers rather than simply music fans'. In other words, dominant feminist narratives encompass the notion of women needing to overcome the universal obstacle (oppression) of gender. A concentrated look at women's music in Australia reveals strong connections to grassroots feminism and that it was produced by, and produced, the many debates associated with feminism: rights to abortion, re-claiming one's body and so on. This chapter begins by framing second wave feminist debates as a protracted contest for space, which comprised a number of gender-separate tactics and creative uses of music (planned and unplanned) as an activist tool. I then turn to a discussion of feminist community and cultural space, and outline the separate, separatist (assimilationist, difference) approaches associated with women's music. Following that, in order to move beyond these two ways of thinking, I borrow Nigel Thrift's (2003) concept of 'unblocking space'. Unblocking space aims to unsettle the widely held assumption that space is bounded, enclosed. Thus, I explore the relational links of one space to another from a fluid and translocal perspective,

emphasising the places and the bodies implicated in the spatialisation processes of women's music.

Contesting and Contested Space

The women's movement period of the 1970s-1980s is often associated with gender conflict. During this time, all-women band members contested gendered space, it might be argued, by adopting various practices of gender separatism in order to 'liberate' themselves from the obstacles (oppression) of gender. A dominant view of conflict, such as this, implies a warlike battle with clearly defined adversaries, competitors (individuals, groups) and end points. There is a singularity of opposing forces as battlelines are marked out and an expectation that ultimately the contest will cease, once liberation is attained. In her work on youth culture and riot grrrls, Mary Celeste Kearney (1998, p. 151) argues that separatism functions as a survival tactic in the dominant (major/minor) mode of battle, a 'temporary means of acquiring social, political, and cultural space and time by separating from hegemonically defined and controlled institutions'. Michel de Certeau (1984, p. 36) suggests that in everyday life, the experience of separation is not unlike a military exercise. Separation is a first step that requires opportunity with favourable positions gained through 'tactical manoeuvring'. Initially, it may be necessary for the marginalised and weak to self-isolate by postulating a place distinctly, as 'their own' that can be defined. Thus, within the dominant (major/minor) system of conceiving conflict, 'oppositional political groups often rely on understanding themselves as already marginal as well as imagining a place of power and agency outside dominant culture' (Kearney 1998, p. 151). A separately defined place allows threats to be identified and managed.

The difference between the powerful and the powerless, according to Marilyn Frye (1983, p. 103), is access and autonomy; 'total power is unconditional access; total powerlessness is being unconditionally accessible'. On this model of thinking, second wave feminists called for 'no-saying' and the exclusion of men, a time of avoiding and rejecting those perceived to be powerful, as Frye (1983, p. 104) puts it, depriving men of 'certain benefits'. Kearney (1998, p. 152) goes on to elaborate that once separate,

autonomous space and place is deployed during an initial stage of separatism, a newly empowered group may then assert its collective identity through self-determined agency, independent action, making their own choices and initiating political action on behalf of the group and its members. For example, Karin Quimby (1997, p. 189) describes American women's music as a 'constructed a space in which women could gather for the safe celebration' of the women's movement ideas … 'a spatial response to living in a homophobic world'. Spatial separation in order to achieve self-determination is perhaps also what Gayatari Spivak (1987, p. 205) means in her essay on the historiography of the subaltern, when she writes the '*strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest'. Putting it another way, lesbian/feminists tactically deployed ideas about claiming, reclaiming 'space' through essentialist notions of 'woman' to advance the feminist program and the interests of women, feminists and lesbians.

Separating into non-threatening, safe spaces is a form of exercising power. The dominant (major/minor) understandings of conflict suggest that at the end of a battle there are the victors and the vanquished, which is a type of vertical movement. However, in *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault (2004, p. 110) proposes an alternative view of conflict, as a 'permanent feature of power relations', and argues that society is involved in a continual state of war based around the discrepancies between the strong and the weak. Rather than a 'top down' system of conceptualising power exerted in conflict, Foucault argues that power is more complex because it includes the exertion of power by the powerless. In a clash where the fields are empty of corpses and there is no physical death or (literal) bloodshed, the emphasis is on 'presentations, manifestations, signs, emphatic expressions… We are in a theatre where presentations are exchanged, in a relationship of fear in which there are no time limits' (2004, p. 92). In other words, the forces of domination underpinning society's power relations play out continually and sometimes people mobilise in a warlike manner. Keeping Foucault's ideas about power and conflict in mind, I first want to map the various ways that Australian women band members conceived themselves spatially as both marginal and oppositional, outside dominant music culture. Words such as 'take over', 'claim', 'reclaim' signified feminist imperatives to transform spatial relations and open

accessibility, which seemed a natural, if temporary first step, a survival tactic, if you will. From this perspective, second wave feminist interventions in gendered (music) space involved the 'warlike' tactics of (a) identifying gender imbalances (b) separating into 'safe' space-places and (c) asserting agency.

Feminist understandings of space as gendered, involved first recognising the general arrangements that shaped subjects living in the world and ways of being. For instance, in the mid-1970s, Margaret Hender (2008), who completed a degree specialising in the electronic synthesizer[1] at the University of Adelaide Conservatorium of Music, South Australia (subsequently becoming one of the first female sound engineers at the Adelaide Festival Centre) found there was no women's toilet in the technician's area of the building. The male technicians accessed a staff toilet in close proximity to their work area, whereas Hender had to walk upstairs to the female designated toilet for the general public, which was situated in the main foyer of the theatre. This type of spatial arrangement was premised on the gendered assumption that technicians are, by definition, male. Such an arrangement functioned to normalise assumptions, literally, symbolically excluding women from what was constructed as male space, the male role and work opportunities.[2] It was these presumptions about the gendering of space and spatial arrangements that second wave feminism necessarily brought to light.

The autonomous spaces of the women's movement appealed to women seeking encouragement and support, which would enable them to grow. Thus it might be said that the members of women bands did not intentionally set out to align with any one particular feminist strand of thought or action but wanted reassurance, change and growth. In Australia, there are four folk-influenced music groups (at least) that came into being through affirmative, politically active types of spatialisation. Clitoris Band and Shameless Hussies both formed in 1975, The Ovarian Sisters in 1977 and The Lavender Blues in 1978 (see Appendix A). The four folk-influenced groups all attribute

[1] For one of her assignments, Hender built a synth from a kit and learned how to solder and trouble-shoot all of the electronics.

[2] Hender was unable to secure another position in sound engineering. She applied to a studio in Sydney but was advised that clients would not embrace a female sound engineer. In 1978, Hender relocated to Melbourne, where, as the bass player, she joined a short-lived women band called Flying Tackle.

their formation to feminist happenings, reclaim the night demonstrations, pro-choice rallies, women's day celebrations and so on. These public spaces were not strictly aligned *per se* with radical feminism, although they may have indirectly supported separatist positions. Feminist folk groups were also responding to the political push to see and hear women performing on feminist-designated stages. In this regard, one might argue that feminist space(s) shaped the women and their music as much as the women shaped feminist space(s).

In 1975, the United Nations declared a 'Decade of Women' and 'I Am Woman' was chosen as the theme song (Gaar 2002, p. 113). That year, Australia's (then) prime minister, Gough Whitlam made a one-off grant to women's organisations to mark the beginning of the decade, and in capital cities across the country, new performances of music by women occurred on International Women's Day (Arrow 2007). In Adelaide, at the conclusion of the IWD march, Shameless Hussies played to a large, enthusiastic crowd (Shameless Hussies 1978/79). It was their first public performance and their (mostly but not all) cover songs were sweet, funny interpretations, played on whatever acoustic instruments were at hand. Shameless Hussies did not expect that their humorous ragtime, hillbilly, gospel, acoustic rock, country and western, would turn into a regular gig, but they enjoyed their first performance so much they kept it up for another eighteen months. After deciding on a name, Helen Potter, A.C.R, Andy Malone and Belinda Porich discovered that the word 'hussie' is a derivative of *hussive*, meaning housewife. 'One of the best accidents I've ever been in', said one member of the group (Shameless Hussies 1978/79). The formation of Shameless Hussies appears unplanned, almost secondary to the activities of the organised women's movement. Yet music was becoming an activist tool, a method of agitating for change, a means of putting the principles of feminism into practice, and as Arrow (2007, p. 217) attests, it enhanced the way that feminism was understood in public spaces. Thus, there was a contextual relationship between music and feminism in activist situations.

Feminist battles consolidated around the subjugation of women and focused on the vulnerabilities and threats to female bodies. In concrete terms, this often meant implementing gender-separatism for the creation and the defence of 'safe spaces'

where (ideally) all women could take steps to re/gain control of their own bodies. Historian Anne Enke (2003, p. 640) notes that at the heart of feminist agitation were issues such as rape, domestic violence, menstruation, reproduction, childcare and women established a number of different spaces for servicing these types of needs. Women's liberation houses, women's health clinics, rape crisis and women's refuges 'became sites of protest against the gendered exclusions of public geographies and also meeting grounds in which multiple cultures of feminist and lesbian activism emerged' (2003, p. 635). In some of these situations folk music became an effective, if unexpected, strategy for feminist intervention at a local grassroots level.

The Ovarian Sisters folk group first performed for the purposes of warding off the protestations of (approximately) one hundred pro-life campaigners. In the capital city of Hobart, Tasmania, which is an island state located 240 kilometres to the south of the Australian continent, it was not easy for women to obtain a safe, medically skilled termination. Therefore the Hobart Women's Centre provided support to women who travelled across the Bass Strait to the capital city of Melbourne at great stress and extra cost.[3] Recognising that psychiatrists at the local general hospital were referring women interstate to the mainland and that the reasons for abortion tended to be social, rather than psychiatric, the Hobart Women's Centre organised a public forum. It was intended as a general discussion on pregnancy termination facilities, an exchange of information aimed to politicise the needs of women more broadly ('Talks On Hobart Abortion Situation', 1977).[4] Hence, the collective placed the following notice in the local paper.

> NOTICE to members of the Women's Centre Collective. The Collective Meeting of April 26 will be replaced by a discussion on Rape, Legal Aid for Women, Women and Unemployment, Women's Music and the Abortion Situation in Hobart. Please come at 8pm. Sisterhood is Powerful. (Sue Edmonds, private collection)

[3] The laws pertaining to termination in Tasmania are set by the state's Criminal Code Act 1924 and remain (at the time of writing) unchanged. According to a paper published March 2013 by the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services, the code states: 'It is a crime for a woman to have a termination in Tasmania - unless it is legally justified'. Two doctors must decide that continuing the pregnancy would pose 'a greater risk to the woman's physical or mental health than terminating the pregnancy'. See http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/pophealth/womens_health [accessed 26 November 2013].
[4] *The Mercury* reported (that year) that 500 Tasmanian women had abortions in Melbourne clinics and 86 women went to the Royal Hobart Hospital ('Talks On Hobart Abortion Situation', 1977).

Initially, the meeting was 'closed'. But when the women's centre collective opted for a public dialogue and wider consensus, the local newspaper, *The Mercury*, issued a warning that 'anti-abortionists are expected to pack tomorrow night's meeting' ('Abortion Is Rally Draw', 1977). The cautionary threat was effective and collective members grew anxious. The Ovarian Sisters' co-founder, and (then) collective member, Sue Edmonds (2008) recalls that 'it was becoming a big battle and we were scared because suddenly they got hold of it and they were going to storm us and so we had to control this meeting somehow'. Feminists worried they would be outnumbered with the potential for highly antagonistic presentations from pro-life supporters.

To set up and operate a centre for the particular needs of women, the Hobart Women's Centre Collective had 'commandeered' a disused chemist shop in close proximity to the city (Edmonds 2008). The seizure of this particular space was not only a pragmatic re-purposing of a building, it also represented a political contest, and a somewhat ironic battle manoeuvre in terms of the institutional connotations. A chemist shop is a place associated with conventional medicine and all that is implied concerning the objectification of female bodies - including reproduction - by (male) medical professionals. Consumers go to a chemist shop to purchase medicine and other products for managing health matters but many female consumers may feel alienated with their particular needs not met or poorly understood. As an interposition into that spatial arrangement, the establishment of a women's centre on the site of a disused chemist shop was both intensely pointed and tactical. The collective reclaimed the chemist space by transforming the abandoned shop into an autonomous (ideally) 'safe space' where women could independently discuss strategies for the better management of female health matters on their own terms. However, on the night of the abortion forum, the re-purposed, feminist-designated building became not only a site for contesting space but also itself a contested space.

Tuesday nights at the Hobart Women's Centre were usually reserved for a routine collective meeting but on this occasion, in preparation of the abortion forum, three or four collective members had purposefully rewritten the lyrics of some well-known folk songs. Their intention was to dissipate the expected antagonism from pro-life

campaigners by appealing to the sympathies of *all* women through music and a universal feminist message. Folk music has strong associations with political protest and the genre is known for its emphasis 'on lyrics and their plain presentation' (Frith in Peraino 1992, p. 25). Therefore folk music suited the protest of some (but not all) second wave feminists who were intent on communicating a particular message. For example, folk music is not always oriented toward the interests of women and folk ballads that recount national identity and life as white, male may be ideologically opposed to the principles of feminism.[5] Thus, the second wave feminist rewriting of folk lyrics both protested the original lyrics and communicated new messages.

Implicit in the performance of a re-written folk song was an expectation that the audience pay close attention to the lyric and narrative content (Peraino 1992, p. 25; see Chapter 4). On 26th April 1977, a crowd of pro-life campaigners turned up to the Hobart Women's Centre and outnumbered the feminists. Double queues snaked along Tasma and Elizabeth Streets and placards were held aloft saying, 'Don't Throw Away the Baby' ('No Incidents at Abortion Protest', 1977). Inside the Women's Centre, space was restricted because the shop counters were still intact. Accordingly, some of the crowd left for a meeting nearby of the Right To Life Association ('No Incidents at Abortion Protest', 1977). Those who stayed behind witnessed the performance of a little rehearsed group who eventually became The Ovarian Sisters.[6] The performance of (pre-planned) music completely re-configured the relations of power with a calming effect on a much bigger, seemingly stronger, adversarial crowd. Collective member Sue Edmonds was well schooled in the values of singing with irreverent political intent, having grown up in England with communist parents and membership in a communist youth group. She describes the night from her point of view.

[5] For example, Neil Gardiner's album, *Anthem for Wednesday* (1971) describes a pastoral landscape inspired by picking apples as a young man. See http://neil-gardner.com/discography/anthem-for-wednesday [accessed 25 May 2014]. *The Colony Sings* (1972) comprises songs about the Tasmanian convict experience. See http://warrenfahey.com/revival_tasmania_2.html [accessed 25 May 2014].
[6] The group decided on a name after the abortion meeting. The Ovarian Sisters line up eventually became Sue Edmonds, Mary Azdajic, Susie Tyson, Tina Bain, Lian Tanner and Penny Sara. Half the group (Tanner, Bain, Edmonds) also formed Shirlenes Shitstirrers and staged agitprop actions under that name; for example, sauntering into a department store on a Friday night and enacting sexual harassment.

> We made the agenda as long as we could and put abortion at the end. We had women and the law, women and education, women and health, and women's music, and we said well what do we know about women's music? Nothing. We'd better work it out really quick. Couple of us re-wrote a couple of American Folk songs to be pro-abortion songs. And we sang at this meeting with my ukulele, about three or four of us. And they all stopped, and they clapped. And I thought, oh this is better ... we can sing and they clap, and maybe somebody hears something. So we were jubilant that we'd managed to handle this meeting. (Edmonds 2008)

The collective had appropriated well-known (American) folk songs to deliver their message and when the soon-to-be-named Ovarian Sisters performed, the music reverberated for some of the listening crowd. In her interview for the study, Edmonds sang a line from one of the rewritten songs; 'Down in old Hobart old Hobart so drear/You want an abortion but no one will hear'. The spatial dynamics of the room switched, as Edmonds tells it, from an angry altercation to a manageable 'conversation'. The anecdote that I have discussed (above) also illustrates a form of political intervention into the language of the pro-life campaigner placards. The words 'Support Motherhood' and 'Don't Throw Away the Baby' ('No Incidents at Abortion Protest', 1977) were 'stopped' to enable a different syntax and meaning (see Foucault 1994, p. xviii). In the Foucaultian sense, the use of music at the abortion forum shows the discursivity of power, the way that power is continuously resisted and disrupted.

Today, it is possible to consider what happened at the Hobart Women's Centre as a process demonstrating the connections between the reconfiguration of space/place, and the body as a site of contest. Human geographer Nigel Thrift (2003, p. 103) calls this 'place space' and argues that 'place is involved with embodiment and it is difficult to think of place outside the body'. The way our bodies move and interact in any given space may be determined by the limitations of the physical place itself and the particular human senses that are active at the time, such as touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing: we see other eyes and we hear other sounds. In different situations, as Thrift tells it, individuals may feel as if they have little or no power, and yet, as we have seen, people use place, space, language, words, talk, gestures, movements, and music to open up spaces - sometimes inadvertently - in which they can assert agency. Thrift (2003, p. 103) theorises that bodies, things, places are held together and redefined

through *affect*, emotion and embodied sensations. The 'larger spatial dance' involves 'reacting to encounters and evolving out of them'.

Figure 5. The Ovarian Sisters, Hobart, circa 1977

At the abortion meeting organised by the Hobart Women's Centre, music transformed some of the emotions and with ears attuned, the new relation of bodies to each other shifted the management of a potentially difficult encounter or warlike clash. This does not necessarily mean that the pro-life campaigners changed their views of abortion, although they may have been challenged. But in that moment important political advantage was gained for those feminists in the weaker position. Thus, a (temporary) feminist listening space might be conceived with a degree of interpretive flexibility, as a musicalised 'heterotopia' (Foucault 1986). Borrowing Foucault's term 'heterotopia' at this juncture, I mean to contrast ideal space - feminist Utopia - and indicate the transformation of hegemonic public space into 'other' space; a different space where one counteracts subject positionality through the connections with 'all the space that surrounds it' (1986, p. 24). In this way, it might also be possible to unsettle some of the assumed aims, objectives and outcomes associated with women's music.

The Ovarian Sisters' anecdote illustrates a women-centred but non-separatist practice of spatialisation - as much accidental as it was planned - at the same time, Australian

women bands were involved in the intentional creation of women-only spaces structured around separatist principles. From a spatial perspective, it is important to unpack this a little more given there are many strands of separatism and spatial practices that are easily conflated and lumped together within a feminist narrative. Geographer Kath Browne (2009, p. 542) identifies that separatism, for some women, may be a complete or absolute separation from men, such as living in women-only communes; or it may mean the exclusion of men from sexual relations, a sexual separatism or 'political lesbianism' as it was sometimes called in the 1970s and 1980s (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists). Within the Australian women's music scene, women embraced separatist practices in complex ways. Separatism referred to the women-only music events and activities that excluded men on the basis of separatism, such as women's dances and performances where there were only women performing and attending. Sometimes women may have excluded men from sexual relations but not in all aspects or areas of everyday life, which for some women band members meant an approach to music that may have included men in some capacity. Thus, separatist practices of spatialisation functioned together and/or independently of each other.

Separation from heteropatriarchal society was a form of contesting space oriented tactically toward overcoming the oppression of heterosexuality (Valentine 1997, p. 67). Politically, according to Sheila Jeffreys, separatist principles involve radical feminism and lesbian feminism, the former a precursor of the latter. For Jeffreys (1994, p. 469), lesbian feminism is 'the model for free womanhood' because it identifies heterosexuality as oppressive to women but not inevitable. The next chapter looks more closely at the feminist investments in 'political lesbianism' within Australian women's music. The current discussion outlines the spatial aspects of radicalesbianism, which as Jeffreys (2003, p. 22) puts it, emphasises the necessary steps to overcome oppression, 'the need for some degree of separation from the politics, institutions and culture of men'. Separatism tended to imply 'safety' for women based on degrees of withdrawal from heteropatriarchal, masculinist society, although gender separate spaces (as seen with The Ovarian Sisters) were themselves contested sites.

Overall, the separatist spatial practice of women's music manifested in multiple ways, as the following anecdote illustrates. In 1979, a nondescript inner city warehouse in Sydney was established as a women-only space commensurate with separatism, where women-only cultural events and activities were held. The building was located at Bay 9, Number 4 Ultimo Rd and became known as the Women's Warehouse. Collectively run, the unrenovated multi-storied building was home to many different groups and women gravitated to the space for a variety of reasons; there was a short-lived restaurant on the top floor, a silkscreen and photography collective who worked in the basement, a women's theatre group, a women's film group, gym, Thai chi and self-defence classes, and the *Rouge* (feminist press) collective. The activities at the Women's Warehouse came to be known as 'women's culture', comprising all types of artwork, photography, silkscreens, posters, music and so on, made by women. Women's culture was not exclusively separatist (meaning radicalesbian), which I demonstrate in due course, but the separatist space of the Women's Warehouse aimed to be nonhierarchical, nonracist, nonageist, nonclassist, and nonexploitative (Faderman 1992, p. 216). Once a week, a women's music co-op held meetings (Uma 1980, p. 18) and music instruments were left on the premises to be communally accessed. A large open space, at street level, doubled for music rehearsals and performances.

Toward the conclusion of 1979, five women started performing at the Women's Warehouse under the slightly unusual, perhaps self-deprecating and peculiarly Australian name of Stray Dags.[7] Tina Harris, Mystery Carnage, Ludo McFerran, Celeste Howden and Chris Burke each had an interest in music and cabaret, which blossomed in the encouraging spatial environment of women-only events at the Women's Warehouse.[8] Sax player Ludo McFerran (in Stott 1983, p. 63) says that for Stray Dags, it was 'the sort of venue where you could get up with three songs to a supportive but critical audience. Without somewhere like that … there's this immediate pressure on you to have fifteen songs together and you have to spend an enormous amount of money straight up on equipment'. Arguably, access to instruments, equipment,

[7] 'Dag' refers to the wool that hangs from the hindquarters of a sheep and is mattered with dung. 'Dag' may also mean an unusual or eccentric character (*Macquarie dictionary*, 1987).
[8] Tina Harris and Mystery Carnage performed cabaret acts together at the Women's Warehouse.

education, books, and so on, accrue knowledge and skills, that constitutes a type of 'cultural capital' and facilitates mobility. Pierre Bourdieu (1984) has argued that cultural capital refers to the systems of exchange (advantage and 'wealth') hidden within everyday social relations, including cultural, economic, social, symbolic accumulations (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of women's music as a commodity). In my view, the available resources and haven for women's culture at the Women's Warehouse produced a form of cultural capital. Several women bands performed at the Women's Warehouse (such as Hens Teeth and The Other Band). But it was Stray Dags that capitalised successfully into a five-year survival, considered to be a long time for any band, but particularly a lesbian/feminist band of that era.

Situated in close proximity to Chinatown, an inner city area of difference, not far from Sydney's CBD, such a large brown roller door of the Women's Warehouse was commonplace with no sign to mark it out from other buildings. It was imagined 'hidden', safe from men. Entry and access depended on word of mouth, self-printed leaflets and the feminist press. Inside the space, women bands set up just to one side of a tall concrete pylon on the ground floor. The drummer perched on a tiny wooden riser and bits of brown carpet were strewn on the floor as a token gesture of acoustic enhancement. Half the overhead fluorescent lights were turned off to create atmosphere. On women's dance nights, the main roller door was closed and entrance was through a small cut out door, which was easy to monitor. As a separatist space/place, the Women's Warehouse established its (transparent) exclusion of men by and through door regulation. In turn, audiences came to associate Stray Dags with separatism and radicalesbianism when not all of the individual members of the band necessarily or actually identified that way.

At this point, the variations between America and Australia in regard to door regulation can be noted. The particularities of women's music festivals in America are slightly different from the women's music scene that I focus on. However, there are similarities concerning the regulation of boundaries and inclusions/exclusions. For example, the

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival[9] (Michfest) has a 'womyn-born-womyn' policy that prevents transwomen from entering the festival site because it does not recognise transwomen as 'womyn' (Browne 2009; 2010; Gamson 1997). Michfest was established in 1976, and is still going strong. Its door policy has had revisions throughout the years and continues to be a source of debate-action. There have been discrepancies, for instance, between the policy and its enforcement (Gamson 1997). A trans-resistance space called Camp Trans was also set up in 1994 near the main festival site and has re-appeared ever since. Kath Browne's (2009) research suggests that Michfest is spatially complex because of the way it has both contested heteropatriarchy and produced a site of pro-trans resistance. For example, iconic pop duo and regular Michfest performers, Indigo Girls, issued a statement[10] in 2103, claiming it would be their last appearance unless the door policy was reversed to indicate Trans-Inclusion.

In Australia, during the period on which this study focuses, spatial disputes about 'woman' and music were not strictly or formally asserted as they were during the 1990s when the 'trans debates' emerged (see Taylor 1998).[11] Nevertheless, it is possible to map the shifts in language, which could be said to reflect different political approaches. For example, the 1973 dance at the Ecumenical Centre in Melbourne was advertised plainly as a 'Women's Dance' (see poster collection, Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives). But by the end of the 1970s some of the reports in the feminist press used the word 'wimin' to describe women bands. The Australian feminist newspaper, *Rouge*, reported 'the new wave of wimin in rock is an energetic force determined to be accepted in their own right without pre-occupations of self-consciousness' ('The Best of a Good Bunch', 1979, p. 6). Changing the spelling of 'women' to 'womyn' or 'wimin' made visible separatist and radical feminist aims and objectives to 'write out' the

[9] Michigan Womyn's Music Festival is an internationally recognised festival that takes place once a year in the remote woodlands of Michigan with a weeklong program of 'women-only' performances.
[10] See http://www.indigogirls.com/correspondence_2006.html [accessed 27 November 2013].
[11] The Australian 'trans debates' coincided with the Sydney Lesbian Space Project in the mid-1990s. Among other contributing factors, a protracted conflict about transsexuality saw the collapse of the project. Affrica Taylor (1998, p. 131) writes of the 'rifts amongst those involved in the Lesbian Space Project … it was not hard to trace moves to regulate internal difference along its fracture lines. These were attempts to regulate not only the symbolic territory of lesbian identity, by seeking to establish once and for all who the 'real' lesbians are, and thus who is entitled to speak, vote, represent and be represented; but also to gate-keep the physical space, to decide in advance who would and would not be allowed to use the building once it was purchased'.

patriarchal domination of women by men (Faderman 1992, p. 219) using grammatical interventions. Yet, at the same time, many posters continued to advertise events using general concept names. In the early 1980s, for instance, Stray Dags and the new wave women band Hotspots played for the 'Women and Arts Movement (WAM) Dance' at Adelaide University (Delma Corazon, private collection of posters).[12] In addition, women bands that supported separatism did not exclusively play women-only events (although some bands may have done so). To cite one example, Stray Dags performed on the same bill as The Kevins (mixed-gender band) for the 'Gay Wimbledon Dance' (see poster collection, Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives).[13] These markers of language materialised women bands through feminist discourse but with different intentions. As Foucault (1978, p. 100) writes, 'a multiplicity of discursive elements come into play in various strategies … we must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both instrument and effect of power, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point'. Yet this notion of planned and unplanned intention tends to be overlooked in narratives claiming all women's music as 'womyn's music'.

In its pure form, absolute separatism and separatist space/place was difficult to realise. The Women's Warehouse (for example) exemplifies some of the material realities and contradictory forces encountered by separatists. The space was a so-called 'man-made' building, a rented property in a capitalist market. Therefore the collective was always already dependent on relations to (male) ownership beyond the physical boundaries of the building and the economic pressures outside the control of the women managing the space. Despite numerous efforts and activities such as rent-raising dances,[14] the Women's Warehouse folded within two years. Unsustainable internal conflicts are also often cited for the demise of second wave separatist spaces (Browne 2009; Valentine 1997). For example, in her study of separatist rural women's lands in America, geographer Gill Valentine (1997, p. 70) attests that identifying 'threats' and defining

[12] The posters are a poor record of the year. Dates are often missing, at the time assumed unnecessary.
[13] Another example is the Land Rights Benefit Dance that had two women bands on the bill, Stray Dags and Escargo Go and two mixed-gender bands, Big 5 and Mutant Death (see advertisement *Gaywaves*, 2 December 1982, held by the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives).
[14] I first took charge of the sound for Stray Dags at one of these rent-raising women's dances, early in 1980.

the sexuality of the space they were trying to create were the greatest sources of tension for radical feminists. Determining and enforcing the exclusion of men, male children and possibly heterosexual women (sometimes) caused disagreement and I return to this point at the end of the chapter (see also Chapter 3). Kath Browne (2009, p. 543) makes the observation that since the 1970s-1980s, radical feminist, separatist spaces have been heavily criticised and dismissed as extremist and essentialist in contrast to poststructuralist ideas about the instabilities of gender/sex. Poststructuralist investigations may critique ever-present male/female binaries by arguing that the sex/gender dichotomies within radical feminist designated spaces are essentialist, exclusionary, because of the way lesbians are configured (see, for example, Podmore 2001). This has led some music theorists such as Jodie Taylor (2009; 2012) to seek a decisive queer distance from the past by describing womyn's music and women-only spaces as 'gender rigid' in order to emphasise the fluidity, instability of sex/gender/sexuality.[15] Rather than drawing a conclusion about the failure of radical feminism and its questionable intentions, I want to hold these problems open as informative in order to look at the culture and community of Australian women's music from a different angle. The Women's Warehouse in Sydney came to 'house' the creative manifestations of women's culture and the idea(l)s of gender separatist strategies. But it was only one space/place where women bands formed and performed. Many more bands came into being in other ways, and other venues.

Community Space

So far, I have discussed women's music and feminist spatial practices in terms of identifying gender imbalances, separating into safe places, and the separatist principles of women's culture. It is also possible to broaden the discussion about contesting and contested space to include a consideration of community. For this I explore Anne Enke's (2003, p. 237) interesting observation that the gender-separate spaces of feminist community were not all oriented toward radicalesbianism. There is an important distinction to be made, she argues, between separatism and separate

[15] Alternatively, a trans agenda may focus on the notion that embodiments at birth 'are not necessarily tied to lifelong gendered identities, lives or experiences (Browne 2009, p. 543; see also Prosser 1998).

(women-only) spaces, which were often accused of being separatist. On the one hand, women's music and women's culture meant materialising women's space as separatist, which placed the emphasis on creating 'new women's space'. On the other hand, women's music implied separation from (outside) and opposition to a universally gendered male music industry. It is my contention that spatialisation/s did not function in such a clear-cut way, and claiming space (creating new) and reclaiming (rearticulating existing) space are not mutually exclusive, as the following discussion on community illustrates. Nevertheless for heuristic purposes it is useful to describe separatist (meaning radicalesbian) and reclaiming strategies independently.

Women's culture contributed to a sense of feminist community founded on the principles of collective identity and sameness amongst women. The ideas and ideals of women's culture and feminist community appeared to stand against the individualism of the hegemonic, heteropatriarchal, capitalist society, and best realised those ideals because it was assumed that women are less individualistic, less competitive, and more 'other-oriented' than men. Putting it differently, there was a widely held belief amongst second wave feminists that in order to rectify all that had gone wrong in male hands, the world needed to foreground the values of women (Faderman 1992, p. 216). On that basis, it was thought that cultural products such as music had intrinsic value if produced by women, as Sylvie Leber of Toxic Shock suggests in the following comment.

> I was a very active feminist. I had a very strong belief in creating a women's culture and I saw this huge gap. There were very few women playing instruments and it was a reaction against the girl out the front and boys playing the instruments and I thought its time for change. We can create our own music without having to be macho and male, pub rock beer barn sort of music. And it was fun. (Glenn and Leber 2006)

Leber's remark indicates a feminist investment in reclaiming the gendered space of music based on the idea that the existing space (and by extension society) was in need of change. Creating something identified as 'our own [women's] music' implies taking particular steps to achieve that objective and here it is possible to see the different second wave feminist interventions into the practices of spatialisation.

Second wave lesbian/feminists in Australia attempted to build a sense of community designated as feminist and women's music brought women purposely together to materialise that community. Thus, it might be argued that women's music in Australia became a vehicle for proselytising feminist community, similar to America (Faderman 1992, p. 220, see also Peraino 1992). The trouble was that under the one feminist umbrella different groups (including all-female music groups) had different visions. As I have stated, liberal feminism argued that men and women are fundamentally the same but have been socialised differently and that is where the problem of inequality lies. Radical feminism, by contrast, argued that women and men are inherently different (see also Chapter 3). At this point, it is necessary to unpack the problems associated with the general notion of community, not just the narrowly defined understandings of community found in separatist spatial practices (such as the Women's Warehouse).

The idea(l)s of feminist-designated community, space and place, constituted a critical manoeuvre for establishing political cohesion among all women. Yet the generalist claims of feminist community tended to conflate sameness (assimilation) among women. Community, by definition, refers to a group of people residing in the same place and/or leading a common life according to a rule (*Macquarie dictionary*, 1987). In her critical work on community and sexuality, Nikki Sullivan problematises the widely held belief and assumption that community orients the individual to commonality.

> In opposition to 'the world outside' which often seems dangerous, alien or hostile, one assumes that in one's community one is safe, that all the members of the community understand and support each other … and that disagreements, far from being dangerous or destructive, enable the community to develop and improve itself. Here community is represented as a source of strength, a safe place you share with others like a 'home'. (Sullivan 2003, p. 137)

According to Sullivan, people need to know who they are, who others are and imagine ideas about belonging, comparable to the comfort and safety of home. The community imagined by feminists tended to presume a 'natural' bond between women based on sex/gender with a presumption that such a bond would guarantee common goals, common agreement. On this 'common-sense' model of reasoning, it might be argued that second wave feminists conceptualised a feminist community as safe, non-

judgemental space necessary for the growth of women, a defendable place where thoughts could be gathered before heading out into the world. Sullivan (2003, p. 138) argues that women do not 'constitute a full community unless they actively form a community based on their common identity as women, for example, the feminist community'. From this perspective, Australian women's music, as a feminist-designated space/place, might be described as the idealisation of 'full community' based on 'woman' as the shared identity.

In the interviews for the study, several participants talked about their time in women bands using the conceptual framework of shared identity and assumptions about feminist-designated community. Guitarist Sharon Jakovsky of jazz band Zelda Swang (late 1980s) believes that women's music gave her a sense of belonging to a like-minded group of people in a helpful space of encouragement.

> I'd always been searching [for] the lesbian feminist scene and then I thought oh okay I can fit in there … It was a great place the women's music scene … we were trying to create opportunities and I found it supportive. (Jakovsky 2008)

The categories women, lesbian and feminist are imbued with power to represent collective identity in Jakovsky's statement (above) and claims of empowerment and affirmation are made on that basis (Gamson 1997, p. 179). Marian Webb (2008) of Tasmanian band The Budgies considers women's music 'gave us courage and confidence to be who we were'. In this sentence, ideas about shared identity bind the 'we' and 'women' together in the fullest sense of community. Sue Maslin (2006) of Canberra band Domestic Dirt says that, for her, in those days 'you couldn't separate music from your political expression or your sexual expression, the whole thing went together' (see also Chapter 3). However, some of the interview comments, particularly Jakovsky's, also seem to imagine and imply the notion of choice to account for women's feminist community spaces. As Sullivan (2003, p. 139) suggests, a voluntary association of individuals with shared commonalities might also be called a 'created community' because it is founded on ideas about individual choice. Both conceptions of community - 'natural bonding' on the basis of sex/gender or 'created community' - imply that sharing identity is unambiguous and unchanging (Sullivan 2003, pp. 139-

145). As Sullivan points out, individuals conforming to singular notions of community (then and now) encounter a range of problems associated with expressions of identity and concepts of oneness.

Drawing attention to the problem of difference, Iris Marion Young (1990, p. 302) writes that 'community presumes subjects can understand one another as they understand themselves and denies difference between subjects'. Community membership and community ideals ('we' are all the 'same') invoke the opposite of individualism and greater value is placed on social relations invested in rational reasoning for the 'good of the community' (Sullivan 2003, p. 137). Building community entails attending to and sharing in the particularity of the other's needs and interests, more than simply respecting the rights of the other, which is its contradictory, problematic task (Young 1990, p. 305). Other theorists have analysed community in similarly helpful ways. Linnell Secomb (2000), for example, argues that in general the community ideals of singularity and 'oneness' have powerful homogenising effects with a tendency to suppress difference in the name of unity. Given that a sense of community continues to be deeply embedded in sociality and governmentality, Secomb makes the claim that we need to rethink community as 'fractured space' rather than abandon it. Secomb (2000, p. 134) writes that 'disagreement disrupts the formation of a totalizing identity and … holds a space open for diversity and freedom … and it is only within a community that acknowledges disagreement and fracture that difference and freedom flourish'. Drawing on Secomb's concept of community as fractured space, I argue that the Australian women's music scene may be similarly re-interpreted. From this perspective, it is possible to see that as much as intentional agreement, separate (women-only) spaces both shaped and were shaped by debate, divergence and disagreement.

Consensus was not always reached within the gender-separate spaces of Australian women's music, nor was it always needed for the scene to flourish. In 1980, Tess McPeake was living in Darwin, playing bass guitar in a women band called Thrush. The five-piece group comprised McPeake, Linda Duck, Aloma Court, Buzzy, Susie Sickert and Lisa Medici. In her interview, McPeake indicates a strong personal idea of feminist

community, describing a number of political battles waged in Darwin. But she then says that other members of Thrush felt differently.

> There were some of us who were lesbian feminists ... Linda Duck and I, and some of the people we were close to were at the core of some of the feminist battles that were going on in [Darwin] Northern Territory at the time. But the rest of the band wasn't. Buzzy was never interested and didn't have [feminist] consciousness. Aloma was very different, a sympathizer if you like but not a real strong [feminist] thinker … But we brought women's issues to the front and we pushed it. The music was an outlet for anger and we wanted people to feel that power of the movement. (McPeake 2008)

In this narrative, McPeake uses collectively shared identity to claim that the band acted on behalf of the women's movement, even though individual ideas about feminism varied. Thus it is also possible to see the contingencies of second wave feminism. In other words, despite what some separatist women's groups claimed (see Chapter 3 for claims made by the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists), 'sameness' was not an essential ingredient for political effectiveness. Nevertheless, women's music was able to provide a form of mutual benefit for the good of the group and/or the feminist community.

The activity of making music with others does require some type of human co-operation and agreement, argues Johan Fornäs (1995, p. 112). But how does the 'private' individual reconcile and/or comes to terms with public assertions made in the name of collective identity? Judith Butler (2004, p. 20) reasons that when a community agitates and argues for rights, the language of community is 'we' but there is a predicament because 'in that language and in that context, we have to present ourselves as bounded beings, distinct, recognisable, delineated, subjects before the law, a community defined by sameness', which implicates the individual in 'lives that are not our own'. Insightfully, Anne Enke (2003, p. 636) has written about the racism and whiteness of the second wave women's movement in America and suggests that while allegedly bringing women together, feminism and lesbian sexualities invested in whiteness for a normative definition of woman and feminist community had a homogenizing tendency to deny difference. In Australia too, gender-separate spaces designated feminist tended to ignore whiteness and differences such as ethnicity, religion, age, class, sexuality, although it is difficult providing the evidence to support

this claim. In the research interviews for the study, for example, the whiteness of the Australian women's music scene received little mention and there are few illustrative anecdotes apart from a general perspective offered by Vicki Gordon of Brisbane women band Spit.

> We were living in a time when anybody who was different was scorned upon. The Queensland police would pick you up and lock you up if they didn't like your haircut … it was terribly corrupt and lesbians and gays and blacks and anybody who was different, we had to make noise to affirm our existence within ourselves, and music creates a medium to do that. (Gordon 2008)

Things began changing in the 1990s, according to Gordon, when a number of affirmative, proactive music programs were established. After her time in Spit, Gordon forged a career as a marketing manager in the music industry. She then established the Australian Women's Contemporary Music (see Aims and Objectives AWCM 1990) and later staged the (national) Aboriginal and Islander Contemporary Music Festival 1992, which involved at least two hundred women in performance and workshops, including Indigenous artists The Mills Sisters, Leah Purcell and Christine Anu. Around the same time, music journalist Lesley Sly (1993, p. 331) wrote a comprehensive (Australian) music industry handbook titled *The Power and The Passion* and interviewed Mandawuy Yunupingu of the successful Indigenous band Yothu Yindi. He says, 'the hardest part for urban Aboriginal bands is finding places to play … racism is everywhere, but you can't let it stop you … and we're going to put money back into the community'. Throughout the 1980s, Aboriginal 'community' bands occasionally played on the same bill with lesbian/feminist bands, particularly for fundraising benefits and causes.[16] It might also be argued that women's music encountered (some) similar contingencies to Aboriginal bands: access to venues, audiences, production facilities and so on. However, Indigenous female artists were notably absent in Australian women bands.

Community contributes to a dominant story, the imagined romance of a common history and shared cultural institution. It brings people together and yet functions problematically as a mechanism for excluding difference (Secomb 2000; see also 2003).

[16] For example, Stray Dags (circa 1981/2) played with Aboriginal reggae band No Fixed Address at an event in Canberra that was sponsored by the local community radio station 2XX.

Investigating the difficulties associated with imagining 'oneness', Secomb argues that acknowledging heterogeneity is not enough to overturn the presumptions of commonality in community, the effects of singularity and 'oneness'. Secomb proposes the homogenous effects of community require a cultural re-imagining as interrelation to others, openness, hospitality and friendship. Secomb follows Jean Luc Nancy when she writes:

> The human existence emerges from the community of others. Community is not produced by the agreement of individuals; rather, human singularities are produced by community. Community does not, therefore, involve intentionality, agreement or commonality. We do not make it happen - it enables our becoming. (2000, p. 140)

Group activities bring us into being but do not mean that individuals hold the same political views as each other, although one's ideas may 'firm up' in relation to others. For example, singer Jacquie Reid of Perth band Tokyo Rose says she was self-conscious that her feminist viewpoints sometimes differed from others.

> What is it that lets us hang with a certain crowd? When I first got to Perth, I went to a women's dance. I had dreadlocks and gold lame pants … The DJ was playing ethereal stuff and eventually we did the big circle thing [dancing] to 'I Will Survive', they'd go out and in. I was agitating and said can't we have dance music? They said 'don't get so stuck in the patriarchy'. These are the moments where you think, are these my people? (Reid, J. 2008)

In theory, the gender-separate (separatist) space of second wave feminism intended to welcome all women but the anecdote above shows that feminist community is an ideal being-with-others where assumptions are imbricated in relational interactions that are in reality always under question. Individuals may agree with generalist notions of community but act differently in specific situations.

Women performed (and attended) women-only events without necessarily identifying fully or completely with any one particular strand of feminism, gender-separate or separatist. For example, socialist and Marxist feminists based their theories in economics and did not necessarily prioritise gender-separate events. Feminist women oriented toward party politics, may well have enjoyed a women-only music event while

at the same time working politically toward a community in which their brothers-in-arms were very much a part. Kaye Brown, who has a background in unionism, talks here about the shared language of (women's) music within Razor Cuts, as an intimate, process of inter-personal, group negotiation that exposed vulnerabilities.

> I was so happy playing music. But there are songs you want people to feel sad about or angry about or whatever but it's not going to work if everyone's playing a different tune … they're all wanting to say the same thing but they're just disparate people standing on a stage … to say it together then you've got to be a band *and to find out what people want to say together is a very exposing and intimate experience* to get to that level of communication. (Brown 2006, my emphasis)

In the (above) statement, Brown is referring both to her relationship with Haines (who she founded the band with) and the happiness that she felt playing music with others, 'we loved sharing music and we loved hearing the sound of our own music'. Brown does not mean that all women in Razor Cuts were lesbians or shared a radicalesbian perspective but the group space of music allowed intimacies, indeed depended on a type of vulnerability with each other and hence a discovery that what people are able to say with 'one voice' is often a fractured process. As Secomb (2000, p. 142) suggests, it is not singularity or the common identity of 'oneness', which is important in re-conceiving community, but the social activities of interrelation that brings subjects into being. Understanding community and groups from this perspective, suggests space may open for different histories to be written, circulated, passed on.

Unblocking Space

The first part of this chapter has outlined processes of contesting and contested space, the interrelated complications associated with gender-separate interventions and separatism. The second part turns to flows, pathways and networks as an alternative way of conceiving Australian women's music and its relation to space. Social geographer Nigel Thrift (2003, p. 99; see also 2006) argues that 'blocks of space' such as capitalism, neoliberalism, cities, communities and so on, are useful, but there are no forces inherent to those spaces. For example, community 'captures and holds still a

particular aspect of the world and it is doubtful we could ever do without it' but spaces and bodies are active and changeable and not in the 'freeze-frame' (Thrift 2006, p. 140) that may be evoked by the term 'community'. To 'unblock space' and think differently about how space functions, Thrift (2003, p. 99) emphasises the idea that subjects do not necessarily know precisely what they are doing or trying to achieve. Movement and change wrought through (physical and intellectual) movement may be the starting rather than endpoint. Drawing on Thrift's notion of unblocking spatial thinking, I argue that Australian women's music can be analysed as a form of (musical) 'borderless-ness', an exchange of knowledges radiating outward from specific sites.

