Outstanding issues :
Gender, feminisms and librarianship

Rosemary Catherine Ilett

Submitted to the University of Glasgow
for examination for PhD

DACE / University of Glasgow

December 2003

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This thesis employs a third wave feminist perspective to consider the regular crises experienced by British librarianship concerning professional status and issues of theory and practice. It proposes that librarianship, particularly within the public library, is being contested by a range of external and internal forces with immense significance, and that such processes have occurred at other periods of major change, notably the late nineteenth century and the late 1960's and early 1970s. It explores the gendered roots of such manifestations, and reviews the critiques and other possibilities offered by earlier feminist waves, with those of second wave feminism seen as of particular significance, but limited in their ability to offer satisfactory insights.

Contemporary librarianship is identified as vulnerable because of its difficulty in accepting the gendered nature of its nineteenth-century construction, when the activities of American librarians like Melvil Dewey had profound effects on its ongoing form, components and practitioners. Ongoing debates about librarianship's professional status are viewed, using second and third wave feminist insights from sociology and other theoretical positions including queer theory, as outcomes of late Victorian notions of gender roles that have embedded structures, frameworks and behaviours within librarianship that still continue. It is argued that the librarianship ratified by the professional library associations resists ideological challenges to its construction and maintenance, with feminism the pivotal example under consideration, and that relevant activity taking place in settings outside the mainstream is frequently invisible. This is proposed as limiting the possibilities of librarianship and the work of librarians, within what is defined as a feminised occupation. A twenty-first century interpretation of librarianship informed by feminisms is proposed, and considered through the utilisation of an original concept, gendertopia, derived from Foucault's heterotopia, that describes the transformative potential of libraries and aspects of librarianship.

To undertake this investigation the experience and actions of women librarians within mainstream British libraries were explored through field-work, along with the activities of three contemporary British women's libraries that operate outside the mainstream and which derived form different periods of twentieth century feminisms. The author has been actively involved in some of the activities described, and to reflect this and feminist research methodologies, the development of which are described, an explicit theoretical position is taken that integrates autobiographical and fictional material.

The waxed floor of the library squeaked when she walked on it. And there was the smell of wax and polish, she remembered that from when she'd been here before. The high windows were open to the blue sky and sunlight filled the newly-dusted room, fell across the long wooden shelves of books. The girl did not know of a place that was more clear, more light and high outside.
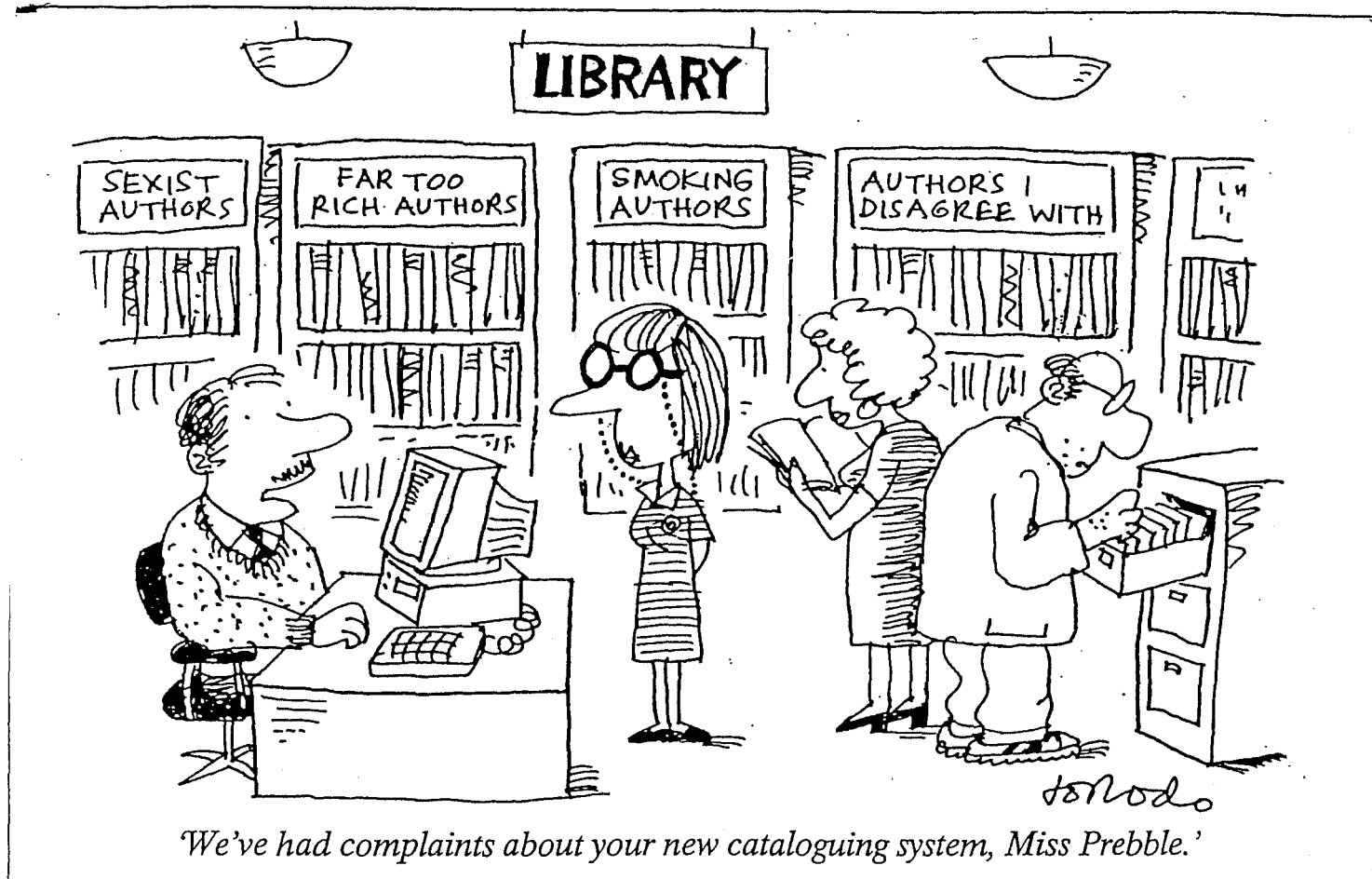(Gunn, 1999, 17).

People become librarians because they know too much. Their knowledge extends beyond mere categories. They cannot be confined to discipline. Librarians are all knowing and all-seeing. They bring order to chaos. They bring wisdom and culture to the masses. They preserve every aspect of human knowledge. Librarians rule. And they will kick the shit out of anyone who says otherwise.
(Librarian Avengers, 2003, no pagination).

In the movie *It's A Wonderful Life*, Jimmy Stewart sees what the world would have been like if he'd never lived. He calls from his window beyond to Donna Reed his now-librarian wife looking frumpy, unhappy, unfucked and practically dressed. She lets rip a hysterical scream. Had Jimmy Stewart never lived, might Donna Reed have been....
a lesbian, I mean a librarian?
(Thistlewaite, 2003, 93).

'We've had complaints about your new cataloguing system, Miss Prebble.'

Contents

Preface

Part One : Theoretical perspectives in librarianship and feminism

Chapter One identifies librarianship as the site for observation within a changing context. It proposes that although the twentieth century saw an upsurge of activism, legislative and social change to benefit women, feminised librarianship is continually in a state of flux but dynamics concerning the role of women are rarely addressed. It situates librarianship as a practice reflecting and incorporating social, cultural, political and economic factors, with a historically ambiguous identity and function, making it vulnerable when crises occur and when disruption takes place within the existing status quo and social order. This chapter attempts to explain why librarianship is particularly contested and open to challenge.

The contemporary impact of information communication technology together with changed expectations of the role and function of libraries, notably public libraries, appear complex for librarianship, reaching into its heart and core identity. This may be partly because its purpose, meaning and its nature are not clear. Librarianship appears to have been self-absorbed and overly concerned with professional status during much of the key historical periods with which I am most concerned. The chapter will specifically position the major period of social change in the late 1960s and 1970s as the one to be studied, heralding uncertainty within librarianship about its professional status. Tools like trait theory that were used within that period to assess professionality will be employed to consider librarianship at that time and question how it saw itself. The chapter will reflect on the origins of this ongoing uncertainty about librarianship's professional status as these tools appear to be wanting and unable thoroughly to explain librarianship. Bringing in an understanding of gender relations into these debates to allow discussion of librarianship as an occupation associated with women may provide the insight that will help to develop further understandings.

Chapter Two will develop an argument that the Women's Liberation Movement in the West, or second wave feminism, developing during the late 1960's and early 1970's, began to make challenges to librarianship's construction and practice, and therefore needs

to be taken into account. To begin to do this, it will consider the development of second wave feminism, through the Women's Liberation Movement, describing its main theoretical positions and themes, focusing in detail on socialist, liberal and radical feminism. Feminism challenged many academic disciplines, most notably sociology, that until that time had been androcentric and failing to understand or acknowledge gendered social arrangements or their impact. Reflecting on how social, domestic, economic organisation and arrangements were viewed by sociology during this period and noting methods of study and research that because influenced by feminism will enable me to introduce new insights into debates concerning librarianship. Understanding librarianship with awareness of gender relations, gained through second wave feminism, with the ability to regard librarianship as a social and occupational practice that inevitably incorporates gender dynamics, is then possible.

Opportunities offered by second wave feminist insights into work and domestic life and women's social and cultural roles are of value in this study, but it is important to acknowledge their possible inadequacies. Librarianship can be illuminated using tools from second wave feminism but perhaps not enough to consider the contemporary context. The chapter discusses for example second wave feminism's inability to fully integrate the diverse perspectives of race, sexuality and class, therefore excluding all women whom it could have benefited and represented. These failings arguably contributed to the movement's eventual fragmentation, yet also facilitated the development of post-second wave thinking especially concerning identities and affiliations, of benefit to later parts of the investigation. Other aspects of thinking concerning aspects like space and its meanings, that integrate and progress second wave feminist thinking, may also be of later help in the investigation.

Chapter Three describes the development of feminist sociology, women's studies and feminist research methodologies as products of the second wave feminist project that aimed to incorporate insights and practices that both challenged existing arrangements, and suggested new alternatives within academia. The chapter also establishes the methodologies that I generated to carry out the fieldwork, and how I informed my deliberations and investigated librarianship from a third wave feminist perspective. It describes how I established my research area, undertook my field-work, carried out

interviews and reflected on my own influences and histories, and how they contributed to some of the trajectories that I later describe. It defines my approach as a third wave feminist bringing my own experience, involvement and reflections into both the carrying out of the research and its writing-up, as well as having an active involvement in many of the settings and events described. To systematically incorporate my own histories and influences throughout the work, I use fictionalised diary entries at the start of each chapter to provide a cameo of the issues that I will address in each chapter, positioned in the time and space at which I first thought about the insights as presented.

The chapter provides a history of the steps taken to locate my informants and those I interviewed. It describes the aims of the questions that I asked and how I amended and worked with them. It sets out my reflexive position and how I saw myself in relation to the research that involved my identities as a feminist and a librarian, and therefore the work could never remain fully objective. My relationships with British women's libraries, the focus of the last part of my thesis, are explored. The chapter also reflects on the barriers encountered in using the approaches that I chose, as well as my own reactions to undertaking the research and how it helped to clarify my situation as a non-practising librarian and feminist whose life has moved in other directions.

Chapter Four explores further applications of feminist insights into work and work roles to better understand librarianship as a work practice that involves women. It describes second wave feminist sociological approaches to gender and the workplace, and uses this knowledge to discuss the office, administration, work roles like the secretary and information technology from a gendered perspective. To apply these tools to librarianship, I then reconsider traits from a gendered perspective. This allows an exploration of librarianship from a more knowing position as gendered occupation, not fully understood by such a limited functionalist method as trait theory. The notion of the semi-profession, developed by Etzioni at the start of second wave feminism, is highlighted as another example of theorising about women and work without fully incorporating gender as a factor.

The chapter ends by raising outstanding concerns about issues like knowledge, identity and space that began to be addressed through some theorising from second wave feminism, but not to the extent required to fully comprehend librarianship and the work

of the librarian. It suggests that second wave feminism had a limited impact on thinking about librarianship and its theory and practice at the time when it had most influence and that other theoretical opportunities need to be taken.