Music draws people to particular places on the basis of ideas about shared affinities and the process of repetition is what builds a music scene (Straw 2002, p. 254). The crystallisation of women's music through its battles, contests, and political affinities for building a sense of community is clear. But Australian women's music also mobilised energies, I argue, in multiple, rhizomatic (rather than singular, vertical) directions, therefore it is useful to understand this type of (literal and conceptual) movement and some of its effects. As Thrift (2006, p. 141) puts it, 'every space is in constant motion', meaning that boundaries are always already under question and potentially (in theory) there is 'no such thing as a [spatial] boundary'. For example, Bennett and Peterson (2004) borrow from studies of conventional migration and utilise the notion of 'translocality' to analyse the spatialisation of music scenes. They suggest (similar to Straw) that a local music scene corresponds to a specific geographic focus, whereas translocality 'refers to widely scattered local scenes drawn into regular communication around a distinctive form of music and lifestyle' (2004, p. 6). Translocality implies that social relationships across locales shape a 'network of spaces, places and scales where identities are negotiated and transformed' (Brickell and Datta 2011, p. 5). Differently put, identities are produced by the specifics of place and the local-to-local connections, or situatedness during movement from one locality to another.

In the taken-for-granted movement that occurs in everyday life, musical influences associated with geographic localities are sometimes overlooked. The distinct, situated 'Australian-ness' of women's music is examined in Chapter 4. At this juncture, I argue

that movement between geographic locations was a form of spatialisation with an invisible and yet influential effect on the music styles, aesthetics within the Australian women's music scene. At different times in their lives, individuals in the study navigated the upheavals and emotions of space/place disjuncture similar to people in mainstream music.[17] Some women moved away as adults from childhood streets, neighbourhoods, countries in order to experiment and gravitate toward like-minded others. For instance, after growing up in England and studying at university, Ludo McFerran (Stray Dags) went searching for feminists and lesbians, and landed in Australia. Sue Edmonds (The Ovarian Sisters) has a similar travel trajectory. Thus, hints of Irish jigs and ballads can be found in The Ovarian Sisters, while the music of Stray Dags has echoes of British ska and reggae. When she was young, Jacquie Reid's family emmigrated on government-assisted passage from Scotland to Australia and found work in the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, New South Wales. When interviewed, Reid (2008) reported that her mother continued to sing old Scottish drinking songs in their new home, which contributed to Reid's own 'bawdy' style of singing. Thrift (2003, p. 104) might describe this as 'spatial a-where-ness' because people retain memories of the places and spaces away from which they have shifted.

At a local level, the exchange of information between people may eventuate haphazardly rather than uni-directionally. It should not be overlooked that lesbian/feminists were frequently involved in a number of different scenes. Re-thinking Australian women's music as a 'music scene' (in addition to community) has the potential to evoke the fluidity of urban life (Straw 2002, p. 248) as continual processes of cultural activities, which produce and are produced by the sociality of human interaction. For example, Tina Harris (Stray Dags) arrived in Australia with her family from Canada at the age of nine and grew up in Sydney. During her interview, she described a network of scenes and groups of people interacting with each other that she discovered primarily but not only through music.

[17] For example, Glasgow born George Young met Dutch born Harry Vanda at Villawood Migrant Hostel, Sydney (now known as Villawood Detention Centre). In 1964, while living at the hostel, Young and Vanda formed The Easybeats and were joined by singer songwriter Stevie Wright, who had grown up in Leeds, England. The Easybeats are recognised as Australia's most commercially successful band of the 1960s.

> I went to university and got involved in a women's scene, which wasn't a women's music scene, it was a women's scene, the lesbian scene, the motorcycling scene, the university scene, the feminist scene … I brought my guitar along one day to a street theatre group … and through that met one woman who lived with another woman and she asked me to help her with a song … which began that phase of my life. (Harris 2006)

Rather than having a sense of one particular community, for Harris, there were many interrelated scenes. In her narrative it is possible to see overlaps and interrelatedness and that the 'members' of scenes create connections and identifications in multiple directions. Individuals may participate in many scenes and/or shift and change. Harris' seemingly accidental encounters are also a reminder that the term 'women's scene' circulated in conversation, whereas references to an Australian 'women's music scene' were infrequent at the time.[18]

Scattered geographies, changing locations and bands that came and went also typify women's music in Australia, and thus its translocality. One of the striking aspects of the Australian women's music scene is the way bands produced clusters of activities in capital cities separated by large distances.[19] Women bands (and for bigger events, their audiences) travelled across state boundaries and relied on local-to-local interactions (Bennett and Peterson 2004, p. 6) and the exchange of resources, such as staying in each other's houses. The spatialisation of Australian women's music in different cities is important. A women band contributed to a national women's music scene, as I mentioned in the Introduction, and yet within their specific locale may have been, at any given time, the only 'known' lesbian/feminist band in existence, particularly in the small cities of Hobart, Tasmania, and Darwin, Northern Territory. In turn, a geographic location may have shaped the way that bands accessed venues and audiences. In 1982, for example, Stray Dags went on their first interstate tour to Adelaide. The band (with separatist inclinations) played a program of four performances set up by the co-ordination efforts of Barbara Baird (2008) and her male colleague at the community radio station 5MMM. Of the four gigs, one was a women-only dance at the Adelaide

[18] In general, the 'women's scene' referred to cultural and political happenings where lesbian/feminists gathered: rallies, demonstrations, fundraisers, dances, household socialising and parties.

[19] By road, Adelaide is approximately 1,500 kilometres west of Sydney, which entails at least 18 hours of driving on the national highways. Travelling north from Melbourne to Sydney takes an average of 10 hours over 900 kilometres (approximately) of bitumen.

Town Hall for the Women and Labour Conference. The other three gigs for the radio station were reliant on the organising principles and hierarchies of independent live music. Thus a range of coalitional efforts materialised according to geography and size of population and women bands encountered local contingencies in ways that may have contradicted and/or did not necessarily align with personally held views, political objectives and intentions.

Public/Private Sexualities: Women's Music in Everyday Space/Place

In this section, I want to further 'unblock spatial thinking' about women's music by discussing the public/private sexualities of everyday music establishments. In the makeup of Australian women's music, hotel venues were a big part of the scene, as were women's dances. But the human, social geography of hotel sites was important for different reasons to the all-women dance. Regulated by the laws of residential zonings and the logics of commercial pressures, the hotel is a traditional site of live music and witness to the struggles around gender and sexualities. Hotels contribute to the fabric of the cityscape, generally accessed, utilised and shared by many people. I am describing hotels as 'public spaces' although it can be noted they are usually privately owned. My particular interest lies in the hidden forces of exclusion, class, race, sexuality, and so on that operate around and within hotels as public spaces. Conventional music history suggests that male bands at the workingman's drinking hole, transformed the sounds and sensations of Australian rock and roll during the 1970s (see Episode 4, *Long Way To The Top*). By contrast, women (and women's music) have different histories in relation to pubs (Hedger 2007; Johnson 1992) not least because women were once subject to sex segregation laws and unable to drink legally in the front bar of an Australian hotel. It took a period of active lobbying[20] to change these laws and eventually, women performed music in hotel bars that once denied their entry. As Marian Webb (2008) of The Budgies puts it 'playing in the pub scene was about being heard in pubs, which were pub-rock and traditionally male. Women bands

[20] In 1965, Merle Thornton and Rosalie Bogner chained themselves to the foot rail in the front bar of the Regatta Hotel in Brisbane and demanded to be served. A nationwide debate sparked about the sex-segregation rules that prevented women from drinking in the front bar (Hedger 2007; Johnson 1992).

getting out were a rarity'. Thus, given the historical background, some feminists regarded the formation of all-women bands as a gender reparation project. At the same time, women bands were pivotal to the spatialisation and creation of a lesbian social scene in the ordinary, everyday places of leisure such as hotel venues.

Before discussing hotel venues further, it is important to remember that second wave feminist folk groups did not, in general, play at hotels. For instance, (some) members of Clitoris Band regarded the space/place of hotels, as materially, symbolically, oppressive to women, and playing in a pub would have felt too much like the music industry that feminist folk groups wanted to call into question. Thus, motivated by radical feminism and the codes and conventions of 'pure' folk music[21] Clitoris Band favoured left-wing theatre venues, dances held in community town halls and performances at political rallies. One exception to this pattern occurred in the smaller locale of Hobart, Tasmania, where a choice of venues was limited compared to larger cities. The Bothy Folk Club at the Sir William Don Hotel attracted a large folkie and mixed left wing audience, the rules were fairly relaxed and children were allowed to attend music performances on the premises. In turn, the members of The Ovarian Sisters came to depend on the Bothy Folk Club as a place to perform. It was a welcome practical solution for the group, albeit a quirky variation specific to that geographic location of the rules and laws that generally governed hotels.

By the end of the 1970s, a number of traditional rock venues in capital cities around Australia welcomed women bands and their audiences, when previously those doors had been 'closed'. While the main stage for women bands was a women's dance, which I elaborate later in the chapter, many bands, particularly throughout the 1980s, went in pursuit of (and were pursued for) gigs where live music was programmed most nights of the week. Women band nights in hotels were subject to the unpredictable pressures of commercialisation, the variations of live music, and the lack of lesbian/feminist commercial power.[22] My approach is to divide these women band nights into 'public'

[21] Folk music flourished in coffee lounges, rented rooms and halls during the 1960s and into the early 1970s, which contributed to ideas about purist folk music and where it should be played.
[22] Lack of commercial power is historically associated with lesbians (Clark 1991; see also Chapter 4).

and 'semi-private' events. Some hotels relied on an open door, which is what I mean by 'public event', whereas larger hotels often staged women's nights in a separate room (semi-private) where a cover charge was sometimes applied.[23] My use of 'semi-private' is also an attempt to signal the different organising principles of hotels compared to women-only dances in community halls. At hotel venues, women bands were (potentially) subject to the financial transactions and control of the particular venue and thus a set of power relations and mechanisms associated with the conventional music industry. At larger hotels, women bands tended not 'interrupt' trading elsewhere on the premises, although the hotel clientele may have been cognisant of the lesbian/feminist crowd assembled. In turn, lesbian/feminists were aware of watchful eyes as they walked through to their designated area.

In what might be conceptualised as the normative production of non-normativity, women bands became a regular feature of the lesbian/feminist social calendar and came to represent (for some) the centre and highlight of lesbian social life in inner city Australia. Social geographer Gill Valentine (1993, p. 396; see also 1996) has persuasively argued the hegemony of a 'heterosexual street' and that the social regulation of public places and the sexual activities within those spheres produce an assumption of heterosexuality, given that sexuality is assumed to belong in the privacy of the home, not urbanised places of leisure, eating, drinking, dancing listening to music. According to Valentine, the hetero/homo binary is a continual sense of public discomfort for lesbians.

> Whilst the space of the centre - the street - is produced as heterosexual, the production of gay and lesbian space is relegated to the margins of the 'ghetto' and back street bar, the closeted or private space … thus heterosexual privilege is about having, and assuming, the right to be more 'normal' in both public and private. (Valentine 1996, p. 147)

Valentine's theory of the heterosexualised street is useful for illustrating the way lesbians adjust performances of sexuality in everyday public places. Yet, women have historically employed a range of tactics to negotiate their urban presence, not always in

[23] In larger hotels with multiple stages, a women-only notice was occasionally posted on the relevant door.

'backroom ghettos' and bodies acting in public are sites where heterosexual dominance is always already questioned (Podmore 2001, p. 337). Thus, there are other ways to engage with public/private sexualities and notions of the everyday.

The hegemony of heterosexuality is shaped by and through visibility to others, but it is always already under threat from sexual dissidents who embody and claim the idea that we are not all the same. Attempting to rethink the heterogeneity of public space in which lesbians are visible to each other, Julie Podmore draws on Marion Young's 'unassimilated otherness' and the idea that strangers in the city find affinity with each other through a type of indifference to difference. According to Young (1990, p. 318), city life is the 'being-together of strangers'. Whereas community suggests common goals, unity and a presumption of understanding, human living as strangers implies their contiguity. Acknowledging the contributions each makes to others, strangers 'experience each other as other' (Young 1990, p. 318), which engenders and necessitates a type of indifference. The concept of indifference to difference (Podmore 2001) may not sit well with all lesbians - and many live beyond cityscapes - particularly those lesbians who reject difference as identity status. For other thinkers, imagining affinity between strangers still fails to acknowledge difference because it potentially merges 'alterity into an identity founded on common purpose' (Secomb 2000, p. 140). Nevertheless, everyday public space/place as a metaphor for a pluralist society (Young 1990) is helpful for thinking about visibility and the various ways that lesbians live in the world. Podmore (2001, pp. 350-51) proposes complex definitions of personal identity and that the 'streets' (public space/places) offer important resources for lesbian sociability, including desire, that is not confined to the private sphere or to designated 'lesbian spaces'. Following Podmore, I argue that during the 1970s-1980s, many Australian women bands created social spaces of desire when they played to lesbian/feminist audiences in a number of traditional music venues.

The production of space is dependent on those present within that space-place and music sometimes 'sexualises space' because it brings bodies together in close

proximity. When lesbian/feminist bands played in hotels[24], the heteropatriarchal assumptions of the particular venue were momentarily rearticulated, I emphasise, not only as feminist but also as homosocial. By re-deploying the perversion of homosocial to mean 'a turning away from what were [at the time] considered to be the 'natural' aims and objects of sex' (Sullivan 2003, p. 172), my use of homosocial intends to signal that there is no obligation for relations to be sexual, but there was a presence of social interactions based around same-sex relations. Music creates a (temporary) form of social cohesion, and desire, including for those who might never have met before; a 'private space momentarily shared in public' (Valentine 1995, p. 480). Sexualisation and attractiveness to others was important to women bands as it was to their audiences. For example, Ludo McFerran (2008) of Stray Dags remembers going 'out of her way to get some rather snazzy tops' before a performance, even though feminists were also politically developing desexualisation strategies, which I discuss in the next chapter. The articulation of sexual identities and the power of (women's) music facilitated 'sexualised space' and women bands made a contribution to that type of sexualisation.

The homosocial, homoerotic elements of music within (sometimes) sexualised spaces gave shape, for some lesbians, to political action, while for others music (and dancing) connected to desire without a political end goal (Enke 2003). By politics, I mean the political power and practices of institutions and the broader struggles with power relations, including heteronormativity (Browne, Lim and Brown 2007, p. 5). Jacquie Reid (2008) of Tokyo Rose tends to support the view that the sexualisation of women bands was important. 'It was difficult to separate the sexuality and the motivation' for being in a women-only band, she says. According to Reid the imperatives of desire and sexuality connected loosely to politics. But in Tess McPeake's narrative, political imperatives fall away completely. McPeake (2008) says, honestly, being in a women band was 'a good way to be seen … In Darwin when a new dyke came to town they'd be there and it was a chance for a new affair'. Thus, for many women (band members and audiences) the presence of lesbians at women's music events came to be

[24] It is worth mentioning a few of the best known 'rock venue' establishments that staged women band nights: the Governor Hindmarsh Hotel in Adelaide, the Sandringham Hotel, the Native Rose Hotel, the Leichhardt Hotel, and the Trade Union Club in Sydney, the Ivanhoe Hotel, known as The Tote, the Kingston Hotel and the Burnley Tavern in Melbourne.

presumed. For some lesbians, a women-only dance was the preferred public place to explore social intimacies such as looking for a new sexual partner. But wherever women bands played, lesbian bodies were brought in relation to other bodies, encountering, interacting and producing difference in a type of 'pressing against space' (Probyn 1995, p. 83).

Women's music is often painted with a generalist, sex-negative brush and many feminist narratives of women's music, as Peraino (2006, p. 175) notes, tend to focus on the 'warm and fuzzy sensuality' of women's music (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of political lesbianism). Therefore, I want to press the point that same-sex desire and a range of sex practices (or at least the potential for them) were enabled in traditional music venues where Australian lesbian/feminist bands played. As Jodie Taylor (2012, p. 45) writes, music allows us to explore, circulate pleasures, 'to immerse ourselves in the ecstatic, to let go, to speed up, to slow down, to overcome and to climax'. For enthusiastic women band admirer, Barbara Baird (2008) women bands were 'very sexy, and pleasurable and exciting'. For McFerran, the new way of orienting lesbians and lesbianism to a public world of social intimacies by and through music was a decisive political imperative.

> We had to create our own social scene … we wanted to get off with each other and have fun and so there was an imperative to create a social scene. Maybe the hetero women wanted that scene as well but we were the driving force because we didn't just want it we needed it and maybe that's the difference. (McFerran 2008)

Private and public worlds collide in a music-filled room and women bands contributed to the sexualisation of space within hotel venues, including as objects of desire to their audiences, which needs acknowledgment (in my view). In the everyday world of hotel venues, music was shared with others and women's music functioned as a dynamic and fluid social context producing a desire-filled and sometimes eroticised atmosphere. Inner city hotels usually[25] offered a hospitable, quotidian space of 'otherness' both for women bands and their audiences. Thus, 'lesbians were seen as one population among

[25] Anecdotally, I am aware that whilst on stage some women bands were subject to verbal aggression (catcalls, whistling and so on). Occasionally women band members scuffled with patrons outside the hotel.

a multitude of other forms of social, cultural and sexual differences' (Podmore 2001, p. 341), which might also suggest a way of rethinking lesbian discomfort, and focussing instead on difference and different bodies.

Asserting Agency: New Women's Spaces

In the final section of this chapter, I return to the space of all-women dances for a possible re-reading beyond assimilation (sameness) and difference. Second wave feminist interventions in gendered music space were at their most successful and innovative (in my belief) staging women's dances. In Australia, the women's dance became the chief stage for the majority of (but not all) lesbian/feminist bands. As single sex dances increased in frequency, the demand for all-female entertainment grew exponentially and many women started bands with a performance at a women's dance. Thus, it might be said that Australian women band members demonstrated a capacity to act, open access to alternative music stages, and assert agency. Moya Lloyd (2007, p. 57) argues that the dominant feminist thinking about agency has been to assume that subjects (actors in the performative sense) are 'independent of the socio-political world around them' and that 'agency is construed as the capacity both to envisage particular projects and then to implement them according to one's free will'. While many second wave feminists agreed that the world could not be changed at will and subjects are situated by factors such as class, race and sexuality, the idea and ideal of agency as free will underpinned the 'feminist blueprint' for collective political action. Putting it another way, the 'liberated woman' of second wave feminism suggested a pre-existing category, a timeless, essential 'woman' who escaped conditioning, therefore enabling a 'well spring from which agency rises' (2007, p. 58). On this basis, second wave feminists built women's culture and a sense of feminist-designated community, as this chapter illustrates. Yet women's music was more complex than (either/or) sameness between women and difference from men.

Politically and symbolically, women-only dances during the second wave era were actually full of twists and turns to do with the push for separate space and separatism. Women's dances were commensurate with the objectives of radical feminism because

of the primary commitment to other women rather than to men, which was (for some women) interchangeable with radicalesbianism as *the* alternative to personal and political equality (Jeffreys 2003, p. 145). But this does not mean there was consensus about separatism (and/or radicalesbianism) within those gender-separate and single-sex spaces. Nevertheless, it is possible to see the assumptions in feminist narratives about the era. For example, Susan Brownmiller (1999, p. 172) writes in her memoirs that 'defiant, open dances in nonbar spaces became an organising tool of Gay Liberation' and women's dances in America represented a 'popular manifestation of lesbian input into radical feminism'. However, Brownmiller also remembers being frustrated by sexuality politics and makes the claim that 'we desired to change men, not our sexual orientation' (1999, p. 173). For her, a women's dance became a lesbian-designated space, immaterial to second wave feminist objectives.

> A tremendous release of sexual energy was apparent in the spirited circle dances and conga lines, and there was a sweet innocent bacchanalian aspect to tearing off one's shirt and dancing bare-breasted in a room full of women, but I was one of those who demurred … I felt the dances were irrelevant to the pursuit of feminism's serious political goals. (1999, p. 173)

My quarrel with Brownmiller's narrative is her reliance on an absolute, universal speaking position and the presumption of (lesbian) separatism. An all-women band playing at an all-women dance did not compulsorily entail that the individuals in the band or in the crowd collectively identified as separatist and/or lesbian and/or feminist, although there were many assumptions.[26]

Occurring annually, monthly, and/or for special events, women's dances were not commonplace or everyday urban space/places but rather they were historically contingent. In order to assert agency and act independently of men, women aimed to be autonomous, self-determined and self-sufficient. Practically, this meant that women performed a range of tasks traditionally done by men, such as staffing the bar and operating the sound amplification equipment. In this sense, women's dances relied to an extent, on the organising principles of a 'private party', as Cynthia Lont (1992) has

[26] For example, Bronwyn Stephens (2008) played bass in two women bands, Sheila and Doris Dazed. She says that she was regularly assumed to be lesbian even though she is not.

claimed of the American context, similar to how one might organise a social gathering within the safe confines and boundaries of one's home. It is possible that some of the women-only dances held in Australia took place in privately owned properties. But the bands in this study performed at women-only dances that were primarily staged in local town halls, community halls and university refectories.[27] A feminist press account portrays an early 1970s women's dance in Australia as follows:

> Women have been cruelly conditioned into behaviour limited by inhibitions. The dance we had together was a dazzlingly clear example of our potential in an unoppressive environment. Our excitement and free flowing sexual energy culminated in ecstatic united finale. I have never felt so sure of what we can achieve for ourselves. (Wilson 1974, p. 15)

In this idealistic, nostalgic recollection of an event that already existed in the past, the contradictory complications to do with gender separate space/places are smoothed over. The description (above) of 'free-flowing' sexual energy imagines transcendence, an achieved liberatory state of being for all women who attended the dance. But as seen in earlier discussions (Chapter 1), liberatory logic tends to misconceive power and falls back 'on the idea there exists a human nature … imprisoned in and by mechanisms of repression' (Foucault 1997, p. 282). Foucault reasons that although sexuality can be imagined as un-shackled, it cannot actually be repressed and/or unoppressed, given that individuals are always constituted within relations of power.

Foucault's alternative model of power proposes that relations of power both inhibit and enable possibilities, and it is this thinking that Judith Butler elaborates in *Gender Trouble*. Threaded throughout Butler's (1990, p. 147) work is a question about how feminism mobilises identity politics and 'opens up possibilities of *agency* that are insidiously foreclosed by positions that take identity categories as foundational and fixed'. Butler (1990, p. 124) attempts to problematise the dominant feminist view of agency and writes 'if power is not reduced to volition, then power-relations can be

[27] There are too many to name but the list of town halls includes Leichhardt Town Hall in Sydney, Prospect Town Hall in Adelaide and Kensington Town Hall in Melbourne. The support of universities is also significant. Women-only dances in university refectories were organised by the Women On Campus groups. In Sydney, the International Women's Day annual dance was for several years at the Manning Bar on the campus of the University of Sydney and Stray Dags played these events.

understood as constraining and constituting the very possibilities of volition'. The tension between free will and determinism, and whether subjects are situated by class, race, gender, sexuality and socially conditioned outside discourse, shaping their own histories at will, and/or whether they are discursively shaped and able to draw attention to the instabilities of power relations, continues to be at the heart of rethinking past/present feminisms, suggests Lloyd (2007, p. 57). Applying Butlerian thinking, *agency is not pre-discursive* and this includes, in my belief, the constituents of the Australian women's music scene. The Butlerian concept of agency, as Lloyd (2007, p. 60) puts it, is the idea that 'practices that produce gendered subjects are also the sites where critical agency is possible'. Given the discursive subject is always in process, always incomplete in some sense, Butler does not adhere conclusively to one side of the free will versus determinism binary but attempts to rethink agency and how subjects might act subversively with political intent. 'To intervene in the name of transformation', says Butler (2004, p. 27), means precisely 'to disrupt what has become settled knowledge and knowable reality, and to use, as it were, one's unreality to make an otherwise impossible or illegible claim'. Power can neither be withdrawn nor refused, according to Butler, and yet can be redeployed for subversive purposes. Women's music at women's dances was an attempt to transform political disadvantage into advantage and the processes of creating new spaces, alternative music stages, brought 'woman' and personal, political agency to the foreground in this way. Australian women's music at women's dances was a binarised spatial process that emphasised the male/female gender, sameness/difference. But I argue that it *also* produced knowledge through the intensities, complexities and inconsistencies of co-operation, coalition, dispute and disagreement.

Spatiality produces and creates subjects but does not necessarily hold subjects in that position forever (Browne 2009, p. 549) and second wave feminist spatial processes were not always unified, cohesive or 'fixed'.[28] Gender-separate women's spaces, including women's music, were not just ideals nor were they ideal, suggests Anne Enke

[28] For example, separatist space produces (or has the potential to produce) additional resistant spaces, such as the trans-inclusive areas set up in response to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, womyn-born-womyn policy (Browne 2009).

(2003, p. 638), they were 'competing and always disputed environments'. In theory, the door regulation at women's dances in Australia promised a 'safe' space/place for all women away from men, but not all women felt safe and/or empowered because of their differences (or, more specifically, the overlooking of difference mentioned earlier in the chapter). Elaborating further, some women band members disagreed strongly with the exclusion of men from women's dances and believed that the technical aspects of music production benefited from and/or required the expertise of men. Adelaide punk band Screaming Jennies, for instance, did not embrace radical feminist objectives and was not committed to the principle of employing a female technical crew. In her interview for the study, guitarist Libby Kerr (2008) of Screaming Jennies conflates feminism with separatism and says 'we were just horrible, we were so cruel, so mean, we'd deliberately turn up to gigs with male roadies and a male engineer because we thought that separatist activities were hideous'. Screaming Jennies was not the only women band that relied on a man to work the sound equipment. Barbies Dead, for instance, engaged a man to operate the PA and mixing desk when there were no women available and he was the only man 'allowed in' to the women-only space.[29] This also indicates a gap between what was politically imagined as separatist and the lived experience of materialising those women-only spaces. My own reality involved a heavy reliance on the friendship, generosity and assistance of one man in particular, John Bassett, for technical knowledge and PA equipment hire/supply. Sound engineer Dawn Holland (2006) who mixed for the Melbourne women band Rapunzel Gets Down has a similar narrative and explained in her interview that many men supported her professional career as a sound engineer. Further, it can be seen that although Screaming Jennies disagreed strongly with the exclusion of men from women's dances, and made their views plainly known to the organisers, they still accepted invitations to perform at such events. The opportunity to play was paramount and the significance of this seemingly small point should not be underestimated. It illustrates that exclusion on the basis of gender was itself a starting point but not ultimately the only focus or the only reason for women-only music events.

[29] I am indebted to Jane Cottrill for additional information about Barbies Dead.

Women's music at women's dances was an embattled political strategy, a fight for space and a displacement of other conventions of (music) history in order to prevail (Brown 1998). However, the discussion in this chapter shows that women bands were loosely connected, rather than inextricably bound, to the claims and concerns of feminism and the broader women's movement. In Australia, a band such as Screaming Jennies both 'made a scene' by speaking, acting out, and made a women's music scene. Libby Kerr's narrative of 'behaving badly' also fits with the (romantic) notion of a misbehaving musician that is cherished by many bands. Yet it was not simply wilful expression. The members of Screaming Jennies contested the gendered space of mainstream music and contributed to feminist community by playing at women's dances. At the same time, they contested lesbian/feminist-designated spaces by gesturing toward a female subject that exceeds (rather than precedes) the norms. In this sense the band deconstructed the meanings of identity, although not necessarily in those terms. The perhaps unexpected behaviour of Screaming Jennies suggests layers of struggle: anxieties about the loss of individuality, ideas about sameness and conformity, and gendered questions about what might be considered (at the time) as appropriate, acceptable behaviour for a lesbian, feminist, 'woman' musician. As Sullivan (2003, p. 148) writes, 'community is an unworking of the humanist model of identity and sociality because it is the experience of radical difference', animated through discord. In the next chapter, I examine the fractured ways that Australian women's music challenged the hegemony of heterosexuality and further illustrate Butler's (1990, p. 144) theory that agency is discursive and does not reside in subjects as an innate quality or property of the subject.

Conclusion

The discussion of space in this chapter shows that second wave feminist interventions in gendered space materialised in a range of interrelated ways. Feminist spatialisation processes shaped the Australian women's music scene as the scene shaped feminist discourses about music. Deploying warlike manoeuvres of the marginalised and weak, lesbian feminists and feminist lesbians contested space; gender imbalances were identified and autonomous space/places were created during a stage of separatism,

followed by an assertion of self-determined agency (Kearney 1998). Music became one of the grassroots feminist cultural tools (planned and unplanned) to agitate for change. Feminist community and women's culture may, at some level, have been founded on idea(l)s about commonality, collective identity and a natural sex/gender bond between all women, yet a closer analysis of the women's music scene in Australia shows that gender-separate spaces were not singularly unified nor were they always oriented to radical feminism (Enke 2003). Different responses to what feminists considered to be gendered (music) space had different effects and produced spaces that were at times indistinct from each other and also themselves contested spaces. Drawing on the idea of 'unblocking space' (Thrift 2003) and the way space is neither bounded nor enclosed, it is possible to reveal the connectivity of spaces, places and subject histories. Scattered geographies, changing locations and bands that came and went typify the social geography of women's music in Australia and its translocality (Bennett and Peterson 2004). Knowledges of women bands radiated out from specific urban sites separated by large distances in continual processes of being made, doing and acting without knowing precisely: sites where sameness, difference and matters of sex, gender, sexuality could not necessarily be resolved one way or another. Yet, it was an exuberant time bursting with intention. The possibilities of new subjectivity, new being (Secomb 2000; Sullivan 2003) released spatial thinking for political action aimed at social transformation. Australian women's music could not fully define, mark out and/or know conclusively what it means to live, think and be a (non-patriarchal and liberated) woman musician and/or lesbian/feminist. However, musicalised interventions and exertions of power, opened spatial questions.

3

Performing Social Worlds: Everyday Life, Sexualities, Music

Introduction

My argument in this chapter is that the Australian women's music scene was enmeshed in historically situated performances of sexualities. By mapping social relations and the everyday lives of lesbian/feminists involved in Australian women's music, this discussion demonstrates the public/private effects of a political push to transform the experiences, ideals and assumptions about same-sex relations. The previous chapter focused on second wave feminist interventions showing the interrelation of spaces and places. The emphasis is now on lesbian embodiments and bodily materialisations, which further describes the complexities of agency, and the humanist and radical debates associated with women's music in Australia. According to Judith Butler (1993, p. 2) bodies never simply comply with norms. 'Biological sex' may appear natural, but what constitutes natural, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, is premised on repeated idealisations, regulatory practices and norms concerning how bodies should look and sound and what socio-sexual practices are associated with those ideals (Marinucci 2010, p. 78). The complexities of gender, sexuality, feminism, and women's music, illustrate that matters of the body involve public/private dichotomies that are not easy to decipher - different meanings are formed at different times, places and cultures. However, it is the instabilities, the re-materialisations that are able to call hegemony into question (Butler 1993). Following Butler and others, it is possible to show that sexualities within women's music are performatively constituted. The effects of political action are unpredictable and bodies are always involved in struggles of knowability that are not definitive but open to interrogation.

In general, women's music is aligned historically with the women's movement over and above gay and lesbian liberation. More specifically, women's music is harnessed to 'women-identification' and feminist narratives tend to describe (American) women's music with this type of political framework (see, for example, Petersen 1987; Quimby 1997; Stein 1994). My quarrel is not with the feminist orientation of Australian women's music: the scene would not have emerged, as the previous chapter has shown, without the forces, interventionist logics, organising principles of feminism and the Women's Liberation Movement. However, it might also be said that narratives of 'women-identification' associated with and accounting for women's music have occluded some of the problems to do with liberation based on notions of freedom and visibility. The current discussion begins by elaborating and situating Australian women's music in relation to the politics of sexuality: the emergence of radicalesbianism and the application of radical idea(l)s to everyday living. Following that, I look at the concomitant lesbian and feminist strategy of 'desexualisation' and the materialisation of aesthetics, on and off the women's music stage. To move beyond the essentialist emphasis on identity and liberation through visibility, I turn to gender performativity (Butler 1990; 1993) and the embodied processes of performing difference. The chapter concludes with a re-reading of Australian women's music as a mesh of non-normative/homo-normative queer kinships, family relations, and a distinctly Australian network of musicalities and sociality.

Contesting Heterosexuality

Women's liberation and gay and lesbian liberation were identity-based movements associated with the 1970s-1980s and both forged new politics of sexuality. Initially, the focus was on affirming identity through visibility. Pushing for visibility, as (for example) coming out does, appears commonsense because subjects need to argue for rights, which necessitates public knowledges. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990, p. 11) eloquently argues that coming out is a type of epistemology of the closet for Western identity through 'the categories secrecy/disclosure, knowledge/ignorance, private/public, masculine/feminine and so on' (see Chapter 1). At the time of liberation, according to Sedgwick (1990, p. 87), the processes involved in the transformation of same-sex

relations from a medical model to a social and cultural model mark the historical tropes of homosexuality; the trope of sexual inversion favoured by medical models, which 'preserves an essential heterosexuality within desire itself', and the trope of gender separatism, which argues that it is 'the most natural thing in the world' that people of the same gender should 'bond together on the axis of sexual desire' (as woman-identified-woman feminism does). Generally, liberationists tended to regard gender norms and heterosexism as oppressive and believed that coming out would lead (ideally) to new self-empowered experiences of same-sex relations (Altman 1993; Jagose 1996; Sullivan 2003). In this discussion I am not suggesting that all lesbian practices were shaped by and through feminism and/or gay liberation but that the politics of sexuality contributed to the re-formulation of public/private knowledges[1] and tied identities to politics with a variety of problematic assumptions, inclusions and exclusions. For example, concerns for lesbian visibility and concepts of women-identification have been particularly influential in shaping predominant feminist narratives of women's music. In this chapter, I borrow Sedgwick's trope of gender separatism to examine the concepts of sexuality that are relevant, in my view, to the (queer) histories of Australian women's music with its challenges to heterosexuality and hetero norms: (a) radicalesbianism, or political lesbianism as it was sometimes called (b) 'desexualisation' of the female body and (c) queering social relations through alternative family models.

The term 'women-identification' is often used to describe women's music in universalising terms. However, my reading is that women-identified narratives of women's music tend to produce U.S.-centric discourses. There are also multilayered meanings associated with 'women-identification' that reveal tensions within feminism and complex histories of sexuality. For example, Karen Petersen's (1987, p. 206) article, 'Women-Identified Music in the United States' suggests that it was 'the expression of women's oppression by men, the celebration of women to overcome this oppression and the beauty of women loving women in a sexual relationship'. According to

[1] The organised women's and gay liberation movements in Australia have been documented elsewhere (see, for example, Altman 1993; Burgmann 1993; Chesser 1996; Jagose 1996; Lake 1999; Willett 2000; Wotherspoon 1991).

Petersen (1987, p. 211), women's music in America exemplified loving relations between women as 'positive images' and the 'creative side of women's lives'. In my belief, Petersen's understanding of woman-identification is heavily influenced by gyno-feminism. Early second wave feminist theories[2] were humanist, woman-centred and assumed that patriarchal structures of power oppress all women (see Chapter 1). Marion Young (2006, p. 175, originally 1985) writes that 'humanist feminism defines femininity as the primary vehicle of women's oppression'. From this perspective, humanist feminism was a 'revolt against femininity' and aimed to open opportunities for women to participate in spheres of public 'world-making' previously dominated by men (see Chapter 2). Unlike humanist feminism, the work of later feminists, such as Robin Morgan, Mary Daly and others, proposed gynocentric theories about women's oppression. Gynocentric feminism, focuses to a lesser degree on the prevention of women participating in full humanity, thus women's self-development. As Young (2006, p. 174) puts it, gyno-feminism 'defines women's oppression as the devaluation and repression of women's experience by a masculinist culture that exalts violence and individualism'. Whereas humanist feminism suggests there is no difference between men and women, gynocentric feminism proposes that that is in itself an oppressive view of difference. For Young (2006, pp. 178-182), gynocentric feminism finds positive values in women's bodies, sexuality and traditional feminine activities; a capacity to nurture and behave in socially cooperative ways, a belief that women's reproductive processes are 'linked to ideas about nature and the production of life and thus the (possible) salvation of the planet'. In this meaning, lesbian sexuality is not an impediment but connects positively to idea(l)s about female 'naturalness'. Although making such (gender as oppression) assumptions about biological anatomy was essentialist, gynocentric feminism nevertheless broadened the critique beyond sexist institutions to a radical approach of womanhood and feminine sexuality. The radicalisation of sexuality in this manner was incredibly influential and many women built their entire existence on gynocentric, women-identified utopianism. However, some believed that it did not fully acknowledge lesbian sex practices.

[2] See, for example, *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1972) and *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan (1965).

Initially anxious to avoid homophobia, lesbians welcomed the universality of the women's movement and 'lesbianism represented a sense of connectedness based on mutuality and similarity [among women] rather than difference' (Stein 1998, p. 554). Over time, lesbians became aware of their marginalisation within the Gay (and Lesbian) Liberation Movement and lack of recognition within the Women's Liberation Movement (Jagose 1996, p. 44). Thus, some took the view that lesbianism would and should be integral to feminism. As debates consolidated, concerns for lesbian visibility intensified and liberation came to politically involve - at least for radical feminists - the necessary abandonment of heterosexuality (Onlywomen Collective 1984). Ideas and ideals strengthened when a British group of women called the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists published a highly contentious manifesto that called for the outright rejection of heterosexuality. Their unambiguous case against heterosexuality stated, 'our definition of a political lesbian is a woman-identified woman who does not fuck men. It does not mean compulsory sexual activity with women' (Onlywomen Collective 1984, p. 5). Not all liberationists believed that sexuality was a choice and by the time the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists issued their manifesto it must be noted that many second wave feminists had already come to regard lesbianism as a form of lovemaking that would (and could) be different to heterosexual sex. In other words, some women 'discovered' lesbianism through the feminist movement and constructed a 'true belief' out of a coherent philosophy that love between women repaired all that had gone wrong in a 'male-created' world (Faderman 1992, p. 217). But the publication issued by the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists posited lesbianism as *the* revolutionary feminist act. In so doing, it reinforced the notion of sexuality as individual choice, but it was a type of voluntarism that tied sexuality to feminist politics - 'political lesbianism' - over and above desire and sex practices.

Women-identification was a universal idea(l) but it actually has strong historical associations with the emergence of radicalesbianism in America. It is now well documented, for example, that Betty Friedan used 'lavender menace' to publically disparage lesbians for weakening the goals and the legitimacy of the organised women's movement in the early 1970s (Jagose 1996; Sullivan 2003; see also Brownmiller 1999). In response, a collective of women in New York calling themselves

'radicalesbians' presented a position paper, titled 'The Woman Identified Woman', that called for a specific political strategy - lesbianism - in place of generalist women-centred theories. The following is an extract.

> A lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion. … She has not been able to accept the limitations and oppression laid on her by the most basic role in society - the female role. … Lesbian is the word, the label, the condition that holds women in line. When a woman hears this word tossed her way, she knows she is stepping out of line. She knows she has crossed the terrible boundary of her sex role. (Radicalesbians 1973, pp. 240-241)

The proposal that feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice was both radical and divisive. For some second wave feminists, the linking of women's oppression to (hetero) sexuality undermined the objectives of a feminist movement not least because it alienated those feminists who identified as heterosexual and/or had relationships with men that they regarded as personally and/or politically nurturing. Some feminists also wanted to avoid being labelled 'man-hating lesbians', which was (and still is) stereotypically used to bait feminists and undermine feminism (Marinucci 2010, p. 120). Consequently, a number of women's movement organisations sought distance from and generally excluded public discussions about the needs of lesbians (Faderman 1992, p. 205; see also Jagose 1996; Marinucci 2010), which deepened anxieties.

Karin Quimby (1997, p. 187) supports the view that women's music in America was a political reaction, in part, to homophobia in the women's movement and provided 'a particular moment and cultural representation of lesbian feminism to which we can now historically refer as a defining moment in lesbian consciousness'. Musical responses by visible, publicly out lesbians exemplify, for Quimby (1997, p. 192) the notion of women's music as (politically) 'women-identified': for example, 'Sweet Woman'[3] by Chris Williamson (*The Changer and The Changed*, released 1975). Yet, throughout the 1970s-1980s, the notion of woman-identified-woman and the love between women were mired in a conflation of lesbianism and feminism as well as

[3] The lyrics of 'Sweet Woman' say 'A little passage of time till I hold you and you'll be mine/Sweet woman, risin' so fine'.

debates about being the same or different from heterosexuals.[4] 'Mutual sensuality became more politically correct than genital sexuality, which might too easily imitate the exploitative aspects of heterosexual sex' (Faderman 1992, p. 232). In turn, the emphasis on political lesbianism and what women did with their bodies, steered accusations concerning the desexualisation of lesbianism, which is discussed in more detail later this chapter. Nevertheless, it might be said that universalising, political models of sexuality have been useful for rethinking same-sex relations, questioning hegemony and the instabilities of heterosexuality or to borrow Sedgwick's (1990, p. 11) terminology, the 'modern crisis of homo/heterosexual definition'. Similar to America, women's music in Australia functioned as a vehicle for public knowledges about lesbians and lesbianism (Lont 1992; Peraino 2006). If you *knew* about any of the women bands, went to a gig, and/or bought an album, even if it wasn't a favoured music preference, it meant you were (for the most part positively) interested in second wave feminism and (possibly) lesbian lifestyles, practices, politics (Lont 1992, p. 242). There are very few Australian women's music songs that use the word 'lesbian' in the lyrics.[5] 'Lesbian Nation' by Sydney folk group Lavender Blues makes a direct reference to the straight-lesbian feminist tensions in both countries and the song's title is a reference to *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution* by Jill Johnston (1973). Recorded on their *Wake Up Sister* album, the lyrics of the Lavender Blues' song say, 'The feminist movement flows up and down/But the lesbians always seem to drown'. Thus, universalising notions of sexuality shaped by international political discourses (publications and American women's music recordings) were influential in Australia and need to be acknowledged.

Describing the American context, Lillian Faderman (1992, p. 220) believes that 'visions of self-affirmation through lesbian-feminist music and literature' gave love between women greater visibility. Other theorists have focussed on factional disagreements. For example, Cynthia Lont (1992, p. 242) has made the claim that American women's music

[4] The 1980s tends to be associated with discussions about penetrative sex known as the Sex Wars. Women divided between those defending sex-positive practices (including pro-porn) and those believing sex should not mimic heterosexual sex (Sullivan 2003, p. 34; see also Faderman 1992; Healey 1996).
[5] While 'Lesbian Nation' is the only song collected for the study that uses 'lesbian' in the lyrics, 'Sporting Dykes' by The Budgies uses the word 'dyke' (see Chapter 4).

was 'started by heterosexual feminists and taken over by lesbian feminists when they broke away from the women's movement' (see also Quimby 1997). The view that women's music was almost entirely formed by lesbians in the name of feminism is questionable (see Chapter 4) and Judith Peraino has examined this debate with a queer lens. According to Peraino (2006, p. 167), American women's music manifested a style 'that *we* [lesbian/feminists] just love to hear but one formed, perhaps, by default rather than by design'. Emphasising the effects and consequences, she also suggests that anxieties about lesbian visibility had a lasting impact on the sale of albums and the 'internal and external evaluations of women-identified music … [the albums] came to stand for the stereotype of 1970s lesbian feminism - puritanical desexualised essentialism' (2006, pp. 167-194). While concurring with Peraino, I also argue that the American context does not entirely (universally) account for Australian women's music. Tellingly, a comparable (public) debate about women's music and sexuality has not eventuated in Australia as it has done in America. I am not implying there was a lack of discord and/or concern about lesbian identity and visibility within the Australian women's scene. Rather, women's music in Australia has not engendered exactly the same practices and discourses for contesting heterosexuality as America. The politics of sexuality did have far reaching implications that occurred within specific circumstances and thus the importance of genealogical (rather than universalising) women's music histories. Putting it differently, the unpredictable ways that bodies materialise and how those experiences are historicised, continue to suggest historico discursive complexities concerning choice and agency.

Radicalesbianism, Everyday Life

The politics of sexuality are very evident in the early years of Australian women's music when notions of women-identification played a particularly persuasive role in shaping everyday practices for lesbian/feminists.[6] In 1975, for example, Clitoris Band was heavily influenced by the principles of folk music, feminism and the blurred boundaries

[6] Prompted by events in America, a small group of women in Australia held a National Lesbian Conference over a July weekend in 1973. Of the event, Chris Sitka (1994, p. 9) says that women wanted to reclaim lesbian from its derogatory status and 'chose Radicalesbian as distinct from Radical Feminist because we wanted to identify ourselves positively as lesbians'.

between home life and political activism. As a consequence, the band avoided rock music and pub performances. In the words of Diane Fuller who was a member of Clitoris Band, 'you couldn't separate the music from everything else that was going on' (see Brown, Literary Papers, 1963-2004). Lively conversations at liberation meetings continued over brown rice dinners in the lounge room. Strumming a guitar in the lounge room unfolded into public performances. Bass player Pam Brown (2008) recalls there was an oft-repeated saying about Clitoris Band, 'it's a lifestyle not a band'. The nine members of the group, Trudie Brickwood, Pamela Brown, Leonie Crennan, Diane Fuller, Ros Hecker, Theresa Jack, Shayne Kelly, Cess Lilly, and Mim Loftis had no formal training and tended to get by on vibe rather than musical expertise (Jack 2008; see also Chapter 4). When the peace-loving hippie group first formed, none identified as radicalesbian, but within a short period of time, radical ideas and ideals became paramount for some members of the band.

The women of Clitoris Band were in agreement with each other that naming the band 'Clitoris' recast *clitoris* from private pleasure to the realm of the political. It was a step toward correcting 'all that secrecy about women's bodies', says Brown (2008). At that juncture, women were heavily influenced by gyno-feminism and Anne Koedt's (1973, p. 202) position paper, titled 'The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm' in which she states 'the clitoris has no other function than that of sexual pleasure'. Controversially at the time, Koedt argued that vaginal orgasms are a myth invented by men interested in heterosexual coitus and/or procreation, rather than the pleasure of women. Koedt's challenges to the existing patriarchal medical models of female bodies were later elaborated in women's self-help books such as the highly sought after and widely available, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, written by the Boston Women's Health Collective.