In order to locate new understandings of librarianship at the start of the twenty-first century, **Chapter Five** goes beyond second wave feminism as it responded to challenges from internal and external forces and began to develop new theoretical positions. It acknowledges the opportunities offered by the second wave to understand librarianship as a feminised profession, but moves to consider theories such as postmodernism and their role in assisting the creation of third wave feminism. The chapter reflects on second wave feminist epistemological challenges to positivist knowledge and its aim to develop new knowledge and to redress academic and knowledge deficits experienced by women. It finds such thinking insightful but limited overall for considering librarianship which involves practitioners, most of whom are female, or seen to be female, working within physical, organisational, professional, virtual and knowledge spaces.

Explaining further the impact of external and internal space will allow more understandings of the position of women in the library and in public spaces, and the construction of roles including that of the librarian. Postmodern and third wave feminist thinking around space and gender relations is therefore discussed. An argument is then made for a reading of space that acknowledges the construction of public and private space on gendered lines. The creation of nineteenth century, rational space is described, where gender roles became embedded, and women were regarded as publicly disorderly but privately decorative. Initial examples are given of this in relation to libraries, namely the middle-class home library and its gendered construction, and the role of women in presenting and decorating domestic space by their presence.

Foucault's concept of heterotopia is described in detail as a useful tool to understand contemporary gendered relations and space. The various definitions of heterotopia are set out, with discussions concerning Foucault's application of heterotopia to libraries of particular significance. The chapter argues that third wave feminism generates a range of issues relevant to librarianship and this investigation, and that these will be utilised in the remaining parts of the thesis. It concludes by introducing the concept of gendertopia, a new theoretical construction that I have generated and defined through Foucault's

heterotopia and by undertaking my investigations. Gendertopia is defined and proposed as useful in the final Part of the thesis in assessing the potential of the three women's library sites that are investigated as possible testing-grounds for new formations of feminism and librarianship. The chapter concludes by arguing that to fully understand contemporary librarianship, with the full range of theoretical concepts that have now been set out, it is necessary to return to the construction of late nineteenth century librarianship, and then to the challenges made to it by second wave feminism, as the next Part sets out to attempt.

Part Two : The legacy of contemporary librarianship

This part of the thesis will analyse the establishment of contemporary British and American librarianship and locate its origins and desires to explore, order, organise and control the world. It will reflect on this experience through challenges made through different wave of feminism, especially from the second wave, and attempt to answer some of the questions that Part One has raised in relation to librarianship as a potentially gendered occupation and practice. It will then allow the final Part to be positioned as a possible solution to some of the questions that have been raised.

Chapter Six describes the key architects of modern librarianship – Andrew Carnegie and Melvil Dewey – and their professional, organisations, ideological, physical and gendered legacies, particularly those of Dewey. Arguing from a post-second wave approach about their impacts on the development of contemporary librarianship, I review Dewey's beliefs and motivations, including concerns with order and hierarchy, and social dynamics. I explore his efforts in standardising and creating the new librarianship through organising and introducing infrastructures like library schools, library supplies and businesses, professional library associations, the introduction of women into librarianship and the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme.

Carnegie is positioned as the philanthropist who realised many of Dewey's dreams through the funding of public libraries in Britain, the United States and throughout the world which encapsulated notions of reverence, order and learning. Dewey's business

and social interests moved into areas beyond librarianship to support the work of the developing middle-classes, and his development of Lake Placid as model community, is discussed to reveal further his attitudes towards race and gender. The chapter sets out a number of important aspects of librarianship including classification, and suggests the possibility of second wave feminist challenges via librarianship that the next chapter will address.

Chapter Seven charts the attacks and objections made to the settlement inherited within librarianship through the work of Dewey and Carnegie and others, by women within librarianship inspired by second wave feminism. The feminist concerns of some British and American librarians as they began to question the underpinnings of librarianship are uncovered, including the involvement of some of the librarians that I interviewed. Some reference to the activities of first wave feminists within librarianship will be made, as the desire of Dewey to create a malleable profession of 'tender technicians' as Garrison describes became partly dislodged through the independent nature of many of the women who were drafted in to promote subservient domesticity in the library.

The chapter considers second wave feminist work within public libraries concerning key areas of stock selection, linking back to women's historical library role as selectors of library stock where female characteristics and tastes were felt important. Reflection on the British and American library associations will also be made, and identifications made of where and how women librarians began to introduce change based on second wave feminist insights about the concepts of professionally that were being proposed. The chapter discusses theorising about classification schemes from a feminist and librarianship perspective and includes a section on the work in 1980s of the British groups, Women in Libraries and the Library Association Women's Group, both of which challenged the Library Association from different second wave feminist positions.

These attempts at feminist transformation were never fully successful as this section will conclude, because of the feminised nature of librarianship, the lack of support from women for women-oriented concerns and the inability, like second wave feminisms overall, to move firmly into areas of investigation that incorporated diversity. The chapter suggests throughout that other insights into feminist challenges to, and engagements with, librarianship may be demonstrated through the activities within

women's libraries that operate outside the mainstream, as the last part of the thesis investigates.

Part Three : How do feminism and librarianship engage outside the mainstream?

In the Introduction to Part Three, I describe the tools to be used and the questions that will be asked of three British Women's libraries. This concept will provide a gender-aware way of interrogating the meanings of certain types of space for women, and will be applied to each women's library in Part Three to analyse their abilities to transform and influence collective and individual awareness and self-knowing. On the basis of continuing a critique of Dewey and his outcomes, from a third wave feminist position, it will be important to raise questions concerning five identified facets – trajectories, identities, space, feminisms and classification and librarianship – and their engagements within women's libraries. To explore these concerns from this perspective, I will introduce my case studies of three British women's libraries. These directly derive from the main waves of feminism between the nineteenth and twenty-first century, embodying different feminist intentions and critiques of, and approaches to, librarianship.

Chapter Eight introduces the first women's library to be interrogated from a third wave feminist perspective – The Women's Library in London – and considers its trajectory from its origins as a first wave suffrage resource to becoming a high-profile mainstream development. Like the other two libraries that follow, besides the histories and influences that have impacted upon the Library, investigation will also be made of the manifestations of identities, space, articulations of feminism, and library and classification issues – to chart the possibility of the Library being a potential gendertopia, and a location that can offer new understandings of feminism and librarianship. Relationships that the Library has with other women's libraries are also discussed, partly concerning their embodiment of various waves of feminism.

The chapter argues that feminism has complex meanings within the library as it appears to try and incorporate various feminist waves and postmodern approaches, and to adopt other identities including that of a museum and an institution linked to academia. It suggests that the Library manifests certain messages about librarianship, class and

professionality, and presents oppositional tensions of activism, radicalism and diversity from a seemingly neutral position, for which naming it postfeminist or beyond feminism may be understandable.

Chapter Nine charts the fortunes of the Feminist Library in London, that nearly closed during the research period after years of steady decline, in relation to the five main areas as already described and its potentiality in offering a gendertopic experience. It describes its trajectory through second wave feminism and its difficulties as it failed to achieve public funding after the demise of the Greater London Council and continued to operate outside the mainstream in the tradition of radical feminist separatism. The chapter also reflects on the Library's relationship with feminism, notably the decline of second wave feminisms and feminists during the life of the Library. It argues that the two are entwined, and describes the Library's resistance to adopting new forms of feminist discourse and approaches that could provide financial lifelines. The Library is interrogated as a space and a potential gendertopia for those using and working there, including past and present volunteer workers.

The relationship between the Feminist Library and The Women's Library is described as one of power inequalities between first wave and second wave feminism, and between class and theoretical positions, and as significant in seeming inability or desire of these libraries to work together to promote an enhanced form of feminist activism or feminist librarianship. The role of feminist librarians in the past work of the Feminist Library is described, along with second wave feminist schisms about professionalism that perhaps inhibited the potential development of gender-aware librarianship. Events that occurred near to the completion of my investigations, concerning the Library's future and its need to shift some of is ideological beliefs are reviewed, with my own role made explicit.

Chapter Ten describes Glasgow Women's Library as an organisation that arose after second wave feminism. It describes its relationship to the five themes that the Introduction to Part Three sets out, its trajectories, space, identities, engagement with feminisms, and its incorporation of understandings from librarianship including classification and the input of feminist librarians as supporters and advisers. The Library's changing association with local authority and its funding streams and outcomes are discussed, including its links with the local public library service. The chapter again

reflects on this library's contact with The Women's Library in London, partly as a way of understanding the relationships between various feminist waves and also a way of charting the possibilities of a feminist-inspired librarianship.

Discussion also takes place on responses of the Library to their changing circumstances and environment, including the onset of Scottish devolution and the challenges of new feminisms and women's diverse needs. My own involvement in the Library is described through the inclusion of personal reflections that chart some of the developments within the Library concerning interfaces between feminism and librarianship. The potential gendertopic nature of the Library is a key feature of this chapter, and its arguable identity as a third wave feminist library reviewed.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this investigation revisits key arguments and themes, and reviews the findings of the three parts. Particular consideration will be made of outstanding issues within the five key elements – trajectories, space, identities, feminisms and librarianship and classification – from both public librarianship and women's libraries. It will be concluded that gendertopia and a third wave feminist reading of librarianship offers opportunities to envision a new approach to librarianship that incorporates elements of postmodern feminist understanding. A process will be undertaken that reviews the challenges that this approach offers and its liberatory potential for librarianship through utilising aspects from all feminist waves.

Bedfont Public Library, Middlesex, 1968

Dear Diary

I went to the library today with Mum, Alison and David. We went through the fields, along Bridlepath Way, by Beech Road, round Grovestile Waye, and past the gravel-pits near Nan's house. Loads of planes went over from the Airport. At the library, I had a lovely time. Me and Alison and David sat down and read books, it was just like being at home. The ladies there knew all about the books and they showed me how to find the ones I wanted. They made me feel special and helped me.

I like those ladies. I told Mum I would like to be one because I like books. But she said it wasn't all just about reading. One of the ladies showed me a book called *I Want to Be a Librarian* - it shows the things they do - they choose the best books for children, they mend books that are worn out, they help teachers find books and they put books on shelves. I would like to do that.

Alison and me have got so many books in our bedroom, ones that we have got for Christmas and birthdays. We are going to make some tickets so that our friends can borrow them. If any girl would like to read our books we can help them - just like the ladies in the library.

Rosemary Catherine Ilett, aged 8

Chapter One

Librarianship : Identity, change and crisis since the 1960s

- Introduction

- Crisis, what crisis ?

- Names, identities and demand

- Changing public libraries

- Librarianship as a contested practice

- Can the concept of professions help understand librarianship ?

- Identifying professional traits

- Trait Set One : Librarianship's knowledge, training and education
  Specialist knowledge
  Training and education

- Trait Set Two : Librarianship, professional associations and unions
  Professional associations
  Unions

- Trait Set Three : Librarianship service, ethics, values, commitment and community
  Service and need for the service
  Code of ethics
  Values
  Commitment and community

- Trait Set Four : Librarianship : autonomy, independence, public image and status
  Autonomy and independence
  Public image
  Status

- Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter will suggest that contemporary librarianship, specifically public librarianship, is undergoing a crisis regarding its functions and role, its activities, its identity and where it takes place. Central to this uncertainty appears to be the professional identity of the librarian, and perceived and real threats to it. Librarianship has continually been concerned with itself as a profession, and this introspection appears to have been strong at significant historical points when social and cultural movements facilitated internal and external questioning and responses. This chapter will question whether the concept of professionalism can help understand librarianship's seeming vulnerability and difficulty in responding to change, and propose that concerns with professionalism and the construction of librarianship are linked.

I will therefore interrogate librarianship through employing a set of tools grounded in this period that aimed to identify the traits that made up a true profession. It will suggest that the current crisis in librarianship partly emerges from the 1960s period when widespread social transformations in the Western world, based on repositionings and new engagements with race, class, and specifically sex and gender, affected librarianship and those who practised it. That is not to underplay the effects since then of microtechnology and global communication that have provided powerful new tools to librarianship and have expanded the information resources, products and possibilities available, that will be referred to throughout this, and later, chapters. I will begin by reflecting on the current context of British librarianship.