> Medical texts (written by men) followed Freud's famous pronouncement that the mature women has orgasms only when her vagina is stimulated. This theory made the penis central to a woman's sexual satisfaction. Following Freud, early psychoanalytic theories belittled women's enjoyment of masturbation as 'immature' and labeled lesbian sex as a pale imitation of the real thing. (Boston Women's Health Book Collective 1998, p. 239, originally 1984)

Lesbian/feminists theorised that the clitoral orgasm is frightening to men (and the institution of heterosexuality) given that women are anatomically able to achieve sexual pleasure non-exclusively from men, which suggests that heterosexuality is not absolutely necessary for female pleasure (Koedt 1973). Thus, for lesbian/feminists, the political power of the 'clitoris'[7] founded on the notion that a clitoral orgasm 'contests' patriarchal and heterosexual norms because it can be thought of as outside and/or not integral to the reproduction of human life.

New ideas about female pleasure and the function of the clitoris influenced radical theories about how lesbians challenge the heterosexual model of reproduction and patriarchal control. Sheila Jeffreys (2003, p. 146) has since theorised that 1970s radicalesbians regarded heterosexuality as a direct source of oppression because the practices of heterosexual penetration, as she puts it, are a form of domination or 'female body invasion'. Deploying the 'personal is political', Jeffreys (2003, p. 156) argues that lesbians are better able (than other women) to combat patriarchy because 'lesbians are egalitarian in their sexual and emotional relating'. Jeffreys' theory that lesbians relate 'equally' is a highly debatable view of power, a narrow perspective that excludes (for example) lesbian intimacies and sexual practices that favour sadomasochism. And as Butler (1993, p. 95) says, 'there is no sexuality outside power'. For the members of Clitoris Band, the word 'clitoris' represented a political weapon that seemed to fit the revolutionary language of second wave (gynocentric) feminism and some of the objectives. The act of naming their group in such a manner was a decisive paradigm shift. Theresa Jack (2008) explains, 'we wanted to freak people out because 'clitoris' was such a no, no word'. Accordingly, 'Clitoris Band' was artistically painted in the same style as the poster on the front of the vehicle (owned by Jack) used for transporting people and equipment, to and from gigs. From that moment onwards, whenever they drove down city streets, the members of the band were conscious of the statement on the front of their van. Yet at the same time, they were never really

[7] In 'Goodbye to All That', writer and second wave feminist Robin Morgan (1993, p. 58, originally 1970) claims that the terms 'clit militancy' and 'pussy power' were politically effective only when used by women. According to Morgan, when the 'male left' published sympathetic articles in the name of 'clit militancy' they were, in reality, sexist and running down feminism.

able to ascertain the effect on others, which is a reminder of the gap that exists between political ideals and what may and may not eventuate.

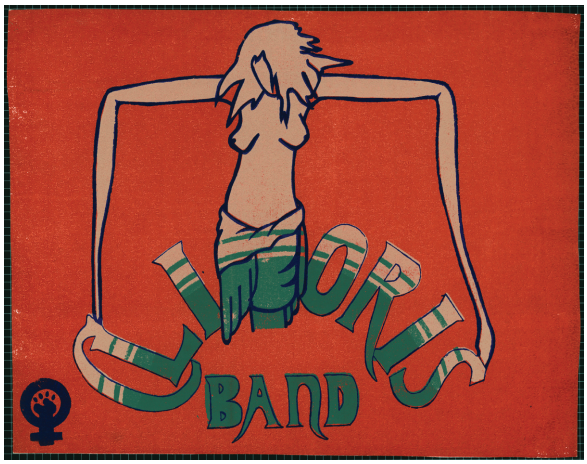

Figure 6. Clitoris Band, poster, 1975

For Clitoris Band, everyday living and the rhythms of 'band-life' were arranged around their respective households.[8] During her interview, Jacquie Reid (2008) of Tokyo Rose recalls going to see a Clitoris Band performance. Vividly, she maps out what life was like in Sydney before she moved to Perth.[9]

> I was living in Leichhardt and down the road and round the corner, I think it was Johnston Street, Annandale,[10] lived a household of wild lesbians, including Theresa Jack. It was a very active household and around that time Theresa changed her name to Greadann … and I remember going to a Clitoris show … it was wandering type of music, ethereal and wafty, a different experience of music … and they sat down on the stage. It was almost a like you can imagine sitting around with a pot of herbal tea listening to Clitoris … it was very much in the lesbian scene, and at that time the lesbian scene was forming around politics. We were young feminists, we were lesbian feminists, there were Marxist lesbians, anarchist lesbians and the lesbian separatists, well separatism was very big at that time and Clitoris really fell into, or was part of, that emerging culture. (Reid, J. 2008)

While radicalesbianism has come to dominate narratives (and some memories) because of its extremes, Reid outlines the women's (music) scene as a 'melting pot' of political standpoints, of which separatism was one position. Here it is possible to see

[8] Note that many women (not only radicalesbians) lived in non-separatist, women-only houses and experienced the difficulties of negotiating what it meant to live as lesbian feminists and feminist lesbians.
[9] In Perth, Reid formed the band Tokyo Rose during the mid-1980s (see Chapter 5).
[10] Leichhardt and Annandale are inner city suburbs of Sydney that share a border with each other.

that spatialisation is involved in what second wave lesbians/feminists did and that bodies and embodied social relations are implicated.

Organised on the basis of a collective, women-only households were, for some, a gender-separate decision to relate only to women and/or 'escape' from domestic violence and/or a shift away from heterosexual relationships. For example, in the summer of 1974, the feminist journal, *Refractory Girl* ran a feature on radicalesbian lifestyles and focussed on two inner city households in Sydney, one in Crystal St and another dubbed Canterbury Castle ('Radicalesbian Lifestyle' 1974). Women from the houses were interviewed for the article, their names withheld. My reading is these women were not in agreement with each other. One interviewee says there was 'no difference between a radical lesbian household and a feminist one'. Yet another says that 'just knowing that all the other women are lesbians, I feel more accepted. I think that because we are lesbians we're directing hardly any of our energies toward men and we have all our energies for each other. And not entirely in a sexual way: our energies go towards helping other lesbians' ('Radicalesbian Lifestyle' 1974, p. 14). The women indicate a general sense of shared, collective politics and (intended) action that they regarded integral to the cohesiveness of their way of living: giving talks, handing out literature, spray-painting, consciousness-raising groups, helping each other and so on. However, the article also gives the impression that radicalesbian households were haphazard, chaotic, a constant flow of comings and goings.

Gill Valentine (1997, p. 67) argues that in America, the ideals of separatism were more effective in rural rather than urban areas because isolation meant 'it was easier to be self-sufficient and purer in their practices'. What she means is that politically and ideally, some separatist women envisaged rural life as authentic to womanhood because 'closer to nature' and independent of men. This may not have been exactly the case for all radicalesbians in Australia (as the *Refractory Girl* article illustrates) but some women came to favour living in the country as a strategy for sidestepping and/or withdrawing from patriarchal heterosexuality. Theresa Jack lived in the city when Clitoris first formed. But when she and others of the nine-piece group re-oriented toward separatism, they decided to rent a riverbank house at a place called St Albans

just north of Sydney's city limits. Jack (2008) recalls, 'I got a bee in my bonnet, I had to get out of the city, you know, because cities were really bad places and electric music was pollution'. Thus, Jack moved to the country in the pursuit of ideals that she believed to be associated with female authenticity, purity, naturalness and goodness. Women drifted in and out of the St Albans house. Jack played her acoustic guitar beside a campfire. The rambling property was affordable and there were no complaints from neighbours about the noise of music and the comings and goings. However, everyday living was far from tranquil. The St Albans household became a difficult test of 'political correctness'. Here, I am referring to the way 'politically correct' was used as a benchmark for all the judgments that were passed by and amongst women (Faderman 1992) about what was considered acceptable and/or unacceptable - the 'blueprint' - for feminist and lesbian behaviour.

Feminist versions of 'politically correct', according to Faderman (1992, p. 230), meant that 'one adhered to the various dogmas regarding dress; money; sexual behaviour; language usage; class, race, food and ecology consciousness; political activity and so on'. For radicalesbians, the 'pure' form of separatism and women-identification founded on the principle that women should reject all of the codes and conventions of femininity, including the visible inscriptions on the body deemed to be associated with heterosexuality. Bass player Pam Brown lived at the St Albans house for a while; her memory is that their feminist consciousness-raising sessions were relentless discussions that tended to scrutinise the minutiae of identity, bodies, and behaviour.

> People would be judgemental. Everything had to be honest, thousands of hours of discussion about truth. And it was exhausting … too much pressure to try and live an idealistic life. I cut [my hair] to my shoulder and thought oh that will do … someone called me male-identified because I was wearing my hair to be attractive to men. (Brown 2008)

The radicalesbian model of living was too regimented for many women, the ideals impossible to achieve because of the privileging of conformity (loss of individualism) over difference (Valentine 1997, p. 71). Out of frustration, Brown (2008) resorted to 'a tent for a while because I couldn't stand any more of it. Took my poetry books down [to the tent] and there was a big storm and a big branch knocked the tent down, lucky I

wasn't in it'. For Brown, 'the extremes of feminism' were unmanageable, the loss of personal freedom intolerable.

In the research interviews conducted for the study, radicalesbianism tended to be discussed in terms of its contradictions and/or as an idealistic political position that shaped living for a relatively short time. Brown reported that her separatist period lasted about six months, which was not the entire duration of the band's existence. During that time, she was heavily influenced by Johnston's (1973, p. 165) *Lesbian Nation*, which states 'the sexual satisfaction of the woman independently of the man is the *sine qua non* [essential ingredient] of the feminist revolution'. Whilst Clitoris Band exemplifies an uncompromising political stance, closer examination reveals the gaps between (political) acts in the name of feminism and a range of 'private' struggles concerning sexuality. For example, in spite of her radicalesbian orientation, separatist lifestyle and political activism, Jack believes that she behaved one way with Clitoris Band and differently in other situations, as she explains.

> We felt really strong as a group. I mean that's what was really amazing I guess for me was being part of this group where it felt okay to be a lesbian. But personally I still had lots of issues. And I did for a long time after that. Even now it's hard for me to tell people that I was in a band called Clitoris, who aren't people I know will be fine with it, sort of embarrassing. But we wanted to be in people's face in a particular way. I mean that's partly being young isn't it? So we just went with the outrageous kind of thing. But we could only perform in places where people were happy to put [Clitoris] on the poster. So that was limiting. (Jack 2008)

Jack attests that political action and politically oriented sexuality do not follow or guarantee outcomes for the 'self' and/or how a 'private' individual might negotiate sexuality in the everyday world. Gender separatism and forms of political lesbianism exposed the instabilities of heterosexuality but public/private disparities were not necessarily resolved one way or another. Jack says, 'It was always messy, the separatist thing … I certainly acted like one because I didn't have many men friends … but not everyone in the band necessarily felt like that'. Exhausted and fraught with internal disagreement after eighteen months, the members of Clitoris Band called a collective meeting and agreed to disband.

Subjects are deeply situated by the specifics of social life, suggests Moya Lloyd (2007, p. 58), thus re-shaping the world at will is an illusion. Individuals in other women bands applied radicalesbian idea(l)s to everyday living with differing effects. It can be noted, for example, that the members of Stray Dags attribute their break up to personal relationships, over and above internal political disagreements or radicalesbian problems.[11] At the time of our interview, Jack (2008) confirmed that she is no longer exclusively separatist but (off and on) has continued to live a country lifestyle. She also expressed ambivalence about her musical pathway. 'We were singing about things that no one else was singing about … certainly challenging what was the norm at the time … maybe if I hadn't gone so strongly into the women's thing, if I'd stayed more in a mixed scene like some women I know … and in that way, learned heaps [from men] … I've never allowed myself that possibility … could still happen'. Jack's thoughts seem to echo something that I stumbled across one day when sorting through boxes of Clitoris Band materials. On a scrap of paper was a handwritten note that said: 'there will be a myth about Clitoris Band but while we're all still alive that myth can be set right' (Brown, Literary Papers, 1963-2004). This 'sign' or evidential trace of the group heightened my researcher interest. It pointed (potentially, I thought) to the right/wrongs of radicalesbianism, given that after Clitoris Band, singer Shayne Kelly and guitarist Mim Loftus eventually put together a women band called Sheila (see Appendix A). Sheila was a more conventional rock band and played cover songs in inner city pubs. For those reasons, Sheila may be interpreted as a reaction against and/or correction of Clitoris Band. However, reflecting on the effects of sexuality, radical politics, and the enabling and limiting constraints on Clitoris Band, it can be seen that subject histories and historico legacies are not easily 'set right'. As Foucault (1978, p. 60) says, the production of truth is 'thoroughly imbued with relations of power'. In my belief, Clitoris Band was meshed in political idealisations of the female body, as were other women bands, and discursive processes of power produce multiple stories and legends.

[11] In her interview, Tina Harris (2006) says 'the shit hit the fan with me and the boy I was seeing but yeah Mystery and I were lovers, and so that was it, bang' (see 'Rock On With Your Frock On', p. 280).

Performing On/Off the Music Stage

Alongside political lesbianism, second wave feminists developed the notion that female bodies can be 'desexualised'. Politically and strategically, the aim of desexualisation was to overcome objectification by men (Faderman 1992, p. 231) and announced a concomitant feminist and lesbian 'refusal' of male desire. It might be said that Australian women's music exemplified the desexualisation strategy by critiquing (and 'rejecting') eroticised aesthetics conventionally associated with the female body: hair, clothes, surfaces of the skin. In general, women's music came to involve ideas about subverting the norms of (female) gender by and through visual appearance, blurring the distinction between what is performed on a stage and what is 'performed' in everyday life, in other words, looking 'the same' on and off the music stage. The feminist press reinforced 'dressing down' and published comments such as, 'you don't have to squeeze yourself into uncomfortable Ziggy bird clothes to go to a women's dance, nor find a pair of shoes with extension heels, or worry about the colour of your underwear' (Liz 1976/1977, p. 24). Of course some women may have paid very close attention, indeed, to their undergarments to perform and/or attend a women's dance but the general political view was that lesbian/feminists didn't need to put on a 'Revlon face' to be attractive. However, reinscribing one's body in the name of political action raised a number of problems for women's music not the least because individuals acted in different ways.

To re-read the bodily re-inscriptions of Australian women's music as more complex than gender rigidity and lack of erotic playfulness (see Jodie Taylor 2009), I want to draw on Butler's (1990, p. 141) theory of performativity, and gender as 'stylised repetition of acts through time'. Essentialist (feminist) notions of identity and ontologies of gender suggest 'being'. Contemporary theories of performance and performativity emphasise processes and practices, and both are useful for re-thinking second wave feminist aesthetics, specifically what Australian women band members did with their body hair and dress codes. In her insightful problematisation of performance and performativity, Moya Lloyd (1999, p. 208) notes that the potential effects of any action may be more numerous than we imagine or plan. I argue that

transgressions of the male/female gender binary within Australian women's music were subversive because they comprised non-normative, embodied performances of gender acted on and off the stage. However, intention does not guarantee outcomes such as the disruption of norms, nor does it automatically expose the fiction of gender and/or subvert heterosexuality.

The various ways we desire to be in the world are marked, declared, signified and re-signified on the surfaces and materialisations of our bodies. Second wave feminists struggled to explain female bodies universally in terms of sex and gender (de Beauvoir 1972; Oakley 1972; Rubin 2006, originally 1975). It was thought by many that 'sex' is located in the body, thus biological, physiological, genetic and somatic, whereas 'gender' is located in consciousness and acquired as a result of social processes. Gayle Rubin (2006, p. 88) described 'sex/gender' as a system, 'the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity'. Assuming a distinction could be made between sex and gender in this manner, feminists turned to questions of corporeality, whether bodies are blank canvases and infinitely pliable or biologically programmed. Feminist theories about what it means to be gendered and socially acculturated female, attempted to expose the institutional, systematic ways in which female bodies are exploited through sexualisation and focussed on outward appearance. To unsettle ideas about objectification and the 'male gaze',[12] second wave feminists tended to denounce beauty practices in favour of essentialist ideas and ideals about the 'unadorned, natural female body' ('The Best of a Good Bunch' 1979). The denouncements of beauty practices by feminists thus came to be broadly known as 'desexualisation' and feminist idea(l)s about subverting the social construction of gender through desexualisation strategies led to assumptions that gender could be transformed (see, for example, Brownmiller 1984; Coward 1984; Greer 1971). In turn, such idea(l)s contributed to the re-scripting of bodily being, for example, new materialisations of female bodies on and off the music stage.

[12] Laura Mulvey (1975, p. 11) developed a psychoanalytic theory about the male gaze for cinema. She says, 'in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female'.

The feminist scrutiny of female bodies was intense. The push to de-naturalise (by 'de-sexualising') patriarchal notions of female beauty reconfigured conventional femininity as artificial and suggested that female bodies were not in need of cultural adjustments and/or modification. Yet, individuals had different ideas about the un-adorned female body and the so-called harms of beauty practices. Many women allowed their body hair to grow, which for some included facial hair. As a teenager, Celeste Howden practised music with schoolmates in the bedroom of a middle class suburban house. After high school, she joined a mixed-gender rock band called Stiletto. Well respected in the independent music scene, Stiletto[13] had success in 1978 with their album, *License to Rage* (see Spencer, Nowara and McHenry 2002) and performed on *Countdown*, which was the television music show of the day.[14] By then Howden was nineteen years of age and living in the inner city of Melbourne with the other members of the band. Fairly soon after the *Countdown* appearance and in keeping with her new lesbian/feminist ideas on the negation of male objectification, she stopped performing a daily routine of facial hair removal. Emotions surface during Howden's interview. The tape is stopped and turned on again as she finds a way to tell her story. Through tears, she explains that Stiletto's (feminist) front woman Jane Clifton 'sat me down and said … my facial hair was a barrier to the band's success because it was too out there' (Howden 2008). Rather than remove her facial hair, as Clifton requested, Howden broke off communications[15] and moved to Sydney, where she reoriented to radicalesbianism and a specifically 'women's music' scene.

Howden joined Stray Dags, a band with a slightly different set of idea(l)s about music production, aspiration and inclusion/exclusion. For Howden, a fluffy, tufty face beard is 'a physical thing that happens' and not about being in the wrong body. But as she says, the hair on one's (female) face is more deeply stigmatised than, for instance, the hair on one's legs.

[13] The most well known Stiletto line up was Jane Clifton (vocals), Andrew Bell (guitar), Eddie Van Roosendael (drums), Janie Conway (rhythm guitar) and Celeste Howden (bass).
[14] In footage, Howden can be seen keeping cool as her guitar strap breaks (see Stiletto 1978, Appendix D).
[15] Stiletto split soon after.

> My experience during that period when I didn't do anything with [my] facial hair was that it wasn't just in the music world. It was a global negative reaction. Apart from my personal one-to-one relationships there were no relations that I managed to develop with people, nowhere that that was acceptable … it was always a point of threat, discomfort, drama wherever I went, in any situation. The music industry helps reinforce those things but I don't think it's the only area where it happens. What it is about facial hair, for women, that is so out there, and so threatening, I don't know, but it is. (Howden 2008)

Howden's narrative demonstrates the way that gender is regulated, disciplined and punished in the Foucaultian sense of power. As Sullivan (2003, p. 84) writes, 'the punishment or stigmatisation of so-called 'unnatural' actions and identities is everywhere apparent in our society, and functions to reaffirm or naturalise that which is held to be normal'. For Butler (in Kotz 1992), identifying as a woman and performing all of the attributes 'normally' associated with that gender is an effect of cultural forces, and 'coherent identification has to be cultivated, policed and enforced, and the violation of that has to be punished, usually through shame'. What it might mean if the lives we lead do not make sense to others underlies the discourses of power that both uphold and obscure the idea(l)s of sexuality and gender. While the identity politics and the body reinscriptions of second wave feminism attempted to subvert the norms of gender by emphasising the 'unadorned natural beauty' of women, the actions taken were often met with discrepancies and punishments, as Howden's anecdote illustrates.

During the 1970s and 1980s, women with facial hair agonised over social pressures to do with sexuality, identity and the negative stereotyping of feminist lesbianism in ways that other feminists and lesbians did not.[16] Thus, there is an important point to be explored here about political/personal agency, choice and voluntarism. On the one hand, Howden's narrative may suggest a type of wilful capacity to act. For example, when the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) filmed Stray Dags at a women's dance in 1982, she wore a boiler suit on stage. Howden (2008) was highly aware of the effects of national television and in her words, it was 'a conscious political statement'. The program that went to air was about homosexuality and law reform. The edited video footage cuts from the all-female audience dancing to Stray Dags performing on stage and in a lingering mid-shot we see Howden's beard (ABC Television 1982,

[16] In this study, Howden is the only woman who discussed problems with facial hair.

Appendix D). On the other hand, in addition to intentional performances, Judith Butler's (1990, p. 141) theory of gender performativity argues that gender is a repeated stylised act (doing, thinking, behaving) rather than something that one puts on or takes off at will. At the local and situated level, it can be argued that Howden was (and continues to be) a subject of power and subject to power. Ultimately, although there were difficult anxieties, the act of wearing facial hair did not entirely prevent Howden from playing music to appreciative audiences, which shows that 'we are both agents and effects of disciplinary regimes' (Sullivan 2003, p. 84). There is no self that exists (as ontological categories of being) outside the gendered self, as Butler (1993, p. 7) suggests. Genders are neither true nor false, never completely internalised and/or externalised. After Stray Dags, Howden played in several other women bands, Anywhere But Paris, Doris Dazed, and a brief stint with Zelda Swang. However, ten years later, she removed her beard on joining the Gottani Sisters, a country and western duo looking for success in the early 1990s.

Figure 7. Doris Dazed, 1986 (L-R) Bronwyn Stephens, Celeste Howden, Glenys Page, Donna Day

What many (not all) second wave feminists did with outward appearances and body surfaces was intentional, tactical, political, and the 'signs' of women's liberation repeatedly involved things that could be 'seen' (Enke 2003, p. 658). On the basis that

'gender is imposed by patriarchy' (Lloyd 2007, p. 39) and therefore able to be reversed, women also adopted the working-class street wear of men as another form of materialising the 'desexualised' female aesthetic. Arguably, women wearing overalls became one of the most visible signs of second wave feminism. In the belief that female subject positions are defined by male expectations to look and sound a particular way, the adoption of (male) street wear and overalls was a somewhat ironic manoeuvre, given that men wearing similar clothing were both theorised as the oppressor and eroticised (by some lesbian/feminists). Nevertheless, a variety of army pants, boiler suits and overalls (not terribly practical for women going to the toilet) came to stand for the political feminist. Thus, in a non-normative context, lesbian/feminist band members in Australia developed a set of assumptions favouring a 'soft' butch and/or androgynous body image. As Ann Enke (2003, p. 658) points out, visibility depends on types of knowledges about 'what signs signify' and to whom they might be speaking. The universalising feminist argument was that killer heels, plunging necklines, tight short skirts render women erotically vulnerable to objectification and the male gaze. Masculine clothes, it was believed, created a sense of power, particularly for white, middle class feminists who enunciated a speaking position for *all* women. However, the radical feminist perspective, which Sheila Jeffreys (2005, p. 7) argues, posits that *all* female beauty practices - cosmetic surgery, the pornography industry, and all forms of body modification including tattoos - are brutal and harmful because they essentially serve men and subordinate women. Jeffreys (2005, p. 175) goes on to make the claim that liberatory freedom for women can be attained by, amongst other things, stopping the dyeing of one's hair, not wearing skirts and avoiding the application of makeup: these were things that Jeffreys, and many other women, personally did.[17]

In contrast to identity-based theories, gender performativity suggests that gender involves all of the bodily gestures and actions that are repeatedly performed by and through the body, including posture, voice, mannerisms, clothes and surfaces of the skin. Butler (1990, p. 141) makes the point in *Gender Trouble*, that gender is 'a

[17] During the 1980s, the feminist rejection of conventional beauty came under a slightly different scrutiny from pro-sex feminists and butch-femme lesbians (see, for example, Nestle 1992).

performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief'. To further account for the gendered individual acting within the social world, Butler (1993) turns in *Bodies That Matter* more specifically to linguistics[18] and the concept of iterability - the idea that all human subjects are social actors performing a type of 'script' that is repeated. In Butlerian terms, gender performativity examines the power of discourse to repeatedly produce that which it names and underscores the investments that we make and the idea(l)s that are imagined in the acts of speaking and behaving. Butler's concept of iterability proposes that one knows, repeats and re-experiences 'a set of meanings already socially established' (Butler 1990, p. 140) similar to a script. This notion of presupposition (pre-conditioning if you like) may infer a lack of distinction between performance and performativity and an impasse about volunteerism. But according to Butler (1993, p. 95), iterability is not personal choice, it is the 'regularised and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed *by* a subject this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject.' Rather than an essential core of identity, gender is produced through one's individual repetitive performance of gender and constituted in and through action (Sullivan 2003, p. 89). It is this aspect of gender as performativity that is useful, in my belief, for re-interpreting the gendered selves of the women's music scene in Australia.

The photographs and videos collected during the study's research support the view that some Australian women bands 'dressed up' on stage (see Figure 8., and Chapter 5), but most performers wore loose jeans and/or styles of clothing associated with the everyday. Eve Glenn of Toxic Shock says she combined a string of pearls with a pair of overalls and singer Fran Kelly 'dressed up' in the clothes of the archetypal woman, a cowgirl outfit and a Wonder Woman tee shirt, which were the popular signs and symbols of second wave feminism. However, according to Vicki Gordon (2008) differences were accepted, 'if there was a butch girl in the band, she was the butch girl and if there was a feminine girl in the band that's how she was, we were individuals'.

[18] To develop gender performativity in *Bodies That Matter*, Butler (1993, p. 224) draws on J. L. Austin's theory of linguistics, the associative binding power of speech acts. For example, 'I apologise for my behaviour' is performative because it is neither true nor false.

Kaye Brown (2006) of Razor Cuts remembers things differently. She says, 'if you came along in some hot little fashion item from femmeville then your membership might have been brought into question'. In the following comment, Jacquie Reid of Tokyo Rose points out that youth and restricted economies also influenced dress codes.

> People cut each other's hair so you had that real punk look about you that was what you did. We sat around and cut each other's hair or put henna through each other's hair and I remember wearing a lot of vests. Kind of really rough woollen knitted things. Everybody shopped in op shops and I suppose that was another thing, we were students and not very well off and not exactly poverty but very low incomes and nobody worried about that. (Reid, J. 2008)

The dress codes within a group or a scene such as women's music are often inferred and/or implied rather than literally discussed in conversation or exchanged as knowledges. People want to feel comfortable within a group and therefore select a woolly jumper to wear, for instance, instead of another item of clothing.

Figure 8. Flying Tackle, Melbourne, 1978

In turn, decisions made over time by individuals come to appear as if they are an expression of the individual self, a person's identity. Politically, lesbian/feminists wearing 'street clothes' while performing on a music stage signalled proximity, the inference that 'we women' are all the same, which was implicit in second wave feminist

notions of political unity. Ludo McFerran (2008), for instance, considers the dress codes in Stray Dags not that different to everyone else (meaning other lesbians and feminists at the time). Thus, inclusion in women's music required much more than music, it involved a totality of codified (repeated) bodily gestures, and social acts of gender performed on and off the music stage.

The theory of gender performativity developed by Butler (1993, p. 7) was an attempt to address some of the problems of identity-based feminism and its hetero assumptions, arguing that we make sense of our lives as gendered subjects within 'a matrix of gender relations'. Deploying Foucault's understanding of power to expose the norms of gender as 'regulatory fictions', Butler (1990, pp. 136-141) theorises that genders are 'produced as the truth-effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity'. In other words, performativity claims that identities are culturally, historically specific and the categories heterosexual and homosexual (for example) are cultural fictions without an inner core or essence. Drawing on performativity theory, it can be seen that in some situations, Australian women bands intentionally queered the normative frame of gender, the hegemony of the music industry's (straight) female performer, and the political ideals of feminism. However, some women band members also wanted the touch and feel of feminine clothes that feminism 'outlawed'. In the early 1980s, Lee Brooks was a baby dyke, a soft butch with spikey hair who played guitar with Adelaide new wave band Hotspots (see Appendices A, C). Brooks (2008) says that she enjoyed moments of 'getting out of the ovaries' (her nickname for overalls) and into a skirt for a performance with the band. Off-stage, the androgynous lesbian heartthrob Vicki Bell hardly wore dresses but occasionally donned a leopard print dress with no bra and no makeup for a gig with Sydney band Escargo Go. In her interview, Bell (2008) recalls that she 'felt like a drag queen' and entertained the idea of unsettling male audiences and parodying 'anti-femininity' feminists. Bell's drag queen, queering of heterosexuality (potentially, a lesbian woman playing a man playing a woman) 'mocks' true gender identity and exposes a 'fiction' and is a playful form of dissonance between anatomical sex, identity and performance.

The Butlerian meaning of gender performativity allows us to re-consider gender as repeated stylisations, the doing/undoing of discursive practices that invoke subjectivity, but never fully realise the gendered self because it is always 'in-process'. Butler's (1993, p. 95) point is that 'performativity is neither free play nor theatrical self-presentation; nor can it simply be equated with performance'. For example, it is difficult to know exactly how others may have interpreted or read 'the sign' of Brooks' skirt and Bell's leopard print dress, given the theatricality of the stage sometimes 'allows' transgressions, which raises the problem of how to interpret subversiveness.

One of the difficulties for performative theory is accounting for individual decisions and actions that are performed in the name of a political manoeuvre by a group of people. Political processes aimed at social transformation set up a contingent public discourse on multiple levels and an inner/outer tension between the social project and individual desires, wants, needs. Second wave feminist-designated dress codes and the reinscriptions of body surfaces challenged the presumptions of binary codifications and contributed to the downplaying of conventional eroticised aesthetics within the Australia women's music scene. Yet political processes do not exist outside the matrix of conventional norms. Foreign Body's bass player Annie Shepherd (2008) says, 'it was never our intention to look like dolls on stage … but that is not to say we didn't want to look good'. Feminism favoured 'dressing down' but the attractiveness of women bands to others was nonetheless important to women band members and their audiences. As Barbara Baird (2008) remembers, 'there might have been an anti-pretty politics among women's bands but on the other hand they were incredibly sexually attractive. Knowingly or not they got dressed up to perform. I thought Stray Dags were very sexy'. Arguably, lesbian audiences may (or may not) have eroticised women bands and for some feminists (see, for example, Brownmiller 1999; see also Chapter 2), desire complicated the intention of an identity-based movement that ostensibly aimed to de-naturalise eroticised aesthetics. In turn, the rejection of eroticised aesthetics produced self-regulatory processes (inside/outside the scene) whereby subjects were negatively stereotyped and/or individuals were judged as failing/succeeding feminist objectives.

There is a so-called boundary between stage and life, theatricality and social acting. It is this boundary that Butler initially deployed to argue there are strict lines between theatrical performance and life. The social act that one does 'is an act that has been going on before one arrives', says Butler 1988, p. 526, much like rehearsing a script. In the early formulation of her performative theory - theatre as self-creation and/or the performance of signs - Butler suggested that without theatrical conventions, the punitive consequences off-stage are more intense than on-stage. However, the experiences of women bands in Australia and their abject exclusion from histories, might suggest otherwise. Indeed, Lloyd (1999, p. 202) points out that if all instances of doing gender are instances of subjectification, there is nothing, in theory, that distinguishes between performance (one-off act) and the performative, between the individual and the social group. Reconsidering the problem in 'Critically Queer' Butler (1993a, p. 29, emphasis in original) draws the conclusion that 'subversiveness is the kind of effect that *resists calculation* … since such productions are not owned by the one who utters them. They continue to signify in spite of their authors'. Yet, this may still appear to complicate the problem of ascertaining political effectiveness.

Sullivan and Lloyd have both taken up Butler's knotty problem of performance and performativity and how we might understand subversion. It is extremely difficult to measure and quantify social change, confirms Lloyd (1999, p. 207), although 'this does not mean that we need to concede that there are no calculable effects'. Lloyd (1999, p. 210) writes that it is 'easy to over-emphasise the discontinuities in gender performance and to present them as indicative of disruptive behaviour'. What is often occluded, she argues, is that others are involved in the spaces in which gender performances occur. It might be said that women-only audiences were already open to reading the signs of women bands and this was where non-normativity was most effective, yet cannot be exactly determined. Sullivan's (2003, p. 201) view is that radical political mannoeuvres draw our attention to the 'extent to which these ideals about gender become consolidated and invisible, in and through the everyday practices in which we are all implicated'. For Sullivan, any performance predisposes performativity, where performance relates to intention and is goal orientated and performativity refers to the processes. 'Intentional forms of subversion will always be open to multiple meanings'

(2003, p. 201). Australian women bands may have produced some of the most enduring stereotypes of 1970s-1980s lesbians/feminists, which might be described (similar to America) as 'puritanical desexualised essentialism' (Peraino 2006, p. 194). But as Sullivan and Lloyd both point out, it was then (as now) still necessary to plan political action even (or perhaps particularly) if the outcomes were unfathomable.

Queer Kinships: Motherhood and Music

One of the persistent questions for women with respect to 'normalcy' and how life unfolds is motherhood. After a fractious decade of second wave feminist politics, Adrienne Rich (1980, pp. 637-643) published a paper on compulsory heterosexuality and made the claim that 'heterosexuality, like motherhood, needs to be recognised and studied as a political institution' because compulsory heterosexuality 'assures male sexual access to women' and therefore reproduction on a systematic basis. From this perspective, Rich proposed women could (and should) 'choose' indifference to men, although this did not necessarily mean indifference to children. Writing many years later on queer subcultures, queer temporality and queer music, Judith Halberstam[19] (2006, p. 11) invokes 'queer time' as the life arc of queers who disrupt heteronormativity by refusing the imperative of home and family. Heterosexual practices of childrearing suggest bloodlines, kinships, generational ties, and relations of emotional dependency through illness, dying and death. But many kinship practices do not conform to the nuclear family model. For Halberstam, queer kinship is both an alternative to assimilation and an oppositional narrative to heterosexuality and hetero-reproduction. Thus 'queer time' (and a queer timeline) arises out of an immersion in non-normative subcultural activities, which as she tells it, prolong adolescence.

> Queer time for me is the dark nightclub, the perverse turn away from the narrative coherence of adolescence-early adulthood-marriage-reproduction-child rearing-retirement-death, the embrace of late childhood in place of early childhood or immaturity in place of responsibility' (Halberstam in Dinshaw *et al.* 2007, p. 182).

[19] Judith is now Jack but the article discussed is authored as Judith Halberstam.

The problem with Halberstam's view, however, is that prolonged adolescence may actually include rather than preclude (planned/unplanned) children. My reading of women bands concurs with Halberstam in that the Australian scene comprises the production of queer, non-normative lifestyles. But I posit that parenting is more complicated than Halberstam seems to suggest given that it is not always heteronormative. I argue that within the Australian women's music scene, for example, lesbian/feminists performed a set of non-normative social relations and queer kinships. Rather than liberated and/or free (as feminism and gay liberation promised) women had diverse responsibilities, including (for some) the daily care of children.

In an article on female identity and song writing, Charlotte Greig (1997, p. 169) argues that adults are socially situated and normalised in relation to the question of parenting, whether or not we actually have children. She goes on to say that since the 1970s, a number of female music artists (she cites Joni Mitchell, Bonnie Raitt and Mary Chapin Carpenter) have gradually brought the subject of motherhood and domesticity into their music work. It might also be said that the songs of Australian women's music represent a type of heuristics, a method of problem solving how to live life based on trial and error, and these sentiments had never been heard before in rock music (O'Brien 2002, p. 257). Typically, women choose between motherhood and a career and/or find ways to navigate both. In her comprehensive study of UK women bands, titled *Frock Rock: Women Performing Popular Music*, Mavis Bayton (1998, p. 33) says that it is difficult 'for a woman to combine a career in rock music with domestic labour'. Although they offered different solutions, many second wave feminists supported this view of gender oppression. For example, the song 'Housewives' by Toxic Shock (see Appendix C) sends a 'universal' feminist message that freedom from household chores is needed to attain a state of liberation and all women must grow strong. 'Juggle the teacups/Drum on the pots and the pans/Put your foot through the TV/Spin around and stand on your hands/Get out into the world and do what you want to do'. Collected for this study, the song 'Aussie' by Clitoris Band is similarly utopian but cuts contemptuously with its radicalesbian perspective. The lyrics say, 'How the fuck we gonna have this revolution/Wipe him out with a laser beam/Withdraw into a separatist dream/Whatever we do it's gonna be soon/And women, we've got no time to be

mothers'. The insistence here is that 'political lesbians' are too busy for children. Yet everyday living may have actually included that reality.

During the 1970s-1980s, many (but not all) women re-oriented their lives counter to hetero-normative activities. Some feminists critiqued the power relations associated with marriage and monogamy and sought alternative relationship models (Morgan 1970, p. xxxiii), reasoning that the monogamous couple of (heterosexual) marriage equated with patriarchal capitalism and the proprietary ownership of women. Other feminists were influenced by counterculture and hippie philosophy, believing non-monogamous relationships gave each partner the opportunity to pursue feelings for others and/or to live apart (Faderman 1992, p. 233). For example, Eve Glenn (2008) of Toxic Shock and Barbies Dead came from a hippie background and explored alternative, living apart relations with men, allowing feelings toward women, even if not acted upon. By the time she became involved with women's music, Glenn had two children and was not always living with the father of those children. She altered the lettering on her Marshall amplifier to read 'Ma Shall' as a declaration that motherhood was not a barrier to her music activities. The questioning of marriage, monogamy and heterosexuality opened new possibilities. According to Arlene Stein (1998, p. 556), 'never before had so much social space opened up so quickly to middle class women who dared to defy deeply held social norms about their proper sexual place … but for many women, the relation between sexual orientation, sexual identity, and sexual practice is far from stable or uncomplicated'. Upon leaving her husband, for instance, Sue Edmonds moved with her two children from England to the other side of the globe where she began lesbian relations, which continued throughout her time in The Ovarian Sisters and beyond. As more women came out as lesbian,[20] the group of people calling themselves 'lesbian' became increasingly (sexuality-wise) heterogeneous and also scrutinised,[21] which the earlier discussions on political lesbianism demonstrate.

[20] In the film, *Witches and Faggots, Dykes and Poofters* (1979) a lesbian mother defends her right as a 'fit mother' and battles child custody after coming out.

[21] Some lesbians already in long-term relationships with women interrogated monogamy as a reflection of the 'master-slave' role-playing of heterosexuality (see Jay 1975; Lee 1975). Radicalesbians believed monogamy was 'men's ways of keeping women enslaved' (Faderman 1992, p. 233). In practice, debates about lesbian monogamy required delicate negotiation and were fraught with contradictions.

In 1980, Adrienne Rich published an analysis of compulsory heterosexuality, theorising lesbian subjects in a historical continuum. Rich (1980, p. 649) proposed that lesbianism is constant and knowable over time - in essence transhistorical - because it involved 'the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support'. The problem with Rich's universalising 'lesbian continuum' is that it still suggests, as Sullivan (2003, p. 121) points out, 'lesbianism is in essence political and that all lesbians therefore resist patriarchy', which is debatable. Rich's essay thus tends to consolidate political lesbianism rather than moving beyond it. Nonetheless, a set of practical and emotional relationships to children as alternative 'family' practices that provided coherency (for some) to personally held political beliefs. For example, out lesbian Ludo McFerran (2008) began caring for the daughter of a close (female) friend during her time with Stray Dags and maintains those extended (queered) family relations in the present day.

Figure 9. International Women's Day Dance - 'p.s. free childcare' - Adelaide, 1983

By the mid-1980s, the responsibility and provision of childcare was integral to the organisation of second wave feminist social events in Australia, particularly those held in relatively autonomous venues such as community halls, university spaces, the Women's Warehouse and so on. The poster (as above) usually indicated whether kids were welcome and/or whether childcare was available, either at a nearby location such

as a women's liberation house or on the premises where the dance was held. Women band members often relied on these types of arrangements. For example, Adelaide women band Thin Ice (precursor of the more well known Sticky Beat) was booked to perform a feminist event in the mid-1980s, and assumed their children would be welcome. They were surprised to discover, however, that children were not granted entry and took the unusually strong action of withdrawing from the gig in protest over the organiser's (a feminist collective) decision. A heartfelt apology was written by the band to their fans, printed on a flyer and distributed. The following is an extract.

> Our children are very much a part of the band, not to mention other children who are friends of the band and would like an opportunity to see us play. We are insulted that the collective considers that they are more able to make decisions about our children's welfare than we are. ('Thin Ice Apologise' 1986, Dutkiewicz private collection)

In this anecdote (above), childcare is considered a collectively shared responsibility for the whole band (for which Thin Ice were prepared to take action at the expense of performing) rather than an individual mother's problem to be solved. Thus, for Thin Ice, taking care of children was a form of political cohesion amidst experimentations with alternative models of family, sexuality and social relations. Yet, groups and individuals within the women's scene took responsibility for children in many different ways, indicating there was a complexity of feminist imperatives and that the normalcy of everyday life was not always driven by political necessities.

Potentially, the concept of queer adolescence as 'queer time' offers a contemporary way to rethink Australian women's music as non-normative, different from heteronormativity. Compulsory heterosexuality, understood as a systematic institutional force (Rich 1980) with punishments and rewards (similar to capitalism and racism) that naturalise opposite sex-attraction and ensure its continuation and reproduction, continue to exert influence in work that interrogates the hegemony of heterosexuality. For Halberstam (2006), a queer music group disrupts heteronormative temporalities because it extends the activities associated with adolescence, immaturity, and lack of responsibility, such as night clubbing, partying, sex cultures, going to see bands and/or hanging out with a band. Lesbian/feminists were not above

the 'excess' that may be associated with adolescence. For example, The Ovarian Sisters organised to record their album during the week before school holidays. Sue Edmonds caught a ferry from Hobart to Bruny Island and delivered her children to the care of friends. Excited about the upcoming new experience of recording in a studio, she was 'distracted,' smoked cannabis, missed the last ferry home and stayed over (Edmonds 2008). That night, in a serendipitous moment, she wrote 'Beat Your Breasts', which was (eventually) recorded the next day and subsequently became the title track and name of the album. Lesbian/feminists may have hung on to ideas and/or some of the practices of adolescence and in so doing lived different milestones to heterosexuality. Yet queer 'adolescence' in adulthood may not be completely devoid of responsibilities and finding someone to look after the kids was a 'normal' routine for mothers in bands.

An analysis of motherhood within the Australian women's music scene shows the gaps between political ideals or what was performed (sung) on-stage and the material realities off-stage.[22] For example, 'Childcare' by Clitoris Band calls out to the audience. 'Are you coming to the demo on Saturday morning? /What's it about? Childcare … /Not much you can eat on forty bucks a week/But how can you get a job/With no one to mind the kids?' The protest rhetoric expressed in this feminist song suggests a persuasive 'yes saying' and a rallying call for political action. Off-stage, however, the care of children was sometimes managed in impromptu ways. Interviewed for the feminist broadsheet, *Vashti*, Janie Conway said that her (single mother) method when she played gigs was to 'stick earplugs in her son's ears and put him in a basket behind the stage' ('Janie Conway Interviewed' 1979, p. 23). At the height of separatism, boy children at the age of six onwards were generally excluded from women's spaces and often denied entry at women-only dances on the basis of sex. Occasionally, children were left sleeping in cars outside the women band venue when there was no sitter available and when it was not considered hazardous to the child in the way that it is now. In my view, the mothers of those children suffered political, philosophical and practical difficulties. Leonie Crennan of Clitoris Band, for example, considers that her

[22] 'Cradle Song' by Stray Dags was written in support of all mothers but actually presents the isolation of working class women. 'The cradle will rock/The waitress gets swollen legs/And wears a dirty frock … /She pays the price, she's such a nice lady/But nobody knows just how she goes crazy' (See Appendix C; see also Stray Dags 1982a, Appendix D).

son felt the effects of radical feminism quite sharply.[23] Separatism and gender-separate strategies can thus be seen to have created inconsistencies that flowed on to a network of relations between mothers, children, partners, family and friends.

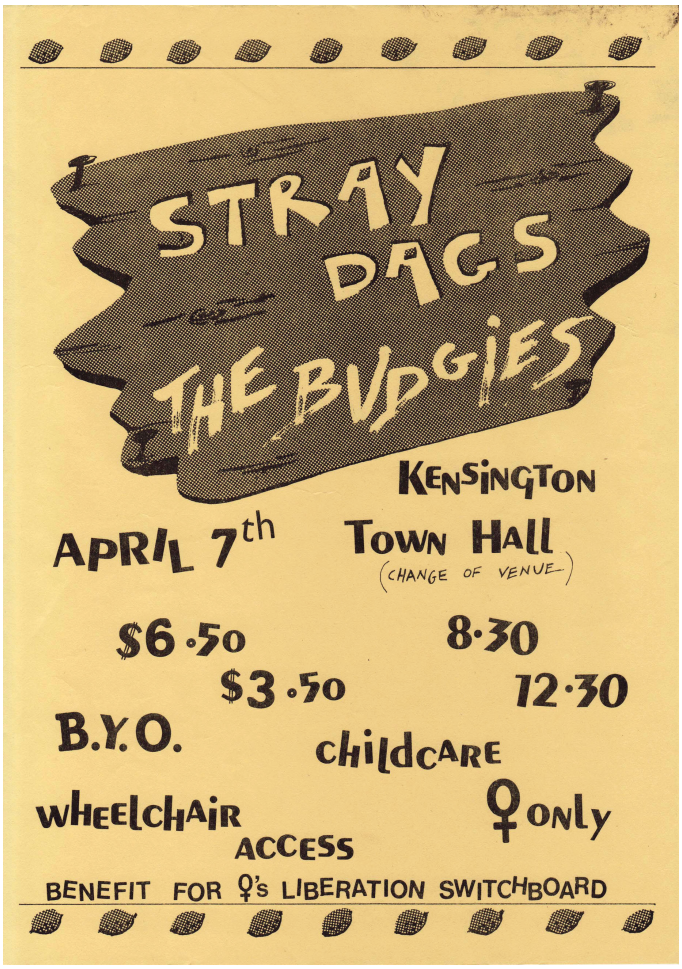

Figure 10. Stray Dags, poster showing childcare, circa 1983

My queer re-reading of lesbian mothers in Australian women bands was initially prompted by Bayton's study of British women's music, mentioned earlier. Her feminist narrative acknowledges that a 'significant proportion of women-only bands have been lesbian' (Bayton 1998, p. 72) but then makes the following claim.

> Lesbians had liberated themselves from the need to prove their femininity and conform to heterosexist expectations - the role of wife or girlfriend, and so on.

[23] For information about this point see also Sport (2007, p. 345).

> Without these commitments lesbians were (and still are) freer than the average woman to engage in rock music making if desired. (1998, p. 73)

Bayton is describing the UK situation, yet there is a universalising tendency, and failure in my view to acknowledge the multiple pathways of sexuality that may include (for some) a heterosexual relationship and/or the care of children, which was the case for women in Australia. During Barbies Dead, for instance, Jane Cottrill had a long-term relationship with a woman, eight years older, who had two young children. Cottrill (2006) co-parented for the length of the relationship, which lasted several years after the band broke up. In a queer sense, Bayton's reasoning is actually not that different to the claims made by Halberstam (2006, p. 11) who attests that queer subjects 'refuse the heteronormative imperative of home and family' and prolong a carefree adolescence without responsibility. Bayton implies that all lesbians during the women's movement era could (and did) achieve a state of liberation from patriarchal 'oppression'. Yet, liberating something known as the 'true self' is a highly problematic view of power and identity given that changing your life is more complex than changing your mind (Sullivan 2003, p. 41). Liberatory notions of freedom imply mechanics of repression, but subject histories of sexuality are more intricate than breaking the constraints of repression, re-establishing and re-discovering a full relationship with the individual, 'normal' self (Foucault 1997, p. 282). It is not so easy to discard enculturation, including the behaviours of motherhood that are traditionally associated with femininity and heterosexuality.

The structures of understanding that 'cohere' heterosexuality organise and privilege normalcy as heteronormative (Berlant and Warner 1998). Heterosexuality produces, privileges, celebrates the normative temporal milestones of one's individual life based around heterosexual family, kinships, social relations and parenting. Heteronormativity takes many forms, as Sullivan (2003, p. 132) points out, because it 'does not exist as a discrete and easily identifiable body of thought, of rules and regulations'. Therefore, it is not easily denaturalised. On this basis, Nguyen Tan Hoang (in Dinshaw *et al*. 2007, p. 184) suggests that there is also a homonormative time line in which we 'pity those who come out late in life, do not find a partner before they lose their looks, or continue to

hit the bars … we create our own temporal normativity'. Following this reasoning, it can be argued there may be no pure opposition to the matrix of heterosexuality since all types of sexual and non-sexual behaviour are positioned within its regime. Heteronormativity informs all kinds of practices and lesbians live with a range of situated problems - normative, non-normative and homonormative - that impact and shape those relations (addiction, health, lack of money, housing and so on). Thus, I argue, when put into practice, second wave feminist idea(l)s about subverting (queering) norms, were also shaped by 'homo-normativities'. Lesbians conduct a range of functional and dis-functional social relations that may/may not involve and/or uphold the 'normal' reproduction of life.

Queers may not want children in their daily routine, but they do not necessarily set out to be naturally and/or automatically excluded from, uninterested, even hostile towards the bearing and caring of children (although some might). Recent feminist and queer discourse indicates a turn toward a queering of heterosexuality through a type of homonormativity; the 'respectable' same-sex couple defined through childrearing and the institution of marriage, conventional, legal and alternative (see for example, Baird 2007; Valverde 2006). In my belief, a study of the past, shows that the issue of having a child - whether the result of heterosexual relations or artificial insemination by donor - may not have been necessarily resolved one way or another for those within the Australian women's music scene. For example, career musicians and life partners, Sharon Jakovsky and Nikki Coleman had two children after Zelda Swang and for the couple, entailed Jakovsky (2008) working from home. A future study on sexuality might examine Australian women band histories in terms of prolonged adolescence and/or non-normative life arcs. However, in the current study, I have found that presuming second wave lesbian/feminists did not raise and/or care for children during time spent in a women band (as Bayton does) falls into the trap of configuring only one type of 'normalcy'. Yet there are many ways of rehearsing 'lesbian' just as there are many political articulations and discrepancies in the material realities of everyday life.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the Australian women's music scene is shown to comprise historically situated bodies meshed in a political push to transform ideas about same-sex relations. The politics of sexuality that emerged out of the liberation movements tended to affirm identity and oriented women toward ideals about authenticity, natural femaleness and the unadorned body. But concerns for lesbian visibility had a specifically radicalising effect. Radicalesbian articulations of 'women-identification' (also known as political lesbianism) focused on politics over and above desire and sex practices. Political lesbianism was regarded by some feminists as *the* revolutionary act and linked sexuality to notions of voluntarism in this manner. Concomitantly, lesbian/feminists sought to subvert the norms of gender by re-signing female bodies with new bodily inscriptions, which came to be known as desexualisation. The politics of sexuality brought women bands into constraints described as a lingering stereotype, 'puritanical, desexualised, essentialism' (Peraino 2006, p. 194). In Australia, it can be seen that women bands adopted a range of competing, sometimes contradictory tactics that included both radicalesbianism and desexualisation practices for varying periods of time with differing effects. The gaps between individual worlds and public articulations reveal that the self is never fully realised, always open to other readings and it is difficult to measure the effects of subversive acts (Butler 1993a; Lloyd 1999; Sullivan 2003). To re-consider the particularities of the Australian context and its meaningful world making, the current chapter emphasises 'stylised acts of gender' (Butler 1990). Gendered identities and public/private sexualities involve the approximations of ideals, repeatedly performed, including those intended to unsettle norms. The realities of living are not always steered by political necessities, and opposition to the ideals of 'normalcy' is complex. This chapter demonstrates that the performances of non-normativity within Australian women's music included a type of homo-normativity: producing and produced by embodied performances, social relations, and the mundane, ordinariness of day-to-day life. A performative perspective shows that more than music mattered within the Australian women's music scene, it required a totality of codified bodily gestures and social acts of gender performed on and off the music stage.

4

Making Musical Selves: Production

Introduction

This chapter consolidates my claim that women's music in Australia was a distinctly local scene, different to America. The previous chapter demonstrates that what women did with their bodies on and off the music stage was, in part, influenced by concomitant feminism/s and the new politics of sexuality that intensified concerns for lesbian visibility. Turning more specifically to production, this chapter elaborates the possibilities and constraints of identity and that women were both the subject and the makers of music. Music is an emotionally mediated form of experiencing, questioning, communicating, writing, telling stories about one's self (DeNora 2006). It is a vehicle for constructing life in relation to others. As a technique for mobilising and experiencing one's self in relation to others, music is always produced in the context of the social and invested with meanings of self/selves that extend far beyond the music that is played and heard (McClary 2002, p. xvi). We locate 'selves' in past, present, future temporalities through songs and the rhythms that configure everyday living (Grossberg 1991, p. 364). Ideas about the self and individual self-care through aesthetics, taste, sensibilities, sensations and our producing, consuming selves can also come to define political hope, a 'trajectory of transformation' (Straw 1991, p. 373). I argue that Australian women's music built a style inflected with local politics, sensibilities and interests. Drawing on the works of musicologist Judith Peraino, cultural commentator Will Straw, and others, I assert that Australian women bands had a type of freedom to experiment under the mainstream radar. However, the politics of gender and sexuality both enabled and constrained their production practices.

Music and all of its different styles, exists as a mode of production within a capitalist system of consumption and it is usually shaped by its potential and/or relation to mainstream commodification. During the 1930s-1940s popular song proliferated into a commercially viable industry. At the time, Theodor Adorno (2002, p. 114) wrote a number of influential essays that attempted to assign intention and meaning to music itself as a language. Adorno eschewed popular music in favour of high modernist music because he believed mass production produced complacency that alienated individuals (Peraino 2006, p. 2). More recent cultural debates focus on the relationship between music - and musical selves - to something called mainstream or that which is ideally held up as 'normal' (see, for example, Straw 1991; Peraino 2003; 2006; Taylor 2013). Discourses about 'mainstream normalcy', and opposition or agreement with it, are important in critiques of popular music, not the least because many music scenes seem to come and go with hardly a trace (Bennett and Peterson 2004). Yet music scenes that appear to have little consequence are fascinating because their subjugated knowledges reveal different histories in the clusters of people drawn together by their affinities for music tastes and distinct lifestyles built around particular activities.

A music scene may be distinguished, according to Will Straw (2004, p. 412), by and through its (a) location (b) type of cultural production (music style) and (c) the social activities around which it takes shape. Earlier in the thesis, I deployed 'spatial borderless-ness' to rethink Australian women's music (Chapter 2). Here I examine the tension between universalities and the idea that society continues to be defended around national identities and cultural activities that construct and offer forms of comparison, a relational position to others seen to possess a similar but different identity and/or culture. The current chapter thus elaborates its genealogical argument that Australian women's music was a distinctly local scene, comprising dissonant musical selves with (at times contradictory) links to mainstream norms. Commencing with the second wave feminist trajectories of change, I map the grassroots battles to access equipment and learn instruments through do-it-yourself ideas about un-alienated and non-exploitative forms of labour. Following that, I contend that the human social value of Australian women's music was greater than its monetary profit-value. It developed a hybrid music style, in my view, that was not easily commodified

and characterised in part by its locality. Women's music in Australia was also a site of where the production of lesbian selves queered heteronormative practices of music commodification and consumption. To further re-activate and re-emphasise the scene's historical significance, I draw on Foucault's (1997) ethical self and Dennis Atkinson's (2002) theory that artistic practices can be understood as 'discourses of experiencing' and (music) selves-in-practice.

Do-It-Yourself Logics of Australian Women's Music

The do-it-yourself strategies of women's music involved learning music instruments and new self-knowledges; a tension between music norms, one's non-political self, and one's (perceived) political self. Second wave feminists drew attention to (universal) gender disparities in popular music and to the fact that women in rock bands were at the time not commonly seen on instruments, other than vocals. Women were universally 'excluded' from the popular music stage, it was argued, and feminists pushed to hear and see women equally on all instruments, guitars, drums, saxophones and so on. However, this discussion shows that there were different ideas about one's female, feminist, music self. The (liberal) feminist agenda for equality in the music industry was a response, in part, to the girl group era of the 1960s. Girl groups such as the Shangri-Las and The Ronnettes comprised female singers backed by male instrumentalists and became known for the 'feminisation' of rock with their 'high pitched, humming, husky teenage girl sound' (O'Brien 2002, p. 66). Girls groups brought an unprecedented number of female artists to the charts but second wave feminists argued that it was the male producers of girl groups who controlled, 'called the shots' and often left those groups at a financial and artistic disadvantage (Gaar 2002, p. 32). Seeking to contest these music norms, feminists focussed on independence from men, the technical development of women and the sound of female instrumentalists as unique and potentially different (Kearney 1997). Politically, feminists believed that taking a number of steps would overturn the identified gender constraints and imbalances within music (see Chapter 2). To achieve that objective it was logically reasoned that self-sufficient, self-determined, do-it-yourself methods of

music production were required and a process of music making unfolded, which is now associated with second wave feminist, liberatory notions of freedom.

However, when one is situated as 'other' to the norm, it implies regulation, not only as an exotic object of difference but also as a 'pure object, a spectacle, a clown' (Barthes in Kearney 1997, p. 211). Norma Coates (1997, p. 61) says 'women in music' has 'a contingent feel about it, an aura of something that will never be complete, never fully integrated with the whole'. Otherness intensifies anxieties and explains why women invested in music as a career sometimes argue against drawing specific attention to gender in fear of neutralisation as the 'Other'. At the level of the individual, Tina Harris (2006) of Stray Dags recalls an inner battle with her music self, which she believes did not resolve during her time in a women band.

> There were anarchists and socialists and Spartacists and all the people that came to International Women's Day marches. There were lesbians and feminists and the people who thought it was cool to see an all-girl band. But I guess probably to some we were freakish curiosities maybe and then there were left-wing men who liked our music and took us at face value ... I remember Ludo [McFerran] saying well I'm a woman first, refuge worker second, and musician third. And it took me a long time to call myself a musician … in a way it's a shame that I didn't get that from playing with Stray Dags and towards the end it was something that I felt frustrated by because there was a struggle. (Harris 2006)

Individuals in all-women bands worried deeply about not being taken seriously, of being categorised as a novelty - 'otherness' to the norm - instead of (by implication) being included in the norm. Adelaide blues and reggae band, Foreign Body decided that naming their band 'foreign body' offered a possible 'reversal' with a political public statement about feeling 'alien' outsiders. To manage the intensifications of otherness and as an act of intervention in the gendered space of music, lesbian/feminist bands necessarily tried to control, as much as possible independently of men, the production processes for their music. In turn, access to the means of production, equipment and knowledges, became a gendered site of struggle inflected with greater meanings, which continue to be negotiated in the present day.

An early example of this in play occurred before women bands developed more strategic do-it-yourself practices. In 1975, Clitoris Band was invited to play a fundraiser in aid of battered women and the newly established Elsie Women's Refuge in Sydney. Not owning the appropriate amplification equipment, Clitoris Band struck a musician's agreement with the headline act, Uncle Bob Band, to 'borrow' the amps that would be set up on-stage. On the night, they played first, as the support act, without any problems. Mark Butler (2013, p. 46) of Uncle Bob Band has published his recollections of the night, and says, 'Clitoris had played their set, then we had played, but then I saw the Clitoris members wandering back on stage, turning on the PA and firing up our amplifiers. This wasn't part of the deal and in full roadie mode, I moved swiftly to turn off the power.' Butler claims that diehard Clitoris fans then 'rose up' to protest his action and he copped a beer can on the head. A sound recording that was made of the event (held by the National Film and Sound Archive) reveals a chaotic din. On the tape, the following voices can be heard shouting and it sounds as if a scuffle is taking place; [male voice] 'we don't want to take the risk of incompetents ruining our equipment' and then [female voice] 'patriarchal, capitalist bullshit' (Clitoris Band 1975a, Appendix D). People talk over each other and it's an emotional (potentially alcohol fuelled) exchange. According to Butler, the event was abandoned when a 'Clitoris clique stormed the stage' preventing Uncle Bob Band from their intended second set.

Initially, men and women had come together to raise funds for a worthy political cause. Uncle Bob Band (UBB) had already played several benefits for the women's refuge (Butler 2013) and was known for their counterculture ethic but had not met Clitoris Band before this night. As the mood disintegrated into an altercation, blame was quickly ascribed. Afterwards, an article appeared in *The National Times* with the rhetorical 'someone please give [Clitoris Band] some sound equipment' and the hackneyed, 'radical women don't have much of a sense of humour' (Edwards 1975, p. 3). Butler (2013) now admits that (on the night) unbeknownst to the other members, UBB's singer had verbally agreed to a second set by Clitoris Band. On the tape recording, Butler can be heard appealing to the crowd for sympathy and that UBB did not make much money. In the written article, he (2013, p. 46) again defends his action to switch off the power, and says that 'protecting the equipment was a sacred task'

because it was expensive to replace. A statement about protecting gear at all costs appears 'commonsense' and yet makes a huge assumption about gender and technology. Clitoris Band had already completed their first set without technical hitch and it is debatable whether they would have intentionally or otherwise 'ruined' the equipment. On the other side of the argument, Theresa Jack (2008) recalls the incident in the following way; 'we believed men were out to get us you know, and they [the men] won't let us be who we are and express who we are'. Uncle Bob Band packed up their equipment. Meanwhile, in the middle of the dance floor, Clitoris Band formed a protest circle, sitting cross-legged with tambourines and acoustic guitars (see photograph, Edwards 1975). My reading is that there are some additional complexities to this incident. Clitoris Band had little knowledge of music industry etiquette. Needing access to equipment, the band was defensive, yet at the same time wanted to be different. Thus, despite a pre-arranged musician's agreement, the group (perhaps unwittingly) disturbed a set of institutional norms; the support act does not play after the headline act, and musicians protect hard won equipment. These mainstream 'rules' of live music are only transgressed with a struggle.

To 'control' production, women sought mainstream alternatives and turned to the practices known within music and other artistic ventures as do-it-yourself.[1] DIY is an anti-corporate approach, a set of logics and organising principles adopted by those seeking artistic control. Historically, DIY has strong connections with various leftist movements committed to creating non-alienated forms of labour and social relations (Kearney 1997, p. 215). It is based on Karl Marx's (1964, p. 86) theory (albeit gendered) of alienation, which argues that 'the abstract existence of man as a mere workman who may therefore fall from his filled void into the absolute void'. The worker's relationship to the products of labour in a capitalist system is a form of alienation and according to Marx (1964, p. 110) 'the worker feels outside his work … at home when not working and when working not at home'. The exploited worker experiences loss of self through the separation of the production activity from the products made. This 'loss of self' is a state of human existence comparable to estrangement, whereas a 'non-alienated' form

[1] For example, filmmaking has a long history of DIY production practices that include self-funding.

of work implies, by contrast, that labourers are able to maintain a connection and remain (theoretically) invested in the end products. For the makers of women's music, DIY offered both an attitude and a practice, a political and non-alienated form of labour in which women were (ideally) not exploited nor estranged. DIY enabled the assertion of agency and a pragmatic, viable alternative to the mechanisms of the music industry that routinely and systematically, it was believed, denied women access.

In general, the DIY methods adopted within women's music depended heavily on volunteer labour for their implementation and self-sufficiency. Toni Armstrong (1989, p. 19) says that in America, women donated 'hard-earned money and time because we believe in the cause'. This type of 'faith' and self-belief also demonstrates the feminist reasoning based on the 'good of the community' (Sullivan 2003, p. 137; see Chapter 2). There are many examples of volunteerism and DIY self-sufficiency within Australian women's music but a benefit concert for Toxic Shock to raise money for their studio recording is exemplary. The fundraiser was called the Toxic Shock Ladies Auxiliary Benefit Party and it was held at Collingwood Town Hall, Melbourne. Prior to the event, a small group of friends and partners banded together under the name of a ladies auxiliary. Bass player Sylvie Leber (in Legeay 2013, p. 53) explains that it was 'a bit of a cultural and feminist joke. Ladies auxiliaries traditionally do very feminine things like make scones and tea and have a support role helping run events or raise money'. Usually, a ladies auxiliary forms as a gender-separate entity within a male club, society or organisation and consists of the wives of the club members, mothers, daughters, sisters, nieces and granddaughters. Thus, a ladies auxiliary is not an acknowledged part of the main power structure but nevertheless integral to its operations.

Re-appropriating the concept of auxiliary from its conventional definition and reconfiguring the relations of power, the Toxic Shock volunteers hung a large banner in the town hall supper room announcing the 'Ladies Auxiliary V.I.P Lounge'. Thus, unpaid labour became a matter for public recognition. The Ladies Auxiliary sold a lethal punch out of garbage bins and successfully persuaded the local police to bid a retreat from the all-women affair before discovering that the 'ladies' were not in possession of a liquor licence. To emphasise the 'joke' that raising money for an all-women rock band

was un-ladylike for a ladies auxiliary and to make a political point, the volunteers dressed up in old-fashioned 1950s ladies' dresses on the night, each wearing a corsage. 'Normally these girls wouldn't get around in a dress if you paid them' recalls Glenn (2006) because second wave feminists (in general) frowned on frocks. On the single that Toxic Shock recorded, the liner notes indicate that the fundraiser cost $350 and grossed $1,358. The record cost $1,681. It is extremely rare for a band to open their finances to public scrutiny but the seven members of Toxic Shock, Vicki Bell, Cahsn Foley, Even Glenn, Fran Kelly, Sylvie Leber, Hellen Sky and Helen Smart were grateful to the assistance provided by the Ladies Auxiliary and were also committed to feminist community transparency and accountability.

Figure 11. Toxic Shock Ladies Auxiliary, setting up at Collingwood Town Hall, Melbourne, 1981

Women's music was heavily reliant on the kind of self-sufficient attitude described in the anecdote above. The point must also be made that the recordings of women's music would never have eventuated without a DIY approach, and in this respect Australia is comparable to America. There are several 45rpm singles, one EP and four vinyl albums of Australian women's music: *Wake Up Sister* (1978) by Lavender Blues, *Beat Your Breasts* (1980) by The Ovarian Sisters, *Lemons Alive* (1983) by Stray Dags, and the self-titled *Sticky Beat* (1989). Seven studio-recorded cassette tapes were made by

the following groups throughout the 1980s, coinciding with technology changes and the finances of each band: The Budgies, Famous Girls, Hotspots, Nice Girls Don't Spit, Rapunzel Gets Down, The Other Band (see Appendix C). All of these recordings depended on various forms of self-funding ('our own' product) rather than mainstream industry finance. *Wake Up Sister* grew out of requests by friends for tapes of their songs and the album recording ultimately had fifteen private contributors. The press release (accompanying the album) for *Wake Up Sister* makes the claim that 'it is the first recording by a lesbian/feminist group in Australia. But while it is assured prominence for these political and cultural reasons alone, the album, nevertheless deserves to stand on its musical merits'. The money for *Beat Your Breasts* came from a philanthropic (male) benefactor who made a large, unexpected donation to the Hobart Women's Centre. On receipt of the donation, the women's centre collective set up a loan scheme specifically for the creative projects of lesbian/feminist artists unlikely to receive government or industry backing. The Ovarian Sisters were able to access funding from that scheme. *Lemons Alive* by Stray Dags was similarly made in the belief that it was an achievement that the band had formed in the first place and therefore their lesbian/feminist songs were worthy of documentation (Harris 2006; McFerran 2008). An 'anonymous' friend gave the band a generous loan, which was repaid after sales (Mitchell 2008). As Peraino (2006, p. 160) writes of America, 'the origins of recorded women's music are in the money of white, politically left, middle class women who invested in the project of their own self-expression'.

In Australia, however, the controversies about separatist-designated music did not unfold in the same manner, and Australian women's music recordings were generally available to anyone as a product, despite some individual makers identifying as separatist.[2] Nonetheless, there were a number of production decisions made in the name of separatism that had particular consequences when combined with inexperience. Toxic Shock, for instance, recorded three songs on their 45rpm single using the money from their 'Ladies Auxiliary' fundraiser. It was their first time in a studio and the engineer suggested enhancing the vocals for the song 'Prisoner' during

[2] The exception is a self-titled cassette tape by The Other Band, which was passed around to women, between friends, on the basis of separatism.

the post-production mix-down of tracks. On behalf of singer Vicki Bell who was not in the studio that day, Eve Glenn (2006) rejected the engineer's suggestion in an attempt to support what she then believed to be Bell's feminist views on a man 'fiddling with the sound'. Consequently, the unadorned female vocals are 'thin' on the recording.[3] This type of feminist attitude toward music production changed markedly throughout the 1980s. For example, Party Girls used the full range of studio techniques on their EP, as did Sticky Beat, Rapunzel Gets Down, Famous Girls, and Nice Girls Don't Spit. At the end of the 1980s, Sticky Beat insisted on borrowing a good quality drum kit[4] for studio recording, and the synth-pop and blues album is instrumentally accomplished with an imaginative keyboard and lively percussion supporting strong vocal harmonies. 'The sad thing about the album' reflects Ursula Dutkiewicz (2006) 'we should have made a CD'. *Sticky Beat* was pressed on vinyl and also released on cassette. Whereas the cassette sold out and could have been re-released, boxes of vinyl still sit under beds because popular music had by then changed to Compact Disc. DIY, feminist practices may have retained a sense of personal investment in the labour. But if Australian women's music wrought by self-funding achieved self-determination (in general) for the makers of those products, it ultimately, perhaps ironically, required a lot of unpaid work. Self-distribution meant selling music in feminist bookshops, left wing music shops, at gigs and/or passing the music around by word of mouth. Women's music also depended on community radio. Additionally, while DIY offered pragmatic political solutions, it did not automatically open access. Relative to the number of women bands that came and went in Australia, there were few recordings made.

Problematising the Trajectories of (Self) Transformation

In music discourses, ideas about 'community' tend to imply ongoing tradition (heritage, stability, history, fixity), whereas a 'music scene' evokes cultural space/place within which a range of music practices co-exist according to 'trajectories of transformation' (Straw 1991, p. 373). I have outlined the DIY methods and attitudes that offered necessary pragmatic solutions for the creation of a women's music (feminist

[3] A decision, Bell (2008) says, both women later regretted.
[4] Tony Elliott engineered *Sticky Beat* at Bartels Street Studio, Adelaide.

community, cultural) scene in Australia, a type of freedom for women to make music. Yet subjects are not actually free but always exist in relation to others, through institutional systems, economies, cultures and sociality. Thus, in this section, and sections that follow, I attempt to problematise lesbian/feminist musicalities and re-read the second wave trajectories of (self/selves) transformation that were both enabling and constraining.

One of the first articles to use the term 'women's music' in Australia appeared in a monthly music broadsheet called *Airwave*. At the time, the women's public broadcasting collective for Adelaide's 5MMM community radio station was formulating anti-discrimination policies. In an attempt to raise public awareness of female musicians, Barbara Baird (1979, p. 4) wrote 'there are now, and always have been, women musicians who have refused to create music in the mould that has been defined for them by men. This is the sort of music that is meant by the term 'women's music'. Baird (1979, p. 4) goes on to say that music 'written/performed by women is an honest account of their experience, an important part of women's struggle for self-defined independence and freedom'. Although the notion 'controlled by men' is highly debatable, many feminists (then) reasoned that 'lived experience' was something shared-in-common, and could and would be understandable to all women. This type of feminism underpinned Australian women's music and the study takes as given the humanist idea(l)s embedded in that thinking (see also Scovill 1981). For example, feminist ideals about self-determination and commonsense notions of independence, freedom and unconstrained being are reflected in the following interview comment.

> Feminism and the women's movement created an environment in which women could play music, could pick up instruments … we created that and some might have said they weren't feminist but their ability to do what they did needs to be credited to feminism saying 'women can do anything'. (McFerran 2008)

Australian women's music asserted presence and 'strength' by and through the staging of rock-against-sexism concerts ('happenings' 1979, p. 12) and other women's cultural events such as IWD concerts at Bondi Pavilion. I credit Frock Rock, held on 2 October 1982, as the first (national) women's rock concert of its kind held in Australia. That

night there were four women bands at the Sydney Town Hall, a large, prestigious venue with a sizeable (mixed gender) crowd.[5] A press release described Frock Rock as 'a timely marker of the establishment of an independent women's rock music culture' (Coupe 1982, p. 94). Many women's music events followed Frock Rock throughout the 1980s, most notable was Fast Forward, a ten-day women's music festival at the end of the decade that culminated in a ten-band concert over two nights.[6]

Concomitant with the increasing number of female musicians performing women's music events was a feminist discourse about music and sexism. The (by now) familiar epithet decrying 'cock rock' had emerged largely out of feminist publications.[7] Peraino (2006, p. 157) writes, 'women, these writers complained, were denied access to electric guitars and drums on the grounds that these instruments were unfeminine and that women aren't aggressive enough to play good driving rock'. The electric guitar (and amplified rock music) actually came to pose a number of problems from a second wave feminist perspective. Some feminists wanted to play music in the same style as men and drew inspiration from the way men played. 'Watch what those 17-year old boys are actually doing' says Eve Glenn (in Ronge 1981, p. 17), 'they are playing three chords … with their legs planted wide apart. That gave me fantastic inspiration. It's just a matter of nerve to get up and do it'. However, at the time, it was not socially or musically acceptable for a woman to hold a guitar down low and only men stood with their legs wide apart, looking sweaty and messy. Thus, many (but not all) second wave feminists came to equate this type of behaviour with masculine aggression. Peraino (2006, p. 160) says, 'not only was the instrument phallic but it was also an emblem of technology and symbolised the misogyny of the music industry in general'. As feminist discourses about music developed, women tended to polarise their views (pro or anti-electric) and what was thought to be authentic, female, women-identified music.

[5] Frock Rock coincided with the Women In Arts Festival 1982. The event had a mixed gender audience of approximately 2,000 people. On the bill were Stray Dags and Escargo Go from Sydney, Right Furniture from Melbourne and Hotspots from Adelaide.

[6] Fast Forward was organised by the Australian National Women's Rock Institute, established by Vicki Gordon. The two-day concert, 16-17 March 1989, featured Sticky Beat, Famous Girls, Rapunzel Gets Down, Scream Pretty Peggy, Maiden Oz, Any Women's Blues, Mojo Blues Band and others.

[7] See Petersen (1987) who quotes at length from a comment, describing The Rolling Stones as 'cock rock'.

Feminism placed the emphasis on gender differences and music performances of masculinity were critiqued as phallocentric. 'Mikes and guitars are phallic symbols; the music is loud, rhythmically insistent, built around techniques of arousal and climax; the lyrics are assertive and arrogant' (Frith and McRobbie 1990, p. 374, originally 1978). In turn, a second wave feminist strategy (for some but not all) was to advocate electric music with less 'volume' as the key to an authentic female self (Reynolds and Press 1995; Kearney 1997). However, feminist views varied and for radical feminists (not all), an acoustic guitar was the *only* way to sidestep patriarchal dominance and assure women (it was believed) of uniquely female music. The most militant women-identified radical feminists thought that electricity was associated with the patriarchy and that the 'evils' of electric music 'destroyed people's souls and rearranged their organs' (Bell 2008), which was highly problematic reasoning. Eve Glenn (2006) recalls taking her electric guitar to the Women's Theatre Group at the Pram Factory in Melbourne was like 'bringing in the devil' because of the way some women reacted. 'It was like you were holding your dick in those days as far as some [feminists] were concerned' (see also Sport 2007). One of the main problems with a feminist analysis of electric music as sexist, cock rock, notes Peraino (2006, pp. 157-160), is that it tends to overlook the ways in which those performances may be themselves feminised and/or androgynous.

Feminist debates and assumptions about phallocentrism put pressure on intention. In theory, feminism suggested that women support each other as they ventured into the gendered space of music. A comment from the Australian feminist broadsheet *Vashti* says that 'any woman can make and share music with other women … by giving and receiving support and encouragement from each other. It's only confidence not lack of ability that holds us back from making music that reflects our unique experiences as women' (Caroline 1979, p. 6). In reality, women became critical, moralistic and doubtful of each other. For example, Jane Cottrill who learned complex lead breaks on the electric guitar says that she was often met with feminist disapproval.

> I used to bugger off [after women's gigs] because there was this clan of women who would say 'why are you playing boy's music?' And I didn't understand. Here I was predominantly playing to the women's community, and I thought I was doing something ground breaking … there was so many rules and pressures … things

> that were okay and weren't okay … I really grappled with that and found it a really weird contradiction … Most of the time it was great but you'd be at some gig and there'd be hundreds of women jumping around and leaping about. Next day you'd go down to Brunswick Street [Melbourne] to have breakfast, everyone's hung-over from the night before and then you overhear someone saying, 'Oh that fucking Barbies Dead, fucking cock rock' … and I would have seen them dancing their brains out. It used to drive me crazy. (Cottrill 2006)

Ideally, women's music set out to be encouraging, non-judgemental, supportive spaces of inclusion, but contradictory comments by members of the audience and other musicians did not always match these ideals, which sparked counter-reactions. Upon spotting a woman in the audience with her fingers in her ears to deaden the volume, and tired of being repeatedly asked to turn down, Cottrill usually edged her amplifier up just a little louder. For Cottrill (and others), music became an intellectual, political and psychological battle not only with her 'inner' self and the world 'outside' but also with feminists who appeared to support only one type of 'soft rock'.

Amplified music in a live situation requires equipment and associated technology that is expensive, particularly at the time of women bands, which made it a privileged practice. It also takes time for individuals to acquire the knowledge that the equipment needed for an electric guitar (machine or axe as it is also known) may be as important as the chords struck. While second wave feminism advocated self-determination and self-affirmation, lack of confidence is still one of the striking ways that women continue to historicise and describe their music experiences, which became evident in the study's research interviews. The photographs collected for the study also show nervous neophytes staring at fingers on the fretboard (see 'Rock On With Your Frock On', pp. 245-283). For example, to perform her very first gig at the Women's Warehouse, Tina Harris purchased a cheapie guitar with a lead so short she couldn't step away from the amplifier without making a horrible sound. Harris (2006) didn't know how to remedy the problem, 'not realising you could get a longer lead … and I'm still like that, not into the technical'. Those shying away from electric guitars believe every little mistake is amplified. But for machine enthusiasts, the thinner strings actually require less effort

and an effects pedal opens multiple possibilities for covering over mistakes.[8] After divorcing her young husband and buoyed by advice from a friend's brother, Judith Haines went searching for an electric guitar. 'I got a Gibson Les Paul Recording, which is really like a jazz [guitar and] much more refined than what I wanted … I should have had a Fender', says Haines (2006). To work around the 'wrong' guitar, the band experimented with their sound and lead guitarist Kathy Bluff learned to use an overdrive pedal to dirty up the songs. Another aspect of the 'music technology' problems associated with women bands is that first time players sometimes play an electric guitar in the same manner as they learn to play an acoustic with open chords. Open chords produce a hesitant or 'jangly'[9] sound, which was the case for some women bands in Australia (Conway 2008; Webb 2008). In turn, women bands placed a great deal of emphasis on being taken seriously for their musical efforts, which is also evident in press interviews published at the time (see, for example, Coupe 1982; Roberts 1984). These processes, show that women venturing into music for the first time needed to find ways to manage feminist ideas about change against personal anxieties and self-confidence, which unfolded with differing effects.

Music theorist Judith Peraino (2001, pp. 704-707) has persuasively argued that the analysis of music from a feminist perspective has led to problematic narratives; women as inevitable technophobes with fragile egos, the sweeping dismissal of female vocalists and an inadvertent impoverishment of women's abilities; 'dangerously close to the masculinist snobism that feminists have sought to redress'. To move beyond these difficulties, Peraino (2003) suggests that Foucault's (1997) work on the ethical self is a way of re-mapping subject histories, particularly his view that an individual is able to perform 'operations' on self thoughts and self behaviours to attain happiness. Practices of freedom, he argues, (1997, p. 282) can be conceptualised as a technology[10] an 'exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform

[8] For example, an effects pedal can create a heavy bottom sound suitable for power rock. In the late 1990s, Jacqui Besgrove and Rebecca Mayhew (2008) formed the women bands, Bracode and Baby Machine. The younger women both prefer the Big Muff, a fuzz box effects switch and distortion pedal, which is made by Electro-Harmonix.

[9] In jazz, the term 'jangly' means smooth and creamy sounding music (Jakovsky 2008).

[10] Foucault (1997, p. 225) describes technologies of the self as 'modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes'.

oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being'. According to Peraino's (2003, p. 235) reading, Foucault's model of the ethical self adds an ascetic dimension such as self-discipline to the work that one may perform on one's self and/or an ethical process by which 'one engages with the moral codes or acceptable code of conduct produced within a given matrix of truth and power'. Ethical practices may (potentially) ameliorate the anxiety of failure, and/or sustain a state of happiness that may be attained (for example) through public cultural work and political action. If caring for one's self is a type of aesthetic goal that strives toward knowledges and meanings, Foucault's (1997, p. 283) ethical self asks how the practices of freedom are understood within relations of power, rather than universal truths of humanity. Re-engaging with the positives and pitfalls of feminism in this way, to put forward the Australian context, it can be seen that outward behaviour does not always align with inward disposition.

Cautious about not wanting to re-present women band members as steeped in technophobia, I posit that lesbian/feminists demonstrated a number of pragmatic attitudes. Some women bands could not musically achieve or did not seek - in light of feminist views on phallocentric behaviour - complex lead breaks on the electric guitar. Individual women gravitated instead to the saxophone. The saxophone (and sax solo) had resurfaced in popular music by the late 1970s, and women bands followed the electro pop and New Romantic trend (in addition to political and/or pragmatic decisions), which may also explain why there are at least twenty groups in the study with a dedicated saxophone in the line up (see below[11]). Replacing the guitar with a saxophone was beneficial to the group sound, although it was not necessarily the most effective music decision. Barbies Dead, for example, included a saxophone in their line up but already had a guitarist able to play lead breaks, hence there is a competitive awkwardness between the two instruments, evident on a few of their songs.[12] The saxophone sighs and cries like a voice and some women in the study loved playing the instrument, although their views differ on its player friendly status and ease of

[11] The following Australian women bands are known to have had a saxophone in their line up: Sheila, Crash Cups, Escargo Go, Famous Girls, Hens Teeth, Party Girls, Anywhere But Paris, Room To Move, Standard Set, Stray Dags, Zelda Swang, Barbies Dead, Disco Flash, The Evictions, Flying Tackle, Ladies Revolutionary Brass, Rapunzel Gets Down, Tokyo Rose, Spit and The Budgies. Several bands also featured the trumpet.
[12] I am indebted to Jane Cottrill for information about the saxophone and lead guitar.

notation. McFerran (2008) enthuses 'it looks sexy, and sounds sexy, and feels sexy to play … and you could get away with murder'.[13] However, Sally Ford (2006) of Flying Tackle struggled to find a mentor when she began and reports that she was painstakingly self-critical. Flying Tackle covered David Bowie's 'Suffragette City' and Brian Ferry's 'Let's Stick Together' and each song had one 'notoriously difficult note' to play. Unexpectedly, Ford's unconfident self-start developed into a performing career of more than thirty years, which at the time of writing, is still active.

At its most essentialist, the 'women-identified' (radical and liberal) politics of women's music assumed a sound unique to women. This view is (still) debatable because it harnesses women's music to femininity, and the idea that music by women is soft, gentle, 'weak'. For example, second wave feminist Kathy Orloff (1974, p. 5) wrote that 1970s female rockers were attracted by rock and roll's dynamic force and energy, yet women, as she tells it, 'have preferred to take a softer focus'. Musicologist Susan McClary notes that the gender binary used in society is often problematically mapped onto music. 'The designations masculine and feminine are far from arbitrary. The two are differentiated on the basis of relative strength with the masculine/feminine binary, culturally understood as respectively, strong/weak. Moreover this definition betrays other mappings: if the masculine version is normal, then the implication is that the feminine is abnormal' (McClary 2002, p. 10, originally 1991). Gender has thus been exploited to criticise Australian women's music for its 'soft' light style, outside the popular music norm (otherness). For example, Helen Carter (in Schien 1987, p. 89) of the acclaimed Australian indie band Do-Ré-Mi, once said that 'women bands are more often than not really wimpy. They all lean towards a soft reggae style, a folky kind of style'. However, from a queer perspective, Peraino makes the important point that not all [American] women's music artists were either 'women-identified' or folk-oriented. It is her view that nevertheless, these were the founding principles that came to universally define *womyn's music*.[14] This meant 'an emphasis on music styles derived from folk and soft rock over those lesbian/feminist musicians whose styles derived

[13] When it first emerged, the saxophone was almost immediately associated with carnal and voluptuous sex, and low and dirty immorality (Segell 2005).
[14] See Frith (1996, p. 86) for mention of WRPM (Women's Revolutions Per Minute) a UK women's music catalogue.

from jazz and rock' (Peraino 2006, p. 167). While concurring with Peraino, I contend that Australia should not be conflated with America. Australian women band members did not all aspire to a soft style of music and there was a predominance of electric rather than women's acoustic music. For example, Judy Costello of Party Girls had a colossal drum sound. Costello's approach was athletic, dynamic, holding back, letting loose, working the top and bottom, hitting hi-hat, cymbals cleanly while slamming the skins and pounding the kick drum of her impressive rig. Party Girls loved the doo-wop girl groups of the 1960s and included mainstream Motown classics such as 'Chain of Fools' and 'Love Child' in their repertoire. In press interviews, Party Girls usually emphasised their four part harmonies and vocal prowess, which they believed was lacking in other women bands (see Roberts 1984, p. 13) but it was the drumming and their massive onstage volume (in my view) that distinguished them competitively.[15]

Drumming is the heartbeat of a band. The drummer marks out the original rhythm, departs and returns but basically sets a beat that keeps time for the rest to follow. Lynda Kersbergen of Barbies Dead also had an exceptionally hard-hitting rock and roll style of drumming, which was a find for a women band. Often mistaken for a man, and with a booming voice, Kersbergen was a perfect fit for Barbies Dead and worth the advertising wait. But to everyone's frustration, Kersbergen never owned a kit. The band had to rehearse in a studio that provided a set of drums, and extra money was always needed for drum rental at performances. 'But she was such a good drummer', remembers Cottrill (2006), 'the band couldn't do without her'. Undoubtedly, many Australian women bands had difficulty finding a female drummer, so stages of (group) learning and access to equipment were always already problems. Kaye Brown (2006) says that her drum kit came out of someone's shed and was 'held together with sticky tape'. Brown's boom-crash drumming was dreadful but suited Razor Cuts' punk feminist, no-nonsense approach founded on participation, contribution, collectivism, support and 'doing everything ourselves'. Adelaide band Sticky Beat also exemplifies a type of political, ethical, feminist solidarity. Sticky Beat's drummer Ursula Dutkiewicz

[15] For these reasons, some readers may exclude Party Girls from a narrative of Australian women's music.

was energetic and not shy on stage but tended to speed up when she became excited, as she explains.

> If you listen to any of the music I'm drumming on its very basic and in the end that caused trouble … our music was becoming more advanced than my ability … All though the history of Thin Ice and Sticky Beat we had other drummers … so I always had a back up. They did all the fancy bits and I could sit back and hold a beat and not hold a beat very well. (Dutkiewicz 2006)

To compensate for the lack of a reliable backbeat, Sticky Beat found a variety of creative, practical solutions according to the needs of the song, and the feminist band members fully supported their drummer by swapping instruments. Thus, classically trained Marianne Permezel, normally on synthesizer and Tina Harris (ex-Stray Dags) both drummed, when required, instead of Dutkiewicz. The all-rounder Harris played congas and expanded the band's range of percussion. Permezel also programmed her keyboard with a driving beat in keeping with the synth sounds of the 1980s. Swapping instruments was one of the reasons (arguably) Sticky Beat was able to keep going for five years. It also demonstrates a non-normative approach to music given that a more commercially oriented group may not have made the same decisions.

For Mavis Bayton, singing equates with emotional expression and 'natural talent' in contrast to the 'learned skill' of an instrument such as drums and guitar. Bayton (1998, p. 13) writes that 'the long-standing association of women with the body and nature, which runs through our culture … is a kind of direct female emotional expression, rather than a set of refined techniques'. This type of feminist analysis has been very useful to account for the lack of recognition of female vocalists but is still harnessed problematically to natural and biological sex differences imprinting universal types of voice. For example, Susan Brownmiller (1984, pp. 116-121) says that 'speaking in *feminine* … produces wavering tones' and women seem smaller than they are, which 'works to female disadvantage. A deeper [male] voice seems more authoritative, like taller stature'. Culturally, a deeper sounding voice equates with masculinity and when a woman speaks she uses language in a way that supports men's dominance, which indicates something beyond sex and gender. Rosalind Coward (1984, p. 157) has similarly argued that 'women are encouraged to laugh at men's jokes and to ask

questions which encourage men to speak' without being returned. Not being heard, not being permitted to speak, being interrupted, talked over and dismissed as trivial, 'right from the cradle, girls and boys are spoken to differently by gender conscious parents … speaking 'in feminine' or speaking 'in masculine' is an imitative process that begins early in life' (Brownmiller 1984, p. 115). Yet, too much emphasis (as Peraino has noted) on the lack of recognition for female singing can reinforce that which feminism seeks to overturn.

Another way to think about voice and singing is as a performatively constituted set of practices and situated struggles to conceive personhood. Culturally, voice is used to determine the male-female binary and it is one of the performative acts that produce gender intelligibility. Judith Haines' account of growing up in a misogynist, violent family, attests to periods of not speaking as a child and finding solace in a private world of poetry. Haines was in her mid-twenties by the time Razor Cuts formed, but because vocal restriction had been such a big part of her childhood, singing into a microphone was not straightforward.

> I've had a few periods of being non-vocal for psychological reasons, and so for me it was more the norm to not have a voice and to not speak. When Razor Cuts got started, I had to work through this whole thing of being able to use a microphone. I did it one day when everyone was out, set up the microphone in the middle of the room and just went for it. So in getting my physical voice out, I got all this other emotional stuff out, and it was like it came out from my cells. (Haines 2006)

A singing voice is an embodied musical instrument because of the way gender acts constitute all of the actions performed by human bodies for the purpose of producing gender (Matošec 2008, p. 15). In other words, singing cannot be detached from the body and the body is acculturated and therefore the sounds emanating from the body are always already acculturated.