Crisis, what crisis ?

> Librarianship is in a period of great transition. Expanding use of information technology and dramatically changing demographic and economic environments are forcing us to re-examine our profession and to ask some tough questions about our future relevance and viability.
> (Reed, 1996, 1).

Librarianship, at the start of the twenty-first century, is experiencing a transition as Reed put it that relates to its practice, context, content and identity. It is subject to a complex range of pressures, many external, but some grounded in the construction of Western librarianship and its relationship to various forms of social and material relations. Histe *(1996)* suggested that librarianship is 'reflective of the society in which it exists' *(29)* and posited the post-industrial growth of electronic communications and information technology, and its impact on 'every aspect of intelligence and popular culture' *(29)* as a central influence. As Gorman *(2000)* commented similarly, libraries are not self-contained systems, and are affected by 'what is happening in social life, social organization, and global economic trends' *(3)*.

Maidment *(1975)* predicted that computerisation would have little impact on future librarians, and 'only a small proportion of tomorrow's' librarians will need to know much on this subject' *(138)*. However, his vision could not have been further from the truth. There have been revolutionary changes in how information is organised, collated and disseminated, and how, why and by whom library and information services are provided. Changed public and business expectations of information services, linked to technology, have expanded the role of information communication technology in educational, leisure, entertainment and community settings as well as in the library. The introduction of the People's Network, free Internet access in all British public libraries, including 557 in Scotland, has changed the nature and use of these spaces *(People's Network, 2002, Scottish Executive, 2003)*. But Kranich *(1996)*, Schneidermann *(1996)* and others argue that the increased commercialisation and commodification of information has created, and been made possible by, tools such as the Internet in which librarians have arguably had limited influence. However, recent articles in the library press have begun to draw out the potential applications of aspects of librarianship such as indexing and classification to the virtual information world *(Breen, 2000; Pedley, 2000)*. A senior officer in C.I.L.I.P. (the new name for the British Library Association) suggested that librarians should worry less about their title, and concentrate on meeting the needs of the information age when 'imaginative use of the tools provided by classification, indexing and cataloguing' *(Field, 1999, 449)* should still furnish librarians with a leading role.

As Greenhalgh, Worpole and Landry *(1995)* pointed out in relation to public libraries, the forces of Post-Enlightenment change - shifting views on public education and self-improvement, moves toward a more inclusive and diverse society, the failure of representative parliamentary democracy, and desires for a more pluralist democracy and broader forms of cultural production - have all combined to generate many of the questions that this work investigates. The empowered consumer may have higher expectations of the library than before, and Drake's comment, quoted in Thompson *(1982)*, that library users have changed from being 'guardians and supporters of libraries to consumers of information services' *(101)* is truer today. Encouraged by policy imperatives like Best Value *(Kirby, 2001)* a level of 95 % user satisfaction was expected of British public libraries in 2001 *(Library Association, 2001ii)*. In the same year, the President of the then British Library Association commented that two pillars of government policy - knowledge-based administration and the learning community - should be at the heart of public libraries and that almost every person 'who crosses a library threshold is registering a commitment in favour of self improvement' *(Naylor, 2001, 724)*. Although this interpretation may be somewhat narrower than that being currently sought through central and local administration, it indicates something of a refocusing.

Names, identities and demand

There are other issues to consider concerning the condition of contemporary librarianship, including its popularity as a discipline and potential career. The identity of the librarian is complex and multi-faceted, and contains normative assumptions that are increasingly contested. The identity of librarian is increasingly less clear, and its broad church now contains :

> . . . librarians, library technicians, library educators, public librarians, special librarians, information specialists, knowledge managers . . . university librarians, teacher librarians, library consultants, professionals who work directly with clients, professions who do work in libraries, and professionals who do not.
> (Bundy, 2001)

It is less easy to identify librarians, and there appears to be less demand for qualified librarians, even in areas where they previously flourished. For example, the English Public Library Standards for 2001 contained no benchmark for the number of qualified staff in each library area or per head of population; services had only to show that they employed 'appropriate' numbers *(Library Association 2000i, 131)*. For recently trained librarians, only 60 % of undergraduate library and information science students obtained library work after graduation, whereas 93 % of postgraduates did, often in management roles, and in both groups, special libraries outweighed any other employment sector *(Black, 2001, 155)*.

Librarians are taking on new functions, and different occupational groups are merging into areas traditionally associated with librarianship. Views are being expressed in librarianship journals about an impending crisis in the quality of new librarians that will cause a future lack of skilled, quality managers *(Library Association, 2001ii)*. One factor affecting people's interest is felt to be the negative image of the librarian, as 'bookish, scared of people' *(Library Association 2001ii, 260)*. The commodification of information is now clearly restructuring the economics and organisation of librarianship, transforming the nature of public libraries and threatening established identities and structures. I will now further discuss the changing nature and context of public librarianship, and the challenges to previously long-standing work practices and locations.

Changing public libraries

The locations for British librarianship, especially public libraries where most library staff work, are also changing beyond recognition *(Ezard, 2003)*. The London Borough of Tower

Hamlets has changed all its public libraries into 'Ideas Stores' - 'modern, access-friendly spaces for libraries and lifelong learning' *(Middleton, 2000, 510)* - where zones for different activity and interests sit side-by-side. Such action appears to be successful in increasing library usage, as book issues quadrupled in the new Bow Library in its first year *(Wainwright, 2003)*, and the library was short listed for the 2003 Public Library Building Award *(Public Library Journal, 2003)*. Some of these new libraries are financed through Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs), and Government 'Pathfinder' status that change the nature of public library funding, local accountability and encroach on the notion of the public library as a local good. The recent successful practices of mainstream bookshops in offering coffee, sofas and relaxation areas *(Usherwood and Toyne, 2002)* have been widely adopted. A recent article considering the role of British public libraries in building social capital and community cohesion, suggested that their current context includes :

> . . . the increasing mobility of work and leisure, the relentless Starbucking of bookshops, the permeability of the household to electronic media, the reported if exaggerated disappearance of street life and "the fragmentation of culture'.
> (Harris, 2003, 27).

However bringing together various agencies, including libraries, to form multi-purpose spaces are not always received enthusiastically by practitioners, as one self-identified, 'disillusioned' librarian wrote in 1996 :

> I am shocked by the fact that public libraries appear to be seen primarily as leisure resources, lumped together with swimming pools, bowling alleys and playing fields under the leisure committee and the users look to their local public library to provide the latest crime novel.
> (Barnes, 1996, 139).

Public librarians that identify with radical and social inclusion agenda, such as the British group Information for Social Change and its American counterpart, Progressive Librarian's Guild, feel strongly that core principles of the public library are being systematically eroded *(Mackenzie, 2002; McDonald, 1997; Pateman, 2002)*. However, librarianship as a dynamic practice has previously experienced transformations through other social, economic, political and cultural shifts. Histe's *(1996)* suggestion that to remain viable 'libraries and librarians must change as society changes' *(29)* treats librarianship as the passive reflex of contemporary forces and excludes other possibilities. It is unsurprising that the contemporary postmodern condition, of multiple possibilities and shifting uncertainties, and what Dear *(2000)* described as a 'radical break from past trends in political, economic and socio-cultural life' *(140)* is having some effect. The modern library has to respond explicitly to multiple

groups and community needs, and to display a range of inclusive spaces and opportunities *(Harris and Green, 1997; Pateman, 1996; Pateman, 2001)*, and some of this may be resisted or impossible to achieve. Librarianship has to therefore be scrutinised as a practice that is expected to be in flux and transformation.

Librarianship as a contested practice

In the 1960s and 1970s librarianship went through a similar process of consideration concerning its status as a profession and its role, as it worked through the impacts of external change and internal response, and revisited many of the constructions of librarianship that had originated in the late nineteenth century. Lock *(1977)* for example argued that a new rationale of librarianship was required that saw increasing computerisation and administration, less as a 'pursuit of some imaginary efficiency' *(348)*, and instead as 'yardsticks of reader-satisfaction' *(348)*. He suggested that the 1970s librarian is :

> . . . no longer tainted with the Victorian image of an introverted, myopic personality who failed to make it elsewhere. He can demonstrate interests and knowledge not confined to any one of the arts, the humanities or the technologies. What must, however, raise him above the competent clerk, the office manager or the social worker, is the vision he should have of the world of the mind in all its variety, and of his own place in opening the ways for others to share its resources to the fullest advantage, each according to his abilities and needs.
> (Lock, 1977, 349).

The need at this historical point to assert its professional nature came after a period in which librarianship had established itself as a practice linked to knowledge, learning and education. Librarianship has existed from the Mesopotamian tablet libraries and the great Alexandrian Library of 320 BC *(Manguel, 1997)* when its function was effectively archival. The Julius Caesar-inspired public libraries in Ancient Rome and the chained monastery and cathedral libraries of the Middle Ages opened up collections to the public for the first time *(Thompson, 1977)* albeit for a restricted audience. The formation of librarianship that was created in the late nineteenth century saw ancient librarianship re-shaped to fit the needs of the burgeoning professional classes and to ensure an educated and self-reliant working class. It is this conception which is arguably now in crisis, and perhaps was also during the 1960s and 1970s. There are differences in how librarianship developed throughout the world, depending on national conditions, but I will concentrate on the British and American forms of public librarianship as these manifest many outcomes of the external and internal influences on librarianship with which I am most interested. The function of the library and those that work

within it possess distinguishable meanings at different times and in different contexts and places, and are constantly being struggled over. I will now begin to reflect on librarianship as a contested profession to discover its prevailing ideologies and aspirations.

Can the concept of profession help understand librarianship?

> The time was when a library was very like a museum, and a librarian was a mouser in musty books, and visitors looked with curious eyes at ancient tomes and manuscripts. The time *is* when a library *is* a school, and the librarian is in the highest sense a teacher, and the visitor is a reader among the books as a workman among his tools. Will any man deny to the high calling of such as librarianship the title of profession ?
> (Dewey, 1876, 6).

If librarianship is viewed as the practical task of the librarian, then its theory and practice may be inevitably confused, for example, one writer promoted librarianship as 'the characteristic and functions of a librarian' *(Atkinson, 1974, 8)*. It is necessary therefore to move beyond such tautologies to interrogate the theory of librarianship, and the practices of the librarian. Like many occupations associated with the middle-class, librarianship is often viewed as a profession, including by one of its key creators, Melvil Dewey, above, but as Atkinson *(1974)* commented during the period with which I am concerned, 'it is undeniable that to become a librarian is to enter a profession of indeterminate social status' *(7)*.

Librarianship assumed its recognisable form during the major nineteenth century transformations of Western capital and industrialisation, when some groups became recognised professions. The British industrial revolution provided a catalyst for the development of new occupations, with professional society being for some the 'logical continuation of industrial society' *(Perkin, 1989, 18)*. Before then, professional people were distinguished from craftsman and workers often more through an accident of ancestry than innate ability or meritocratic opportunity. Within England, the church, law, the army and medicine - then regarded as the few genuine professions - were largely open only to those of privileged birth within a hierarchical society. Different social arrangements in Scotland provided people from poorer and rural backgrounds wider opportunities to progress - the archetypal 'Kirriemuir career' as McCrone *(1992)*, amongst others, describe. Then as now, however, certain professions were regarded as vocations or callings to which individuals were destined from childhood whatever their class or socio-economic origins. After the Second World War, post-war rebuilding, the creation of the National Health Service and the Welfare State generated a new tranche of British professions.

To consider the origins of librarianship's self-interest in professional status it is important to review historical roots of contemporary understandings of professions and professionals. Various perspectives have been used to discuss the reasons why some occupations but not others gained equal status with existing pre-capitalist professions. Revisiting some of the criteria typically used during the 1960s and 1970s will be an opportunity to understand how crises in librarianship have been articulated, to assess the scope and limitations of such tools and to consider their continued powerful hold on thinking about professionalism within librarianship. This will allow further investigation of the concept of professionalism and its relationship to crises within librarianship.