Arguing against universal abstractions, Judith Butler (1988, p. 527) makes the claim that performances on a stage can be judged and criticised but demarcated as a performance because theatrical conventions distinguish between 'act' and 'reality'. People sing in the shower, in the car, in all sorts of places but the stage is the culturally

recognised place for the performer. Slovenian musicologist Matjaž Matošec (2008, p. 95) follows Butler when he says 'as long as the voice conforms to traditional cultural conceits, primarily in pitch and voice register, there is no challenge to the male-female dichotomy'. For instance, Donna Jackson of Nice Girls Don't Spit had singing lessons when she was a teenager but it didn't work out because her music teacher wanted to 'normalise' her voice, and provided instructions to sing 'up high'. Jackson acquired anxieties from being repeatedly told by her family that she couldn't sing. Years later in Nice Girls Don't Spit, Jackson sang in her 'down low, grunty and loud' voice that had been deemed gender inappropriate earlier in her life.

> I always wanted to sing not because I liked the sound but because I liked the ways [that] lead singers looked and what they did. Singing for me wasn't about the sound or listening, it was about how it looked because I'm a visual person. My gift is doing tricks, and things with microphone stands. The lunge with the mic stand and leaping off stages any showy thing that's where I come from. (Jackson 2006)

Jackson managed personal anxieties about singing by performing circus tricks, fire eating and somersaults. Matošec might interpret Jackson's voice as subversively blurring the boundaries between the stage and everyday life because it is 'the same' on and off the stage, pushing against normative ideals of femininity. According to Matošec (2008, p. 16), 'bodily transgressions [such as voice] of culturally dominant gender norms pertaining to the male-female binary are fully disruptive and unsettling when performed consistently both on and off the stage'. Jackson's 'loud, low and grunty' singing voice didn't 'fit' with the norms expected of a female singer and she was dismissed as a 'bad' singer by others, thus it is possible to read her experiences as an exclusion from and/or subverting of mainstream music. Yet, as discussed in the previous chapter, it is difficult to ascertain what constitutes 'full' subversion and as Jackson's comment (above) implies, a singing performance often raises the question of the imprecise articulation or making of one's (musical) self.

The self as a continual process of working and reworking complicates an interpretative reading of women's music as 'fully subversive' based solely on the cultural categories and understandings of gender. Jacquie Reid (2008) of Tokyo Rose says, 'as soon as I'm on stage is a transformation, that's where you have permission to sing, really sing' and

when it's right, it's 'a complete loss of yourself'. Reid may be referring to music's ability to transcend everyday aches and pains and expose an essential 'truth' about the self (to 'find' one's self). But it is difficult to judge the subversive (full or partial) effects of voice within women's music. For Fran Kelly (Toxic Shock), it was the diversity of many voices and the feminist attempt to avoid individual 'star-tripping' that was important. In Toxic Shock, there were three women (at least) who shared the singing duties.

> We did different types of music and we had three different types of voices singing and because they were really different voices, that could happen more easily. I didn't like the fact that, as always happens, you get almost stereotyped into one sort of song as a singer. A [women's] group can cater for a lot of different tastes no matter what sort of music they are doing. (Kelly in Ronge 1981, p. 17)

Many women stepped up to the microphone when previously they may not have done and 'voice' was an early indicator of the hybrid music style that came to characterise Australian women's music.

Problematising and re-reading the (do-it-yourself) transformation trajectories of lesbian/feminist music has shown the complexities of self/selves: political, ethical, intellectual, psychological, and emotional. However, there is one more important point that must be reinforced before turning the attention to women's music as a commodity. Here, I refer again to Kearney's article about riot grrrl music, in which she discusses 'otherness' and that we must be mindful of simplifying the *raison d'être* of women bands and their pro-woman stance. Kearney (1997, p. 213) writes that we must not 'displace the influence of male musicians on riot grrrl bands; and ignore as irrelevant the non-rock musicians (both male and female) who have inspired riot grrrl performers'. I argue that Kearney's insightful point may be applied to women's music in Australia. For example, aspiring to and performing with an electric guitar usually involved male heroes before joining a women band. Jane Cottrill was mad about Kiss. Judith Haines and Tina Harris both listened to the Beach Boys, the Beatles and Bob Dylan. Faye Reid of Party Girls was captivated by New Zealand's Peter Posa, who fashioned himself on the legendary Chet Atkins. Libby Kerr had a poster of Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs above her bed and Celeste Howden admired Australia's (then) king of

pop, Johnny Farnham.[16] These musical influences and love of music complicate the *raison d'être* of women bands as not simply a reaction to masculinity and the sexism of the music industry and women's exclusion from it (Kearney 1997, p. 212). And for some women in this study, playing electric guitar did not mean miming, imitating and/or playing exactly the same as men. For example, Judith Haines' trajectory (politically and musically) is very different from a woman such as heavy metal devotee Jane Cottrill, but in the following comment, Haines explains her intensely felt anxieties on making a switch from acoustic to electric guitar.

> I'd gone pretty much from being involved in radical feminism, the theory of radical feminism and political activism and I was aware that I was stepping from that to something that could be seen as light and fluffy … so I had some concerns for myself as to how I would be seen by my really strong radical sisters. (Haines 2006)

Musically, Razor Cuts sought not only to break with the norms of music but also the 'constraints' of separatist politics by playing to mixed audiences and performing cover songs written by men. Although fearful of repercussions, Haines (2006) says that one of her most satisfying moments in Razor Cuts was 'doing a straight men's song - 'Lola' by the Kinks - about a homosexual situation and owning it as women, and that it could be in our context, a lesbian song'. Thus, it is also possible to see that the trajectory of change supported by feminists was much more complex that being solely driven by a gender-rigid, anti-male (anti-mainstream) stance. Such criticism against women's music is also short sighted because it smooths over the various musical and non-musical influences of men (and women) prior to and during time with a women band.

A Taste for 'Australian' Musical Selves

To problematise the woman-identified-woman narratives associated with women's music and 'otherness' in relation to music norms, I want to further explore sexualities and identities shaped by ideas about 'success' and 'Australian-ness'. Whilst not exclusively for lesbians, I argue that Australian women's music, as a live music scene with some recordings, nevertheless produced lesbian identities and lesbian 'selves'

[16] Information on music influences was collected during the research interviews for the study.

through particular types of production/consumption practices influenced by geographies (see also Chapter 2). In general, Australian women bands were focussed on the survival of a small music scene and searched (knowing and unknowingly) for identity through the development of an 'Australian' sound - even if it was not possible (at the time) to know precisely what that was and/or define Australian women's music in terms of its hybrid musicalities and predominantly electric instrumentation.

In the material world, (music) success tends to be measured by monetary profit generated though the economies of exchange. In this system, subjects are not free agents but are defined by and through the production of value based on consumption. There is a complex set of relations between 'the idea of a mainstream and identity politics, taste and cultural value, entwined as they are with practices of consumption', and the way that an exchange of goods acquires value (Huber 2013, p. 4). Capitalism is about profit, competition and the assertion of mainstream dominance. Marx's (1976) theory of capitalism posits that products have a use-value and an exchange-value (profit). A commodity is an external object, according to Marx, a thing that satisfies human needs. Things may be useful without being commodities. 'In order to become a commodity, the product must be transferred to the other person, through the medium of exchange' (1976, p. 131). Differently put, commodities acquire value through use-value that is for and agreed upon by others. This mode of production gives products character as a commodity and materialises wealth.

Lesbians are consumers and want products of their own (such as music) in the cultural space they occupy. Women's music, as noted earlier in this chapter, may not have eventuated at all without a grassroots DIY approach and in this respect Australia is comparable to America. The details of American recordings are documented elsewhere (see, for example, Carson and Lewis and Shaw 2004; Faderman 1992; Gaar 2002; Peraino 2003; 2006; Stein 1993; 1994; Whiteley 2000). However, it is notable and relevant (here) that the products (recordings) of women's music in America gave rise to debates about 'success' - financial, political, cultural. According to Peraino (2006, p. 167), women-owned record companies, such as the globally recognised Olivia Records, contributed to the 'crystallisation of a mainstream style of women's music', which

assisted a trajectory of success. The sale of records, in turn, consolidated 'women-identified' feminist singer songwriters in a form of mainstream commodification (our own products) and capitalistic competition that was 'double-tongued' because of its 'normalising and *ab*normalising' processes (Peraino 2003, p. 346). Despite or perhaps because of its modest success, a narrative emerged about the failure of American women's music to 'crossover' to the mainstream - in other words transform feminist products for our 'selves' into mass production - due to the constraints of sexuality.[17] Sheila Whiteley (2000, p. 165) has argued that 'in America womyn's music had become a ghetto by the 1980s with the mainstream music business unwilling to risk promoting any artist who might be gay'. This type of analysis may tend to suggest sexuality as *the* constraint and/or limitation. If products are deemed unmarketable and unknowable, companies are generally unwilling to invest, which may become a form of discrimination. Arguably, the financial success of American women's music was modest compared to the institutionally recognised music industry, but its global reach, in my view, definitely marked it out from other women's scenes. In turn, American women's music became mired in complex feminist controversies[18] about ethics, 'sharing wealth' and community accountability (Peraino 2006, pp. 167-173; see also Faderman 1992). Conspicuously, these types of public debates did not emerge in Australia.

In Australia, the aspirational Party Girls believe the band was discriminated on the basis of sexuality. First it must be mentioned that not all Australian women bands (and/or individuals) rejected commercial success and the aspirational potential for it. To this end, Party Girls tactically distanced themselves on more than one occasion from other women bands with competitive statements published in the press saying, 'we're creative feminists rather than radical separatists' (Hooper 1983). Yet similar to other women bands, Party Girls could not secure industry backing to record an album.

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[17] In America, around the same time that k. d. lang came out, Stein's (1993; 1994, p. 15) articles re-asserted the claim that 'out lesbians are not generally thought to be 'crossover' material … a performer who makes her lesbianism known typically becomes categorised as a 'lesbian artist' and is doomed to marginality'. Since the 1990s, it might be said that out lesbians have embraced something referred to as 'lesbian mainstreaming' (Stein 1993; Taylor 2013). 'Mainstreaming' may be regarded by some 'as an act no less subversive than feminist disaffection from the industry a decade earlier' (Stein 1993, p. 103).

[18] In America, Alix Dobkin marked her products 'for sale to lesbians only' with the claim that she 'didn't want to worry about offending nonlesbians' (Tilchen 1984, p. 296). The sale of women's music on the basis of separatism was highly contentious. In 1980, Dobkin released a song called 'Living With Contradictions'.

Therefore, they took the action of secretly recording conversations in order to find out why. The band subsequently learned (via the secretly recorded conversations) that executives from three different companies described them as 'a bunch of dykes' unsuitable for financial support (Reid F. 2008). Ultimately, Party Girls resorted to paying for studio time out of their own pockets. These struggles associated with sexuality should not be overlooked or diminished. At the same time, the mapping in this thesis demonstrates complexities contributing to the trajectories of women's music.

In the material world, (music) success tends to be measured by monetary profit generated though the economies of exchange. In this system, subjects tend to be defined by and through the production of value based on consumption. Richard Dyer's (1979) essay titled 'In Defence of Disco' proposes that capitalism does not make any direct connection between exchange-value and use-value and does not necessarily know what it's doing apart from making (and losing) money. Capitalism prioritises the production of commodities and the profit (exchange-value) that commodities are able to realise, rather than their social and human worth. Yet, as Dyer (1979, p. 21) puts it, 'cultural production within capitalist society is founded on two profound contradictions … between production for profit and production for use'. This becomes a problem for capitalism when dealing with expressive commodities (such as music), which at the point of strong profit margins can be taken up and reappropriated for other purposes, as gay disco was in the 1970s (see also Peraino 2006, pp. 176-194). The 'lawlessness' of capitalism is that it throws up commodities that groups of difference (such as gay men and lesbian/feminists) can use to cobble together their own cultures (Dyer 1979). Effectively, this may suggest different possibilities. Applying Dyer's reasoning to the moneymaking spectrum where material profit is the weakest, I contend that the social use-value of Australian women's music was much higher than its exchange-value. The 'capital' of Australian women's music was not situated in its material wealth and it did not have the international reach of America. The liner notes of *Wake Up Sister* by Lavender Blues say 'we hope you like the music that is the real profit for us'. This statement indicates that Lavender Blues imagined that their (small) financial profit would be converted into value with social meaning for lesbians. Situated under (but

not entirely outside) the mainstream radar is where Australian women bands exerted agency to develop musical 'taste' and make musical lesbian/feminist selves.

Taste is a form of cultural hegemony, a system of classification, which distinguishes and draws groups of people together. The practices of consumption and the appreciation of products, such as artwork, literature, theatre, film, music, and so on, construct a public with tastes in aesthetics and beauty. Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) theory of taste and habitus proposes that patterns of consumption mark out distinctions. Bourdieu (1984, p. 6) says that 'taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier' and 'social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make'. For Bourdieu, consumption is a communication process, an act of encoding and deciphering the judgements, preferences, dispositions and expectations that are routinely exchanged between people in everyday life. Consumption relies to a certain extent on conceptions of identity. Therefore, Bourdieu's theory of taste is useful for understanding the ways in which social relations are regulated and legitimated as the discernable differences between 'identifiable' groups of people. Applying Bourdieu's theory to women's music in Australia, where monetary profit was weak, I contend that the scene was a form of socio-cultural capital constructed by and through knowledges about 'woman' and 'lesbian' and those identities. We say, for example, that friends have the 'same taste' in music and the same sense of aesthetics, therefore their choices of music are associated with all of the other features of that person; as Bourdieu (1984, p. 174) tells it, 'taste is a method of stylising life'. In this way, the constituents of the Australian women's music scene were producing, consuming subjects, which shaped interests and intentions, as illustrated in their recordings, song lyrics and live performances.

The privileging of recorded music is almost inescapable as a product to be sold and exchanged, given the consumption practices of the capitalist system (even in the current era of technological changes). A typical set of Australian women's music usually (but not always) included what might be described as a feminist protest song with lyric content about the material realities of women's lives and topical issues of the day (as I have stated in Chapter 2). The collection of thirteen songs on *Beat Your Breasts*

recorded by The Ovarian Sisters, for instance, reflects what was happening in Tasmania. Among them, 'Deviant' is a satirical commentary on the state's unwillingness to decriminalise homosexuality, 'Hey Mr. Policeman' is about being arrested for busking in the city, and 'Refuge' is a reply to right wing bigots' criticism of women's services. Sue Edmonds (2008) believes the band was 'definitely a rally' in keeping with the principles of feminist folk music; 'The Ovarian Sisters, well you're going to have to sit and listen to the message'. The discography of recorded songs for the study can be found in Appendix C, but mention is made of a few more at this point to provide a sense of the works. In Adelaide, Foreign Body recorded a blues and reggae song about rape in marriage, titled 'Gangland', using a smooth jazz inflected guitar. Julie Holmes of Hotspots was touched by domestic violence in a middle class family and penned a rockabilly song called 'She Says No' and a new wave song with a hard edge, 'Private War', which the band put down on a cassette tape. 'Black and Blue' by Stray Dags suggests that women can escape domestic violence by going to a refuge. Ludo McFerran (2008) says 'it was important they were original songs … all those bands had come out of women's communities and were writing original music you can never understate [the importance of] that'. As the subject of songs, the subjectification of 'woman' had meaning in the universalising context of the women's movement; and although it may have seemed incongruous to dance, feminist audiences at the time 'loved to hear' these songs.

A protest song suggests anti-establishment, subversive possibilities about particular issues. Audiences may relate to music in a political manner. Yet the call to action of a politically oriented song does not guarantee that action will actually be taken. Thus, it is difficult to judge the effects of music and whether songs unite people politically. The songs of Australian women's music functioned, in my view, as an accompaniment to the (global) women's movement and yet not in a straightforward way. Gender and sexuality intensified through lyrics and stage presentations.[19] Mainstream music journalist Christie Eliezer (1985) found that power rock band Barbies Dead was not to

[19] Whilst this study focuses on bands, it must be noted that some songs recorded by Adelaide-born, lesbian feminist Robyn Archer were aimed indirectly at lesbians, for example, 'Dicks Don't Grow On Trees' and 'Menstruation Blues' on *Ladies Choice* (1977).

his taste. Eliezer described them as 'basically hardcore, an ugly noise by ugly women' and his (male) sensibilities apparently offended when the band covered the AC/DC song 'T.N.T' but changed the lyrics from 'T.N.T' to 'PMT' in order to make a feminist point about the menstrual cycle of women's bodies. I quote at length from Eliezer.

> They combine sloganeering with scenario originals like 'Misfit' and 'Whacha Gonna Do Bout It' with a weird mixture of covers from the Rezillos 'I Like My Baby Because She Does Sculptures Well' to playing arch chauvinists AC/DC at their own game by retitling 'T.N.T' with 'PMT' that pub 'oi oi' transformed as some kind of crass Modern Girl Anthem … Right now there's a lot of academic huffing and puffing about whether ten years of Women's Lib in this country has been castrating or liberating. There are others, however, who argue the bigger issue now is how the pendulum is dangerously swinging back to the point where it's COOL to be a male chauvinist. (Eliezer 1985, p. 19)

Rewriting the words of a well-known song was one of the most direct forms of musical protest, and many women bands regularly changed the lyrics (as seen in Chapter 2) when covering the material of other bands that they (perhaps, confusingly) liked. Bands that have strong links to second wave feminism are particularly prone to criticisms of technical proficiency (women bands as 'wimpy', not normal), which also works to undermine the claims of those bands. Rather than championing female assertiveness, Eliezer goes on to describe Barbies Dead as punk, sloppy, aggressive. When people describe music as 'bad' and/or not to their taste, it implies the listener is aggravated, alienated, ambivalent, and the technical competence of the performer is usually under close scrutiny (Frith 2004, p. 19). Calling the technical ability of performers into question tends to sidestep whatever else the band might be communicating and/or trying to achieve. Eliezer misquotes lyrics and concludes his rant with a pronouncement that feminism should be 'humanist'. Out of all the bands researched for this study, Barbies Dead attracted some of the strongest disparagement both from feminists and non-feminists. Barbies Dead set out to be provocative[20] but a bad write up is never welcome.[21] Nevertheless, effective political manoeuvres *should* make those in power

[20] Many feminists considered the AC/DC band as 'macho music'. Therefore Barbies Dead believed that changing the lyrics of this particular cover song was a strategy not only for changing the message but also avoiding (potential) feminist criticism.
[21] The article was in *JUKE Magazine*, a weekly Melbourne newspaper covering rock and pop 1975-1992.

uncomfortable and is one of the aims of unsettling and/or what (in the present day) might also be called 'queering'[22] the social order.

The liberationist push for identity and visibility during the 1970s-1980s raised important questions about how songs (texts) might address same-sex desire. It has been said that [American] women's music wrote and performed 'lyrics about lesbian politics and lesbian love', which tended to unify women (Faderman 1992; see also Armstrong 1989; Petersen 1987; Tilchen 1984; Chapter 3). 'Ode To A Gym Teacher' by Meg Christian off her album *I Know You Know* is one of the most well known examples. According to Peraino (2006, p. 168), Christian's music was technically brilliant, 'a rousing declaration of self-empowerment'. Performed to predominantly female audiences, the lyrics, 'one girl who could grow up to be the gayest of them all' sent an unambiguously lesbian message, a musicalised 'coming out'. Faderman (1992, p. 220) says that music performances by 'out' (*known*) lesbians to a women's audience and sometimes with lovers listening in the crowd became a vehicle for organising a new cultural politic and communicating particular sensibilities. Ideas about empowerment thus shifted to the specific needs of lesbians (Quimby 1997). Similarly, questions about lesbian visibility were of concern for Australian women bands. For example, in the song 'Barbies Rap' by Barbies Dead, the fictional character of Barbie rewrites the heterosexual (female) script. 'Barbie's found drugs and sex with girls/Now she's got a crew cut/Chopped off all her curls'. However, Lavender Blues is the only band to have recorded a song that addresses lesbian marginalisation in the women's movement[23] and the study's evidence overall tends to support the notion that there was no singular and/or overarching cohesive way to articulate 'lesbian' through music.

Sydney women band Stray Dags refused, on principle, to cover songs about love in protest against the heterosexual assumptions in popular music at the time. On the cover of their 12-inch vinyl album titled, *Lemons Alive* is the phrase 'title: ask any

[22] I am not aligning the past with 'queer' (as I have noted in the introduction to the thesis) but rather seek to problematise, query and queer histories, which Chapter 5 also elaborates.

[23] The lyrics of 'Lesbian Nation' by Lavender Blues say 'Don't wanna knock sisters who are straight/But when it comes to choosing a mate/I've fought for your rights and that's so fine/What have you done to fight for mine'. However, making a categorical distinction between lesbian and feminist music, as Karen Petersen (1987, p. 208) has claimed of America, is not a useful reading of the Australian scene, in my view.

schoolgirl' meaning the word 'lemon' is a commonly known euphemism for lesbian. The band's quirky mix of disco blues, reggae and ska is exemplified in 'Love Songs' written by McFerran. The song's lyrics offer a commentary on heterosexual love. 'Same old boring refrain/In Love Out again/Self-inflicted pain … I'm no good at love songs/They stick in my throat/I suspect all my motives/And the words, they make me choke'.[24] According to McFerran (2008) 'romantic love is a construct doomed to fail', a belief she still holds firm. When *Lemons Alive* reached the top of the independent music chart for the October-December quarter, 1983[25] the members of Stray Dags were surprised because Australian women's music did not have a reputation as a commercial product. The chart rating subsequently 're-elevated' the band to its already exciting status of desirability within the women's (music) scene.

In general, original songs about lesbian love by Australian women bands - such as 'Shadows' by Barbies Dead and 'Forever' by Sticky Beat - did not deploy identified pronouns. Some individual band members were cautious, particularly those with aspirational dreams and/or those unwilling to define sexuality. Razor Cuts, for example, performed a poetic love ballad titled '2A' with the lyrics, 'I stood on the bus like every one else/Then you got on at stop 2A and you were something else'. To read this song as lesbian depended on what was imagined and interpreted by the 'I' and the 'you', the singer and the listening audience, and/or knowledges of who was doing the singing, and to whom the text was speaking. By contrast, 'Trouble' recorded by out lesbians, Nice Girls Don't Spit, recounts the dramas of falling in love with a straight woman, getting drunk and smashing the car, sung in a light-hearted music style. Yet, in her interview, Donna Jackson (2006) made the comment that 'it was easier to write about fish and chips than lesbian love'. Coming out cannot guarantee either 'knowability' or happiness, which indicates the difficulties of articulating sexuality through music.

New knowledges and politics of sexuality circulated during the 1970s-1980s and Australia turned to its political alignment with America (and also England) for

[24] If the sexuality of Stray Dags is known, it may be possible to re-read 'Love Songs' as a comment on lesbian love.
[25] See Scratches Oz Indie Chart List, October-December 1983; *JUKE* Chart List, 12 November 1983 (Sourced, Celeste Howden, private collection).

information and inspiration. Yet there were struggles under the surface of the unitary project of second wave feminism, as this thesis highlights. Elaborating further, I argue that Australia's relationship to international sites of sexuality struggle was inflected with appreciation, occasional playfulness and sometimes rivalry. Notably, Meg Christian's 'Ode To A Gym Teacher' was appropriated as one of two (gay/lesbian) songs that were sung on 24 June 1978, the night that is now historically recognised as the first Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade in Sydney.[26] On a cassette playfully titled *Some of My Best Friends Are* (meaning lesbian) by Tasmanian band, The Budgies, there is also a tongue-in-cheek homage to 'Ode To A Gym Teacher' called 'Sporting Dykes'. The lyrics say, 'we're women of action and we're everywhere sporting dykes, sporting dykes'. However, some time later, the Australian mood shifted and several bands made it clear they were reacting against America. For example, Stray Dags said to a *Vogue* magazine reporter 'we were responding to the dominance of America and all of that 'love your sister' and 'women are wonderful' type of thing. That was great in the beginning but we wanted to sing 'You Walked All Over Me'' (in Stott 1983, p. 63). Toxic Shock had expressed a similar sentiment two years earlier. 'It's women's music but it's not. Like it's not Chris Williamson and its not Lavender Blues' (Kelly in Ronge 1981, p. 17). These statements assumed first that readers understood the references to American women's music. Second, despite the universalisations of feminism, it had become important for Australian women bands to claim a distinction around national identity.

The response by Australian women bands to other styles and other countries may, in part, be attributed to temporal ordering and that Australian women's music 'came after' American with its recordings, formation of bands and so on. However, it is possible to make the claim that Australian attitudes toward the international feminist stage were always already shaped by particularly local, self-effacing sensibilities and a type of defensiveness about Australia as a 'cultural wasteland', a place to leave in order to find success and/or a place of cultural shame (see Blundell 2014).[27] This

[26] The other chant that night was a British song, 'Glad To Be Gay' by Tom Robinson. For this information, I am indebted to Sally Colechin who marched that night and is now in the group known as 'the 1978ers'.
[27] As I have mentioned, Australian music history was built (in part) on going overseas for success (see Chapter 1; see also *Love Is In The Air*). The documentary titled *Brilliant Creatures* (2014) examines the reasons that iconoclasts Germaine Greer, Robert Hughes, Barry Humphries and Clive James left Australia

understanding of 'Australian-ness' applied to women's music suggests 'elsewhere-ness' and a general tendency for self-deprecation (sometimes inflected with humour) demonstrated in various ways, for example, the name, 'Stray Dags' meaning the dung on the hindquarters of a sheep.

National identities are implicated in the historicisation of cultural activities (Straw 2004). A comparison between America and Australia also bears out Foucault's (2004, p. 56) philosophy about the 'indefiniteness of histories' and all its minor incidents, including small, seemingly inconsequential skirmishes. Other authors may historicise the Australian and American scene (as one and the same) from a radicalesbian (and/or American-centric) perspective (see also Chapter 1), but it is my view that the politics of sexuality in both countries did not uniformly evolve strategically or intentionally as '*womyn's music*'. The Australian scene was largely (but not exclusively) electric music and the scene did not assert separatism as its overarching political strategy. In her interview, Sue Maslin of Domestic Dirt makes the following comment.

> It was important for us to be a feminist-identified band and to have lesbians … we were open, we were out, we were in the band but we were not all lesbian so we were not promoting ourselves as a lesbian band. (Maslin 2006)

Whereas the American women's music scene asserted separatist strength defined as *womyn's music*, the smaller scene in Australia relied heavily on coalitions and alliances. In the Australian context, I posit that this reflects a pragmatic need for survival and the doubling of gender and sexuality, rather than the idea that women band members intentionally avoided coming out and/or that lesbianism was subsumed by feminism. Actually, Domestic Dirt sometimes used a promo picture in which they can be seen playfully kissing each other (see script 'Rock On With Your Frock On', p. 277). What I also want to point out, following Foucault's (2004, p. 45) theory of subjugated knowledges, is that the relations of power that shaped Australian women's music were complicated. American women's music dominated and yet it also influenced and therefore must be included in an examination of (all) the relations of power that

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when they were young, seeking 'something else'. Greer has said simply, 'I did believe in the great Australian ugliness' (Blundell 2014).

shaped the Australian women's music scene. However, it is striking that by comparison Australian women bands made fewer recordings, little money and did not generate a broad feminist debate about ethics and shared wealth, which also accounts for why the Australian scene has not been historicised in the same manner as America.

By the mid to late 1980s, it seemed as if Australian women bands were 'everywhere'. Zelda Swang, Famous Girls and Party Girls all made appearances on television (see Appendix D) and affirmative workshops and women's music festivals supported women bands for several years. Made possible by live performance, it was a fabulous 'queer' excitement of endless gazing at each other (Baird 2008). In other words, Australian women's music was more complex than failed monetary economies and/or lack of political success concerning that which it sought to unsettle. A final point must be made about the processes of making oneself as a consumable product. Consumption, it might be said, is not necessarily negative. It is a form of 'eating': a pleasure and a necessity of human sociality, given that one must consume. Derrida writes, 'the moral question is … not … should one eat or not eat, eat this or not that … but since *one must* eat in any case and since it is and tastes good to eat … *how* for goodness sake should one *eat well*' (Derrida 1991, p. 115, italics in original)? Lesbians perform aesthetics, styles of consumption, producing lifestyles that we might depict as 'lesbian' and there are multiple expressions of lesbian living illustrated in this study. Here it is possible to argue that Australian women's music was an ethical strategy for throwing heteronormativity into relief, against 'being tolerated in the face of the impossibility of belonging' (Hobson 1997, p. 23). Women's music enabled processes of 'eating (consuming) well' because of the various ways that it provided nourishment to affirm identify and also unsettle discursive positions. The scene generated sensibilities, and a sensation of one's self-production. As Hobson (1997, p. 24) writes 'we potentially consume ourselves *and* produce ourselves as consumable products *and* may queer ourselves - the point is how these potentials are realised: it is the struggle to do each well that should be the focus'. The women's music scene in Australia was never entirely self-satisfied and it did not necessarily involve being lovely, tolerated or even being accepted. However, it was a distinct struggle, in relation to the global, for producing 'what we are' (1997, p. 24) as lesbian/feminist and 'Australian' musical selves.

Experiences and Experiencing: Musical Selves-In-Practice

It is the spirit of a vibrant woman to scream, shout, hum, whisper and float in a river of music, as shelter from the trauma of everyday life when everything else looks too difficult, or as a conscious political act, when the message *is* the music. I want to conclude this chapter by re-considering the 'experiences' of lesbian/feminist musicians as selves-in-practice. Individual women may have experienced new sensations and liberating feelings at the moment of playing music with others on a stage, but women's music was not simply a discovery of the free self. It was a sensibility, developed, in my belief, through ideas about experience as a particular way of knowing the female self. Joan W. Scott's (1992) influential article on the politics of experience suggests that the way we talk about 'our experiences' may go unremarked and automatically taken for granted as historical evidence (see also Chapter 5). Experience is mediated, notes Scott (1992, p. 34) because it is a 'linguistic event' and does not just happen outside established meanings. To understand the experience of a different group such as women and lesbians thus involves attending to 'the historical processes that through discourse, position subjects and produce their experience' (1992, p. 25). In this way, the 'I' and the 'my' that is presupposed in 'female' experience can be reconceived in relation to others, and I argue, as selves-in-practice.

The term 'in my experience' is a phrase that asserts how individuals make meaning of 'being', and seems to be commonsense, irrefutable. It justifies a course of action because it refers to things that happen to us (Atkinson 2002, p. 170). In the comment below, Jane Cottrill articulates a battle to conceive her 'self' as a music-subject.

> I knew I could play quite well but I didn't have this inner whatever it is that said you could be in a band. And boy bands back in the early 1970s definitely weren't interested in looking for a chick in their band, in my experience. Didn't matter how good you were or if you were better than 'em. (Cottrill 2006)

The question of agency relates to experience and refers to one's capacity to act in the world (see Chapters 2, 3). Yet, when experience is taken as the bedrock of knowledge, the questions about how subjects are constituted as different, and how difference is

established, may be left unattended (Scott 1992, p. 25). To unpack this concept in terms of women's music, I want to borrow from art educator, Dennis Atkinson and his interesting study on the challenges of (assessing, awarding marks) interpreting the work of schoolchildren from different gender, class, race, sexuality backgrounds. Atkinson (2002, p. 171) follows the claim made by Derrida that it is not possible to gain direct access to experience or perception because any attempts to do so involve the use of representation and mediation such as language.

Humanist ideas of experience invoke Kantian judgements whereby the aesthetic power of the artwork (such as music) resides in the ability of its formal qualities to resonate with our understanding of human experience (2002, p. 171). The problem with this notion of experience is that it does not change through space and time, which also suggests that what is considered right and wrong about it, is already decided (2002, p. 165). Humanism is therefore a form of interpreting both the human subject and artworks based on transcendence, autonomy. Post-structural theories challenge humanist concepts by positing that human experience is a changing socio-cultural construction. The self that is rooted in Humanism and Enlightenment suggests an autonomous self to be discovered and/or transcended. Yet, as Foucault (1997, p. 232) claims, the self is not universally the same throughout time and space. Critical processes of historical investigation lead us 'to recognise ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking and saying … this criticism is not transcendental' but genealogical in design (Foucault 1997, p. 315). Given that experience is social and meanings are never certain, our access to experience and the experience of others is always mediated through language.

Textualised media and visual and sonic forms of art, all act as a type of intermediary between experience and the various ways we re-present and talk about it, which leads to a consideration of 'discourses of experience' rather than experience itself. Atkinson (2002) theorises that the *discourses of experience* are concerned with signification, which makes a distinction between knowledges (epistemology) and being (ontology).

> The difference between *experience* and *experiencing* in the formulation of subject histories is important because it returns us to the difference between epistemology and ontology. Experience can only be a signifier because we can only articulate that which we experience retrospectively in discourse or image or some other form of signification. (Atkinson 2002, p. 171)

Where experiencing (living) and signification is prioritised, rather than representation and experience itself, time and space are no longer universal; here temporalities are grounded in local experiential and spatial domains, relative to context (2002, p. 165). From this perspective, a poststructuralist view of difference can show that artistic production is a localised and contingent practice because we can never 'get behind representation to a prior essential state' (2002, p. 186). Whereas humanist forms of self-expression and self-reflection assume the artist is essential and universally 'knowable', the notion of 'world making' and making worlds of meaning (2002; see also Grossberg 1993) shift collectively shared experience to the locally situated individual.

Universalising notions of talent and competency tend to underpin the self-regulatory mechanisms of the music industry, subjecting musicians and their music to evaluative processes. Bruce Horner (1998, p. 180) writes that this is a form of technocracy because it depends on ideas about 'speed, precision, repetition, standardisation, virtuosity, accuracy, literalism, impersonality and professionalisation'. The ontology of music (musical being) as a trajectory of success through technocratic commodification normalises music as mainstream. In turn, music and its interpretations are particularly subject to assumptions about biological determinism, innate ability or aptitude and moral judgements about what constitutes right/wrong. Individuals arrive at the unpersuasive 'well I don't have the same response as you', says Horner (1998, p. 172), even though 'one's experience in itself cannot authorise a particular interpretation of music'. For Lucy Green (1999, p. 164), we 'have a negative response when we feel the music delineates social or political values of which we disapprove, or social groups from which we are excluded'. Meanings of music do not inherently and mysteriously arise out of music itself, they arise due to the social relations and politics in play at any given time. The criticisms of women's music as discussed throughout this thesis are linked in various ways to the politics of sexuality and the gender binary. A political view argues there is too much chanting, 'propaganda in the key of C' (Petersen 1987, p. 211); a

technical criticism focuses on too little melody and too much repetition of lyrics (Rodnitzky 1975, p. 81); a cultural argument is that the music is too feminine, 'weak and soft' (Carter in Schien 1987). Like any other blossoming music scene,[28] Australian women's music produced a cluster of bands plinking guitars and dribbling notes out of tiny sound systems in acoustically dreadful venues and I have sketched out some of the problems with its musicalities. Yet, women bands played for many audiences, the right notes, the right chords, and the right tempo, which shows that interpretations of music are highly debatable.

To bring the binary of thought/experience into question (Horner 1998, p. 169), rather than idealise experience, I propose women's music in Australia was a struggle for meanings shaped by the contingencies of its social, geographic, political circumstances. It was constrained by locality and the politics of sexuality/sex/gender and also enabled. Women's music in Australia tended to be middle class and white, but it was not necessarily made up of a congruent 'voice' or type of song or one distinct musical style. This is what I mean by its queerness and hybridity. Sometimes the music seems quirky because there was such a mixture of heterogenous elements to do with learning the craft, tastes and intentions. But rather than a musical derivative (an offshoot lacking in originality) in my view, Australian women's music was a hybridisation that plundered, parodied, laughed at itself and also took itself seriously. It does not (then or now) 'fit' into established genres of music and is not easily placed into a classification of music. Thus, it requires different, genealogical mapping.

The (mainstream music) trajectory of success and interpreting music from this viewpoint tends to 'fix' music within industry norms of practice, and to use Foucaultian terms, relations of power. As Atkinson (2002, p. 102) suggests, artistic ability is both an experience and a progression of skill that imagines and (ideally) proceeds from '*working towards*, *achieving* [success] and *working beyond*' based on reproducing (approximating) the established, mainstream, norms of artistic practice. On this universalising model of normalcy, the ability to achieve (and succeed) rests on

[28] See *The Decline of Western Civilization:* Part 1 (1981). The documentary depicts the 1979/80 punk scene of Los Angeles. Many of the bands were not musically proficient but are widely revered.

individual skill and audiences tend to be highly intolerant of audio sounds that deviate from and/or do not seem to either reproduce or approximate these ideals. The popular music commodification in a capitalist system supports and regulates this form of consumerism, upholding the comfort of (men's patriarchal) privileged positioning in domestic and everyday life (Grossberg 1991, p. 360). On the one hand, Australian women's music is shown to be against these norms. At the same time, it is nuanced with judgements (and struggles) based on technical ability, mainstream modes of production and consumption. Dyer (1979, p. 20) argues that attitudes to music are more complicated than suggesting 'anyone can make music and all that is needed are a few instruments and somewhere to play'. Music does not exactly follow this pathway. Mainstream artists might be commercially successful but not technically proficient. Sid Vicious, for instance, could not play guitar but exuded the 'right' attitude and Sex Pistols found commercial success while appearing to oppose it. Commodified markets of economy tend to locate music in 'knowable' genres (Frith 1996, pp. 75-95). Yet, styles of music are not fixed essences but a set of ideals and authorised rules open to interpretation (Fornäs 1995). Music classification systems are situational and musicians apply 'rules' to different purposes for a range of reasons.

Bands with strong links to community and left-wing politics tend to be associated with anti-commercialism, amateurishness and so-called non-professionalism (Rodnitzky 1975). Yet many amateurs rehearse and play instruments in the same manner as commercially successful musicians (Dyer 1979, p. 20). Clitoris Band experimented with their instruments and occasionally sat in a circle when they performed. But Pam Brown (2008) says they also 'ended up doing the phallic stuff too', which demonstrates that lesbian/feminist musicalities intertwined non-normative modes of production with normative. As Marion Leonard (2007, p. 94) writes, independent musicians and those seemingly outside the mainstream 'cannot merely be understood as reacting against a particular set of conventions but also as working within already existing codes of performance', which in turn may be read as oppositional. Much so-called left field music finds it way into the mainstream and much mainstream music fails or finds only marginal success, therefore most definitions of commercial music are prone to elasticity. If a definition of music is that *any* music can be successful, for ('insignificant')

reasons such as bringing like-minded people together in a social space, then the scope for interpretation broadens.

In formulating the histories of Australian women's music, there is a difficult interplay between the truth of what is considered 'real' and the exercise of freedom. Moving away from humanist notions of experience to discourses of experiencing, shows that institutional systems and normalised constructs of experience have a marginalising effect. Power relations cannot be separated from market-driven economies, but those relations cannot be explained simply as a function of benefit to the human social order through subordination: the regimes governing sexual ordering are interrelated with capitalist economies in complex ways (Foucault 2004, p. 14). Borrowing Foucault's thinking and applying it to Atkinson's (2002, p. 191) concept of an individual art maker as 'body-in-practice,' it is possible to see that an ethical 'self-in-practice' is an alternative way to navigate the unresolvable gap between the material word and our interpretation of it. On the concerns for the self as practices of freedom, Foucault (1997, p. 285) writes, 'ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection … Taking care of oneself requires knowing (*connaître*) oneself. Care of the self is knowledge (*connaissance*) of the self … to take of care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths'. Knowledges are the ethical practices of freedom and there are links between being occupied with oneself and political activities (1997, p. 231) that one might undertake. In this sense, we might also recognise that knowledges are impermanent and our relations of power, relations to authority, relations to our selves, relations between sexes, between queer selves and to each other are always partial and transforming. Conceived as musicalised (sometimes sexualised) experience, the Australian women's music scene can be re-interpreted, I argue, as musical selves-in-practice, a distinctly Australian exigency of self/selves: subjects learning, producing, and experiencing different realities of music making.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have argued for a re-interpretation of Australian women's music based on its difference from America and the complex relationship of subjects to

music production and consumption. Seeking alternatives to mainstream music and a trajectory of transformation, women bands attempted to control production independently from men and developed self-sufficient, DIY methods illustrating a variety of disagreements and sameness/difference attitudes. Influenced by the universalising ideals of feminism, it was also necessary for Australian women bands to battle for existence in their own locale. The small women's music scene in Australia could not afford to exert an overarching narrative of radicalesbian women-identification that came to define American women's music, even though individuals in bands may have shaped identity and everyday living by these principles. It is my contention that the Australian scene demonstrates a (musicalised) fight for survival structured by pragmatic coalitions and elements of rivalry with each other and the dominant America. These forces defined 'Australian-ness' distinct from other countries. A genealogical, historico-political account of Australian women's music indicates the mechanics of domination and relations of power operating on multiple fronts, rather than the scene simply disappearing without a trace, and/or oppression on the basis of gender and sexuality. Under the mainstream music radar, lesbian/feminists exerted social rather than fiscal capital with a type of freedom to produce musical selves. Yet, subjects are performatively constituted and experience does not provide direct access to material realities even though we rely on it to comprehend our living in the world. To rethink the liberatory, lesbian/feminist self of Australian women's music, I draw on the notion of 'selves-in-practice' (Atkinson 2002). Discourses of experiencing suggest that cultural productions are always invested with intention and interests in relation to others. Women's music allowed an ethical self-practice, a set of production techniques to write, talk about, interrogate, queer, female self/selves (Peraino 2006, p. 152). Interpreting Australian women's music as a non-normative mode of production - against capitalism but not free of its influences - and a set of practices for queering identities - recognises a time of experimenting, learning, formulating new knowledges, exercising power. The human, social value of such a different musical battle needs historical acknowledgement. It did not make much money but that was not always the objective or the intention.

5

Queering Histories: Writing A Film On Australian Women's Music

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I described Australian women's music as a technique for mobilising the self as a consumable product and showed that it is possible to re-interpret women's music as individuals participating in the composition and arrangement of cultural products both for entertainment and intentionally political purposes. The current chapter examines authorship and intention in the (present day) writing and planning of a film about Australian women's music and considers how a documentary-to-be-made might be considered a queer/feminist text. The starting point for this project was to make a documentary, as stated in the opening pages of the thesis. My research found that there are no Australian documentaries telling these stories and I wanted to address that gap. Thus, the work began as 'practice-led' research with the intention to make a film as one of the research outputs. The film is still to-be-made but the research pathway and theoretical considerations have expanded my motivations, understandings and approach to its future production. Thus this concluding chapter is envisioned as a theory-practice 'dialogue' informed by the theoretical considerations of the previous chapters, and a reflection on the possible openings/closures between authorial intention and realisation.

Writing a history documentary is a contemporary cultural practice with potential to re-perform and 're-presence the past' (Sobchack 2011, p. 323). A sense of *doing* history in the 'here and now', or 'presencing', as Sobchack suggests, is not to say that the past is itself alive in the present but that we desire its description and interpret past realities in order to grasp the timelines of our past-present-future selves. Clare Hemmings

(2005, p. 116) suggests that feminism tends to tell two dominant stories of itself: progress and loss. We mourn nostalgically for the loss of 1970s collective activism aimed at social change. On the other hand, ideas about 'feminist' progression correspond loosely with the passing of time (the 1970s through to the 1990s) and narratives that emphasise the advancement from political unification and sameness, to identity and diversity, to difference and fragmentation (2005, p. 116). These two forms of storytelling - loss/nostalgia and progress/liberation - both tend to structure the past as unified and cover over complexities, contradictions, heterogeneities and potentially repeat, reproduce the logic embedded in something one might call History. Institutionally, the role of History and 'the Historical archive' is to save, protect, preserve the discourses that one wishes to remember and keep in circulation (Foucault 1972, p. 129). I argue that a history film about Australian women's music is a non-normative method for (creative) research, charged with the incompleteness of other moments, other times (Schneider 2011). It is an attempt to re-negotiate the past through empathetic storytelling (Withers 2013) and orient the present to new meanings.

A documentary film is a text organised through its materials (moving image and sound) and the institutional logics of production, distribution and reception. By suggesting that a documentary film about women's music is a queer feminist text, there is an assumption that some type of relation can be drawn between a text and queer/feminism. Queer, as used in the thesis, is a contemporary method of questioning the hegemony of heteronormativity (see Introduction). By archiving lives that may otherwise be lost, I am not claiming that the constituents of women's music in Australia regarded themselves as 'queer' in the way that the term is now understood.[1] However, if one is not claiming to tell a singular truth as 'The History', then a method (and methodology) that allows for difference is not inappropriate. In this discussion, I have not been asking, nor will the film to come pose the question, what *really* happened in the past. I am not interested in corrective and/or proscriptive answers.

[1] It is not always appropriate to apply contemporary paradigms to the past. For example, to call someone who lived in the 16th century a homosexual elides the reality that homosexuality (the word and term) had not entered language at that time.

Rather my focus is how storytelling and its techniques function in the present day. 'My' writing and reading is not the definitive 'truth' nor the only version, given there is more than one way of writing and more than one queering of women's music histories. Nevertheless, I consider that I'm queering the histories of Australian women's music as it has been previously implied and understood.

In order to explore the (present day) problems associated with documenting and re-presenting the past as 'real', this chapter sketches the principles and political ideals of liberationist documentaries founded on affirming identity. To do that, I analyse stories about women's music in two films; an expositional documentary of American women's music titled *Radical Harmonies* (2002) and an observational film called *Tokyo Rose North* (1987) that follows the Australian women band, Tokyo Rose, on a road trip in the mid-1980s. I then discuss the interviews conducted for the study and how they shaped the writing of a documentary treatment, 'Rock On With Your Frock On' (working title) and an accompanying short video that I made. From the perspective of a maker, this chapter aims to rehearse arguments relevant to the production of a new women's music film. There is not one particularly 'right' way of doing a documentary about Australian women music and it is a challenge to manage the constraints of the medium, the maze of production pathways and what may or may not eventuate. Reflecting on my intentions and what actually happened during research, and the inferences for the future, I propose that writing the histories of Australian women's music into a documentary film re-performs the past as 'effective histories' (Foucault 1984, p. 81), a re-interpretation rather than re-presentation of the real.

Women's Music On Film: *Radical Harmonies* and *Tokyo Rose North*

Documentaries have the appearance of showing 'life-is-like-that' because they draw a commonsense link between the verisimilitude of the photographic image and the 'real' world. Historical documentaries present evidence of the past and often assume the objectivity of factual events, yet images by themselves do not show intent or motivation. A theoretical schema developed by Bill Nichols (1991; 1994; 2001) proposes that documentaries can be analysed as modes of audience address:

expositional in the 1930s, *observational* in the 1960s, *interactive* in the 1970s, *self-reflexive* in the 1980s and *performative* in the 1990s. Styles do not fall neatly into a chronological framework and documentaries frequently combine more than one production mode. However, the Nichols' schema is useful for analysing the problems (aesthetic emotional intellectual pragmatic ethical feasibility) of non-fiction film. For example, the extraordinarily well-researched *Radical Harmonies* (2002) uses the expositional mode and appears to construct a universal story of women's music chronicled as a movement. In the film we see a multitude of performers over three decades, from folk of the early 1970s to rock and popular music of the late 1990s: among others, Chicago Women's Liberation Band, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Fanny, Alix Dobkin, Meg Christian, Holly Near, Linda Tillery, Melissa Ferrick, Ani DeFranco, Indigo Girls and Tribe 8. There is a wealth of archival footage and performers, producers, sound engineers, distributors, enthusiasts who share their stories in interviews shot for the film.[2] Producer/director Dee Mosbacher and co-producer Boden Sandstrom, the filmmakers of *Radical Harmonies*, have created a strong sense of universal storytelling.

Typically, expositional documentaries take shape around a problem to be solved, such as the historical 'invisibility' of women's music, and use a narrator (voice-over images) to build an argument about '*the* world'. A scripted voice-over is a filmmaker's device to explain, guide and provide contextual story links for the viewer and/or the overarching arguments of a film. A narrated voice-over is therefore distinct from narrative.[3] The difficulty of using a narrator for a history film is that universal tendencies (*the* History) may work against rather than toward effective, localised histories, despite the filmmaker's intention. *Radical Harmonies* attempts to unsettle the classic (patriarchal) expository mode of documentary. The narrator is female and sparingly used without dominating the text. The voice of authority and the point of view appear to be situated with the women interviewed for the film and the (interview) comments seem to suggest there is no singular definition of women's music. However, the film's narrator states categorically that 'lesbians led a cultural revolution from the ground up, which

[2] Archival footage is understood as footage that is acquired and not specifically shot for the film.
[3] Narrative is the idea that sequences on film can be arranged in a logical and linear order to build a film's message (Bordwell, Staiger and Thomspon, 1985, pp. 12-24). However, voice over (by a narrator) and narrative may (confusingly) both be referred to as narration.

came to be known as women's music' (narrator, *Radical Harmonies*). This supports the idea that the origins of women's music are attributable to lesbians but the film does not make it clear that actually this may be describing a specifically American context.

The overall message of *Radical Harmonies* is that women's music is worthy of recognition and historical preservation. The film is wonderfully informative. Personally, for me, there are parts of the film that I directly identify, particularly women sound technicians talking about their experiences. In another section, two Pentecostal southern sisters describe an emotional journey from isolation to connection with other lesbians by and through attending a women's music festival. Lesbian musicians recall singing to an audience for the first time. Chris Williamson, for instance, fumbled the words of her own song when she became aware of the (potential) number of lesbians gathered in the crowd. Melissa Etheridge humbly acknowledges that the forces of earlier radical women created a space for artists like her to grow up in the mainstream music industry. However, *Radical Harmonies* is also harnessed firmly to second wave feminism and the narrator 'explains' individual stories by saying unproblematically that the role of women's music was to be found in 'stimulating feminist consciousness and building a feminist community' (narrator, *Radical Harmonies*). In this statement, the film tends toward a trouble-free link between music and feminist, enlightened, liberatory social change. Yet there is no mention of racism, white privilege or the difficulties around separatism within the American scene. Overall, the film does not clarify that 'the women's music movement defined woman in biological terms' and informed events such as Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which excluded transgender and transsexual women (Mockus 2005, pp. 115-116). *Radical Harmonies* re-presents rather than critiques the themes of second wave feminism, and in my reading, it also highlights the difficulties of moving beyond nostalgia and beyond the so-called objective presentation of factual evidence in a history film.

In the making of history documentaries, the imperatives of preserving the past are set alongside present day ideas about persuading, promoting, analysing, interrogating (Renov 1993, p. 21), all of which have implications for how a text is authored and addresses its audience. The mode of audience address in *Radical Harmonies* is

incredibly persuasive, naturalising its overarching arguments, but the film is found wanting in a number of ways. There is only one mention in *Radical Harmonies* of the debates between radicalesbianism and humanist feminism and yet such tensions were a rich, vital part of American women's music and lesbian/feminist histories. Additionally, it is up to the viewer to identify that women's music may have materialised differently in other countries. Thus, the film potentially reinforces (audience and filmmaker) universalising assumptions of sameness.

During the 1970s-1980s, the need to affirm identity gave rise to debates about representation, realism, and the efficacy of documentary to critique understandings of reality. In general, non-fiction feminist films of the liberation era are described as realist and non-realist (Kaplan 1983) while gay and lesbian films are loosely referred to as affirmation and post-affirmation (Dyer 1990, p. 274). Looking back it is possible to see that feminists wanted to show patriarchal oppression as the 'truth' of women's lives, whereas gays and lesbians wanted to affirm existence of same-sex sexuality and demonstrate 'what we were in fact like' (1990, p. 274). In the belief that documentary realism could affirm identity, gays and lesbians initially borrowed ideas about consciousness-raising and personal autobiography from second wave feminism, and applied those ideas to filmmaking (Waugh 1997, p. 109). The detail of film histories have been mapped elsewhere (see for example, Blonski, Creed and Freiberg 1987; Holmlund and Fuchs 1997; Kaplan 1983; Kuhn 1982; Rich B. 1998; Waldman and Walker 1999) but the topography of *realist/anti-realist* and *affirmation/post-affirmation* modes in liberationist documentaries is pertinent to this discussion.

Second wave feminists sought to unsettle the taken-for-granted cinematic representations of women and documentary became a strategic, political tool for interventionist feminist methods of consciousness-raising; a 'cultural struggle for political possibility' (Kuhn 1982, p. 5) motivated by the 'experiences of ordinary people' (Kaplan 1983, p. 126). Feminists suggested that the material realities of women's lives could be represented through ethical practices (a question of how to speak about others), notions of sincerity, credibility and transparency (Kuhn 1982, p. 132). A code of ethical practices and trust between 'woman' filmmaker and woman-as-subject implied

the sharing of political objectives. The authentic and trustworthy ('real') voice of social actors who had almost never appeared on the screen before was central to feminist films that explored working conditions for women, women's health, rape, domestic violence and so on. Australian examples are *Age Before Beauty* (1980) and *For Love or Money* (1983). However, the realist method as a strategy to counter patriarchal views of 'woman' was not an approach adopted by all second wave feminists.

In an article titled 'Documentary, Realism and Women's Cinema', Eileen McGarry (1975, pp. 50-51) launched an attack on realism and argued that 'reality is coded long before the filmmaker arrives'. In other words, intentional decisions about subjects and locations are similar to fiction film and encode the pro-filmic event (that which is filmed) in ways that are neither innocent nor neutral. In fact because of this, McGarry (1975, p. 56) suggested that feminists turn to less realist, more propagandistic styles of non-fiction film. Claire Johnston's (1976, p. 214) paper on counter-cinema made the claim that 'the truth of women's oppression could not be captured with the innocence of the camera'. Arguing that cinema is an institutional system of signs, Johnston (1976, pp. 211-215) suggested that verisimilitude is a set of laws responsible for the 'celebration of [woman's] non-existence' and thus 'it is not enough to discuss the oppression of women within the text of the film; the language of the cinema/the depiction of reality must also be interrogated'. On this basis, some feminist filmmakers favoured experimental modes of production, and the idea of 'counterhistories' in order to point out political contingencies (Waldman and Walker 1999, p. 21). For example, Australian feminist documentaries*, We Aim To Please* (1977) by Robin Laurie and Margot Nash, and the personal memory film *Maidens* (1978) by Jeni Thornley are experimental attempts to trouble 'realism' and the 'reality' of female subjects.

E. Ann Kaplan (1983, p. 134) has theorised that the second wave feminist search for a non-patriarchal cinematic approach through realist/anti-realist aesthetics was an engagement with the problematics of representing women's lives as the unified, coherent 'true self' and assumptions about realism itself raise questions about the representation of lived experience. For Kaplan (1983, p. 134), 'realism does not insist on any special relation to social formation' but it is the assumptions about the real -

ways of structuring values, feelings, categories of consciousness - that cause the problem. To show gendered life, many 'pro-realist' feminists favoured observational aesthetics. Documentary film appealed to second wave feminists, as a method, partly because it offered an affordable, accessible form of production compared to fiction film and documentary methods and technology changes during the 1960s opened access. The emergence of portable cameras, for example, gave rise to *cinéma vérité* and observational forms of documentary and the notion that in order to show life truthfully, the filmmaker must assert 'no control' over the pro-filmic event. Techniques to enhance 'real time' aesthetics such as handheld cameras, synchronous sound and editing were also popular amongst second wave feminists[4] because events appear in these films unscripted, unrehearsed, undirected with the intention to construct what might be described as a 'truth effect' … a trustworthy 'real relation to the real' (Leahy 1996, p. 41). The observational method inferred true, real, authentic, unfettered access to the female subject and many feminists wanted to tell stories in this way.

In the mid-1980s, Heather Williams directed *Tokyo Rose North* (1987) using feminist filmmaking practices and an observational mode of documentary. The film follows the Perth women band Tokyo Rose with a handheld, unobtrusive camera[5] as they journey north, performing in regional townships. On the one hand, the film relies on viewer knowledge of rock and roll road trips and observational filmmaking; for example, the (observational) music documentaries *Don't Look Back*[6] (1967) and *Monterey Pop* (1968) made by D. A. Pennebaker, and *Gimme Shelter* (1970) by David and Albert Maysles. On the other hand, *Tokyo Rose North* is aligned with second wave feminist ideas about the gendered space of music. It is also the only film about women's music in Australia. The road trip was organised for the film - a form of filmmaker intervention rather than nonintervention (Nichols 1991, pp. 38-44) - that suggests a set of questions about how subjects are portrayed and the relationship of subjects to filmmakers (director and crew). In the opening scene, we see a bus traveling on a wide-open road. A subtitle

[4] In actuality, time moves forward and back in any footage that is edited (insinuating the role of the filmmaker) but editing 'reality' is an attempt to move imperceptibly between the time of the image and the time of viewing (Wahlberg 2008, p. ix).
[5] Australian cinematographer Erika Addis operated the camera.
[6] See Rothman (1997) for further discussion.

flashes up, which seems to undercut their courage: 'A triumph of imagination over ability'. Undoubtedly, the women of Tokyo Rose were brave to take such a journey at a time when the performances of women-only bands were often regarded with suspicion, especially in remote country areas. The band makes their way from Perth to the north western destinations of Broome, a tourist coastal town, and Port Hedland, which is an iron ore tonnage, deep anchor port with a large male population. On the bus we see male roadies Dennis and Barry are on board. Later in the film, the members of Tokyo Rose are interviewed at the Port Hedland radio station and they caution listeners that 'fleshy bodies will not be on display'. The meta-narrative of the film is that women bands are not reducible to gender or sexualised bodies and women need to be aware of safety when at a male dominated venue.

Figure 12. Tokyo Rose, Perth, circa 1985

Sexuality is not discussed in *Tokyo Rose North* and no one 'comes out' in the film. Nonetheless we see Jacquie Reid on stage making a subtle quip about waiting a long time for 'The Man I Love' and she sings a few bars, 'Some day he'll come along/The man I love' (Reid in *Tokyo Rose North*). A bit later in the show, wearing gold lamé tights, stage make up and akubra hats, the group performs an original country and western

song titled 'Dyke in Hedland'. Reid sings it with an affected American twang. 'It's hard to be a dyke in Hedland, in Hedland it's hard to be'. Dressing up in glittery costumes and putting on accents allowed indirect statements through song that the band might not otherwise have done. But because none of the women actually 'come out', it is possible the 1980s film was attempting to shift some of the 1970s liberationist representation of gays and lesbians that were problematic in all of the ways that have been discussed in the thesis. According to Richard Dyer (1990, p. 274) 'affirmation politics and cinema sought to replace negative feelings about lesbians and gay men with positive ones. Positive meant … thereness, insisting on the fact of our existence; goodness, asserting our worth and that of our lifestyles; and realness'. Dichotomous understandings - oppression/liberation, silence/speech and authenticity/inauthenticity - tended to reinforce rather than draw attention to the difficulties of assimilation, sameness and the elision of heterogeneity and difference. A closeted life does not necessarily equate with misery, nor does being 'free' equate with being 'out'. On this basis, some post-affirmation films tended to favour experimental, performative modes of production for unsettling homophobic assumptions of sexuality. Thomas Waugh (1997, p. 120) argues that experimental gay films such as *Tongues Untied*[7] (1989) are performative documentaries in that they effectively perform a type of doing one's queer identity as well as representing identity.[8]

It may be possible to read *Tokyo Rose North* as politically 'in-your-face' given the comedy rock style of the band was a form of theatrical freedom. But (in my view) the observational film does not sit neatly within the model typography of affirmation/post-affirmation. The narrative structure of *Tokyo Rose North* is conventional and stylistically, the realist film is not confrontational in the post-affirmation (or performative) mode, although it does provide evidence to counter assumptions about women bands. At the gig in the township of Port Hedland we see (in the film) the

[7] *Tongues Untied* uses nonverbal performance, dance and gesture to explore the lives of black gay men.
[8] Nichols (2001, p. 131; see also 1994) associates performative documentary with the 1990s and defines the mode as underscoring the 'complexity of our knowledge of the world by emphasising its subjective and affective dimensions'. According to Nichols, the performative mode sets out to question knowledge and what counts as understanding derived from documentary realism and thus relies on poetic liberties, unconventional narrative structures and subjective forms of representation. For example, *Paris Is Burning* (1990) is often described as a queer performative documentary with the idea that the film performs and refuses heteronormativity, queers reality (see Bruzzi 2000; Butler 1993; Nichols 2001).

audience responding to the band's performance and some who began the evening with uncertain glances eventually tap their toes and get up to dance. When the night is finished a man from the audience slurs his drunken appreciation, 'it was a really good concert and I think you'll go far' (*Tokyo Rose North*). Back in the city, Tokyo Rose performs an upbeat song to a predominantly female audience who dance energetically. 'Revving up my engine and ready to roll … /It's a Hot Summer's Night In Perth … ahhh'. The band is 'safe' and at 'home' and there are no apprehensive glances. The concluding scene of the film is heavily invested with lesbian/feminist meaning, and yet reading it that way actually depends on extra textual knowledges and understandings of sexuality specific to that time. Arguably, the feminist objective of *Tokyo Rose North* was to demonstrate women's ability to overcome the obstacles of gender, survive and thrive. From this perspective, the band's journey might be read as an interventionist 'crossing' into unchartered territory in order to explore ways of verifying (affirming) an all-women band. However, the realist mode of *Tokyo Rose North* lacks some historical context, as observational films mostly do, and does not textually account for the reasons that women bands in Australia have been historically unrecognised. The film does on the other hand, illustrate that women bands brought entertainment to a wide range of audiences, which supports the idea (of this thesis) that Australian women's music did not materialise in one space or place with a singular style of musicality.

An analysis of *Radical Harmonies* and *Tokyo Rose North* and a consideration of the complexities associated with constructing women's music histories on film have shaped both my thinking and 'my' queer/feminist sensibility throughout this investigation. During the 1970s-1980s, the term 'feminist cinema' raised political questions of authorship and intention, concerning who could author a feminist text and to whom it might speak and why (Creed 1987). For Julia Lesage (1978, p. 508), 'feminist films explicitly demand that a new space be opened up for women in women's terms … to bring feminist analysis to many women it might not otherwise have reached'. For Annette Kuhn (1982, p. 9), feminist documentary implied a conscious political awareness and that the meanings to be made of a text are more or less the same as those intended by the author. Yet as the thesis shows, this is not always the case and a text will produce different (sometimes multiple) readings. Documentary realism can

function in many ways, including but not limited to the critique and/or the confirmation of patriarchal reality (Gaines 1999, p. 11). The challenge for my queer/feminist filmmaking practice (authorship, intention, production) is that a film about Australian women's music needs to both affirm historical evidence and introduce questions in order to queer evidence, critique and/or confirm heteronormativity, and to queer its storytelling.

Film/Research Interviews: Remembering 'My/Our' Music Past

The account of oneself that is presented in an interview places the experiences of life into a 'language' of storytelling, a performative enactment, a rehearsal and repetition of the public/private self. In this examination of the research interviews conducted for the study, I argue that Australian women's music and its so-called gender rigid narratives are open to re-interpretation; queer brings concerns to feminism as feminism brings concerns to queer (Marinucci 2010). I am not making a claim that feminism is itself queer, nor is my use of queer meant to 'disappear the lesbian' as Sheila Jeffreys (1994, p. 469) worries it does. Queer mobilises cultural categorisations, which inform the grid of intelligibility and how we make sense of each other by problematising normative constructions of gender that presume a certain set of interrelationships between sex, gender, sexuality (Richardson 2006, p. 22; see also Weed and Schor 1997). If feminism appears to stabilise identity categories at the same time calling for the eradication of roles, the political, strategic deployment of queer is a way to argue that identity categories are always 'under erasure'. Judith Butler (1992, p. 14) outlines the double move of materialisation/erasure when she says that 'once it is understood that subjects are formed through exclusionary operations, it becomes necessary to trace the operations of that exclusion and erasure'. Arguably, the processes of stabilising/destabilising, rehearsing and repeating idea(l)s about the self are heightened in an interview situation, which is where my attention now turns. Film funding was sought but not secured, as I have stated (see Introduction) and the academic time frame did not allow further work on the production. Instead, after recording a series of audio-only interviews, I then wrote a treatment draft (see 'Rock On With Your Frock On', pp. 245-283). The interviews for the study comprise an

important aspect of the research method and film pathway, offering a rich source of data for investigative analysis. The following discussion is a reflection on those processes.

The act of interviewing is not simply a question of what memories are recounted and shared, but how we construct - perform, repeat, record, interpret - a network of deeper meanings of the self. In the broadest sense, interviews are one of the most common forms of encounter between documentary filmmaker and subject (Nichols 2001). Interviewing is also used as a vehicle for unearthing 'missing' historical knowledges, which is why it is a tool favoured by feminists, gays, lesbians, historians, and academics. There is an extensive, ongoing body of work, for example, around feminist oral histories (see Gluck and Patai 1991; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007) and 'the retrieval of evidence from the margins of history' (Walker and Waldman 1999, p. 22). Feminists have politicised individual experience through oral histories that counter institutional neglect and argue a different account of (female) being. In the category of retrospective historical documentaries, *Union Maids* (1976) and *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (1976) illustrate a reliance on interview (oral history) techniques as evidence of different ('missing') female material realities. By focussing on the recovery of 'lost histories', feminism has challenged the principles of patriarchal histories to advocate the inclusion of that which may have been previously overlooked, and expanded the range of documents or what counts as valuable evidential 'remains' (Schneider 2011). Yet there are a number of problematics in the deployment of interviews as evidence of experience, as Joan W. Scott has written about.

> The evidence of experience, whether conceived through a metaphor of visibility or in any other way that takes meaning as transparent, reproduces rather than contests given ideological systems and in the case of histories of gender those that assume the facts of history speak for themselves and those that rest on notions of a natural opposition between sexual practices and social conventions. (Scott 1992, p. 25)

Histories that document 'the hidden world of homosexuality', Scott argues, may bring to light the effects of silence but preclude critical examination and the workings of

man/woman and homosexual/heterosexual.[9] Arguably, this presents a dilemma for documentary filmmaking that on the one hand seeks to stabilise testimonial evidence as 'knowledge and fact', and on the other hand recognises, at least theoretically, that the self is incomplete, uncertain and never fully realised subject. A genealogical approach argues that the recording of memory is a discursive process functioning within a network of power relations, including queer/feminist research practices. But within documentary there are (off-screen and on-screen) questions for how we come to know ourselves through documents and the commonsense, routine production technique of interviewing.

Musicians tend to be a collaborative lot and to my delight, there was a snowballing effect of genuine interest in this research project. Band members were located by chasing up existing connections. Word of mouth generated further interest, although given the large number of people it was not possible to find 'everyone'. Altogether, 35 audio-recorded interviews were completed with a total of 39 participants. Geographically, the interviews were spread between the capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra and regional News South Wales. Due to project constraints and creative decisions appropriate at the time, I chose to conduct audio-only research interviews. An audio interview prior to filming is not a commonplace documentary practice but it is also not altogether unfamiliar, especially for history projects requiring depth of consideration. Audio-interviews are more affordable than film interviews and allowed, in this context, for a larger number of participants to be interviewed than initially planned. Audio-only interviews also assisted in establishing a conversational atmosphere and rapport with interview subjects. Indeed, some people expressed relief at the absence of a camera. The length of interviews varied but averaged between 1.5 and 2 hours each. On three occasions, at the request of the interviewee, two members attended, which is a regular practice for band interviews.

The relation between participant and researcher is not easily counterbalanced by institutional practices, shared by filmmaking and other disciplines, to secure a consent

[9] See, for example, the documentary, *The Hidden History of Homosexual Australia* (2004).

form. Outside the academy, independent documentary filmmakers are known to have a sometimes-vexatious view of consent forms. For example, Australian filmmaker Dennis O'Rourke (1997) was always fairly forthright in his belief that consent forms inhibit production pathways. In most cases, the problem lies in the participants feeling as if they have no say or power over the material once the researcher leaves. Experience (my own included) has shown how difficult it can be to manage this aspect of filmmaking. Participants can and do change their mind. Nevertheless, formal consent was obtained for each interview conducted within the parameters of the investigation.

All of the audio-recorded interviews were pre-arranged and participants forewarned. Of the 39 subjects interviewed, half had no personal and or direct relationship to me. However, most (not all) were aware of Stray Dags and my work role with the band, and my picture is on the cover of the album, which is highly unusual. This provided ease of access, trust, reassurance, and caution. On one occasion, a participant asked, 'is this going to be a lesbian thing' just before I switched on the recorder. The film/research interviews followed a semi-structured, informal format. My agenda was to access marginalised voices and stories not previously accounted for in the public domain. Open-ended questions attempted to be queer/feminist and filmmaker oriented (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007) and during the interview itself, I followed the respondent and made adjustments. A set of pre-planned questions, reflecting the principle goals of the research, were kept handy in case of a blank moment or in case the interview veered down an unexpected track. Some interviews took place while looking at old photographs, which jogged memories and enabled stories. A crucial aspect of the interview method was that participants regarded me as 'belonging' to the world of women's music. Similar to participants, some of my personal memories are captured in photographs. For example, I remember sitting in a crowd (and have a photo of myself) watching Adelaide women band Foreign Body perform. My immersion in the women's scene (Adelaide and then Sydney) entailed not only sound mixing but also going out with friends to see bands and because women bands were few in number it was something of a social obligation. For me, it was an exciting moment of questioning 'compulsory heterosexuality', although I did not use those words at the time. Working with Stray Dags I met The Budgies, Hotspots, Right Furniture, Party Girls and many

other people. I also did sound for Crash Cups and they performed with Barbies Dead. Thus, the women interviewed for the study were (with me and each other) friends, co-workers, collective members, activists, on marches and demonstrations, housemates, lovers, and in other roles such as event organisation. Through the study, many cheerful reconnections were made and some participants then pursued independent re-linkages with band members.

Whilst sexuality is a significant part of the research, I did not ask direct questions in an attempt to allow multifaceted definitions. As Sullivan (2003, p. 53) says, giving oneself an identity name is a fundamentally humanist project of categorisation. Prior to interviewing, I made a decision to assume those who knew me from the past also knew something about my sexuality. I gave consideration to my subject-object position but did not want 'lesbian' to be the defining core of the interview as if it would harbour or reveal a fundamental secret or truth about the person being interviewed. The terms 'lesbian' and 'lesbianism' were sometimes used (by myself and participants) to describe selves, relationships, audiences and the socio-political milieu. For example, Theresa Jack of Clitoris Band recalled painting her van with the word 'clitoris' as a political statement but had the following to say about her 'self' constituted through liberationist notions of visibility.

> I knew it was important to get out there and be visible as lesbians … but I was never one of those people who could just be an individual and proud to be gay or whatever … I would never have told anybody until recently … but music is the thing I can rely on when everything's falling apart there's always music and no-one can take it away from you … Music is a way for me to express my self as a human being … when I write a song it comes out as a reflective space … it enriches my life and hopefully the lives of the people around me. (Jack 2008)

Thus, women related experiences of women's music to me, the researcher, and in the process accounted for their sexuality struggles and musical self/selves.

A film researcher, like a journalist, is faced with information presented on and off the record, and participants are aware of the recording apparatus with differing degrees of comfort. On occasion, sexuality created interview 'instabilities' and grappling with

stories from the past tended to break down when lesbianism was 'shared' knowledges. For example, lesbians routinely rely on word of mouth, a 'flexible grapevine' as a way of navigating the complexities of the social world and as a promotion of group solidarity, a who's who at any given time of a lesbian cultural scene. During the interviews, I became conscious of slipping between interview and a friendly exchange of gossip structured around previously shared knowledge. By gossip I mean 'evaluative talk about a person who is not present' (Eder and Enke 1991, p. 494). Lesbian gossip regularly identifies other 'lesbians' and provides a short cut to the exchange of information, which also establishes inclusions/exclusions. In turn, the unclear divide between queer/feminist researcher and queer investigation has implications for truth and knowledges. It opens access but I found myself 'split' between my position/s as 'insider researcher' and reminiscing friend (Coffey 2002). The friend contended with extra detail offered in interviews, for instance, when asking others to remember events and situations in which I also participated, while the researcher assessed the relevancy. For these reasons, taking interviewer risks around the subject of sexuality was surprisingly difficult. One participant (previously well known to me) felt comfortable to reveal intimate details about band relations (that I was surprisingly unaware of) but reflecting on it afterwards, requested those sections of the interview be omitted, which also illustrates the tension between public/private selves.

During an interview, a researcher/filmmaker is in a subject-object relation of power, which circles endlessly around the knowing and the imagined. The contingencies of gender, race, class, sexuality, enter into every interview situation and with varying degrees shape the relations of power and the production of knowledges (Wilmsen in Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, p. 171). As a set of power relations, the interview interaction raises ethical questions deriving from 'an unequal distribution of power similar to the confession' (Nichols 1991, p. 47). It may appear that power resides with the person doing the speaking, but drawing on Foucaultian ideas about power, it is possible to argue that an interview is similar to the relations of power that unfold during a confession. Foucault (1978, p. 62) describes confession as 'a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement'. Thus, during a confession, according to Foucault (1978, p. 62; my additional emphasis), agency 'does

not reside in the one who speaks (for it is [*she*] who is constrained), but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers but in the one who questions and is not supposed to know'. From a performative perspective, it has been argued that (on-camera) 'confession is the documentary referent to the real' (Waugh 1997, p. 120), an intentional performance that enacts and describes that identity. Implicated in the documentary interview is the idea that confessing 'in public' to a witness (the interviewer and/or film audience) may be therapeutically good for you. Perhaps some of the best examples are the agony aunts of print newspapers, magazines, talkback radio, daytime television shows that use the out-pouring of one's problems, the promise of healing, vindication and/or freedom from burden. The mechanisms of an interview, on this basis, suggest an authority that 'intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile' (Foucault 1978, p. 62). Thus Foucault's ideas on confession nonetheless rely problematically on deterministic notions of truth, which infer something is already in need of atonement, or the righting of a wrong. We may assume, for instance, that confessions of sexuality are liberating if witnessed by others, whereas interviewees are subject to the effects of power.

In the context of this study, 'my' interview method prerogative was to construct the subject/object as a political problematic and release the re-signifying processes of possibilities (Butler 1992). Yet no amount of pre-interview preparation can predict what will take place during an interview, whether audio-recorded or filmed. When 'a person speaks from the heart, particularly for the first time', writes filmmaker Michael Rabiger (1998, pp. 173-187), 'it can be magical … a window to the soul'. But to arrive at that moment entails environmental factors (time of day, weather, location) and the unpredictable chemistry of human interaction. Sometimes we listen well, at other times we are too concerned with our own agenda, or distracted by a ticking clock, to hear what the other person is saying. One has to be open to the encounter and all of its possibilities. The interview with Celeste Howden of Stray Dags - the band that I formerly engineered - was among the most memorable. Her narrative about facial hair, the stigmatisation and judgement of others, the shame and pain that she felt was intensely emotional, a revealing personal story for her to share (see Chapter 3). According to Dyer (1990, p. 257), people who 'come out' in a recorded interview and

make revealing statements, or tell painful stories, have usually (but not always) made a decision to do so by the time the camera crew arrives.[10] And the interview with Howden bears out that claim. Months beforehand, she and I spent hours together sifting through her remarkable archive. Without either of us realising, this gave time for her to make decisions about what she wanted to place on the public record before I returned with a recording apparatus. There is also an important distinction to be made, argues Michael Renov (2004, p. 194), between commercial confessions and those political (documentary) confessions that attend to a 'kind of self-interrogation that produces spiritual reconciliation'. The expectations of political confessions, such as Howden's, tend to focus on the greater good with idea(l)s about calling others to action and/or to think differently, which is an example of the (unspoken) documentary contract. For me, the interview with Howden brought into focus how little I actually knew, all those years ago, about her struggle to materialise her (music-politico) public/private self. During that interview, I 'unmade' (by confronting) some of my assumptions and re-made ideas about identity and radicalesbianism.

Institutional subjectivation processes tend to subject individuals to the question of 'what speaks when 'I' speak to you?' (Butler 1992) and the 'facts of history' are always open to re-interpretation. On other occasions, participants related to me as if they did not need to explain the details because I was 'there' (in the past) and accordingly must already 'know' the story, which was a frustrating but not unworkable constraint. For example, another member of Stray Dags had a strong memory of technical problems and claimed that she did not (then or now) believe that the equipment ever worked and doubted the words of the band could be heard properly, let alone the instruments on stage. The interview transcript indicates a type of disconnection between what was being said by the musician, 'the big black boxes never used to work', and to whom it was being said, the technician, and in turn reveals my discomfort and inability to tease out extra detail at this moment. It is possible to interpret these comments as a general (humorous) disparagement of amplification equipment and not only, or necessarily a personal criticism. But the remark also reveals a musician's perspective, which was

[10] This may not always be the case, and sometimes people change mid-project, which I have experienced.

occasionally difficult for me the former technician, to navigate. In hindsight it may have been handled differently. Further, interviewing friends does not always result in the 'open-ness' that filmmakers seek. An interview with an old friend I had not seen for years proved to be more challenging than anticipated. My friend was shy, her answers short and the conversation did not flow. I hesitated to ask questions that might upset sensibilities. On two other occasions I was asked to stop recording so that a story could be told 'off the record' and not for public scrutiny.

Rather than emphasise the evidence of the real, Arlene Stein (in Gamson 2000, p. 358) suggests that interviews and the recording of memories constitute examinable stories of the self, not the true self but the 'ever-changing stories that get told'. In this way, life stories may be acknowledged as 'ever-changing' and evoke less of the singularity of truth and more of the ways that identity is constructed. 'Experience becomes not the origin of our explanation … but rather that which we seek to explain' (Scott 1992, p. 25). My film/research tasks negotiated the fictions about worlds we think and believe to be 'true', both upholding, and at the same time 'erasing' the self. In this sense, 'the narrative [of oneself] might be said to determine the evidence as much as the evidence determines the narrative' (Gossman in Scott 1992, p. 24). I asked questions from an institutional position of power, and I listened. As the interviewer and analyst, I needed to manage my assumptions about people I had not seen for many years and the detail of former times that may no longer be relevant. For the participants I did not know at all and/or knew well but had had no contact, I needed to be aware of life changes and the possibility that their reasons for participating were not the same as my own. I sought trust. But I am the one transcribing the interviews, writing up a thesis underpinned by ideas about the exclusion from histories of Australian women's music and the effects of institutional neglect.

At the completion of each interview, I asked participants for some reflective thoughts on their time spent making music in a women band. In general, everyone had something nostalgic and/or celebratory to say about memorable moments and things of which they are proud. Here, I present three responses that illustrate different

emotions and political linkages between the private self and the public functioning of Australian women's music.

> I think I found some good qualities I never knew I had and I found the worst of myself. I had to come face to face with my demons … I learned how vulnerable I am with other human beings … excruciating as well as fantastic and wonderful. I learned that I love belonging to a group and at the same time I'm always pulling away from it … I guess in a way it was very expensive personally but to not have done it would've been the bigger tragedy. (Haines 2006)

> It was like a great relationship, you just move on … and I didn't miss it. It was a brilliant time and I was happy to be part of it. But what are you going to do? When you know it's over, it's over … the music industry is all bullshit anyway isn't it? (McFerran 2008)

> Women bands were a move from the individual to the collective notion of a group. What impact did it have on the larger world? Did it matter? It had an impact for all of us who were part of that scene like celebration and joy and we all joined in and we all shared in writing the story of the women's movement in Australia … Fantastic. I know how much fun we had and that it was also fraught with pain and loss. Something about youth and joy and as you get older you don't have the courage … thank you for this project, now I'll cry. (Reid. J. 2008)

Memory shapes our inner worlds and it also informs the collective imagination for the purposes of constructing social relations, communities, families and a sense of 'public' purpose to be made of 'private' lives (Kuhn 2002). Yet, personal memories and feelings are subjective rather than objective, scientific, and thus recording of queer/feminist memories is a fight for recognition. Ann Cvetkovich argues that the formulation of queer histories attends to the emotion and trauma of institutional neglect through witnessing and retelling. Understanding the emotions of queer/feminist histories and archives helps to explain some of their idiosyncrasies, and she argues, 'queerness'.

> Lesbian and gay history demands a radical archive of emotion in order to document intimacy, sexuality, love, and activism, all areas of experience that are difficult to chronicle through the materials of a traditional archive. Moreover, gay and lesbian archives address the traumatic loss of history that has accompanied sexual life and the formation of sexual publics, and they assert the role of memory and affect in compensating for institutional neglect. (Cvetkovich 2002, p. 110)

We use memory to formulate notions of 'my/our' individual/group experiences in the public domain and idea(l)s about shared identity is an ongoing question for

queer/feminist histories, a battle of historical indefiniteness. The power and limit of experience as evidence, the realism constructed through documentary interviews both announces what we *think* we know to be real, but it cannot claim to be either authentic or the final word. On reflection, it is possible that I was knowingly/unknowingly searching for a particular 'lesbian/feminist' subject in the interviews conducted for the study and this may have sometimes been at odds with my queer/feminist intention to explore sexuality as a constant state of change. Once an interview began, the imagined boundaries between the subject-object and researcher-researched did not disappear, although they blurred noticeably. Rehearsing, re-performing 'my' lesbian/feminist past self and present day lesbian/feminist/queer self in relation to others was a complex interaction that tended to affirm identity as much as unsettle and pose questions about sexuality, gender and the making of musical selves.

On Film/Research and Queer/Feminist Possibilities

It is most often, although not always, queer/feminist subjects who author their own histories (see Cvetkovich 2003; Dyer 1990) and the academy can play an important role in these processes. For Halberstam, the academy offers an empathetic force, a type of institutional intervention in the relations of power between marginalisation and the mainstream. As Halberstam (2006, p. 8) tells it, intellectual (academic) recording processes are able to claim subcultural work 'before it is absorbed by mainstream media'. Marginal cultures such as the Australian women's music scene may not be re-appropriated by the mainstream exactly as Halberstam suggests, but the role of the academy is pertinent to the formulation of histories that may not otherwise be mapped and thus, the current discussion. Documentary filmmaking as a method of qualitative research within the academy is grounded in enthusiasm, although things do not always go to plan, which raises questions about how film production and the creative work of queer/feminist filmmakers can be framed as research. Qualitative research, such as film, relies on symbols and language as a basis for communicating findings, interpreting aspects of human life and the relation of self/others. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 3) describe qualitative research as 'situated activity that locates the observer in the world'. Rendered textually visible, the researcher/author/filmmaker is

open and included in criticism, which has implications for truth/knowledges. At the outset of this investigation, I situated myself in this manner for the thesis, yet I didn't think it given for the film-to-be-made. However, analysing the politics of sexuality over time and what is at stake in formulating queer/feminist histories (on film) brought about a reconsideration of the (a) creative strategies and (b) funding pathway for 'Rock On With Your Frock On'. The remainder of this chapter therefore offers a reflection on my shifts in thinking and the flow on to the (research) production method.

It is never easy pinpointing if the subject matter of a film affects its funding potential. Funding doors open less easily in today's competitive climate, whether because of the content or what is required to tell the story. The industry is currently undergoing change but documentary convention is to identify television broadcast slots and target audiences. On that basis, I initially imagined three scenarios: focussing on music, or emphasising the political context of 1970s-1980s lesbian/feminist, or pitching the project as queer. Teasing out the issues reveals the complexities under consideration. A generalised story about 'women and music' may soothe government-regulated institutions and open funding pathways, but if the finished film reflects this bias, it is likely to estrange lesbians, which goes to the core of the problems articulated throughout the study. On the other hand, producing a film about lesbian/feminists for mainstream audiences may exoticise its subjects. Given these unknowables, I made an ethical decision to emphasise the lesbian/feminist historical aspect of the project in the belief that it gives voice to the subjects that it seeks to address even if potentially alienating a broader audience and some lesbians. While I had little success securing industry funding with this tactic, there is ultimately no right or wrong way forward, except perhaps an ethical production of subject histories. The lack of secure, substantial finance for 'Rock On With Your Frock On' means that if the project is to be realised, it will probably require alternative sources of funding, similar, for example, to the DIY approach of women's music. In this sense, my present day search for funding echoes the struggles of the past. What I mean by this statement is that 'Rock On With Your Frock On' may be suited to a form of production similar to the way Australian women's music existed without finance from the mainstream industry.

The 'advantage' in producing cultural work without backing from conventional sources is that it allows a sense of creative freedom. Renowned documentary maker Bob Connolly (2013) notes that 'independence can be as basic as the freedom to shoot and edit as long as necessary; freedom from oppressive editorial interference; from the conflicting demands of multiple broadcaster investors and state funding bodies … freedom, if you like, from the tyranny of the market place … but it requires a regular stream of money'. Independent filmmaking, as it is commonly conceived, is actually 'idealisation' because it is usually reliant on conventional industry finance. Connolly goes on to discuss the negative effects of the contemporary corporatisation of the Australian documentary industry. Potentially there is an even greater widening gap between 'independent' films that are nonetheless financed in some capacity by industry sources and projects that are completely self-financed (or financed through several private sources). There are multiple factors that cause films to languish, although it is usually to do with creative control and finance. Historical documentaries are particularly expensive because of the time needed for research, the cost of licenses for archival materials, the soundtrack, and the requirements for (potential) reenactments. There is no assurance that a film will actually be realised on the screen, whether inside or outside the academy, and this has been my journey. Thus it remains unknowable (at the time of writing) whether a DIY approach via philanthropic sources is sufficient to make 'Rock On With Your Frock On' according to the aesthetic in the (submitted) script. But hopefully, my production 'abandonment' will reverse when solutions are found in whatever format and/or media platform.

In its simplest form, this investigation deploys film/research to configure lesbian/feminist music histories but sexuality has had different consequences for the research and the creative filmmaking strategies. Decisions about how to manage sexuality in the research raised a set of ethical considerations given it cannot be assumed that all lesbian feminists and feminist lesbians believe (then or now) that sexuality has a direct correlation with music. Not all of the participants in the inquiry are lesbian. Some are but don't want it publicly articulated, some who may have been lesbian identified and in a women band many years ago are now in a heterosexual relationship. Sexuality is therefore a challenging axis of inquiry given that performances

of sexuality and sexual practices, change, slip, slide and reverse. Women may have explored a lesbian relationship for the life of the women band, but not since. Additionally, some women band members are not lesbian but enjoy being read as lesbian by virtue of their gestures, signs, dyke-hag proximities and alignments. Foucault (1997, p. 163) argues that 'sexuality is a part of our behaviour … Sexuality is something that we ourselves create … not a fatality, it's a possibility for creative life'. It might be said that stories about the embodied performances of lesbian/feminist bands illustrate Foucault's claim. For example, Party Girls insisted on an assimilationist standpoint during the 1980s and went to great lengths to 'hide' their lesbian sexuality in press interviews. The tactic actually thus enabled the band's (queer) musical life to be lived in a particular way. However, at least one member of that group now speaks differently about sexuality (see Chapter 4; see also 'Rock On With Your Frock On', pp. 245-283). In this sense, sexualities revolve around what is considered public/private, the embodiments and exteriorisations of each, which leaves difficulties for how a music history film might historicise sexuality.

Arguably, how a filmmaker/researcher speaks for others involves the potential to exoticise, exploit and/or open space for political advantage. For Nichols (2001, p. 133), performative documentaries function as a political corrective to those ethnographic films that are reliant on 'we speak about them to us', and proclaim instead, 'we speak about ourselves to you/us'. For Bruzzi (2000, p. 4), we now accept that documentaries are authored texts predicated on the 'tensions between the documentary pursuit of the most authentic mode of factual representation and the impossibility of this aim'. Yet, the question of who speaks, when/how they speak, to whom, what is taken for granted in 'we' and 'you/us,' is multifaceted and not necessarily resolved by replacing one mode of production or thinking with another. In my view, the processes by which filmmakers find a 'voice' for authoring creative work are imprecise. For example, the acclaimed *Paris Is Burning* (1990) has provoked lengthy discussions about authoring and whether a filmmaker needs to render their body transparent (in the text) to the viewer.[11] Speaking about and on behalf of others is always complex, and coming out as

[11] *Paris Is Burning* relies on the organising principles of observational documentary to convey a story about a community of drag queens and transsexuals. But the viewer never learns the sexuality and/or white

a queer/feminist filmmaker on film does not actually guarantee outcomes, although it may work to situate political agendas.

In music documentaries, storytelling techniques are often structured around the making of classic albums, concerts, music festivals, music history series and/or reflective memory pieces about individuals in bands. Storytelling may also expose (some) histories as authoritative, commonsense. Generally, within these largely expositional and/or observational modes of production, the filmmaker/author is 'unseen'.[12] My approach, at the beginning of this project, was to adhere to the (music documentary) 'off-screen' filmmaker. For example, the makers of *Radical Harmonies* and *Tokyo Rose North* are off-screen and 'invisible'. Another example is *Rise Above: A Tribe 8 Documentary* (2003), which presents an unfettered (on/off stage) look into the lives of Tribe 8 band members. Filmmaker Tracy Flannigan followed the American queercore band with an observational handheld camera in the late 1990s. The viewer does not see the filmmaker's body in the resultant film, although we are aware of her presence as she asks questions of the lead singer, Lynn Breedlove (in *Rise Above*) who states that 'being queer means you are different from mainstream … go ahead, if you don't like what you see, go ahead and hate me'. As demonstrated in *Rise Above*, music documentaries document much more than music styles because they reflect language, aesthetics and questions specific to time and place. By contrast, *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* (2005) makes a departure from the 'invisible filmmaker' that typifies music documentaries. In this film, we see the anthropologist Sam Dunn packing bags, catching a plane on his personal journey to meet, interview (and chart) heavy metal bands across America and Europe. Dunn is an engaging on-screen presenter and to

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privilege of the filmmaker in the text, which triggered much of the debate. Many commentators argue that *Paris Is Burning* unsettles documentary realism because its queer content cannot be reduced to a heterosexual framework. The performance of queers in the film who pass as straight through vogue dancing, queers the 'truth' (origins) of heterosexuality. In turn, this becomes a sophisticated refusal to fix documentary 'truth'. For further insight, see, bell hooks' (1992) discussion of the white privilege/standpoint of the filmmaker; Cvetkovich (1993) for a discussion of the film's destabilisation of documentary realism; Butler (1993) deploys an analysis of the film to revise her gender performativity theory; Prosser (1998) critiques the film and Butler's understanding of transsexuality. Filmmaker, Jennie Livingston has defended her authorship in press interviews (see Livingston and Haynes 1991, p. 40).

[12] For example, *Pink Floyd The Making Of The Dark Side Of The Moon* (2003) is about the making of the album with the same name.

achieve this type of on-screen presence requires more than social acting. I now consider (after the study's analytical, contemplative process) that it is imperative for a new film on Australian women's music, to render the filmmaker (body and/or voice) transparent to the viewer - it is, in part, my story too. However, I am a little camera shy and more comfortable behind the lens. Ultimately, the viewer may not be an on-screen presenter but my questions will be heard and occasionally I may provide a (self-identified) voice-over and/or be 'seen' with the camera apparatus interviewing women band members. Thus, a range of factors contributes to the way filmmakers 'speak' to audiences and how documentary subjects 'speak for themselves'.