Identifying professional traits

Many writers from the period with which I am most concerned have identified (and sometimes also critiqued) the criteria or traits that can be used to differentiate between occupations and professions *(Goode, 1969; Krause, 1971; Larson, 1977; Pavalko, 1971).* The application of such functional traits follows on from the earlier work of Carr-Saunders and Wilson *(Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1932)*. The main components employed in trait theory and in similar analyses, expanded from Carr-Saunders and Wilson's original set - specialist knowledge; training and education; professional associations; service role and need for the service; code of ethics; autonomy and independence; value system; commitment and community; status; public image, and having a trade union - have been organised into four main sections, each of which will be considered in relation to librarianship.

Underlying this process is the notion that achieving professional status was more straightforward for some occupations and work practices, but not for others including librarianship. I do not wish to conclude whether librarianship is a profession or not, but to indicate the contestation and social determinism of this approach being applied to any work group where the particular conditions that surround it, and flow through it, are left ignored. As I am concerned with a conjuncture in librarianship in the late 1960s and early 1970s that arguably has ongoing resonance, the majority of the literature that I will initially use emits from that period. This will indicate the debates taking place, the range of dominant understandings available as tools and also allow deficits and inadequacies in these approaches to be revealed. I will first consider professional knowledge and the formal educational processes by which it is obtained in relation to librarianship.

Trait Set One : Librarianship's knowledge, training and education

> Profession appears to be a structure which links the production of knowledge to its application in a market of services; the training institutions are the empirical arena in which this linkage is effected.
> (Larson, 1977, 51)

Specialist knowledge

A true profession, according to trait analysis, needs 'presumed mastery' *(Pavalko, 1971, 18)* of a body of rational knowledge that enables it 'to control the supply of expertise' *(Perkin, 1990, 389)*. Newer professions therefore needed a scientific body of knowledge to function and to provide status and authority - a 'cognitive exclusiveness' *(Larson, 1977, 15)* - that could award market value. The sciences historically considered central to professional knowledge were 'a mixture of natural history and physics' *(Toulmin, 1953, 55)*, which later commentators also suggest continues to influence the construction and power of professions *(Kelly, 1987)*. Although professional knowledge should be theoretical, it should also apply to 'concrete problems of living' *(Goode, 1969, 277)* that professionals are trusted to solve. Professional knowledge has been described as 'a *mystery* . . . not given to the ordinary man to acquire, by his own efforts or even with help' *(Goode, 1969, 278)*, and as 'cognitive and technical competencies' *(Larson, 1971, 243)* that attribute power and importance to their possessors. Knowledge awards professional identity and unity *(Goode, 1969; Krause, 1971; Larson, 1977; Pavalko, 1971)*, and the more rational and formal it is, the more legitimate the profession is seen *(Larson, 1977)*.

Librarianship is partly concerned with organising records of knowledge through cataloguing, classification and indexing and by combining 'different types of intellectual organisation' *(Winter, 1988, 6)* to derive new meanings and outcomes from the primary work of others. For Benge *(1970)* this weakens its claim to a unique and identifiable knowledge base, as dealing with others' output does not necessarily enhance status :

> The doubts about the intellectual nature of library work arise because librarianship is not a primary but a secondary process, in the sense that it organises other people's intellectual activity.
> (Benge, 1970, 209).

This point about primary and secondary functions is central to debates over librarianships' professionality. For some the development and application of bibliographic techniques that

make knowledge records accessible provides librarianship with a legitimate knowledge base. Winter *(1988)* for example, stated that it 'was the first of the information-handling occupations to confront the need for new ways of classifying and organizing the recorded forms of this new knowledge' *(5)*, and although perceived as lacking an obvious intellectual base, this may be through misunderstanding librarianship, rather than proof that a knowledge base is missing. The need for librarians to understand knowledge sources and to interpret user requirements can also be viewed as evidence of librarianship's knowledge, as later suggested:

> The relationship between information and problem solutions and of information-seeking behaviour, and the elicitation of information needs . . . forms a considerable element of the specialised knowledge foundation of librarianship. It has the necessary depth and breadth and continuing dynamics to substantiate the 'subjective' claims of librarianship to professionality.
> (Roberts and Konn, 1991, 103).

However, the administration function of librarianship is felt by some to undermine librarianship's professional claim. Benge *(1970)*, Gwinup *(1974)*, and also Roberts and Konn *(1991)* considered that some routine librarianship tasks, 'many of which are not even of high clerical calibre' *(Gwinup, 1974, 482)*, could be performed by non-professional and professional staff. Goode *(1969)* also argued that the public does not believe in a science of librarianship, because it is thought 'only clerical or administrative' *(286)*. Writing in 1974, after a decade of consolidation in British librarianship education and wider adoption of a degree followed by librarianship training, Saunders *(1974)* commented tentatively that such a system assumes that 'there is a body of principles and theory underlying the practices of librarianship and information work' *(154)* and that this should develop, through research and intellectual development, during the next decade into 'a satisfactory theory of library and information science' *(154)*. Rodgers *(1997)* observed later that many librarians resist clerical tasks 'presumably beneath them' *(155)* but will perform them if in jobs that require skills below their professional training. However, 'looking at librarianship is a lot like picking shapes out of moving clouds' *(155)* and identifying professional librarianship skills is complex 'because of the nature of library work . . . any smart person can learn it' *(161)*. Gwinup *(1974)* had earlier suggested that the public could not distinguish librarians from other library workers because librarians have not given them reason to. For such observers, the labels of librarian and librarianship, and their professional meaning, are fluid and questionable. The seeming dominance of administrative processes means, as Corrall *(1998)* points out, that many library assistants are now active 'change agents empowered to initiate change on the ground as well as influencing organisation-wide development' *(583)*. This clearly implies that being a librarian may not be essential to undertaking librarianship. For professions to take a unified and predictable approach in how they apply their knowledge and

provide their service or product, standardisation and consistency is required. This impacts on the overall knowledge base, how it is organised and those whose apply it.

Training and education

Systematic training and education, including examination structures usually ratified by professional bodies, became associated with the developing professions during the nineteenth century. Most contemporary professions require a university education indicated by a specialist degree, and the post-1945 rise of higher education in the United States and United Kingdom facilitated a new wave of professional development *(Larson, 1977))* based on the introduction of professional status for 'new or transformed occupations' *(90)* like engineering, architecture, dentistry, accounting, and teaching. Typically most British librarians undertake a postgraduate librarianship qualification after an academic degree in virtually any subject, besides a period of relevant work experience, unlike the longer years of study and 'apprenticeship' needed in medicine or law. American librarianship degrees are usually at Masters level, awarding holders more status than British examples. Such abbreviated training, especially from the British point of view, affects librarianship's knowledge base as it may not adequately cover the 'research, scholarship, and demonstration of genuine academic competence' *(Gwinup, 1974, 482)* expected of a genuine profession.

The possession of a knowledge base and specialist information that is rare and not universal supports the notion of professions as having something valuable to offer. The more that rationalist, positivist science appears to underpin it, then the more powerful a profession is considered. Some aspects of librarianship work are perceived as non-professional and the inability to identify their proponents as professional or paraprofessional has been raised. The lack of primary knowledge creation and the seeming dominance of perceived secondary work have ensured that librarianship's professionality is compromised. There are counter suggestions that specific skills of librarianship are rigorous and complex, including the identification and interpretation of information need and cataloguing and classification. During the late 1960s and 1970s there were strong internal and external concerns about librarianship's intellectual rigour, and its ability to claim a unique and identifiable set of hard-to-attain abilities and skills when little time appeared spent on study, research and knowledge development. The length and content of library training appears to prevent any real knowledge generation and to consolidate librarianship's professional image. Edwards *(1977)*, when arguing for a cohesive model of training and education to underpin theoretical and practical knowledge, also suggested that librarianship has long suffered from a tendency to regard professional education and training as alternatives.

Trait Set Two : Librarianship, professional associations and unions

Professional associations

In response to the increased number of new professions, and as part of their development and maintenance, a large number of British and American professional associations formed before the end of the nineteenth century. These bodies supported professional knowledge bases and helped negotiate cognitive exclusiveness, typically supplying or ratifying professional licenses, examinations, diplomas and training through approved providers *(Larson, 1977)*. Linking professionals in whatever work environment they were based, professional associations pursued the overall interests of their respective group of practitioners through the creation of an identifiable group. For Perkin *(1989)* professional associations were 'more successful than trade unions in uniting almost the whole of each relevant occupation' *(20)* and in ensuring cohesiveness.

Both the American and British Library Associations came into being in the nineteenth century amongst the new breed of professional associations. Although librarianship was an ancient activity, these bodies helped it 'to show a distinctively modern shape' *(Winter, 1988, 3)*. Gwinup *(1974)* argued that such associations unify and shape professions, direct work 'towards the attainment of professional goals and ideals' *(483)* and ensure that suitably qualified people fill professional posts. Both Benge *(1970)* and Gwinup *(1974)* considered that authorised professional qualifications, gained through validation by professional associations and recognised by employers, were necessary to professions including librarianship. It is still the case in the United Kingdom that to remain a Chartered librarian (the professional affirmation of librarianship) continued membership of C.I.L.I.P. is compulsory. According to the Association, a Charter awards professional status and librarians may find their careers restricted unless it is acquired *(Huckle, 1998)*. However, an analysis of 24 randomly selected copies of the job supplements of the *Library Association Record / Library and Information Update* from 2002 and 2003 indicates that this is not now the case. Of the 1002 jobs advertised in the 12 bi-monthly supplements in 2002, only 8 % required a Charter, and of those the majority were for public library posts (78 in total). In 2003, a similar pattern emerges, with 11 % (or 100) of the 912 advertised posts regarding a Charter as essential, with again the majority, 76 % (or 76 posts), being in public libraries. This clearly demonstrates that British library posts at all levels and in all settings rarely require a Charter.

Benge *(1970)* considered that the British Library Association served librarianship well and Harrison *(1977)* called it 'a most influential and indispensable body' *(421)*. Gwinup *(1974)* suggested that its American counterpart was less successful, as its primary preoccupation was with library services and the library, not the librarian, which detrimentally affected the library

profession and ultimately the public. Harrison *(1977)* argued that the British body, although not a trade union, had done much 'to enhance the salaries and working conditions of all types of librarians' *(421)* whilst Harris *(1992)* later commented that the policies of the American Library Association 'reflect a considerable ambivalence vis-à-vis their role with respect to workers and managers' *(103)*. Harris *(1996)* then argued that the impetus for an increasingly professional librarianship links partly to dissatisfaction over pay. In her view, an issue remained about whether library associations or unions should fight for better pay, whilst noting that the American Library Association has prioritised the fight for professional status, instead of arguing for increased librarians' pay and conditions *(Harris, 1996)*.

The lack of cohesion or clear identification with the needs of the librarian by both the British and American library associations is arguably because membership is open to all library staff, not just 'professional' librarians, and the organisation's focus is then 'library-centered rather than employee-centered' *(Harris, 1992, 105)*. As the associations include senior librarians, the employer's interests are heavily represented in the strategy and operation of the library associations, and may inhibit collective bargaining and a cohesive identity. To counterbalance this lack of protected space for librarians within the main library associations, smaller, more specialist associations have long existed in both the United States and Britain, for example the Association of Assistant Librarians in the latter, although these are usually secondary professional affiliations for most librarians.

Unions

Many librarians, especially within the public sector, may also belong to unions. Unions typically are associated with protecting workers against capitalist and management exploitation. For more professional groups, the role of the union is more ambiguous and its contribution to the maintenance of professional power is different. For Larson *(1971)*, a desire for status, rather than money, explained the general lack of interest in union activity by professional groups. She suggested that 'professionalism functions as a means for controlling large sectors of educated labour and for co-opting its elites' *(236)* and therefore dislocates and removes them from the possibility, or even attractiveness, of union involvement. For Krause *(1971)*, the more functional power a professional in public service has the more they can achieve status, money and other rewards, and the less reason they may have to join a union. His view that groups 'with low functional power but with reasonably high prestige, often with a professional skill, do not often consider striking in their own interest for essentially practical reasons' *(331)* may not be so true in the early part of the twenty-first century. Groups perceived as professional, for example teachers and nurses, through their union organisation, have used strikes in the last few decades.