Writing this chapter at the completion of the study, I have found that although political views vary, the participants consistently agreed on their desire to see the stories of Australian women's music told in the public domain. It has been noted that some lesbians may feel invisible, even disrespected if the film is promoted as queer, which raises the question of whether the end (still) justifies the means. My view is that a 'queer/feminist' film can map the lesbian/feminist landscape of women's music and might reach a wider audience if marketed as a generalised queer product. It is also possible that an alternative, future method of moving past gatekeepers, for the purposes of production, is to seek completion funding or what is known as post-production finance after the film has already been shot. Whatever happens, it is likely that 'Rock On With Your Frock On' will require a philanthropic approach (crowdsourcing in the contemporary vernacular). The downside is that it might entail making a film that is not the one I intend (in the script) given that low budget production values may prohibit the inclusion of archival material and/or the filming of key re-enactments. The upside is that the histories of Australian women's music are now formulated by and through the writing of this thesis, which marks, and makes, a significant change to the histories of women's music in Australia.

Documentary Treatment Writing: Re-Performing the Past

The creative script writing practice of this study was embedded in research from the outset. Provisionally, I titled the film 'Rock On With Your Frock On' and pursued

funding while conducting audio-recorded interviews and collecting materials (archival evidence). Over time, I found that the women's music research needed longer than anticipated. Primary materials and participants were geographically scattered, not always easy to locate and travel was needed by car/plane to other cities and regional towns. When the fieldwork phase of the research came to an end, I was a filmmaker without a film and the 'invisible' work of fundraising for 'Rock On With Your Frock On' was a time-consuming chase that had yielded little. Once it became apparent the film could not be made during the academic pathway, there was a turn toward the theoretical aspects of the project. The decision to expand the theory came quite late and after I had completed the research interviews and edited a short video using the available archival materials that I had collected.[13] The change in direction resulted in spending more time than initially planned on previsualisation, a continual back and forth movement between thesis writing and writing the treatment draft.[14] In early drafts, the move between thesis writing and script writing was awkward, requiring different mindsets. As the project expanded, writing for the screen allowed an exploration of the ideas developed throughout the thesis; in turn, theoretical considerations shaped thoughts about the documentary film as a queer/feminist text with potential beyond the parameters of the inquiry. The theory/practice 'dialogue' also allowed some of the emotional, intellectual complexities of the film to unfold.

To reflect on (my) writing lesbian/feminist music histories into a documentary film, I draw on Rebecca Schneider's theory of live performance, and Deborah Withers' (2013) paper on British women's music. Schneider (2011, p. 92) suggests that live performance and artworks such as theatre and music are often conceptualised as 'temporal immediacy, happening only in an uncomplicated now'. In other words, even though recordings may be made of an event, live performance constantly disappears, 'does not remain'. Withers (2013, p. 2) reports that the 'remains' or evidential traces of women's music in the UK are 'incomplete, fragmentary, unfinished'. Bringing the past to life

[13] The (submitted) short video 'Rock On With Your Frock On' was screened at a fundraiser organised by Stray Dags and myself. I also screened a photographic slideshow of Australian women bands at the same event. All of these processes assisted previsualisation and the script development.

[14] A documentary proposal categorises information of the intended film, whereas a treatment/script comprises an aesthetic description of what an audience might see on the screen (Rabiger 1998, p. 119).

through re-performance, she suggests, communicates the possibility for empathetic storytelling and an interactive rather than static or singular temporal dimension. Documenting queer lives and queering histories is an emotional re-performance. Whilst feminist/gay/lesbian histories have been written and claimed (see, for example, Duberman, Vicinus and Chauncey (eds) 1990; Faderman 1992; Lake 1999; Summers; Wotherspoon 1991), there is a lingering hesitation, it has been argued (Hemmings 2005), to engage with the cultural products associated with the Women's Liberation Movement, such as women's music. Poststructuralist and queer theories may dominate, for example, at the expense of liberal, radical feminist histories. Thus, writing a film about Australian women's music is an engagement with a double challenge of authorship and intention. Given the film is still-to-be-made, I do not want to speculate too hypothetically, but focus on what happened during the scholarly time frame, therefore in this section I look at the changes in the creative development.

Documentary makers are heavily invested in drawing linkages to the realities of the historical world (Nichols 1991). Jane M. Gaines (1999, p. 5) writes, documentary suggests that there is 'a special indexical bond between the photographic image and the object in the material world to which the image refers'. This raises uncertainties about referentiality, language and realism. On the one hand documentary and the act of documenting, is a will to knowledge that tends to cohere, stabilise and invest in 'real' evidence. On the other hand, the documentary form is deployed to bring the reality of that evidence into question. In the past, second wave feminists worried that 'realism as a style is unable to change consciousness because it does not depart from the forms that embody the old consciousness' (Kaplan 1983, p. 131). Audiences and filmmakers make many assumptions about realism and the real world, although in the present day, documentary 'truth' is more likely to be scrutinised as a utopian project and fictional techniques in documentary filmmaking are commonplace (Bruzzi 2000; Nichols 2001). Poems, journals, photographic essays, diary films, personal narratives are signs of 'real life' authoring that expose the 'fiction' of documentary's non-fiction.

Rather than the representation of reality, I came to conceptualise (my) documentary treatment as a 're-presencing' of the past, an empathetic technique for the writing of

effective non-normative subject histories. The notion of 're-presencing' implies access to the past through 'narrated acts of discovery and description that open up our senses as well as our intellect to the world' (Sobchack 2011, p. 327). It might be said that acts of documentary storytelling are 'undisciplined' because they are emotional. Documentary may not be a direct link to social change but it offers a mediated potential for unsettling established ways of thinking (Sobchack 2011, p. 330; see also Cvetkovich 2002). 'My' queer/feminist practitioner intention is to avoid a monolithic narrative that makes objective truth claims about 'real' evidence and to find an empathetic mode of storytelling - re-presencing - that both informs and 'divides emotions and dramatises instincts' (Foucault 1984, p. 88). By proposing a documentary film as queer/feminist, I draw on past feminisms and the instabilities of heterosexuality to mean that all cultural texts potentially contain elements of queerness, and queerness is the non-straight ideas in a text (Doty 1993). A density of discursive practices suggests that historical events (and their attendant stories) are a set of materialisations, discourses and things said and done in relation to other discourses, as this study has been at pains to demonstrate. During the production of a documentary, it is not always possible to precisely pinpoint one's own assumptions and/or the problem with those assumptions but this does not prevent some reflective analysis.

The 'Rock On With Your Frock On' pathway is a narrative about funding feasibilities and storytelling techniques. I always envisaged 'Rock On' as an archival, historical film but late in the study, the mode of documentary storytelling shifted away from one (realist) aesthetic style. The archival footage of Australian women bands that I have collected comprises live concerts in the observational style (for example, Sticky Beat and Nice Girls Don't Spit). Other footage is structured, highly edited song clips. But some Australian women bands have no such visual evidence. Therefore a hybrid style that combines exposition with re-enactments is not inappropriate. Hybridity has come to be accepted in documentary production, particularly in programs seeking to intentionally expose something about 'reality,' for example, parodic mockumentaries (Roscoe and Hight 2001). My meaning of hybridised, authored, documentary is to deploy a mixture of production modes in order to render political agendas, and the 'fiction' of documentary, visible to the viewer. Documentary is no longer an unproblematic site of

'scientific truth' and the filmmaker is not always an unseen author demonstrating the ideals of objectivity. While paradoxically, 'some form of truth is always the receding goal of documentary' (Williams 1993, p. 20), a mixture of techniques to address an audience allows for loosening rather than holding on to histories as 'true and real'. It may also open the possibility for re-thinking Australian women's music as heterogenous, fragmented histories, a space for neglected, situated experiences.

Stylised reconstructions and dramatic re-enactments, in the theatrical sense, are often used in documentaries when there is an absence of evidential material for a visual story, or events have transpired before filming has commenced (see Rabiger 1998, pp. 351-355). Some of the most typical re-enactments are 'realist' docu-drama documentaries illustrating events long gone or biographies of persons deceased. Theoretically, archival footage offers an evidential body-in-history, whilst re-enactments signal a 'body too many' because the actual 'real' historical bodies can never be matched (Nichols 1991, p. 250). Initially, I wanted to avoid re-enactments in the belief that theoretically, practically it is not a suitable storytelling technique for the women's music subject matter and re-enactments tend to raise the budget stakes. However, upon re-thinking some of these concerns, I reflected on Schneider's (2011; 2012) theory of live performance, in which she argues that if we understand the past as something that has already disappeared, formulating histories becomes a way to re-perform, re-enact 'disappearance' through the traces that remain. Eventually, I decided to use the research interviews conducted for the study in a combination of realist/non-realist re-creations, as a way to 're-presence' past bodies. Here, I present a short excerpt from the documentary treatment 'Rock On With Your Frock On' as an illustrative example of the re-presencing strategies within the creative work. The example uses animation and the re-enactment is based on my research interview with Judith Haines of Razor Cuts.

Animation. Alone on a shallow embankment, a young woman listens to the sound of a slow moving river. Tentatively, she dips her hand into the water, catching sight of her ghostly 'self-reflection' shimmering on the surface. Words stream out of her

mouth as she clutches her throat - *I cannot speak, I cannot sing* - but her voice is dry. A bird glides past, its wings locked in silence. The young woman takes off her shoes, and leaves them in the long grass. Drawn to her watery apparition, she wades into the water, still clothed and allows her body to drift. Music notes float dreamily in the sky above.

JUDITH HAINES
It was really strong. It was like a river. That was a river I could stay afloat when everything else just looked too difficult too hard to understand. Music was always really there.

Subjective storytelling may break with (or at least have the potential to depart from) the classic problem/solution narrative[15] structured around closure. Non-realist re-enactments can also build an impression of place and space that informs the viewer of public/private worlds. Deborah Withers (2013, p. 2) confirms that re-performing the past through acts of emotional storytelling 'can create openings for relating to history in affective, empathetic and corporeal ways'. In the context of Australian women's music histories, I want to re-presence the past in a mixture of non-realist (and realist) styles to suggest a songline of the self, a script that exists (as subject histories do) but without clear beginnings or endings.

A second re-performance strategy for the 'Rock On With Your Frock On' film-to-come involves a re-working of (some) women's music songs. In a musical way, this aims to provoke the viewer to query the 'evidence of evidence' and what is understood as the referent to the real. In my view, the music of Australian women's music does not need to be re-presented exactly as it was in the past. Thus, I envisage selected songs can be musically re-arranged. In particular, as indicated in the treatment, 'Housewives' by Toxic Shock will be re-worked into a heavier power rock version of the song, which may or may not provoke viewer responses about re-presencing the past. An accompanying visual sequence for the reworked 'Housewives' will also be shot for the film. It is another opportunity to explore alternative narratives to the liberatory ideals expressed

[15] Narrative in this sense means that sequences in a film can be conventionally arranged in a logical order driven by cause and effect (Bordwell, Staiger and Thomspon 1985). This cues the viewer to draw particular inferences about problems-solutions suggested by the film/maker.

in the song lyrics: for instance, a repetition of housework rather than 'freedom'. The aim is to avoid assuming 'an unproblematic relation to an objective truth that is outside discourse' (Berry 1997, p. 134) and to be aware of truth as a set of idealisations.

Queering experience as evidence and exploring subjective, empathetic storytelling techniques through re-creations, foregrounds the tension between performance and document, the personal and the taken-for-granted, the embodied and the disembodied, in short between history and science (Nichols 1994, p. 97). Jane M. Gaines (1999, p. 11) writes that 'even if we defer to some of the natural world, conceding that it is the real, even if we give the body the last word, the body cannot speak without the benefit of our intervening discourses'.[16] In Foucaultian (1994, p. 29) terms, bodies are imprinted with the historical past and searching for resemblance and a-likeness is a hermeneutic and epistemological problem of language. Blurring the boundaries between fiction/non-fiction, indeed borrowing from each other and informing each other, exposes discursivity (Nichols 1994, p. 113). Differently put, history is mutational and perspectival in the way it is re-told and evidential 'facts' (such as the 'facts' of women's music) are accordingly interpreted. The strategic inclusion of non-realist re-creations brings performance possibilities to the storytelling.

The workings of a documentary, as a storytelling technique, cue an audience to draw inferences about its overarching argument. This is a film's narrative mechanism. Conventionally, narrative techniques in non-fiction (and fiction) films are causally related events that take place in time and space: a new situation arises with cause and effect implying change. Being so, narratives are often based on universal tropes such as overcoming adversity, heroism, failed dreams, unrequited love, personal loss and so on. Nichols (1991, pp. 35-37) writes, 'knowledge in expository documentary is often epistemic knowledge … and expectations that the commonsense world will unfold in terms of the establishment of a logical, cause/effect linkage between sequences and events'. Potentially, Australian women's music could be told as a narrative that

[16] See Leahy (1996) for a discussion of observational documentaries and realism. See Kuhn (1982: 154) for a feminist analysis of *Union Maids* (1976) and the use of footage that is shot to appear archival: this is a documentary technique that blurs fact-fiction and introduces questions about the evidence of evidence.

suggests the loss of (music) dreams and/or the loss of a politically radical feminist era. However, Hemmings (2005, p. 121) cautions that narratives, which mourn the loss of the radical feminist 1970s may also need that decade to be *innocent* of its essentialism. The Australian women's music scene was not in my belief, universally and/or singularly innocent, given its investments in political agendas. Yet, while the thesis demonstrates this point, I have reservations about the film and therefore the treatment draft. There is a complexity of information in the treatment, covering many people over a long period of time, and the differences between the American and the Australian women's music scene may not be clear enough. Thus, I am not entirely satisfied that the tension between re-presencing and re-interpreting the past has been reconciled. It is possible that when the (future) film arrives at post-production, additional explanation and/or exposition (such as scripted voice-over) may, indeed, be required.

The scholarly pathway and the film production practices for this project have shown that my investigative film/researcher approach has been 'caught' in a tension at different times between objective reporting, a journalistic tendency to re-present (describe, explain) the 'real' evidence of the past and my desire to re-read, ask questions about the past. This point may not need to be fully resolved one way or the other, given that journalistic imperatives make important contributions to documentary. Similar to fiction, a documentary treatment is a guide through the phases of pre-production-production-post-production and an integral part of the creative and previsualisation process.[17] The documentary maker's task is to decide when to adhere and when to let go of the plan, and to articulate the gaps between theory/practice. Production does not always translate the intended theory (or written script/treatment) in exactly the same way. I cannot conjecture too much but without theoretical considerations and without reviewing some of the problems encountered in other films, these aspects of film practice and engagement with queer/feminist histories may not have clarified.

[17] Some documentaries also use a storyboard for previsualisation, especially if dramatisations are involved. Note that a treatment draft is not (necessarily) a 'shooting script'. A shooting script is usually the final work up of the script when the finance is in place for the shoot. The term 'scriptment' may also be used to indicate a more detailed treatment.

At the completion of the investigation, 'my' queer/feminist conclusion is that Australian women's music histories need a technique for subjective, perspectival storytelling and an awareness that the 'ability of a certain account of historical events to carry weight, depends on social negotiation rather than strict historical facts' (Berry 1997, p. 139). Thus, my authorial intention is to work toward a set of ethics and production practices for how well 'I' may produce 'my'/'our' queer/feminist music self/selves and a production mode that exposes the 'fiction' of documentary and 'reveals' something about the agenda of its making (thus its maker). This is 'my' queer/feminist technique for processing the pain of neglect and exploring the playfulness of self-rediscovery through re-performance. Ultimately, it is unknowable (and incalculable) if the content and form of 'Rock On With Your Frock On' will stimulate a different way of (audience, filmmaker) thinking about Australian women's music and documentaries are often critiqued for their presentation of a singular viewpoint. However, thus far, the research and writing activities discussed - the search for funding, the making of the trailer, the treatment draft - together with theoretical contemplation have ensured of 'Rock On With Your Frock On' is different to the film that I was intending to make at the start of the investigation. On reflection, I want to acknowledge, first the epistemological debt to the relationship between inquirer and subject. Second, the dialogic transformation and hermeneutic problem solving offered by theoretical contemplation. In other words, my approach to women's music histories and documentary (treatment) draft writing has been influenced by and through the practices and processes of re-reading second wave feminism and the critical engagement with my supervisors. Over time, I developed a different set of tools and knowledges for re-interpreting (re-presencing) Australian women's music rather than simply re-presenting it. Late in the study, my film writing oriented more decisively toward a hybrid mode of address, the inclusion of non-realist re-enactments and a musical re-working of (some) women's music songs. I hope these creative strategies invested with political intent, offer effective ways to construct Australian women's music histories on film, and reveal that there is much more at stake than the simple documentation of music.

Toward Queer/Feminist Histories and Archives

Historical projects about the liberation era continue to be written, and video images and online platforms are at the forefront of those processes.[18] Annette Kuhn (2002, p. 46) suggests that working with memories 'presents new possibilities for enriching our understanding not only of how films work as texts, but also of how we use films, images and representations to make our selves, how we construct our own histories through memory, even how we position ourselves within wider, more public histories'. There are long cultural traditions of securing and protecting knowledges of the self through the preservation of our 'remains', which is evident in museums, libraries, archives and so on. Documentary films make a significant contribution to the archival 'remains' of our selves and the meaning and value that is constructed by and through public archives. An archive of Australian women's music beyond the film, and in addition to the histories of the thesis, is one of the potential outcomes of this investigation.

There is a tendency to think of historical material in archives as static and inert, whereas Foucault's work on the histories of ideas and knowledges, suggests that histories are 'alive'. Histories and archives, he argues, are systems of functioning and enunciability, which 'differentiates discourses in their multiple existence … and enables statements both to survive and undergo regular modification' (Foucault 1972, p. 130). Building on Foucaultian logic, performative theories analyse histories in terms of enactment, repetition, discursivity, and suggest a different temporal dimension to conventional archiving. My thinking here is also influenced by temporality and Withers' (2013) article on the Women's Liberation Music Archive (WLMA), which is an online blog of women's music in the UK.[19] The site was launched in 2011 and offers an accessible historico-cultural archive of British women's music: digitised songs, illustrative photographs, posters, extensive written information, including reader comments on the website. Archives are embedded in the notion of preservation, which

[18] See, for example, *Sisterhood and After: An Oral History of the Women's Liberation Movement*, available from: http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/sisterhood/index.html [accessed 16 November 2013].
[19] See WLMA at http://womensliberationmusicarchive.co.uk/ [accessed 6 March 2014].

implies a temporal logic, the idea that we come to an object after it has been made and it is finished. But for Withers, the WLMA site communicates a temporal dimension similar to arriving at an event in the middle, where the expectation of reaching a conclusive end-point is suspended. Thus, she (2013, p. 2) writes, 'digital media facilitates high levels of networked relationships, linear time is muddled, as past, present and future touch and rebound in unexpected ways'. In other words digitised memories are temporal and less spatial and open new possibilities for access to re-performances of the past in ways that are not predetermined.

Constructing histories is an act of choreographed intentionality charged with 'the fragments and the incompleteness of other moments, other times' (Schneider 2011, p. 92). Ever since the beginning of this film/research project, I considered that an online archive would be possible for Australian women's music and encountered many women interested in digitising their music (some have already done so).[20] An Australian women's music film that might become part of a queer/feminist historical archive with online presence, a form of digital media - whether stand-alone or embedded in existing gay and lesbian history sites[21] - would add to a public stream of consciousness invested with meanings about queer/feminist identities. It also illustrates that stories about the women's movement and the gay liberation era are practices that do not remain universally unchanged throughout time and space but are the result of history and shifting cultural (and technology) practices. As Vivian Sobchack (2011, p. 323) suggests, 'presence' is a sense of doing history in the 'here and now' and we interpret past realities in order to grasp past-present-future timelines. In principle, histories open 'access' to selves, and the emotion of documentary storytelling and the archiving of memories can offer an empathetic storytelling technique (Withers 2013). Whereas narrativised histories tend to impose a singular worldview in a 'representation of *the* real', re-presencing implies access that may open up our senses as well as our intellect (Sobchack 2011, p. 330). Providing access to a temporal re-enactment of the self also corresponds to the potential for re-circulating knowledges, redistributing the relations

[20] In 2009, I set up a blog for 'Rock On With Your Frock On' but am now exploring other online options.
[21] For example, *Victorian Women's Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archive* held by the University of Melbourne. *Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives* (ALGA): http://alga.org.au/ [accessed 10 July 2014].

of power and unsettling established ideas. Hence, anxieties and attachments to the hurt of institutional exclusion may also be re-negotiated (Brown 2001, pp. 45-61). The genealogical mapping in this study challenges entrenched ideas and dominant narratives. While some historians have suggested otherwise, it can be seen that the Australian women's music scene not only existed but also materialised differently to women's music elsewhere. I hope that 'Rock On With Your Frock On' will be made and this film/research finds its place within scholarly/queer/feminist historical archives by contributing to thinking differently about the past.

Conclusion

Gathering thoughts together for the final conclusion, I cast over the questions that have shaped this chapter and the study. Why isn't Australian women's music well documented or generally accepted knowledge? Why did the scene seemingly disappear with barely a trace? Storming ahead, tearing it all down, feminist lesbians and lesbian feminists created the music necessary it was believed for a radical socio-sexual revolution. Musical forms of protest and the raw emotions of agitating for change found their way into rousing folk, raucous rock, reggae, blues, ska, jazz, as women bands voiced a new generation for which freedom and the politics of sexuality were liberatory cornerstones. Women bands negotiated the terms of sexism and took to the microphone without intentionally setting out to be radical or universal in their objectives. But it was a contradictory time. To map women bands in Australia and re-activate the non-normativity (and homo-normativity) of a music scene with a distinct sense of localised self-awareness, this investigation deploys Foucaultian-influenced genealogy to make the following propositions. (a) During the period associated with liberation and second wave feminism, the practices of spatialisation and spatial interventions were interrelated, at times haphazard, planned and unplanned encounters. In Australia, the tactics of gender separatism were widely adopted as an exertion of political power, a form of second wave feminist intervention into the gendered space of music. However, Australian women's music illustrates the divergences rather than the singularity of those political strategies. The women's music

scene opened spatial questions, and by contesting (musicalised, sexualised) space, it became itself a contested space.

(b) In general, Australian women bands aimed to subvert norms. Historically, the push to transform ideas about same-sex relations was a liberationist battlefront that adopted desexualisation tactics. Concerns for lesbian visibility intensified, as did the problematic affirmations of women-identified, political lesbianism. Rethinking Australian women's music as 'stylised acts of gender' (Butler 1990), rather than essentialist stereotypes, reveals a totality of codified bodily gestures, social acts of gender, repeated, performed on and off the music stage. Emphasising processes instead of being, it is possible to see the double pressures of gender and sexuality. There are many gaps between public and private, political idealisations and material eventualities, and bodies materialise in unpredictable ways. The 'self' is never fully realised and the effects of subversive intentions are difficult to measure. While the non-normative, embodied performances of the Australian women's music scene may have included queering social relations in everyday life, it did not produce exactly the same practices or discourses for contesting heterosexuality as scenes elsewhere, which suggests historico discursive complexities concerning choice and agency.

(c) The women's music scene in Australia did not inexplicably 'disappear', nor can its subjugated knowledges be entirely accounted for as oppression on the basis of gender and/or sexuality. A genealogical, historico-politico discourse shows that there were mechanics of domination and relations of power in operation on multiple fronts, as this study demonstrates. Women's music may continue to be historicised by some, and/or universally understood as separatist, women-identified, singer songwriter, folk music and thus, I argue, in American-centric ways. But my claim is that lesbian/feminists in Australia built a distinctly local scene using DIY modes of production. A myriad of musicalities, ideas and ideals drew people together around affinities for particular tastes and lifestyles during the 1970s-1980s. A sense of 'Australian-ness' was shaped by pragmatic attitudes and political coalitions. While politically, the Australian women's music scene in part, sought to unsettle norms, its discursive processes generated a sensibility, a sensation of one's self-production through local contingencies, economies,

and a complex relation to the international feminist stage. In the present day, a re-reading of Australian women's music, as musical selves-in-practice, opens the possibility for re-considering difference: individuals with wide-ranging experiences, stages of learning, complex relations to others and non-normative music histories.

(d) The reversal of subjugated knowledges - the indefiniteness of history in Foucaultian terms - is an ongoing project. Recording the memories of Australian women band members for the purposes of a new documentary film involves more than documenting a particular style of music. It concerns histories of lesbianism, feminism, gender, sexuality, and finding empathetic storytelling techniques for the re-performance of the past. Effective subject histories (Foucault 1984) bring into focus that which is closest, the bodies, spaces, places, social relations, and the music that accompanies everyday life. Until now, the Australian women's music scene has not been placed in discourse (as 'women's music' rather than womyn's) and as culturally, distinctly Australian. Ultimately, a documentary film text and words on a page will always carry a different affect to the bodily sensation of strapping on a guitar, turning up an amplifier and clasping a microphone but we need stories about our lives and we need ways of thinking and acting with political intent. Writing the histories of Australian women's music into a documentary film is a recognised mechanism for that type of ongoing work with potential to circulate new knowledges. Women's music in Australia was both a political vehicle and a pleasurable activity and undoubtedly it paved the way for following generations.

Personal End Note

This has been an emotional journey of self-discovery and 're-presencing'. During the 1970s-1980s, I was protesting on the street. The women's dances that I worked and attended excluded men, and police regularly raided Ruby Reds, a lesbian disco that I frequented in Sydney. The queer/feminist self that I currently live is different and it is not only that I am older, looking back at life, reflecting on memories and experiencing generational shift. Having invited you, the reader, to share all that this investigation has become, I now want to take a moment for a few more thoughts on what I have learned. The urges that are necessary (I now realise) to materialise queer/feminist histories are demanding and this work could not have begun without a firm belief in the project's worth. A long legacy of institutional neglect and public doubt about the importance of Australian women's music is a hurt that does not shift lightly, easily or quickly, and my sense of researcher isolation intensified under that weight. Therefore the completion of the scholarly work is precious and I am proud. What kept me going with an inspirational song in my head was the idea that these stories deserve public space. I learned that making a contribution to 'public knowledges' is quite dear to me and I sought encouragement from others. Throughout the research, I reconnected with friends from my time in women's music. I went out and listened to new music and enjoyed the (unexpected) reunion performance of Stray Dags. Yet the pathway for scholarly writing and critical reasoning is not easy. The time taken and the time necessary for a work of this magnitude, inevitably subjects the body to pain. And it hurts. As I write these words, I think about my extended retreat with few distractions except the library, close friends and family. Nonetheless, privation and hardship brought maturity and the processes of self-questioning have been immensely satisfying, a rewarding privilege of re-evaluation. The process of building and defending

a persuasive argument for the work also changed some of my ideas about gender, sexuality, feminism and queer. Perhaps more importantly, I have a different set of tools to manage the stories, fracture, disjuncture that repeatedly construct 'my' queer/feminist self in a biological family situation.

Researching and writing a long piece of scholarly work involves discipline, the self-practice of daily care and I nourished a desire to honour the journey, serve it well and be served. It was extremely difficult deciding that the film was beyond the reach of the study. A change of direction felt like a double load. I became depressed, unconfident (unlike me) and almost 'disappeared' in the performance of the thesis as I struggled in unfamiliar territory and needed to 'rediscover' the investigative claims of the inquiry. Occasionally I grumbled; I am a lover of music. I am not a musician. I gave over space in my home, allocated finances, devoted time, I organised, planned, worked hard and yet many more years passed than ever imagined. Unexpectedly, sleepless periods of ragged exhaustion switched off my critical voice, allowing moments of crystallisation at odd times when too tired to worry. There were also the events for which one does not plan or work hard. I suffered and recovered from serious illness and uprooted a house of fifteen years. I cared for my partner's grave, ongoing health matters and assisted my mother with my father's admission to an aged-care nursing home. He died six months before this work was completed. One needs courage and the fortitude of good grace when the emotions of life and death intervene. To actually reach this journey's end is a very deep sense of personal achievement and I will need time to appreciate in its fullest sense, the accomplishment of bringing a project back from almost 'falling over'. Above all, I hope that Australian women bands are reflected sufficiently in the stories between these pages. Music changes the mood, and if I could play-it-for-you, it-would-sound-like-this. Transformative.

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ROCK ON WITH YOUR FROCK ON

Synopsis & Documentary Treatment

Draft

April 2015

ROCK ON WITH YOUR FROCK ON

All-women bands in Australia from the 1970s-1980s, offer slice of life stories about music that are yet to be told.

Brief Synopsis

During the women's movement era of the 1970s-1980s, music became an activist tool, a way to make noise and 'voice' a new generation of women agitating for change. But where are the snapshots that describe what happened to all of the Australian women bands that got together for the very first time? While negotiating the terms of sexism, all-women bands stormed ahead, making music to accompany a radical socio-sexual revolution. Women bands used do-it-yourself methods for women-only dances and fundraisers held in community halls, and they also played established rock venues. They did not necessarily set out to be radical feminist. Most went under the mainstream radar and yet one band went to the top of the independent music chart, which raises the question of why some scenes are remembered, others forgotten. Why did women play music the way they did, and why did the scene 'disappear' from view? In the present day we tend to take 'feminism' for granted. Yet at different times it is associated with different meanings. Embattled but far from innocent, Australian women bands forged friendships and heightened emotions. Stories about the scene's fight for survival need to be told.

Figure 1. Screaming Jennies

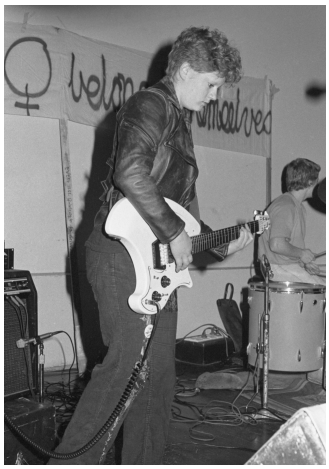

Figure 2. Libby Kerr

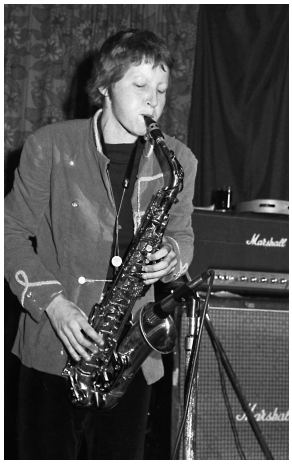

Figure 3. Penny Short

Figure 4. Razor Cuts, circa 1979

Re-creation. While listening to her iPod, a tattooed young woman is spray-painting a laneway wall. We hear a punk rock song by a little known Australian women band called RAZOR CUTS. The lyrics say 'I want to be an equal but could I in this world?' The music gets louder. The young woman writes:

Rock On With Your Frock On

A siren whoops and with the paint barely dry, the graffitist grabs her gear and melts into the shadows.

Archival photos appear on the screen (see opposite page) showing Australian women bands from the 1970s-1980s. There are women playing electric guitars and banners saying: 'Everywhere women belong to themselves'. 'Women Unite!' Archival video shows a women's movement demonstration.

Animation. A lively group of women hold placards up high, as if on a demonstration, 'Women's Music', 'Shit Stirrer', 'Feminist Folkie', 'Disco Queen', 'Country Rock', 'Punk Rock', 'Australia'. While the protestors 'protest', we see a teenager practicing guitar in a (1970s) suburban bedroom. She checks her hand technique in a mirror.

In voice-over, JUDITH HAINES of RAZOR CUTS says, 'I feel like we were born in the women's movement as a band'.

Fast-forward to 2009. At the funky Red Rattler Theatre, Sydney, the members of STRAY DAGS are setting up the stage for a one-off reunion performance. There's a buzz of excited activity as the original backdrop is hung. The quirky, 1980s women band has come together to raise funds

for this documentary film. The benefit is aptly called 'Dagarama' and I am filming the event.

An archival photograph appears on the screen showing STRAY DAGS in younger days. In voice-over, I explain (for the viewer) that I was the band's sound mixer and unlike many commercial bands, considered an integral group member.

At Dagarama, singer MYSTERY CARNAGE and guitarist TINA HARRIS take the time, amidst preparations, to talk to (me and) my video camera. MYSTERY says 'women bands are still really important'. It is a firmly held conviction that I want to explore in the making of this film.

Present Day. I arrive for an interview to-be-filmed at MYSTERY's home in Sydney. There is a clutter of quirky knickknacks and original artwork. MYSTERY is a graphic artist and she sang in two prominent women bands, respectively, STRAY DAGS and STICKY BEAT. She talks about women bands being regarded (by some) as a 'novelty'.

MYSTERY CARNAGE
As soon as you have an all women's band by it's very existence it's somehow broken some rule about what women are capable of and where their place is and so therefore it's a radical act.

Back at Dagarama, day has disappeared to night and the atmosphere at the Red Rattler Theatre is now moody red lighting mixed with warehouse grunge. The audience arrives, queuing out the door. The tickets are taken, wrists stamped, and the conversation is lively. A variety of reasons have brought women to Dagarama. MYSTERY's friend and STICKY BEAT guitarist, SALLY GIBSON says (to camera) that she's looking forward to seeing STRAY DAGS play again. Many women from other women bands have also come and I

speak with KATH DAVIS of FAMOUS GIRLS. She makes the comment, 'people say to me, oh you were in that band FAMOUS GIRLS and you weren't very famous were you?' Inside the venue, PENNY BREMNER, who was the part time (volunteer) roadie for STRAY DAGS, explains that she's driven all the way from Lismore (ten hours north of Sydney) and 'wouldn't miss the night for all the tea in China'.

The support band, BABY MACHINE, is warmly received. Then STRAY DAGS are finally on stage, picking up their instruments. The set list begins with 'Let's Have A Party', which has a blues and rhythm swing feel.

Figure 5. Stray Dags, (Back, L-R) Celeste Howden, Mystery Carnage, Kathy Sport, (Front, L-R) Tina Harris, Ludo McFerran, Chris Bourke, circa 1982

As the music plays on, we switch back to the past and see archival videotape of young STRAY DAGS playing 'Lets Have A Party'. The footage has the degraded look of (VHS) videotape in a square aspect ratio. The clip was shot at night in a dramatically lit laneway. CELESTE is wearing a wide brimmed hat, LUDO a long coat. MYSTERY and TINA are in scarves and jackets. Winter has arrived. In a maudlin tone, MYSTERY sings, 'I have spent a life time/Sitting in my bedroom/But what's the use of thinking when we could be

drinking/Tell me why should I be crying/When tomorrow we'll be dying/Let's have a party'.

Other archival video grabs show STICKY BEAT and FAMOUS GIRLS from the late 1980s. We see presenter Basia Bonkowski in a Sydney television studio. She introduces the eight-piece FAMOUS GIRLS who are donating their performance for a telethon fundraiser. Their Latin salsa is slick and smooth. In Adelaide, we see STICKY BEAT at Club Foote. It is the final performance of the electro pop band and a handheld camera moves around a small stage. SALLY GIBSON is on guitar. MYSTERY is at the microphone.

After the introduction has set the women's music scene (and the film's movement between past-present) we return to the very early days of women's music.

Archival. 1975 was a turning point for Australian women's music. In faded and scratchy film footage that was shot originally on 16mm, we see four members of CLITORIS BAND bidding farewell to friends on the platform at Sydney Central Railway Station. The group's co-founder, THERESA, is wearing bright orange overalls. The women are on route to the Pram Factory in Melbourne, (then) a venue for left wing and feminist theatre, and supper show music.

In voice-over, we hear PAM BROWN, who was the band's bass player. She reads a letter from her personal collection.

PAM BROWN
Sometimes we kept swirling like a pack of angry dogs up and down the coast between Melbourne and Sydney oblivious of the world. It was the beginning of the feminist ghetto. It was like a maelstrom.

An archival graphic on the screen shows an original poster: $1.50 entrance fee for CLITORIS BAND at the Pram Factory. We see PAM, THERESA, SHAYNE and LEE get on board the train (called the 'Daylight Express'). They settle into the leather seats of the carriage.

Present Day. Wanting to learn more about CLITORIS BAND and the emergence of women's music in Australia, I travel (on different days) to interview THERESA and PAM in their respective homes. THERESA lives in the hinterland Bellinger River, mid-north coast New South Wales. On arrival, I'm shown an acoustic guitar that has seen many a campfire gathering and THERESA explains her pathway to folk music.

THERESA JACK

> I was probably too scared to put myself forward when the anti-Vietnam war thing was happening but later on that's what I wanted to do. Sing it. Protest marches like Joan Baez. She was my role model … I needed to be doing something and for me the way was music.

Uppermost in THERESA's recollections are the massed political demonstrations of the 1970s. As she speaks, we see archival footage on screen that illustrates the anti-Vietnam and women's movement rallies.

Archival. We see more footage of the train trip taken by CLITORIS BAND in 1975. A uniformed officer collects tickets. A buffet waitress in a green uniform comes through the carriage selling ice cream. PAM, THERESA, SHAYNE and LEE are relaxed in the rhythm of the journey. Clickety-clack along the track. They rest on each other's shoulders with hands entwined. SHAYNE smokes a pipe. The cares of the world are far away. THERESA takes out her guitar from its case, and impromptu, LEE plays her flute [but in actuality, the women are reported for smoking cannabis, and on arrival

in Melbourne, taken to the police station where they are strip-searched].

Back in the present day, THERESA strums her guitar and sings a CLITORIS BAND song called 'Childcare'. 'Are you coming to the demo on Saturday morning/What's it about? Child Care/Vietnam's gone and faded from our sight/What an anti-climax to fight for childcare'.

THERESA JACK
I got fairly heavily into being a feminist but probably not as much as some people. We started playing music, Mim and me. Suddenly we were playing music together and then we met a couple of other women who played, and that was the beginning of CLITORIS really.

Present Day. Nestled in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, PAM BROWN's neat picket-fence bungalow is located in a leafy street away from the main road. PAM is a well-known poet and in her eloquently spoken voice, she tells me that the name 'clitoris' came about because of the feminist thinking at the time.

PAM BROWN
Women's anatomy was thought of as unclean and secret and a hidden thing; and women didn't have orgasms and all that sexual secrecy about women's bodies was rife. Most of us had grown up through the 1950s and 1960s and so it seemed, well it was just wrong and we had to correct it.

Re-creation. A woman with short hair and wearing overalls is painting the word 'clitoris' onto a 1960s ex-postal van parked in the driveway of a country house.

Researching this documentary, I've grown curious to delve more deeply into second wave feminist politics. There are

many assumptions about the women's liberation era. But personal struggles are not well documented. For example, THERESA loved saying 'clitoris' out loud, as a political act, but felt the band was limited and could only perform in venues prepared to advertise the band's name.

A graphic image comes on the screen and shows the original CLITORIS BAND poster.

Present Day. THERESA shifts uncomfortably in her seat. Her perspective on the band is different to PAM's because of her personal conflict about sexuality.

THERESA JACK
It was such a 'no no' word … but I hadn't come out to my family or anything and felt really bad about being a lesbian and even now it's hard for me to tell people that I was in a band called Clitoris - sort of embarrassing.

Archival. We see an excerpt from the Australian documentary film *Witches and Faggots, Dykes and Poofters*, which was released in 1978 with the aim of counteracting homophobia. The film describes a meeting of radicalesbians, and the narrator says that lesbians felt 'denied their identity as homosexuals by the women's movement and as women by the gay movement'. Women are sitting in a circle.

Present Day. Separately, PAM and THERESA both suggest that radicalesbianism was difficult to put into everyday living and it sometimes affected the band's performances. On one occasion, an audience was kept waiting because a relationship feud broke out onstage. THERESA says, 'I kept singing. It was pretty wild. Everybody got to see the dirty washing'. During her time in a women band, THERESA's search for a radicalesbian lifestyle deepened, and she came to

believe it was more possible in a rural setting. Thus, the break up of CLITORIS BAND was due (in part) because she wanted to leave the patriarchal 'evils' of the city.

Figure 6. Sheila, (L-R) Mim Loftus, Sue Trayling, Shayne Kelly, Bronwyn Stephens, Penny Short, Angelika Booth, circa 1978

After CLITORIS broke up, some wanted to keep playing music. Eventually SHEILA was formed, a band that played rock and roll in pubs.

Present Day. I go to visit PENNY SHORT, who played saxophone with SHEILA. Now a doting grandmother, PENNY lives on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. We see her walking on the beach with her dog. In a conversational interview, PENNY tells me about the time - long before joining a band - she was smitten with THERESA (JACK) when they were both young feminist lesbians, studying to be teachers and involved in 'radical' student politics, which had life changing consequences. I also learn that PENNY wrote the theme for *Witches and Faggots, Dykes and Poofters* (the documentary). She recalls the song lyrics: 'I don't want to start no hassle but I got to be gay and free'.

Archival. In another excerpt from *Witches and Faggots, Dykes and Poofters*, we see (young) PENNY talking about discrimination. At the time, PENNY was emboldened by activism and the new politics of sexuality. She published a lesbian love poem in a student magazine at the university where she was studying. But after a psyche assessment test conducted by the Department of Education, her scholarship was revoked, causing her to drop out of the course. In the archival footage we see PENNY attending a Gay Liberation march. A poster for International Gay Solidarity reveals that SHEILA is playing at the dance that night.

Archival photographs show PENNY onstage with SHEILA playing her sax, eyes shut, breathing into the instrument.

Beat Your Breasts

Beat Your Breasts is a folk influenced album by THE OVARIAN SISTERS. We see a picture of the album cover and hear the rollicking song with the same name. 'Boob titty boob titty/Long tits, short tits, even wrinkly wart tits/Low tits, high tits, reach up to the sky tits'.

Animation. Accompanying the song is an animated line drawing. Breasts of all shapes and sizes bob up and down, and women are nude from the waist up. One woman holds a placard that says 'Shit-stirring folkie'.

Present Day. I travel to Nimbin, a town with a reputation for its cannabis lifestyle, in the tropical, northern rivers area of New South Wales. My purpose is to speak with SUE EDMONDS at her eco-friendly home in a permaculture community perched high on a mountainous ridge.

Throughout her life, SUE has performed music with irreverence and political intent. Growing up in England, she belonged to the organised communist youth movement. After moving to Hobart Tasmania, she co-founded THE OVARIAN SISTERS. Sitting in her sun-kissed kitchen looking out on majestic gum trees, I ask SUE about the Hobart Women's Centre where she worked during the mid-1970s.

SUE EDMONDS
It was impossible to get an abortion in Tasmania. Through the Women's Centre and through the Women's Information Centre, it was a group of volunteer women who manned this phone. Women would ring up and somehow the money would be raised and the women would be sent to Melbourne or Adelaide. After a couple of years of this we thought we'd better discuss how we're going to have to do something more.

Archival. A newspaper spins around. When it stops we see the headline: 'Anti-abortionists are expected to pack tomorrow night's meeting'. It is dated, 26 April 1977.

SUE EDMONDS
Somehow or other it got in the press and the Right to Life advertised that they were going to come [to our public meeting]. So then we had to get together and make this agenda.

Re-creation. In an impression of the incident that SUE describes, we see a new sign on an old chemist shop that says 'Hobart Women's Centre'. A bus (circa 1977) arrives. A crowd of pro-life campaigners disembark with placards that say, 'Don't throw away the baby' and 'Support Motherhood'. Somewhat ironically, the campaigners sing the civil rights anthem 'We Shall Not Be Moved' while they march up and down the pavement. Inside the Women's Centre, lesbian/feminist and pro-life campaigner are cramped and (unexpectedly)

crowded together. A woman with a banjo clambers up onto the 'shop' counter, plinking for attention.

Present Day. I ask SUE for a sample of the music that was performed on the night of the abortion meeting, which also marked the beginning of THE OVARIAN SISTERS. She sings a well-known folk song with the words re-written from a feminist perspective. 'Down in old Hobart, old Hobart so drear/Your want an abortion but no one will hear'.

In the re-creation we see the pro-life campaigners put down their placards and listen to the music. On the screen, an archival photograph shows THE OVARIAN SISTERS sitting on the roof of a car. SUE is strumming her beloved banjo.

SUE EDMONDS
We put women's music on the agenda and we sang pro-abortion songs. That's what we did … The Right To Life attacked us and we grew from that.

Present Day. SUE shows me the *Beat Your Breasts* album cover with its photo of the women 'beating' their chests, laughing. She says 'we were not necessarily changing the world. But we were giving people an opportunity to think about another view'. SUE also tells me that she was comfortable writing songs about feminist issues but did not feel able to write about 'the lesbian stuff', although she admired other women bands that did.

Returning to the year 2009, we see STRAY DAGS on stage at Dagarama playing (anti-hetero) 'Love Songs'. The ever-energetic TINA says in her distinct Canadian drawl, 'this music will be familiar if you ever went to the Women's

Warehouse'. She is referring to the women-only space where STRAY DAGS found a supportive lesbian/feminist audience.

Present Day. While the music plays on, LUDO and I drive to Chinatown, searching for 'traces' of the past. In a busy part of Sydney's inner CBD, we look for the building once known as the 'Women's Warehouse' and we find a redeveloped block, its political, radical feminist past long gone. LUDO remembers that she once scrubbed the floor of the Women's Warehouse on hands and knees for a women's dance. On the screen, we see an archival photograph (below) that shows STRAY DAGS at the Warehouse. LUDO is playing saxophone.

Figure 7. Stray Dags at the Women's Warehouse, circa 1980

Re-creation. All-women dance. A sparsely furnished community town hall gives a sense of the stripped back places where all-women dances were held. Heavy drapes frame the (vintage looking) stage and most of the overhead lights are switched on. Two older women clink plastic cups and bump hips with a devil don't care attitude. There are roughly knitted jumpers, overalls, jeans, and glittery

tights. On the screen, we see a series of (archival) posters advertising women-only dances through the years.

Present Day. LUDO has had a lifetime of political campaigning and advocating women's rights and hasn't lost her feisty passion. She explains the importance of the feminist message in the songs of Australian women's music.

LUDO MCFERRAN
All those women bands had come out of women's communities and were writing original music, and you can never understate that. To be writing such good original music, a lot of it with cutting edge politics. We put women's issues on the map.