Unions have been arguably less important for librarians than for comparable groups like teachers, and partly because of the location of many librarians in bureaucracies and sectors where unions cover various occupational and professional groups. The contemporary librarian may be a minority in a union (for example, the large UK public sector union Unison) that may represent the needs of many professions and occupations. The view of Larson *(1977)*, that an over-riding concern with status may also prevent alliances with other workers and inhibit unionisation, could apply to librarianship. The existence of professional library associations could reduce unions' ability to attract librarians; the membership of each could then be split and unable to achieve significant change or benefit for members. Gwinup *(1974)* however considered unions a useful measure of librarianship's professional claims.

Striking, as stated, is not perceived as typical of professions and may negatively affect public opinion and status. In British librarianship however there are recent examples. In 1988 Hackney Council library staff, with union backing, occupied closed branch libraries with huge public support *(Dillon, 1988i; Dillon, 1988ii; Hackney Gazette, 1988; Hackney Herald, 1988)*. Glasgow City Libraries' staff also held strikes in the 1990s after a long dispute about threatened wage cuts, branch closures and reduced opening hours *(Library Association Record, 1996ii; Library Association Record, 1996iv; Library Association Record, 1998)*. This latter action contributed to a major shift in management approaches, a reorganisation and later modernisation of library service and the early retirement of the then Head of Libraries and his Deputy *(Hyams, 2002i; Wade, 2001)*.

It appears that having a supportive association can provide a profession with structure, qualifications and support, especially when practitioners are isolated within organisations. The role of the union is perhaps more relevant for occupations that are perceived as less 'professional' and vulnerable to management and exploitation. Librarianship appears to have an ambiguous relationship with the main professional associations that support it and that could help improve its pay and conditions, and claims to be a profession. Unions and their activities do not seem a feasible substitute or attractive for many librarians because of their isolated locations within their work environments. Such dynamics are also mirrored in unions where librarians are one group amongst others. Unions are unlikely to aid professional librarianship status claims, and the interesting examples of British public librarians' union-supported action against management may not have gained the sympathy awarded to other public sector groups, like nurses or teachers, arguably because of feelings about librarians and their worth.

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Trait Set Three : Librarianship service, ethics, values, commitment and community

Service and need for the service

> The attitude of the professional men to his client or his employer (sic) is painstaking and is characterised by an admirable sense of responsibility; it is one of pride in service rather than of interest in opportunities for personal profit.
> (Carr-Saunders, 1933, 471).

The desire to serve the public is central to the ideology and motivation of professional practitioners *(Pavalko, 1971)*. Service needs to be client-focused and 'based on the client's needs, not necessarily the best material interest or needs of the professional himself or, for that matter, those of the society' *(Goode, 1969, 278)*, with the professional's role being to interpret these needs and decide best how to meet them. If no professional interpretation is involved and 'if the client imposes his own judgement' *(Goode, 1969, 278)*, then professions are less legitimate. Krause *(1971)* commented that the public needed to sublimate self-determination to the expert practitioner 'for the promise of professional neutrality and expertise' *(76)*.

To offer service, professional practitioners may need to diminish or sacrifice their own needs *(Goode, 1969)*. Such service is generally viewed as admirable, maintains the practitioner-client relationship, and promotes professions whose advice and skills are seen as credible and authoritative *(Pavalko, 1971)*. Professions that provide service in extreme difficulty or emergency are overall viewed as superior *(Krause, 1971; Pavalko, 1971)* as the more they deal with situations 'where the absence of their skills spells immediate and long-term crisis for the individuals of the society and the society itself' *(Krause, 1971, 79)* the more powerful they are considered. These groups - 'person professions' - *(Goode, 1969, 297)* need to gain and retain public trust to deal with people in precarious states.

For librarianship, service is vital, as the later writer Gorman *(2000)* commented, 'every action that we take as librarians can and should be measured in terms of service' *(75)*. Benge *(1970)* and Gwinup *(1974)* regarded the service offered by librarians as requiring 'both an association with individuals and specialised knowledge and techniques' *(Benge, 1970, 210)*, and as central to a profession. If the service motive distinguishes professions from commercial occupations, then librarianship is perhaps in a strong position, although the current increasing commercialisation of information may challenge this possibility *(Ritowski, 2003)*. Librarians' participation in routine administrative tasks, visible to their clients, may also position them as subservient to lawyers and doctors and their clients *(Gwinup, 1974)*. And, if service is the over-riding ideal, there may be an imperative to provide any type of

service, even an inferior one *(Gwinup, 1974)*. Librarians' desire to serve is typified by one more contemporary American children's librarian who saw her work as 'filled with endless good people to serve, always new things to find out for someone . . . and even greater challenges in searching for ways to do things better for more people' *(Louie, 1994, 99)*.

Code of ethics

To provide professional service and maintain status, a code of ethics often overseen by professional associations is considered important. Lewis and Maude *(1952)* commented that professional ethics grew from the codes of the old professions - 'the Hippocratic oath, the inviolability of the confessional, the devotion of the lawyer to his client's interest' *(59)* where confidentiality protects the practitioner-client relationship. Professions that engage in some of the most personal, and potentially ambiguous, client relationships tend to require the most clear and explicit code of ethics and are typically perceived as being at the more professional end of the continuum, for example medicine and the law. However, other work groups that involve more intimate interactions like counselling and nursing, are not seen in this way. For Goode *(1969)*, a code of ethics protects the client but may also be 'a coolly executed plan for serving the ends of the profession' *(292)*.

For librarianship, ethical questions relate to the relationship with the library user and the information provided. As Benge *(1970)* suggested, 'what a person reads may be the most intimate thing of all, and should be a professional secret' *(210)* and librarians have to sublimate their personal views to concerns for neutrality and being non-judgemental. They also wish to maintain confidentiality about the information researched by individuals, or the books borrowed. Librarians arguably are not responsible for the outcomes of use of their service, or others to which they refer, demonstrated by the refusal of some contemporary American librarians to pass on information required by the Patriot Act about library use that may suggest potential terrorist involvement *(Murphy, 2003)*. As Benge *(1970)* commented, in a rather simplistic interpretation, 'if a cookery recipe chokes a family or a chemical formula eventually blows up - this is not the librarian's concern' *(210)*. Librarians therefore have responsibilities and ethical considerations about meeting information needs, but not for its content or results. This is contentious, even within library literature. For example, Zipkowitz *(1996)* asked, 'are there ever times when public safety, or the safety of particular individuals warrants the withholding of information or breaching the privacy of individuals ?' *(43)*. The lack of responsibility for the content or accuracy of knowledge dovetails with the over-riding librarianship concern with neutrality but also undermines to an extent the ability of librarianship to guarantee its information sources and to provide expert guidance as will be later discussed.

Values

Perceived values affect how professions are viewed and rewarded. The relationship of professions like law and medicine to highly prized social values like justice and health aids their status and monetary worth, with the most successful professions arguably those that exemplify and promote values with widespread consensus *(Pavalko, 1971, 18)*. For professions with little autonomy within their organisational structures, there may be a misfit between professional values and 'the standards of the dominant culture' *(Larson, 1977, 187)*. It may be the case that the values of the work group are perceived as less obvious and secondary to the main activity and ethos of the host organisation. Reflection is thus needed on the origins of values, the parts and interests of society that they represent and those which they exclude.

Although to some extent sceptical of the existence of a unified librarianship philosophy, recognising perhaps that librarianship has variable identities and values in different times and contexts, the more recent observer, Gorman *(2000)* synthesised the views of four classical librarianship philosophers (S. R. Ranganathan, Jesse Shera, Samuel Rothstein and Lee Finks) to propose a set of central librarianship values. These were stewardship, service, intellectual freedom, rationalism, literacy and learning, equity of access to recorded knowledge and information, privacy and democracy. Such values are highly relevant to the desire of librarianship to be understood as a profession.

Commitment and community

Professionals are expected to maintain their identity gained through training and education, to be committed to work and to share a sense of community with colleagues. This implies that professional groups will be to some extent homogeneous, share similar views and engage in social contact outside work. The creation of such networks that can benefit individual careers and advancement are typically found in professions viewed as most powerful and middle-class like medicine and the law. Research amongst occupational communities such as railwaymen that are not considered high-status, nevertheless also indicated that individuals socialised with colleagues, had 'work-connected hobbies and belonged to work-connected societies or clubs' *(Salaman, 1974, 26)* in their own time. However, professions or occupations in which many work part time or are located within organisations controlled by another profession or ideology may have difficulties or a reduced desire to extend work connections beyond their contracted time. There are clear differences between identifying with a professional role in paid time, and a wish to socialise outside work with fellow practitioners.

The concept of a librarianship community is widely promoted by professional associations. Levels of engagement for many librarians with such a community may be partly through personal friendships, but within the United Kingdom numerous groups and networks linked to C.I.L.I.P. and other groups provide social, training and educational opportunities. Librarianship conferences are a regular event, nationally and internationally; for example the International Federation of Library Associations' annual conferences typically attract over 2, 000 people. The Internet now provides global opportunities for librarians to form alliances and virtual communities, linked to librarianship and to specialist aspects and interests. It is clear that a professional community for librarians exists but is variable, as many within librarianship work part-time and are in widespread locations.

Typical professions manifest strong service characteristics in undertaking activities or interventions desired or needed by the public, that are felt hard to fulfil and worthy of patronage or receipt. Service is highly regarded by librarianship, yet previous held ideas of service might now be more concerned with facilitating the needs of clients and customers. As such services relate to individuals and their intimate or personal needs, a code of ethics underpinning the supply of the service is required to protect the professional and the person buying or accepting the service. Codes of ethics within librarianship are increasingly being tested concerning confidentiality, necessary public information and privacy and neutrality. Values can sometimes be difficult to sustain for groups like librarians, which do not control the dominant values or culture within an organisation or workplace. Identification of librarians with the librarianship community needs to be further explored, as this is clearly changing. Some of these aspects potentially support the aspirations of librarianship to be a profession, but their origins must be revealed. In the next section, I will consider some of the most challenging areas for librarianship concerning independence, imagery and power - which have already been pinpointed as potentially fragile.

Trait Set Four : Librarianship, autonomy and independence, public image and status.

Autonomy and independence

> To the extent that professions are successful in realizing their claims to autonomy,
> they are able to achieve a high degree of *monopoly* and control over the right to
> perform particular work activities.
> (Pavalko, 1971, 23)

Autonomy gives a profession freedom to regulate its work behaviour and activities, to guard 'the boundaries of their special sphere of activity or competence' *(Pavalko, 1971, 22)* and to

ensure that practitioners can only be supervised and managed from within *(Pavalko, 1971)*. Such autonomy needs to be based on the mastery of professional knowledge, service, public trust and independence *(Goode, 1969)*. Professions like medicine and the law possess high levels of autonomy and independence, reinforced by their common, although not universal, status as self-employed contractors. Such freedom may not be available for professions within bureaucracies who may experience conflict between a desire for autonomy and their employing bureaucracy's demand. For Krause *(1971)*, the worker in a public bureaucracy has a different relationship to his job and employer than one in a private bureaucracy. As many librarians operate within bureaucracies which they do not manage or directly influence, arguably they cannot be viewed as autonomous but instead are forced to adapt and conform 'to the bureaucratic scheme of things' *(Gwinup, 1974, 484)*. Of the 10,664 Chartered Members of the Library Association in 2001 for instance, only 205 were independent consultants *(LISU, 2002)*. Nearly 5,000, plus over 1,000 non-Chartered Members worked in public libraries, and nearly 6,000 Chartered and non-Chartered Members worked in an educational establishment *(LISU, 2002)*.

The fact that many librarians cannot control their work environment for some excludes them from professionality as their loyalty and allegiance will be to their employer organisation *(Gwinup, 1974)*. Professionals such as architects, doctors, lawyers and dentists can work freelance, yet this has been impossible, or less likely for librarians. However, because of technological change and less career permanence, librarians and other information specialists are perhaps now more likely to work freelance or for a series of employers. These opportunities, particularly in relation to project management and information technology, may see a rise in the number of independent librarian - consultants, and ensure that in the contemporary context, librarianship could qualify as a profession. The number of Chartered librarians working as independent consultants recently rose by 18 in a year (2002), whilst the overall number of Chartered C.I.L.I.P. members decreased by nearly 400 *(LISU, 2002)*.

Although autonomy can be affected by their organisational settings, librarians can also benefit from status, pay and conditions. For some, such as those within academia, the organisational culture may be advantageous (and can also positively reinforce the collective and individual identities of librarians). But there can also be disadvantages if the parent organisation is weak or having problems. For librarians in public libraries and the National Health Service, public funding can radically affect or restructure the provision of library services and their work. Decisions which relate to national agendas, like Section 28, can impact directly on librarians and cause them to defend their beliefs in free access to information and neutrality against their employer's policies. There can also be positive outcomes through changes within host organisations or the function of the librarian within them. Recent moves towards evidence-based medicine have impacted on the status of

librarianship within the National Health Service, for example, and UK health librarians have improved their status (although not yet their gradings), through becoming disseminators, educators and researchers, rather than just providing standard medical texts for doctors *(Paisley, 2000; Swaffield, 1999).*

Librarians may overall be viewed as bureaucrats and administrators but if librarianship contains independent thought and 'intellectual functions' beyond the clerical *(Gwinup, 1974, 485)* like stock selection, classification, cataloguing and reference work, it may perhaps not itself constitute a bureaucracy. It has been suggested that where librarians had historical autonomy in areas like stock selection, they did not use it effectively and avoided controversy 'by failing to purchase books which might arouse antagonisms' and instead, preferred to maintain the status quo *(Goode, 1969, 295).* The role of the librarian in influencing the intellectual, cultural and ideological content of libraries will be discussed in Chapter Seven and Eight. The ability to possess and exercise autonomy and independence is influenced by a number of factors, one of which, image, is now considered.

Public image

Professionals need to present outwardly positive aspects through authority and trust and to represent valued aspects and characteristics; groups with less autonomy and power will have more difficulties with these images. The historical image of the librarian as someone shy, retiring and reserved, working within the 'library as womb' *(Benge, 1970, 217)*, arguably still dominates public thinking. Research undertaken by Wallace *(1989)* amongst the American public provided useful reminders of a seeming dualistic public view of the image of librarians, as they perceived two clear sets of librarian characteristics :

> Bright. Educated. Smart. Competent. Good people. Friendly. Nice. Knowledgeable. Intellectual . . . Old fashioned. Homely. Glasses, either half frames or on a chain around the neck . . . Reclusive. Wrapped up in their work.
> (Wallace, 1989, 19).

Images of what is considered successful and professional can shift, and at certain times particular types of librarians were more fitting. The genesis of new images of librarians, that required the participation of women, forms a key part of my later discussions. There are long-standing problems with librarians' perceptions of real or imagined images and the impact - internally and externally - that they have. The British *Library Association Record*, now *Library and Information Update*, carries a monthly column ('Mediawatching') that reproduces unflattering and flattering, and sometimes ironic media images of librarians, which may well manifest continuing uncertainty, confusion and self-doubt within

librarianship about itself. The continuing use within librarianship of the term 'professional librarian' indicates that although 'the public does not differentiate between the types of person that serve them in a library' *(Gwinup, 1974, 484)*, librarians feel the need to reinforce (or question) their position. The elite professions do not need to name themselves, for example 'professional doctors' or 'professional lawyers', as their status is assured.

Negative notions about people attracted to librarianship may affect its claims to professional status, via the continuing concept of the librarian that 'has sought librarianship out as a retreat and refuge from the cares of the world' *(Gwinup, 1974, 486)*. Such images appear still to be reinforced by librarianship research. For example, Bruyns' *(1989)* survey of European library students found them calm and orderly, leading him to conclude that until more dynamic personalities moved into librarianship, the image and the profession would remain the same. Caputo *(1984)* similarly suggested that librarians had to become assertive for their image to progress. The public image of librarians and their work may not necessarily encourage the view that complex issues, difficult tasks or challenging groups are being dealt with, as will now be explored.

Status

The desire for professionalisation is linked closely to that for social and economic status, and Larson *(1977)* observed that for newer professions creating and protecting special status tends to be 'the most central dimension of the professionalization project' *(236)*. According to Larson *(1971)* professionals may misconstrue, exaggerate or 'mystify to themselves their actual power' *(236)* to gain their desired status :

> The individual freedom and control which professionals enjoy in and out of
> work is in part a mask: for themselves as well as for less privileged others, it
> helps to conceal collective powerlessness, subordination, and complicity.
> (Larson, 1971, 243).

The role and status of managers links to professional autonomy, and there are strong views within librarianship about non-librarian managers. It can be argued that non-librarians can introduce new perspectives, but representative correspondence in the *Library Association Record* in 1990, under the heading 'Appointment of Aliens to Senior Library Management Posts' captured this view from within. One writer commented that although they would prefer working for someone with a librarianship background, an increasing number of public librarians are now 'working in leisure directorates run by people experienced in managing swimming pools and playing fields' *('Bede', 1990, 563)*. Later investigations will consider

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the work of non-librarians in special libraries, and determine the opportunities and barriers in such settings.

These criteria demonstrate a bounded set of activities and knowledge that can be valued and that have given elite professions historical power. Criteria like autonomy and independence appear significant, but affected by the location of the work groups. Those within public bureaucracies have less opportunity to exert such power, and librarians have difficulties in promoting themselves as a group with status gained through autonomy, independence and control. Their image and status is not high, partly because their work is unclear, and stereotypes persist that are of much concern to librarians themselves. Librarians wish to protect their occupation and skills from non-librarians, which may be because of their inability to control their external environment. Librarians may be thus disregarded by the public or felt dispensable, arguably because of 'their failure to distinguish between what is professional work and what is not, and their failure, mainly in consequence, to create a favourable public image' *(Gwinup, 1974, 485)*.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have suggested that the dynamic change occurring within British librarianship appears to be exposing its fragile and self-conscious nature. It has been noted that librarianship underwent transformation during the late nineteenth century when many of its components perhaps became established and the social and political change of the 1960s and 1970s. Notions from this latter period have been employed to consider the characteristics and inherent factors that determine why some work practices are viewed as professions whilst others are not. From the perspective of the early twenty-first century when librarianship has changed considerably, and will perhaps never remain fixed or clearly identifiable, the need to reassess whether discussions about professionality is pertinent or even relevant has to be suggested.

Some observers from the 1960s and 1970s felt that judged by this type of criteria librarianship did not qualify as a profession. Gwinup *(1974)* commented that increasing the intellectual work of librarians and 'discontinuing their traditional hackwork' *(488)* could ensure that they became indispensable and improved their image. Goode *(1969)* considered that dentistry, accounting and electronic engineering became professions in the 1960s; social work, marriage counselling and perhaps town planning could later become so, but nursing, pharmacy, teaching and librarianship would not *(281)*. Wilensky *(1964)* regarded medicine, law, accounting, architecture and dentistry as the established professions, with those in the

process of becoming professional or as marginal including librarianship, nursing, teaching and social work.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, shifts in librarianship practice and image have potentially improved claims to professionhood, and some of these have been touched on. McCook *(1999)* wrote that librarianship's claim to professional status lies not with 'new technologies and not with its place in the academy, but how it can deploy these in service of the central goal of information equity' *(no pagination)*. Information equity will be addressed later but McCook's view of the need to centralise the increasing technological base and academic influence of librarianship is worth noting. Although it has been possible to gain some awareness about professionhood in relation to librarianship via the tools employed, there are major deficits in their ability to incorporate a wide range of determinants. Such a framework assumes that it is possible to measure professionality and to ignore external social structures and the dynamics that create and sustain them. Trait theory also infers that science and rationality are the central components of knowledge and professionality, and contain uncontested forms of objectivity and validation. Values perceived as crucial to professionality are also open to debate and may well exclude aspects that are specific to librarianship.

It has been demonstrated that librarianship remains ambiguous judged by the terms used in this chapter, partly because of major omissions in methodology and knowledge. Modern librarianship, as has already been suggested, is an occupation that is highly contested and originates in the late nineteenth century. One of the crucial reconfigurations introduced at that point was the involvement of women within the library workforce, beginning a pattern of numerical domination by women that has never changed within Britain and the United States. We can acknowledge that until then librarianship was a scholarly, male academic pursuit or a voluntary activity, and bringing women into librarianship at this historical point was a vital shift in changing its identity and place in the world. Women's involvement in the workplace and gender dynamics form the content of Chapter Four, but it is important to suggest that such a shift in librarianship began the trajectory that must be understood to clarify the true meaning of librarianship and its seeming constant need for self-depreciation and introspection. The involvement of women in large numbers undoubtedly affects external and internal factors and conditions, including pay, conditions, image and status, as will be described later.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed uncertainty within librarianship about its future role and status, and also saw the onset of the second wave feminist movement. Introducing such thinking can help understand the content and impact of challenges from women within librarianship influenced by second wave feminism and the resulting insights that may be

achieved on the construction of librarianship. The current practical and theoretical challenges experienced by librarianship come after a century and a half in which librarianship has established itself as an activity generally regarded as socially useful, but labelled with a complex and often unflattering image. This is arguably predicated on the gender balance within librarianship, and the majority of women that work within it.

Considering the nature, content and genesis of librarianship can illuminate its ability to deal with various challenges, and how they are linked to, and influenced by, gendered social relations. If librarianship is constantly changing, what is its relationship to gender issues, and the fact that women dominate the staffing of libraries and the practice of librarianship ? Gender issues within librarianship, and their implications, are ignored if an essentialist view such as trait theory is used. The professionalisation process linked to western industrialisation grew from existing gender relations that affected the organisation of public and private arrangements, and power and privilege, but this is barely acknowledged in most of the texts discussed. Many, written at the cusp of second-wave feminism and adopting in some cases a Marxist analysis, fail to incorporate gender. In the following chapter I will identify and assess second wave feminist theory by reflecting on its history within a period of massive global change. My aim will be to investigate whether second wave feminism can provide insights into librarianship as a work practice in which women dominated, and whether women librarians could incorporate their feminist understandings into their work settings and develop new forms of library practice. I wish to examine librarianship and its origins to see why it appears so ambiguous and fragile.

Newcastle University Library, April 1980

Dear Diary

Only two months to go before the first lot of finals . . . I am meant to be revising but as usual I haven't left myself any time and as I've not been in the library much since I came to Newcastle, makes it more of a problem. The department library is better, more friendly. I ended up agreeing to do a stint every Wednesday afternoon. Its quite fun really, a lot of my mates off the course come in for a chat, its not the typical university library - like this !
I must have a bit of a thing about pretending to be a librarian !

I suppose at least its quiet in here, no one bothers you, and quite a good place
To lust after various fanciables - anything to avoid thinking about ethnomethodology or whatever. It certainly won't be any of the male librarians that are worth fancying, that's for sure, tweed suits a go-go !

Asking them for books I need for the medical sociology course, or books that we've been talking about in the Women's Group, is a non-starter. I asked one a minute ago where I could find any books on pregnancy and he told me to look in the medical section. Great !

I didn't realise that libraries were just as sexist and stereotyping about women as the medical profession are. The ways things are organised is like something out of the dark ages. I can't quite get my head round how it could be any different, but how come academic librarians are men and public librarians are women ?
Is it that academia = intelligence = men ? Nuff said . .

Signing off - in a slightly frantic state . . .

Chapter Two : Second wave feminisms and the professions

- Introduction

- Living, working and researching as a feminist

- Section One : Defining socialist feminism
    - Women in the Left
    - Communist Party women
    - Left libertarian feminists

- Section Two : Defining radical feminism
    - Lesbian feminism
    - Making feminist space for women

- Section Three : Defining liberal feminism
    - Organising liberal feminism

- Section Four : The seven demands of the women's movement and centralising subjectivities

- Section Five : Challenging orthodoxies – critiquing knowledge and objectivity
    - Feminist epistemology and second wave debates about knowledge

- Conclusion

Introduction

> The professionalization movement in librarianship represents an attempt to escape its female identity.
> (Harris, 1992, 1).