Archival. In a song-clip made by STRAY DAGS, we see a deep red rose losing its petals. Played backwards, the flower appears to be rejuvenating, returning to life.

LUDO MCFERRAN
I've worked in family violence for thirty years and I'm convinced if we didn't have romanticism there'd be a lot less family violence.

Archival. The clip for 'Cradle Song' by STRAY DAGS was originally shot on 16mm and its saturated colour palette is typical of the early 1980s. The clip depicts some the issues - taken up by (middle class, white) second wave feminists - about motherhood and the material realities of women's lives. Clothes spin on a rotary washing line. A child demands food. The child's mother crawls on the floor, the toys are in a mess. As the archival footage continues, we see TINA and MYSTERY posed like ABBA. They sing monotone; 'She pays the price she's such a nice lady/but nobody knows how she goes crazy/Talk to her now and ask her how she goes/You wonder why she never buys her clothes'.

The mother rips up a bedtime storybook and tips a bowl of jelly onto the kitchen table, and then slowly cleans it up.

Archival videotape that is visibly deteriorated, takes us to an ANZAC Day demonstration, 1981. Hundreds of women are marching on the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. They carry wreaths and large banners that say, 'In memory of all women in all countries raped in war' and 'Rape in War is Against All Women'. Men in uniform march past, unsmiling. Women lay wreaths on the steps. A woman is on the ground. A police officer pulls at her jumper.

Present Day. In Melbourne, I interview SUE MASLIN of DOMESTIC DIRT who was arrested with (approximately) fifty women on ANZAC Day, 1981. Afterwards she wrote a song called 'More Than One Day Of The Year', which was recorded by the band. The words scroll across the screen. 'For every hero in his grave/There's a woman raped living her pain/ … /Rape or war, it's all the same/We live in constant fear'.

Over the footage we hear SUE explaining that the legislative assembly of the Australian Federal Parliament passed new laws, which gave police the power to prevent gatherings other than those officially sanctioned under the ANZAC Day Organising Committee. She remembers her decision to march, knowing it would lead to arrest. She also recalls a terrible argument with her mother.

SUE MASLIN

My mother's brother died in the war. I remember her disappointment at the fact that I'd been involved in this march and then got arrested … so I sat down one day and I wrote a song about the damage that war causes to women through rape, which is not something that had been talked about much beforehand.

Re-creation. A woman is hand writing in a notebook. On the screen we see her writing desk, a stack of feminist authored books and notepaper. She picks up a small metal badge that says 'Ain't I a Woman?' and runs her finger around its smooth edge.

Present Day. Flying to my hometown city of Adelaide, I meet JUDITH HAINES for a conversation (to be filmed). Many who formed all-women bands connected with each other through their work in women's services. In the late 1970s, JUDITH volunteered at the (then newly established) Rape Crisis centre, where she met KAYE BROWN, who became the drummer and co-founder of RAZOR CUTS. A brilliant songwriter, JUDITH penned 'Au Pair Girl' heard at the beginning of this film. Her memory is feeling enraged at the time of writing.

JUDITH HAINES
I was so angry that men were being taken seriously for trashing the earth and they were seen as upright important citizens. I was so furious about that.

The lyrics of 'Au Pair Girl' scroll across the screen, as the anthemic music is reprised. 'Everything is yours if you're/Not born a girl/You can have a career/And blow up the world'. Underneath we see photographs of RAZOR CUTS.

Frock Off - Battles

Archival. By the early to mid-1980s, women bands in Australia were playing many styles of music to different audiences and figuring ways to survive. A band profile filmed for television reveals degraded videotape of the power rock group BARBIES DEAD. We see them loading a drum kit onto the back of an open tray truck. 'Where the hell have you been?' asks one of the women. 'Got stuck at work'

says the other. Wearing a pair of white overalls, JANE COTTRILL clears away a crate of empty beer bottles and jumps into the driver's seat. We see primary school teacher, LYNN GOULD standing at the front of her class. A young student reads out loud from a newspaper article; 'Barbies Dead is an ugly noise by ugly women'. The school bell rings. LYNN rushes out the door. The BARBIES DEAD truck has arrived to take her to band practice.

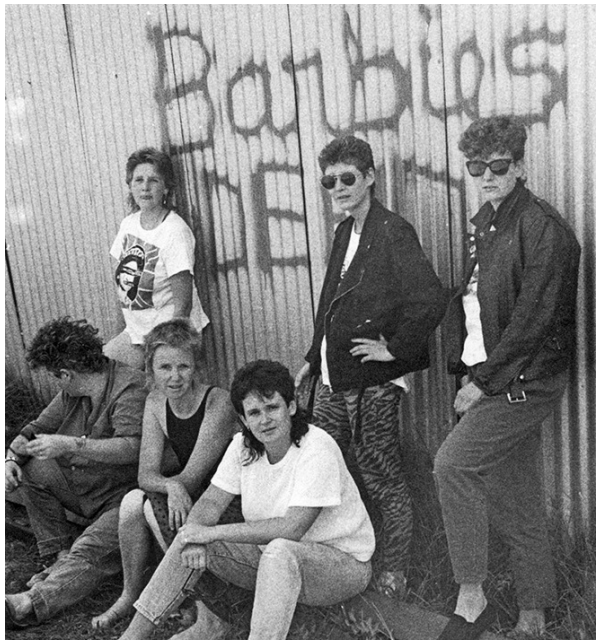

Figure 8. Barbies Dead, (L-R) Lyn Kersbergen, Jane Cottrill, Eve Glenn, Lynn Gould, Meta, Margund Sallowsky

Present Day. JANE COTTRILL and myself go to visit EVE GLENN who lives in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. EVE's shopfront doubles as home and artist workspace and poster-printing materials litter the front room. We sit out the back, where there's a comfy couch and a large wooden table in an open living area. EVE is a shy hippie, well over sixty years of age. JANE is a heavy metal devotee, fifteen years younger. The two women are unlikely friends but archival photos show they played music together and they

tell me that BARBIES DEAD intentionally re-wrote the words to a well-known AC/DC song.

Archival. Another excerpt shows BARBIES DEAD at a rehearsal studio where the drum kit is unpacked from the truck. Inside the studio, the band sets up gear and talk about the possibility of getting paid for a gig. JANE strums the introduction of their song 'Mum and Dad Are Hippies'. The first few bars are melodic and soft. Then LYNN's raspy voice blasts out, 'Piss off Neil. You mean nothing to me'.

Present Day. I am curious to hear the views of the music journalist CHRISTIE ELIEZER, who wrote that BARBIES DEAD was 'huffing and puffing about Women's Lib'. I go to meet him and also STUART COUPE who believes that some journos (such as himself) supported women bands in theory, but didn't actively seek them out.

Archival. As 'Mum and Dad Are Hippies' plays, we see BARBIES DEAD setting up a scaffold against a wall plastered with rock and roll posters. Sliding a plank between two ladders, LYNN climbs up and sprays 'Barbies Dead' in large capital letters, punk style. When she's done, they grab the ladders and scamper away (the video is sped up).

Present Day. Before joining BARBIES DEAD, EVE GLENN played in TOXIC SHOCK and her first guitar was a Kramer with a double neck. In a photograph on screen we see her staring intently at the strings. EVE explains in an interview that her intention was to play rock music 'the same as men'. On the screen we see an original newspaper headline that says 'If those little fuckers can do it, so can I', which is something EVE once said to a journalist. EVE also says that even though she was busy raising two children, it was

important for her to play music but it wasn't easy managing parenting while rehearsing and gigging.

Animation. The letters in the word 'Marshall' on a Marshall guitar amp come to life, jiggling from side to side. The letter 'R' falls down. Clunk. It now reads 'MA SHALL'.

EVE GLENN
I got a Marshall because that's what you had to have to make that noise I wanted to make. I crossed out the R, so it was Ma Shall. It was like Ma will do it.

The views of women band members reveal a number of conflicting ideas about playing styles. However, the need for a strong do-it-yourself attitude and approach was (arguably) one of the 'loosely' agreed upon principles that underpinned Australian women's music.

In 1981, TOXIC SHOCK held a benefit to raise funds for the recording of their single, 'Housewives'. The original version of the song, which we hear, begins with the sound of breaking glass.

Re-creation. The images in this sequence are filmed (or processed) to 'appear archival' and have sepia colouring. We see a circus tent that is set up like a home - a couch, television, (vintage) gramophone, mundane domestic items, an ironing board and wash basket overflowing with clothes. Banners unfurl from the top of the tent that say '*housework is unpaid labour*'. A 'properly' attired housewife switches on the television and starts ironing. A hula-hooping housewife is juggling teacups. A housewife in the guise of Wonder Woman climbs to the high wire wearing a tutu. A bearded Muscle Man-'houseman/wife' balances pots and pans.

Suddenly, the Ringmaster directs our (viewer) attention to an all-female band in the tent. We see the original (available) members of TOXIC SHOCK but they are playing a new power rock version of 'Housewives' that is much heavier than the original song. The music reaches a crescendo. 'Put your foot through the TV/Spin round and stand on your hands/Get out into the world … you must eat fire too'. The apron-wearing housewife stops ironing and links arms with Muscle Man/wife. Together they smash the television. The power rock version of 'Housewives' ends with a long drawn out chord. But it's not enough, there's still housework to be done. Muscle Man/wife walks over to the ironing board.

Figure 9. Toxic Shock, (L-R) Sylvie Leber, Fran Kelly, Nina Bonderenko, Vicki Bell, Hellen Skye, Eve Glenn, circa 1978

Present Day. Women bands in Australia depended heavily on DIY and (perhaps ironically) volunteer labour. In her interview, EVE GLENN clarifies that TOXIC SHOCK's volunteers drew political attention to unpaid labour, which is backed up by a photograph of the 'Toxic Shock Ladies Auxiliary' that appears on the screen. The second wave

feminist 'joke' was that raising money for an all-women rock band was 'un-ladylike'.

Animation. We see a lady dressed in a 1950s frock. There is a glint in her eye as she presents a perfect plate of 'ladylike' scones, fresh out of the oven.

Archival. In the mid-1980s, the members of Perth band TOKYO ROSE felt confident enough to venture outback. Their journey was made into a documentary titled *Tokyo Rose North* and we see an excerpt from the film. Highway bitumen turns into the red-dirt road of Port Hedland, a coastal township with iron ore shipping anchorage. At the radio station, a local disc jockey interviews the TOKYO ROSE. His voice booms, 'in the studio we have the band Tokyo Rose, an all female band. There are seven of you, do you find that creates a bit of interest?' The women rebut 'what do you mean by interest?' The announcer says, 'oh you know, curiosity'. That night at the Pier Hotel, once the toughest pub in the Pilbara region, singer GAIL EVANS channels Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols. She smashes a pair of boxing gloves (put on for the song), and sneers, 'One, two, three. I hate the police, and the bourgeoisie/I hate their guts, and they hate me'.

Archival. The long-running 1980s television show, *Simon Townsend's Wonder World* was a fast moving program aimed at supporting new Australian talent. Flanked by a dog on one side and a cockatoo on the other, we see the unwitting presenter saying in all seriousness, 'It's always a gimmick to have nothing but females in a rock band.' The camera throws to music reporter Brett Clements who is in a studio

back-lot with the PARTY GIRLS. There are streamers on the ground. The band plays 'What You're Thinking', an original song showcasing four-part harmonies in the style of a 1960s girl-group. Unexpectedly, each member of PARTY GIRLS gives the reporter a kiss on the cheek. Like a kid in a candy shop he says, 'Can we do that again?' It's demeaning. Unaware of what he has done, the reporter then asks the women if they get any flak for being an all-girl line up. Singer Nancy Kiel says, 'people realise we are a good rock band when they come to see us'.

Archival. A song-clip (circa 1986) by SUNSET BOULEVARD uses satire and archetypal characters to communicate a second wave feminist message. We see VICKI BELL in bed, having just woken up. She sings, 'I'm living in a fantasy land/This is reality land/Hey ... /Nothing like a slap in the face/To bring you right down to the ground'. A villain played by a woman in a top hat and long black cape sneaks up behind a 'damsel'. Taking his victim by surprise, he ties her to the train tracks. A businesswoman at a desk receives a telephone call. Melodramatically, she takes off her glasses and changes into Wonder Woman. But nothing is 'real' and the studio blue-screen is visible to the viewer. Wonder Woman 'fake flies' and never arrives. The distressed damsel finally frees herself by ripping off her ropes with bare teeth. She makes a fist and punches 'the camera'.

Present Day. While second wave feminism encouraged women to push for change, there was much vulnerability and anxiety. JUDITH HAINES explains that she lacked music knowledge and bought a Gibson Les Paul Recording guitar on the advice of a male friend who assumed she would suit a 'soft' jazz sound. It was a beautiful instrument, she says, but she wanted to create loud abrasive punk music. A photograph

onscreen (below) shows the 'wrong guitar' slung around her neck.

Animation. Alone on a shallow embankment, a young woman listens to the sound of a slow moving river. Tentatively, she dips her hand into the water, catching sight of her ghostly 'self-reflection' shimmering on the surface. Words stream out of her mouth as she clutches her throat - *I cannot speak, I cannot sing* - but her voice dry. A bird glides past, its wings locked in silence. The young woman takes off her shoes and leaves them in the long grass. Drawn to her watery apparition, she wades into the water, still clothed, and allows her body to drift. Music notes dance and float dreamily in the sky above.

JUDITH HAINES
It was really strong. Music was like a river. That was a river I could stay afloat when everything else just looked too difficult too hard to understand. Music was always really there.

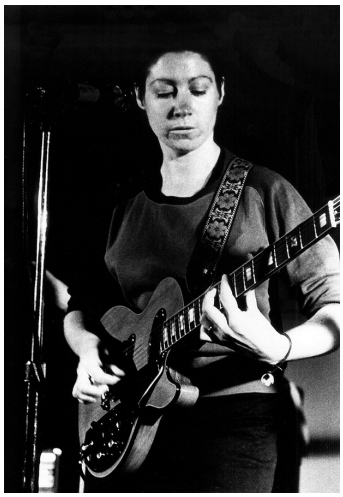

Figure 10. Judith Haines

We learn from JUDITH that she grew up in a difficult family situation. Music and poetry were her coping mechanism.

JUDITH HAINES

I've had a few periods of being non-vocal for psychological and whatever reasons. So for me it was more the norm to not have a voice and to not speak. When Razor Cuts got started up I had to work through this whole thing of being able to use a microphone.

Present Day. We see JANE COTTRILL at home 'noodling' on her guitar. A closer look reveals her beloved 'axe', a Les Paul Gibson covered in stickers and a picture of Paul Stanley from Kiss. In conversation JANE talks about feeling confused by some of the feminist criticism for playing music believed (by some) to be 'cock rock'.

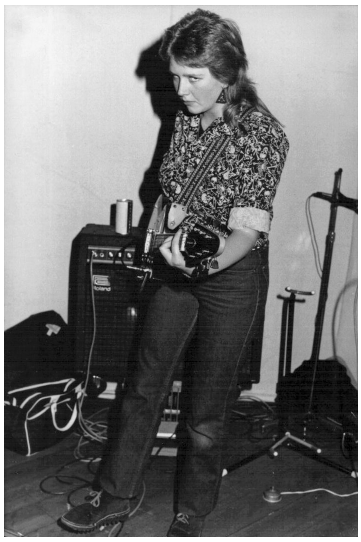

Figure 11. Jane Cottrill, pre Barbies Dead

Animation. Onstage, we see a young woman with a mullet (haircut) executing a sweeping chord sequence on her flying 'v' guitar. Looking out to the audience she catches sight of one woman covering the ears of another woman. The guitarist steps on her effects pedal. We see soundwaves 'radiating' out from her guitar to the audience 'whahwhaah' 'whahwhaah' 'whahwhaah'.

Archival. In degraded (VHS) videotape, we see BARBIES DEAD at a pub gig playing their signature tune 'Barbies Rap'. 'Do something new, use your head/You've got to face it Barbie's dead/ … B-b-b-b, b-b-b-b, b-b-b-b, Barbies dead'. LYN pounds the drums. The sound mixer lets loose and jumps over the console into the crowd.

Re-creation. While BARBIES DEAD fended off criticism, PARTY GIRLS tried unsuccessfully to get a record deal, which is depicted in this re-creation. A scratchy film aesthetic makes it appear archival. We see a nervous man in a brown suit walking into an administrative office. He pulls at his coat pocket and shakes hands with a music executive. They sit down on a leather couch. The executive makes an off-handed gesture to the photographs (of the Party Girls) that are spread out on a glass table. In a close up shot we see a tape recorder with its cassette turning round and round.

Present Day. Bass player, FAYE REID of PARTY GIRLS lives and breathes music. In the lounge room of her comfortable Sydney home, where we speak, there's a guitar collection on display. PARTY GIRLS had weighty connections, explains FAYE, and yet failed to secure a deal.

FAYE REID

I put a little tape recorder in our friend's pocket because I wanted to hear what was going on. He had three meetings with three majors. They all said, quote unquote 'the day we sign a bunch of dykes and they're too bloody old'. We were in our 30s and we sold probably $1,000 worth of merchandise each week so we were

definitely viable. They didn't know what to do with us.

We go into FAYE's home office where she shows me the EP of six songs that PARTY GIRLS funded out of their own pocket. It hangs on the wall, proudly framed.

FAYE REID
There was some gay girls in the band, myself I am, and we didn't let that out but it got out of course and that's the reason basically that I feel we didn't get signed. Back in the 1980s that's just the way it was.

Archival. Degraded videotape shows PARTY GIRLS performing at the OZ Aid for Africa concert Sydney Entertainment Centre, 1985. There's a massive crowd. In the video, singer Nancy Kiel makes a comment that PARTY GIRLS are the only unsigned band on the bill (INXS was the headline act). Sexuality was not the only reason that Australian women bands could not secure industry finance, but it is an issue that needs further exploration.

Archival. It's 1990 and DONNA JACKSON of NICE GIRLS DON'T SPIT (NGDS) is making a homemade video of their 'Lip Tour'. To a handheld video camera, she says, 'this is a workshop and we are learning how to make a film about women's revolutionary music'. She winks. DONNA's camera takes us through the front door of an inner city house and into a room where music gear is strewn higgledy-piggledy on the floor. Stuck to the lid of an open guitar case is a sign that says: Nice Girls Don't Spit Tapes $10, Stickers $1.50.

Present Day, Interview. At her inner city Melbourne home, DONNA says that it was absolutely necessary for NGDS to do everything themselves.

DONNA JACKSON
We made two cassettes. One came about because we were going on tour. It was exciting. We thought we'd sell it and make a fortune. We sold a lot of the first one at gigs, and [we sold] t-shirts. It funded our Australian Tour. Then we decided we couldn't do it anymore and we made 'Last Drinks' to document our work, which I'm glad we did.

Archival. In their 'Lip Tour' video, we see NGDS unloading band equipment with the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the background. One of the women says to the (shaky) camera, 'oh the glamorous life of a rock band. One day we will be able to afford roadies'. Begrudgingly, she carries an amplifier inside. The camera follows to where the band is setting up instruments. Later that night, NGDS are on stage and DONNA has trouble hearing her self sing.

Lemons Alive

In 1983, *Lemons Alive* by STRAY DAGS went to the top of the independent music chart. At the time, the word 'lemon' was a euphemistic term (sometimes negative) for lesbian.

Present Day. The DIY tactic of STRAY DAGS was similar to other women bands. But while talking to LUDO, I ask about the differences between American and Australian women's music and why she thought it was necessary for STRAY DAGS to create and assert their 'Australian-ness', and if it was possible to make such a distinction (at the time). MYSTERY also explains her views. On the screen we see the colourful artwork that she designed for their album. Bright yellow lemons are dotted around its edge. *Lemons Alive* was made with a loan from a friend, repaid after sales. It received good rotation on community radio stations and rated at

number one on the indie chart for the 1983 October-December quarter, which we see on the screen.

Animation. The members of STRAY DAGS are in a station wagon loaded with instruments. The neck of a guitar sticks out the car window. Their song 'Rude Girls' comes on the radio. Shouting excitedly, they whoop along.

Back at Dagarama, there's a break in the music and under red lights, we see women passionately kissing. I quizzed a diehard STRAY DAGS fan as she arrived earlier in the evening. For her, the band's (2009) reunion brings back memories of her first lesbian kiss. Personally, I remember that STRAY DAGS had a song titled 'Het Jungle' with utopian (gay liberation) lyrics about escaping heterosexuality and being 'free'. Speaking with LUDO, I learn that she believes the music industry didn't understand STRAY DAGS and their strong feminist lyrics and presentation as 'out' lesbians.

LUDO MCFERRAN

> We had to create our own social scene … we wanted to get off with each other and have fun and so there was an imperative to create a social scene. Maybe the hetero women wanted that scene as well but we were the driving force because we didn't just want it we needed it and maybe that's the difference.

Archival. A photograph of International Women's Day, 1978, appears on the screen, revealing two women kissing (one in overalls), their arms draped around each other's shoulders. Archival footage from an episode on homosexuality and law reform (shot by ABC television for the current affairs program *Four Corners*), takes us to 1982. We see STRAY DAGS onstage performing at a women-only event. A colourful dress swirls in the crowd. In voice-over, the narrator says, 'Stray Dags are an all-lesbian band. They play at regular

'gay' dances in one of Sydney's town halls'. The film's (male) narrator goes on to say, 'Legal they may be, but when a woman discovers she is attracted to another woman, she faces the same trauma that a man does when it comes to telling the world that she's gay'. This is a debatable point that can be discussed in the film-to-be-made.

The 1970s-1980s was an era of contradictions. On the one hand it is associated with a public affirmation of lesbian identity. But some women band members thought sexuality was a 'private' matter. Actually, life was more complex than either 'coming out' or being 'closeted'.

Figure 12. Domestic Dirt, circa 1982

Present Day. SUE MASLIN of Canberra based DOMESTIC DIRT remembers that on the whole they did not promote the band as lesbian. Nonetheless they had a playful picture of themselves (above) for use in particular promo situations.

SUE MASLIN
It was important for us to be a feminist identified band, and to have lesbians ...

> we were open, we were out, we were in the band but we were not all lesbian in the band so we were not ever promoting ourselves as a lesbian band.

Archival. TOKYO ROSE is onstage in Port Hedland. The singer plonks an Akubra hat on her head and sings with a twang in her voice. 'Its hard to be a dyke in Hedland/Especially one that likes rock-a, rock-a-rockabilly'. The mostly male audience are drunk dancing and 'Dosey Doe' with each other.

Present Day. Pint-sized singer JACQUIE REID of TOKYO ROSE is at her home in Canberra. She talks with me about sexuality within the Australian women's music scene.

> JACQUIE REID
> I was never a lesbian separatist … we were young feminists, we were lesbian/feminists and for me there was a real difference being in a band with women … do men and women have a different sensibilities? I don't know. There's good and bad music that's all that I know.

In an interview with jazz guitarist SHARON JAKOVSKY, I learn that an all-women's band was both a struggle and a supportive place for lesbian/feminists such as herself and life partner, musician NIKKI COLEMAN. The two women founded the jazz band ZELDA SWANG and they also played with the short-lived, all-female, big-brass band ROOM TO MOVE. SHARON shows me her guitar collection hanging on the wall of their inner city, Balmain home.

We see archival videotape from 1986. Television presenter Basia Bonkowski is wearing a blue suit with wide lapels and shoulder pads. She is hosting a music telethon and introduces ROOM TO MOVE. The camera starts close up on the saxophone and moves out to reveal twelve immaculately dressed women in black and white attire. The big band

ensemble performs a beautifully executed, classy version of the jazz standard 'Ain't Misbehavin'. The singer is the only woman wearing a dress.

Archival. On a break from their 'Lip Tour' in the Northern Territory, the members of NGDS drive to a watering hole. We see them behaving like 'blokey-blokes' in the outback. They rev up the car wheels on a dirt road, hang out the window, and yell out loud. At the watering hole there are more screams of delight. The women strip off and clamber onto a log in the water. Breasts naked, holding beer cans aloft, they sing, 'aye, aye, aye, aye'. The dog barks.

DONNA JACKSON

> We are dykes and we are outsiders … We were sometimes consciously trying to provoke people or provoke men in the audience or provoke how they saw women and we were butch – not Michelle – butch working class and into cars – Liz Flynn had a red panel van and I had a white Chev and Billie had an old red Mercedes – what was that silver Holden you had? So we had cars and it was a class thing and we were trying to be provocative.

Later we see NGDS onstage belting out an original twelve bar blues in their country rock style. 'I met a girl/I try to be good/I try to give up drinking/Because I thought I should/Three weeks later I was in that bar/Beating up boys and driving my car/Cuz I'm trouble'.

Dagarama. Back at the Red Rattler Theatre, I speak to VICKI BELL of ESCARGO GO. Her expression is deadpan as she says, 'I'm a hippie and playing music with women was about sharing energy. It was cheaper than psychotherapy'.

Archival. 'Flesh Wound' by ESCARGO GO is a hybrid reggae song with ska beats. We see a suburban house; toast pops

up, kettle boils and a 'housewife' (singer VICKI BELL) throws a lump of meat (her 'heart') to the dog. The clip progresses to an outdoors party. The guitarist grins from ear to ear. VICKI sings, 'Our love is just a flesh wound/Whoa ah oh'. It's a catchy beat.

Archival. Onstage at Club Foote, MYSTERY talks to the audience and then STICKY BEAT'S keyboardist Marianne Permezel begins a heartbreak ballad titled 'Forever' (that she wrote). Hands fly over the keys as her voice soars. 'Watching every moment go by/Touching me inside'. MYSTERY harmonises. TINA is on percussion. Emotionally, the mood shifts to sadness and reflection.

Present Day. There are many stories within the Australian women's music scene about relationship bust-ups causing the end of the band, but perhaps none as 'infamous' (in my view) as STRAY DAGS. At her Sydney flat in Bondi, TINA tells me that she absconded with a man while in a relationship with MYSTERY and stories of her 'indiscretion' circulated on the lesbian/feminist 'grape vine' for months.

TINA HARRIS

> Ludo had given her resignation because she was over lugging gear … then the shit hit the fan with me, and the boy I was seeing. Yeah, Mystery and I were lovers and that was [swear word] so that was it. Bang. We did our last gig on 19 May 1984.

A photograph of the band's final performance shows the emotional strain made more intense due to the elevated status of STRAY DAGS within the women's scene. Yet, seeing TINA and MYSTERY in archival footage of STICKY BEAT and the present day interviews, and Dagarama, it is clear the rift mended and that music helped the two women remain friends.

As the Dagarama night draws to a close, STRAY DAGS play their last song, which is 'Self Attack', an upbeat disco number with a driving bass line. The signature tune is performed with all the self-possession of 1981, when the song was first released as a single. 'Lets all bleed/Lets all bleed/Self Attack'. The lyrics are 'heavy' but 'hidden' by the pop delivery.

Figure 13. Dagarama, 2009

Figure 14. Stray Dags, Dagarama, 2009

After the applause has faded, we see MYSTERY and CELESTE backstage and buzzing with energy, their arms around each other. CELESTE says 'It was great to be transported back in time' and 'to feel young again'.

♪♫♬♭♩ *End* ♪♫♬♭♩

Archival. We see STICKY BEAT (Mystery, Tina, Sally, Ursula, Rhonda, Marianne) giving each other a hug as they leave the stage. The crowd calls out for more. The band returns to pick up their instruments. Over the visuals we see the names of the Australian women bands that made the scene.

Barbies Dead, Clitoris Band, Domestic Dirt, Doris Dazed, Escargo Go, Famous Girls, Flying Tackle, Foreign Body, Hotspots, Lavender Blues, Loose Lips, Nice Girls Don't Spit, Party Girls, Razor Cuts, Rapunzel Gets Down, Riff Raff, Right Furniture, Room To Move, Screaming Jennies, Shameless Hussies, Sheila, Sticky Beat, Stray Dags, Sunset Boulevard, The Budgies, The Evictions, The Ovarian Sisters, Thin Ice, Thrush, Tokyo Rose, Toxic Shock, Women's Electric Band, Zelda Swang and so on.

The animation from the beginning of the film is reprised. We see a crowd of women holding placards. 'Shit Stirrer', 'Feminist Folkie', 'Disco Queen', 'Blues', 'Jangly Jazz', 'Country Rock', 'Punk Rock', 'Power Rock Freak', 'Reggae', 'Ska', 'Women's Music', 'Australia'.

Archival. In a 'coda' clip, we see LYNN and LYNDA of BARBIES DEAD waiting at a tram-stop with bucket and posters in hand. When the tram pulls in, they slap a poster on its rear end. As the tram disappears down the tracks, the women make a speedy get-away in the opposite direction.

Summary Notes

This film provides different insights into the women's movement, feminism, gender and sexuality at a particular historical time. Australian women's music was far from innocent, but friendships were forged in an emotional, musico-politico fight for survival.

Aims and Outcomes

There are twin outcomes envisaged. First, the proposed film is a yearning for lesbian/feminist histories, which may otherwise be 'lost'. Second, it is the hope that at least one other girl, woman, sister, mother, daughter will pick up music instruments and play. A website that forges links with women's music histories around the world is another possible outcome for the film's research. An online archive can offer digitised songs accompanied by relevant supporting material. Visits to the website ('hits') and a social media pathway will re/connect people through the exchange of stories. Additionally, the materials of the research may be lodged with archive repositories and made available for future exhibition and/or research.

Educational Reach

A study guide aimed at young girls and teenagers will show the influences of the women's movement and that feminism means different things at different times. Histories are needed to imagine the future. Women bands not only existed in Australia during the 1970s-1980s, but they also paved the way for others.

Production Aspects of the Film

'Rock On With Your Frock On' is an impressionistic re-presencing, rather than 'real' step back in time and makes use of re-creations as well as photographs and archival footage. A selection of original songs will be musically re-arranged, but close attention is needed for the enhancement of the sound. Poor quality VHS tapes require audio (and video) restoration and some archive vision requires a new soundtrack.

At the time of writing, fifteen hours (approximately) of archival footage has been transferred to the digital environment for re-use. Pending budget constraints, some material is still to be acquired (for example, Clitoris Band). There is archival of Nice Girls Don't Spit, Tokyo Rose and Sticky Beat that has not been mentioned in the treatment, and additional footage from the Dagarama event. Hundreds of photographs have been collected and it is envisaged that editing techniques will be applied to those images. The interviews to be filmed will use 'everyday' lighting while many of the re-creations may appear stylistically archival. If necessary, explanatory voice-over will be written during post-production.

Note: The interview comments in the treatment are taken from the research interviews, as discussed in the thesis (see Appendix D). See also the four-minute video for 'Rock On With Your Frock On'.

Appendix A

Australian Women Bands 1970-1990 (Part A)

Adelaide		**Canberra**	
Annabelle's Band		Domestic Dirt	1982-84
Bash, The	1980	Newrotics	
Crotchet's, The		Salvation Jane	
Date with Judy	1984	She's Famous	
D'yse Wanna		Sunset Boulevard	1985-86
Foreign Body	1978-82	**Darwin**	
Furious Chicken		Five Finger Discounts	
Fun 'N Only		Trash	
Girls At Play	1983	Thrush	1980
Grand Larceny		**Hobart**	
Hats Off		Budgies, The	1982-84
Hotspots	1981-86	Ovarian Sisters, The	1977-81
I want I want		**Lismore**	
Little Mess Big Band		Shrieking Violets, The	1987
Lunatic Fringe		**Melbourne**	
Modesty-B-Blazed		Barbie's Dead	1983-86
Permanent Wave	1983	Butterfly	
Plague of Cats		Charlie's Angels	
Razor Cuts	1979-81	Disco Flash	
Red Meds		Evictions, The	1983-85
Ruby Red & the Chevrolet's		Eye Lash Back (one night only)	
Screaming Jennies	1981-82	Feral Women	1987
Shameless Hussies		Flaming Abandon Supreme DT*	1990
Sticky Beat	1987-92	Flying Tackle	1976-77
Soda Jerx		Franz Tram	1986
Sweethearts of Swing	1987-89	Girl Monstar	1986
Thin Ice	1986-87	Heresides	
Things You See	1982	Ladies Revolutionary Brass	1981
Whiskey & Old Lace		Loose Lips	
Women's Dance Band		Mogadonnas	
Brisbane		Mojos Blues Band	
Layoff	1978	Mystical Miss	1973
Spit	1983-85	Nice Girls Don't Spit	1989-91
Stolen Goods	1979	Oroton Bags	
Zero	1979	Polytix	
		* DT = Dance Team	

Melbourne		**Sydney**	
Raelene Citizen & the Outskirts	1977-78	Room To Move	1986
Rapunzel Gets Down	1989	Rum Babas	1987
Right Furniture	1981-86	See Jane Run	1988-89
Scream Pretty Peggy		Sheba	
Screaming Heep	1974	Sheila	1976-78
Stranger Than Fiction		Standard Set, The	1987
Sweet Jayne		Stray Dags	1979-84
Toxic Shock	1979-81	Swift Kick	
Vixen		Swindle Sisters & Their Orchestra	1989
Wet Ones, The	1984	Tu, Tu Fa	1981
Women's Circus Band		Vicious Rumours	
Women's Electric Band (WEB)	1978	Women's Big Band, The	1989
Perth		Widgies, The	
No Such Band	1979	Zelda Swang	1987-89
Reducers, The			
Bags, The			
Tokyo Rose	1983-86		
Sydney			
Anywhere But Paris	1986		
Clitoris Band	1975-76		
Crash Cups	1984-85		
Crooked Straights	1979	Adelaide	30
Doris Dazed	1985	Brisbane	04
Escargo Go	1981-82	Canberra	05
Ever Since Eve	1990	Darwin	03
Eyebrow Opera		Hobart	02
Famous Girls, The	1987-91	Lismore	01
Freeda Stairs		Melbourne	32
Friction		Perth	04
Foz Bodix	1983	Sydney	39
Hens Teeth	1980		
Huntress		National Total	120
Lavender Blues, The	1978-83		
Maiden Oz			
Moonstone			
Nervous Rex			
Other Band, The	1979-81		
Party Girls	1982-87		
Peaches	1976-78		
Piano Accordian Band			
Pommy & the Bastards			
Razzamatazz			
Riff Raff	1977		

Appendix B

Australian Women Bands 1970-1990 (Part B)

A Tinge of Fire		Plain Wrap
Band of Angels		Retro Rhythms
Blue Tomatoes		Rip It Up
Curse, The		Sarah Lee and the Tarts (Brisbane)
Death Before Disco		Sleight of Hand
Don't Tell Mum		Steel Soul
Dugong Women's Jazz Band		Suffering Jets
Girls Night Out (Canberra)		Wild Women in Wellingtons
Glenys Millers		
Hot Bagels (a capella)		
Human Backs		
Hysteria		
Introducing Doris (Hobart)		
Juicettes, The		
Late, Late Show, The		
Lim Rhythm		
Lisa Young Quartet		
Little Loves, The		
Little Sister		
Lizi Manaria Band, The		
Lois Lane		
Mighty Mouth		
Minimis		
Minx		
Mixed Bag (Wollongong)		
Models of Perfection		
Mohair Stockings		
Nanny Goats Gruff		
One Night Stand		
Palm Court Duo		

Appendix B is sourced from Jean Taylor (2009; 2012) and information on posters held by the Victorian Women Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archive.

Appendix C

Discography, Australian Women's Music

Year	Band Members	Track List	Discography
1984	**Budgies, The** Jill English Diane Hansen Subi Mead Susie Tyson Marian Webb	Sporting Dykes Cheek To Cheek Ode To Punk The Nuclear Family In The USA Women of Strength The Forest Is A Place of Beauty If Only I Had A Car That Didn't Break Down Where The Women Are Insane City AK Girls (Annie Kenny Girls)	Title: *Some of My Best Friends Are* Cassette Self Published
1987	**Doris Dazed** Donna Day Celeste Howden Glenys Page Liz Smith Bronwyn Stephens	Supergirl I've Been Wondering Talk To You	Title: *Doris Dazed* 45 rpm Vinyl Self Published
1991	**Famous Girls** Linda Bacon Jenn Crowe Sarah Cunningham Kath Davis Samantha Davis Julia Day Louise Gore Tina Harris Linda Kelemen Deb King Cathy Kirk Donna Ross Gina Schien Jenny Swain	Listening In Security Blanket Like I Should Just Arrived	Title: *Famous Girls* Cassette Self Published
1981	**Foreign Body** Natasha Boyar Jenny Cole Margie Dodd Jenny Lake Kim Layburn Michele Morris Annie Shepherd Carole Treloar Gill Turpin (Julie Grace)	Gangland Nothing Yet	Title: *Foreign Body* 45 rpm Vinyl Independent release by Foreign Body on Good Bunch Records

Year	Band Members	Track List	Discography
1985	**Hotspots, The** Chris Blades Delma Corazon Lee Brooks Julie Holmes Libby Kerr Jill Olsen Leanne Taylor	Outside War Games She Says No Private War Spirals Coming To Touch Down Black and White Block The Shock Temple of the Wind	Title: *Hotspots* Cassette Self Published
1978	**Lavender Blues, The** Carole Deagan Nicole Mortier Dorelle Pinch	Lavender Blues All Things Shall Perish If This Is Life Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Foot After Such A Good Start Lesbian Nation Wake Up Sister Standing In Nowhere Land I Will Never Marry Twenty-two Years Bella Suicide Song Lavender Blues (Reprisal)	Title: *Wake Up Sister* 12 inch Vinyl Independent release on C.B.S. Records Self Distributed
1982	**Other Band, The** Lee Brooks Chris Fysh Laurel Henderson Jane Stewart Ineke Veerkamp	Waiting At The Station Put Away To Die Affected Freedom Violence Munchies Homebound Standing Waiting For Release Merry-go-Round Vicious Circles Push Shove Where Do I Go Armchair Judges	Title: *The Other Band* Cassette Self Published
1980	**Ovarian Sisters, The** Mary Azdajic Tina Bain Sue Edmonds Penny Sara Lian Tanner Susie Tyson	What About Me The IPD What A To Do Eat Your Heart Out Hey Mr Policeman Beat Your Breasts Miss Tasmania Quest Refuge Paranoia Locked Away Deviant Musty Fusty Fraser The Razor	Title: *Beat Your Breasts* 12 inch Vinyl Independent release by The Ovarian Sisters on Candle Recordings

Year	Band Members	Track List	Discography
1989	**Nice Girls Don't Spit** Michelle Brisbane Liz Flynn Donna Jackson Billi Montana Sue Slammer Tony Trouble	Lucille Last Time Cynical Trouble Seven Lonely Days Midnight Boots Fairlea	Title: *Nice Girls Don't Spit* Cassette Self Published
1991	**Nice Girls Don't Spit**	Nashville Lizzy's Song J.O.K. Fish and Chip Heaven So Tough I Miss Her Bandanna Queen Jackson Down The Track	Title: *Last Drinks* Cassette Self Published
1984	**Party Girls** Linda Bacon Judy Costello Nancy Kiel Louise Hughes Catherine Lambert Veda Meneghetti Faye Reid Pam Withnall	Isolation Only Your Heart	Title: *Party Girls* 45 rpm Vinyl Released on Possum Records
1985	**Party Girls**	Too Close For Comfort Isolation Only Your Heart Heroes and Heroines What You're Thinking Over and Over	Title: *Party Girls* EP Vinyl Independent release
1989	**Rapunzel Gets Down** Paula Dowse Kerry Gilmartin Elizabeth Jamieson Rebekah O'Flaherty Merryn Tinkler Jennie Tomorrow	Dentist Song Pandora Clause 28 Ruth's Shoes New Native Hat I Wanna Go Home Take Away The Pain, Rain Rapunzel Rap Tumba Rumba Spitfire	Title: *Rapunzel Gets Down* Cassette Self Published
1989	**Sticky Beat** Mystery Carnage Ursula Dutkiewicz Sally Gibson Tina Harris Caroline Higgs Marianne Permezel Rhonda Voigt	Fruit Salad Ozone Strange Places Silhouette Mud On The Ground Dark Cloud Tickled Pretty Pink Café Rap Round and About Forever	Title: *Sticky Beat* 12 inch Vinyl Self Published Also available on cassette

Year	Band Members	Track List	Discography
1981	**Stray Dags** Chris Bourke Mystery Carnage Celeste Howden Ludo McFerran Tina Harris	Confessions Self Attack	Title: *Stray Dags* 45 rpm Vinyl Independent release by Stray Dags on Ewe Wave Music
1983	**Stray Dags**	Cradle Song Tension Love Songs Let's Have A Party Avon Calling Intimidation Het Jungle Six Months Rude Girls	Title: *Lemons Alive* 12 inch Vinyl Independent release by Stray Dags on Ewe Wave Music
1981	**Toxic Shock** Vicki Bell Nina Bonderenko Cahsn Foley Eve Glenn Fran Kelly Sylvie Leber Tess McPeake Hellen Sky Helen Smart	Housewives Intoxicated Prisoner	Title: *Toxic Shock* 45 rpm Vinyl Self Published

Note: demo tapes and recordings of rehearsals and gigs not included.

Appendix D

Material Sources

ABC Radio (1987), *Fast Forward*, radio program, exact date of broadcast unknown, Ursula Dutkiewicz, private collection. Program is about the Women's Rock Institute and Australian women bands.

ABC Television (1984), *Edge of the Wedge*, videorecording, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, exact date of broadcast unknown, Jane Cottrill, private collection. Program shows a profile of Barbies Dead.

ABC Television (1982), 'Golden City of Gays', *Four Corners*, videorecording, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 4 September, Catherine Mitchell, private collection. Program shows Stray Dags at a women's dance.

Clitoris Band (1975a), Live Performance Balmain Town Hall, recorded audio, recordist Jon Rhodes, National Film and Sound Archive. Duration 1: 49: 55 minutes.

Clitoris Band (1975b), Live Performance Pram Factory, recorded audio, recordist Jon Rhodes, National Film and Sound Archive. Duration 2: 02: 16 minutes.

Clitoris Band (1975c), Unedited 16mm film footage (mute), Jon Rhodes, director of photography, National Film and Sound Archive. Footage shows train journey by Clitoris Band from Sydney to Melbourne.

Domestic Dirt (1982), *One Day of the Year*, unpublished videorecording by Sue Maslin and Frances Sutherland, Sue Maslin, private collection.

Escargo Go (1983), *Fleshwound*, videorecording (song clip) by Sue Kerr and Jane Campion, Australian Film Television & Radio School.

Party Girls (1980-1985), Videorecording, show reel, Faye Reid, private collection. Shows television appearances by Party Girls, and Oz Aid for Africa concert, 1985.

Room To Move (1988), Videorecording, Sharon Jakovsky, private collection. Program shows performance by Room To Move.

Sticky Beat (1991), Unedited videorecording, Ursula Dutkiewicz, private collection. Video shows Sticky Beat performing at Club Foote.

Stiletto (1978), *Goodbye Johnny*, videorecording available from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7eBWlmeYtw [accessed 12 January 2010].

Stray Dags (1982a), *Cradle Song*, videorecording (song clip) Sabina Wynn (dir.), Celeste Howden, private collection.

Stray Dags (1982b), *Let's Have A Party*, videorecording (song clip), Sabina Wynn, private collection.

Research Interviews

Arlidge, Sue (2008), interview, Adelaide, 28 April.

Baird, Barbara (2008), interview, Adelaide, 27 April.

Bell, Vicki (2008), interview, Newscastle, 21 March.

Besgrove, Jacqui and Mayhew, Rebecca (2008), interview, Wollongong, 6 August.

Brooks, Lee (2008), interview, Tweed Heads, 6 June.

Brown, Kaye, (2006), interivew, Adelaide, 4 August.

Brown, Pamela (2008), interview, Blackheath, 11 April.

Corazon, Delma (2006), interview, Melbourne, 16 July.

Cottrill, Jane (2006), interview, Melbourne, 20 July.

Conway-Herron, Janie (2008), interview, Lismore, 4 June.

Coupe, Stuart and Wilkinson, Vicki (2008), interview, Sydney, 14 March.

Dutkiewicz, Ursula (2006), interview, Melbourne, 30 August.

Edmonds, Sue (2008), interview, Nimbin, 5 June.

Ford, Sally (2006), interview, Melbourne, 1 September.

Glenn, Eve and Leber, Sylvie (2006), interview, Melbourne, 19 July.

Gordon, Vicki (2008), interview, Sydney, 28 March.

Haines, Judith (2006), interview, Adelaide, 5 August.

Harris, Tina (2006), interview, Sydney, 23 August.

Hender, Margaret (2008), interview, Adelaide, 29 April.

Holland, Dawn (2006), interview, Melbourne, 31 August.

Howden, Celeste (2008), interview, Sydney, 30 August.

Jack, Theresa (2008), interview, Sydney, 25 May.

Jackson, Donna and Brisbane, Michelle (2006), interview, Melbourne, 27 August.

Jakovsky, Sharon (2008), interview, Sydney, 8 April.

Kerr, Libby (2008), interview, Canberra, 19 March.

Maslin, Sue (2006), interview, Melbourne, 19 July.

McFerran, Ludo (2008), interview, Sydney, 17 May.

McPeake, Tess (2008), interview, Canberra, 19 March.

Mitchell, Catherine (2008), interview, Sydney, 3 March.

Reid, Faye (2008), interview, Sydney, 4 March.

Reid, Jacquie (2008), interview, Canberra, 26 September.

Shepherd, Annie (2008), interview, Adelaide, 26 April.

Sly, Lesley (2008), interview, Armidale, 7 June.

Stephens, Bronwyn (2008) interview, Booyong, 6 June.

Webb, Marian (2008), interview, Lismore, 5 June.