Chapter One contextualised librarianship as experiencing current shifts and challenges. It highlighted long-standing debates within librarianship about professionality, and identified its potential significance as a determinant of contemporary and historical manifestations of such uncertainty. It suggested that librarianship as created at the end of the nineteenth century is the form that underpins this continued difficulty. A functionalist approach to understanding the components of professions and occupations originating in the post Second World War period, trait theory, was utilised but did not explain librarianship, understand its vulnerability to external change or identify why its status has been a source of such aspiration and introspection.

In trait theory terms, librarianship can be seen as contested through its lack of clarity and professionality. However it is this chapter's contention that this failure is partly because of the lack of an analysis that integrates gender into understanding the development, construction and maintenance of librarianship. Traits themselves are influenced by gender as will be considered later. Harris's *(1992)* proposal above suggests that the repositioning of librarianship as a technical profession at the end of the twentieth century mirrors changes within librarianship in the nineteenth century and has the same potential for denying women's majority and involvement; the components of this argument will be scrutinised later. From initial discussions in Chapter One tools available when librarianship became more aware of women's issues and gender relations in the 1960s and 1970s could not begin to provide meaningful insights about gender and librarianship. The fact that measures like trait theory do not fully declare whether librarianship is a profession or not may be irrelevant however if librarianship, like the notion of the profession itself, is viewed as contested and subject to a variety of influences.

To both examine this and to critique these approaches, feminist concepts need to be introduced. Second wave Western feminism as developed in the 1960s and 1970s had various forms and ambitions. British radical feminist, Amanda Sebestyen, *(1979)* in a useful schema, differentiated a continuum of thirteen - from 'Equal Rights' to 'Female Supremacist' - divided into two main groups, 'Politicos - "The System's the Problem"

(Socialist Feminists)' and 'Feminists - "Men are the Problem" (Radical Feminists)'. As Sebestyen commented, and Oakley *(1981ii)* who also utilised this schema confirmed, its perspective was inevitably influenced by one woman and cannot be definitive. As an analysis of feminism's main strands, it is however useful. I will address the three major aspects of second wave feminism - socialist feminism, radical feminism and liberal feminism - arising from divergent perspectives on women's status and its context as Sebestyen set out. Two other important second wave feminist positions, separatism and lesbian feminism, will be discussed within radical feminism as both are relevant to later commentary and fit most easily here. After outlining the ideological and action frameworks of these main feminisms, I will turn to the importance of their collective outputs, especially concerning the seven demands of the women's movement, some of which highlighted women's experience in the workplace.

Western second wave feminism began to take shape in the 1960s and 1970s when women came together to challenge their cultural, economic, political and social status in what was termed the women's movement or the Women's Liberation Movement. Activity amongst women in the United States of America, Western Europe and other countries in the latter part of the nineteenth century and earlier part of the twentieth century achieved great strides for women in gaining the vote and recognition as more than merely male property *(Rowbotham, 1997)*. From then on, many women's lives changed as education, work and other opportunities became more widely available. However, in the 1960s, concepts of a more systematic form of liberation, some which as Rowbotham *(1997)* suggests, 'came from a new left vision of social transformation' *(348)* began to galvanise many women into articulating a desire for change, for equal opportunities and for further empowerment. As Ali and Watkins *(1998)* wrote, feminism perhaps 'opened a door for women that has never been shut' *(157)*. Being involved in the new feminism was a life-changing experience for many - meeting, campaigning, establishing services, and discovering shared experiences with other women was exciting and empowering, but a wide variety of views and aspirations were expressed within the term 'second wave feminism'.

Like other political or social movements, feminism was not homogenous and differing interpretations of the causes of women's oppression led to the development of a wide range of theoretical positions and preferred strategies for change. I will comment on debates around oppressions and identities, the reclaiming of subjectivity and the inclusion of personal experience in feminist knowledge production and theorising. All these areas

have significance in examining librarianship as a work activity often identified with women. The chapter will conclude by setting out where second wave feminist theory can better illuminate the nature of librarianship through engaging with some of its components and contexts. It will be important to indicate where second wave feminism found difficulties in responding to the changing heterogeneity of women and other issues. I will suggest that third wave feminist perspectives that have developed since the second wave feminist movement may be useful later. Such insights may help consider librarianship as a contested profession or occupation for women in the twenty-first century.

Before I undertake this work, I now describe my own journey as a feminist from the late 1970s onwards, as someone who become inspired and activated to adopt feminist ideas and commit to feminist action that drew on a number of strands of second wave thinking. My life now as a middle-years professional manager is very different, but underpinned by a belief that addressing women's inequality is paramount. My own role is also important to make explicit as my experience of this period has shaped my action and thinking, and how I have conceptualised and undertaken this research and its outcomes.

Living, working and researching as a feminist

When I first considered starting a PhD, it was to think about two sets of identities, practices and activities that had long fascinated me - of being a librarian and of being a feminist. Although this is not my story per se, my history is relevant. Stanley *(1998)* defined autobiography as 'an attempt at making an overview, creating some sense and coherence out of lived experience' *(10)* and this has been part of my purpose. From being fascinated by books, libraries and those that worked in them from an early age, to having my life transformed by rebellion, feminism and punk, the interface between my personal and professional life has been complex and often contradictory. Although this is not an autobiography, it requires and demands truth, and as Stanley *(1998)* again suggests, it is a 'tightrope-walking act' *(11)*, balancing truth with, what she calls, a contextualised self that is me, but not quite me. The easiest and most truthful response is to tell my story, although only I know quite what really happened to me and what my roles have been.

Even though I studied social science as an undergraduate, feminism was not on the curriculum. I am not sure how much I knew about the women's movement when I first

went to university in 1978, but I was already primed to believe that girls had potential but that marriage and children seemed to often get in the way. It certainly had for my mother, my aunts and the other women that I knew. I went to an independent girl's school, a former Dame School, a less fancy version of St Trinians, under Church of England auspices. Mandatory green uniforms - raincoats, blazers, berets, jumpers, skirts, socks, knickers, gym bags, science overalls - were emblazoned with the school motto, 'Servite cum Laetitia' (Serve with Gladness). The school vainly tried to continue replicating the patterns of the past when Oxford or Cambridge were the destinations for the clever ones, who hopefully later returned to teach at the school and to assume a life of cultured spinsterhood. In my day, we were destined more for red-brick universities and returning home three years later to marry a local boy (preferably from the boy's grammar school) and to work in Hounslow High Street or Heathrow Airport.

Luckily my involvement in punk music and general depravity throughout the sixth form led me into music, rebellion - and to some extent organised politics. By the time I went to university, as far away as possible from home, I was committed to a non-specific left politics, informed by Rock Against Racism, the Anti-Nazi League, my parent's unnamed radicalism, and a view, inspired by Siouxsie of the Banshees and Poly Styrene of X-Ray Specs, that women were strong, independent and creative and did not have to conform to male stereotypes. At university my anarchist boyfriend suggested that I bought *Spare Rib* instead of a mainstream women's magazine and after then I never looked back. I joined the University Women's Group, became friends with mature students who were socialist feminists, devoured everything from Simone de Beauvoir to Kate Millett, and began to form a view that can be best described as non-aligned, socialist feminist with a more than passing interest in libertarianism and radical feminism. I got involved in the National Abortion Campaign and marched against the Corrie Bill in 1979, and discovered the politics of women's health and the need to amplify women's unheard and ignored voices. In other areas of Sociology or the rest of the Social Sciences that I studied, there was no mention of feminism, gender - or really women.

Returning to London in the early 1980s, I worked in anarchist and radical bookshops, lived in Hackney and Bow, got involved in working-class writing and publishing, joined women's groups, and sometimes, like Women in the Booktrades, even helped start them. I volunteered at *Spare Rib* and local women's centres, worked for the Women's Press as a manuscript reader, was on the Management Committee of Sheba Feminist Publishers, embraced the base at Greenham Common in 1982, and had a brief involvement in lesbian

feminism around the time of the explosive debates in London around lesbian sadomasochism. I decided to train as a librarian in my late 20s, and saw this as a practice linked to numerous stereotypes and notions of women, yet which seemed potentially underpinned by many principles, like equity and access, that feminism revered. Even though librarianship's core values were praised on the course, and some social issues (mainly poverty and deprivation) were acknowledged, there was an astonishing lack of gender awareness by most lecturers and students. Most of those who trained alongside me in late 1980s London were apolitical, pleasant and well meaning; with some very keen to control access to information and to act out the role of gatekeeper and custodian.

Later I moved to Glasgow, worked in libraries and information services for some years in the public sector (although not in public libraries) and through continuing events that started in the 1990s, am now a senior manager in primary health care, having a remit for health and inequalities. I still have strategic involvement in library and information services as we have a public library in our service, that I originally established, and that the Diary Entry to Chapter Seven outlines. That is my story, at least the part that explains why I became interested in these areas and committed to undertaking this work. My personal trajectory has led me to question certain aspects of feminism and librarianship, including those that I once adhered to, and to adopt certain methodological stances. My work now may seem perhaps more mainstream (if my 20-year old self could see me now, that may be what I would think), but if feminism is about positioning women and highlighting gender inequalities in all settings, then this is what I am doing. This thesis sets out to explore the outcomes of my thinking in these areas, where developing a feminist consciousness has been very significant. Many women grew up as feminists in the 1960s and 1970s whose lives have taken different courses, and the origins of these journeys will now be investigated.

Section One : Defining socialist feminism

> Feminism requires an enormous interrogation of the past, just as other movements
> of people who are held down have sought a past which does not maintain their
> subordination, by exclusion and distortion. One aspect of this critical encounter
> must be with the history of the socialist and labour movements.
> (Rowbotham, 1979, 58)

Having suggested socialist feminism as a significant second wave feminist component, I now explore its importance. It is necessary to describe the involvement of socialist feminists in organised politics and the context in which other women, non-aligned to political structures, operated. My aim is to highlight the theoretical aspects of socialist feminism, its motivations and wider consequences, to allow further insights into gender and women's experiences. If librarianship is a work practice dominated by women then this needs to be kept in mind to ensure that theoretical insights are extracted within this section and those that follow.

Women in the Left

For women within, or associated with, the organised left, second wave feminism allowed a perspective to emerge that positioned women's experience at the centre of struggles for socialism. The range of groupings and views that could be termed socialist feminism are diverse, and although an underlying analysis of class and capital was universal, how this was further dissected to understand women's oppression differed. For feminists inspired by Marxist theory, women's reproductive roles had historically located them in the home as men's property and prevented them from contributing to society and achieving independence. This did not prevent some women from having power in the home or being the main bread-winners, especially in social contexts where male partners were unable to work, or to find work, but women's reproductive capabilities was understood to have contributed to their devalued social status. To counteract the social and political edifices that continued this inequality and to ensure women's equality, women fought through trade unions, the labour movement and socialist groups to gain equal pay, occupational rights (like paid maternity leave), child care and free abortion on demand. Many of these challenges focused on redressing women's exclusion from decision-making and the limited opportunities open to women, often in the workplace.

Establishing autonomous women's sections within political parties, setting up groups to challenge legislation and other structures that restricted or reduced women's rights, like the National Abortion Campaign (that was open to men), and redressing women's oppression, for example, by providing crèches at events so women could become involved, were also part of this strategy. Challenging and amending Labour Party structures and policy-making to make them more women-friendly was a priority for socialist feminists, as Coote and Campbell *(1982)* put it, 'to fight *both in and against* male-dominated power relations' *(33)*. Linking women's private experience to political

theory to widen its parameters and ensure women's participation was another important socialist feminist intention, as Wainwright wrote :

> . . . women challenged their personal life, of who does the housework, of the way
> children are brought up, the quality of our friendships, even the way we make
> love and with whom. These were not normally the subject of politics . . . when the
> women's movement made these a part of socialist politics, it began to break down
> the barriers which have kept so many people, especially women, out of politics.
> (Wainwright, 1979, 13).

Incorporating women's experiences from the private sphere into socialist politics attempted to recognise women's experience as political agents and as ordinary women, to highlight social inequality determined by gender and to make changes in policy making and service delivery that affected lives of women in both the public and domestic sphere.

Communist Party women

Women active in the Communist Party brought together Marxist theory with feminism to promote the empowerment of women through political change that took a clear position on gendered capital relations. This viewpoint advocated for women-only sections and groups within the Communist Party, including consciousness-raising groups, to challenge women's oppression and to generate new communist feminist theory and action. Introducing feminist, potentially bourgeois, thinking into strict Communist orthodoxies, and being loyal to both was sometimes a challenge. One feminist Communist, Brunt *(2002)* at a conference on 1970s' feminism held in 2002, described her dual life as a 'good comrade' and a feminist - elected onto her local Communist Party branch and committee, besides being 'active in the Sheffield WLM *(Women's Liberation Movement)* particularly around the abortion and women's aid campaigns' *(6)*. For Brunt, difficulties for Communist traditionalists in accepting feminist demands proved overwhelming, and she eventually prioritised her energies away from the Party into feminism.

The Party's relationship to the second wave is demonstrated by an education pack on feminism written by Communist women in the 1980s, 'to introduce some of the ideas and key questions currently being discussed in the Women's Liberation Movement to a wider audience' *(CPGB, 1980, 1)*. Published by the Communist Party, it appears keen to distance itself from feminism as a legitimate policy agenda, and clearly states that it 'in

no way represents a 'Party' view of feminism and women's issues' *(CPGB, 1980, 1)*. However, for many in the Party associated with the Euro-Communist / Marxism Today wing, feminism was one more social movement which allowed the Left to depart from the perceived cul-de-sac of 'class politics' *(Laclau and Mouffe, 1985)*. The restrictive structures and personal sacrifices that affected communist feminists were perhaps more hidden for those feminists who did not ally themselves to traditional left bodies as will now be described.

Left libertarian feminists

Libertarian left feminists like Rowbotham *(2001)*, associated initially with radical, socialist and libertarian groups like Black Dwarf and Big Flame, have described their personal journeys from male-dominated radical politics to becoming politicised women. Marginalised and undermined as a political activist because of her sex, when 'even though I resisted the assumption that men did the left politics, it was incredibly hard to have confidence as a woman' *(207)*, Rowbotham developed an awareness of the need to challenge traditional ideological beliefs about women and to incorporate women's own experience, including her own, into generating theory and knowledge :

> I knew I must write not from received authorities on 'women' but from my own observations and feelings.
> (Rowbotham, 2001, 209).

Segal *(1999)* comments that this 'lonely search' *(18)* by Rowbotham to 'find the then unfamiliar words that could express her personal alienation' *(18)* led her to construct some of the first influential writings of British feminism, and to propose the first national British Women's Liberation conference in Ruskin College, Oxford in 1970. The failure of the Far Left to accept feminist challenges that arose at this period, and that led women such as Rowbotham to develop separate structures, is noted by Callaghan *(1987)*. Even though Trotskyist groups like Big Flame were prepared to champion women's issues through equal pay, equal work and crèches that linked to economic demands, besides less obviously economic ones like abortion, they did not embrace the more difficult problems of sexuality, pornography and domestic violence with which socialist and radical feminism became increasingly concerned in the second wave period.

As Chun *(1993)* pointed out, it is impossible to ignore the role of women from the British New Left and later socialist traditions in developing the second wave women's movement from the later 1960s onwards. She cites the period between 1969 and 1973, when demands were made for 'total liberation : student militancy, sexual liberalisation, the civil rights movement, popular radicalism' *(168)*, as particularly crucial for the synthesis of the New Left and feminism. The growth of the women's health movement, Women's Aid, women's centres, local women's groups and feminist publications like *Spare Rib* and *Feminist Review*, was facilitated to a large extent via the input and energies of aligned and unaligned British left and socialist feminists. Women's committees within local councils (the Greater London Council as a major example), Labour women politicians taking an openly feminist line and embodying women's equality issues in policy-making and funding, can be seen as later outcomes of this approach. Much of the shift in policy-making to support women was based on the increased acceptance of the need to incorporate personal agendas into politics, partly through the influence of socialist feminism on the importance of women's subjective accounts.

This move from accepting 'objectivity' as the norm and failing to acknowledge its exclusion of women, to recognising 'subjectivity' both as a (sometimes negative) reality and also a transformative possibility for women, became a touchstone of second wave feminism as will be discussed throughout this work. Documenting women's voices, both through reflexive research as will be later described, and through collecting personal stories, was a central concern, particularly for socialist and left feminists. This aimed to redress the dismissal of women's experiences, especially those of working-class women, from official knowledge and accepted norms, and also to empower women through hearing about the lives of others.

I have set out the central groupings with which women in the British Left were allied, and what was attempted through integrating feminist analyses into promoting socialism. Activity within established left structures, like the Labour Party, to influence local and national agendas to benefit women has been reviewed, as has the task undertaken by women in the Communist Party to link a progressive politics with the challenges of more flexible feminist analysis. Women within the non-aligned Left tried to position women's needs within a radical male-defined politics, and the work of Sheila Rowbotham has been especially noted. All examples indicate difficulties in promoting women's needs within structures, perspectives and political groupings in which men and their contributions, as

the norm, dominated. For radical feminists, this was not the case, and their very purpose, to avoid such obstacles and concentrate solely on women, will now be explored.

Section Two : Defining radical feminism

> No single element of our society has evolved free from male definition, so that to practice radical feminism means to question every single aspect of our lives that we have previously accepted as normal / given / standard / acceptable and to find new ways of doing things where necessary - which is in most places.
> (Chester, 1979, 12 / 13).

For women with radical feminist beliefs, as Chester *(1979)* stated, challenging and dismantling all aspects of patriarchal power, underpinned by a view of women as a dispossessed social and political class, discriminated against because of their sex, was centrally important. This position affirmed and celebrated women, critiqued male patriarchy, and argued that women needed to work autonomously, away from men, to 'organize politically and destroy this sex class system' *(N.Y. Radical Feminists, 1973, 379)*. Socialist feminists, Coote and Campbell *(1982)* noted, that for radical feminists, the 'fight for women's liberation is primarily *against men' (29)*.

Chester *(1979)* pointed out, rather tautologically, that radical feminist theory grew from practice rather than deliberation, 'because our theory is that practising our practice is our theory' *(13)*, although she acknowledged that, bar the early writings that helped generate second wave feminism, the lack of written radical feminist theory - certainly from a British perspective - may have inhibited its impact. It is my aim to investigate the principles of radical feminism, as it arose through second wave feminism, including its advocating for women's culture and women's space. The important links between lesbian feminism and radical feminism will form part of the subject matter, as will the controversial arguments for feminist separatism.

A more recent anthology *(Bell and Klein, 1996)* that aimed to reposition radical feminism at the heart of the second wave feminist project, highlights radical feminism's preference for analysing and challenging women's oppression and misogynist practices (like trafficking in women and children, reproductive technologies, pornography and violence against women) rather than prioritising 'defining and redefining our "theory" for theory's

sake' *(9)*. The women-centred nature of radical feminism was a huge challenge to socialist feminism, as many of its central concerns were 'entirely off the map of male politics' *(Eisenstein, 1984, 127)*, threatened long-accepted social structures and was therefore difficult to integrate into existing male-determined political debates.

As Eisenstein *(1984)* and others have pointed out, approaches of radical feminists on issues like pornography have allied them sometimes with the New Right and the establishment, rather than their liberal feminist or socialist feminist sisters with whom there might be expected to be common ground. For some, such alliances have caused the Left and liberal feminism to misrepresent radical feminism which may have had a damaging effect *(Willis, 1992)*. Willis *(1992)* argued that many apolitical women were attracted to radical feminism because of its women-centredness, and thus ignored the opportunity to challenge and amend male-dominated left politics. Thus radical feminism had a tendency to be inward looking and operated 'to the exclusion of any engagement with sexism in the outside world' *(138)*.

One clear legacy of radical feminism was the identification and exploration of 'man-made language' *(Spender, 1980)* that linked women's oppression to their marginalisation and devaluation in language, literature and culture. Radical feminist writers such as Daly *(1979)* and Rich *(1980)* used poetry, prose and literary criticism to re-invent women's language and promote self-expression to counteract women's exclusion and to circumvent traditional textual forms, based on androcentric models. According to Rich :

> Today women are talking to each other, recovering an oral culture, telling our life-stories, reading aloud to one another the books that have moved and healed us, analyzing the language that has lied about us, reading our own words aloud to each other.
> (Rich, 1980, 13).

The emphasis of a radical feminist approach to developing a women's culture through second wave feminism was strong, and links closely to the cultural feminism embodied in the works of Daly and others although this is still highly contested within radical feminism *(Lienert, 1997)*. Some have suggested that radical feminism transformed into 'cultural feminism' by 1975, as although it had influenced the liberal feminist agenda, it rejected male values in favour of female ones, and became 'essentially a moral, counter-cultural movement aimed at redeeming its participants' *(Willis, 1992, 117)*. Arguments

that cultural feminism and radical feminism incorporated levels of essentialism that made them unacceptable and unachievable was an ongoing debate during the second wave, caused rifts between socialist feminism and radical feminism, and ensured that for many liberal feminists, as later described, radical feminism became even more unacceptable. The place of lesbian sexuality and lesbian rights within second wave feminism is also crucial and a source of much contention, as the next section will discuss.

Lesbian feminism

The role of lesbian sexuality in radical feminism has been widely commented on with some stating that bar sadomasochism, radical feminism viewed lesbian sexuality as a paradigm and a clear rejection of patriarchy *(Tong, 1989)*. Some American feminists certainly positioned lesbian experience or lesbian identity as essential to the (radical) feminist project, and this view had support in America and Britain, although clearly not all radical feminists were lesbians, or identified as 'political lesbians' *(Stewart-Park and Cassidy, 1977)*. Many lesbians clearly were not feminists either, and preferred involvement in gay liberation, or avoided politics altogether *(Hoagland, 1993)*.

However, the debates between heterosexual and lesbian feminism were profound. A paper produced by the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists for one of the national British women's liberation conferences (to be described later) republished in pamphlet form with letters and commentary from some of its critics *(1981)*, accused heterosexual women of being 'collaborators with the enemy' *(7)*, and took a position that many socialist and radical feminists found indefensible *(Coote and Campbell, 1982)*. As Bell and Klein *(1997)* comment, some in the group later tried to retract and distance themselves from some of the more controversial statements. hooks *(2000)* remembers the continual introspection by heterosexual feminists as to whether 'it was possible for women to ever have a liberated heterosexual experience within a patriarchal context' *(87)* because of the ongoing and influential lesbian feminist critiques of heterosexuality, and as Bell and Klein *(1997)* recount, for some feminists, 'the issues of lesbianism and heterosexuality caused an irreparable split' *(28)* within the second wave movement.

In the mid-1980s, editors of the British lesbian feminist journal *GOSSIP* reiterated lesbian feminism as the purest form of feminism by stating that 'we are all radical feminists who see lesbianism as essential to radical feminism' *(GOSSIP, 1986, 5)* and that they felt silenced as 'the Women's Liberation Movement drifts further and further

from feminism and lesbianism towards humanism, socialism and liberalism' *(5)*. To reverse that they wanted to 'a forum for the statements, analyses, theories needed to create a lesbian civilization' *(5)*. Bar certain parts of London and some other urban conurbations, creating a lesbian feminist civilisation was never viable but the influence of lesbian politics and aesthetics within second wave feminism was significant, the imagined space 'envisioned as the symbolic rupture of women from men' *(Munt, 1998, 10)* as one commentator described, but debates concerning feminist sexual behaviours and identification never disappeared. For one, this schism was partly generated by lesbian feminism's' 'own erotic culture to which friendship and sisterhood were integral' *(Rickford, 1983, 145)*.

Making feminist space for women

The concept of separatism, where women isolated themselves from men temporarily or permanently to address male oppression, became a keystone of radical feminist thinking. Withdrawal from male-defined institutions and refusing to accept the status quo for women, meant that for some commentators radical feminists were effectively separating themselves from patriarchal society *(Tong, 1989; Willis, 1978)*. As Munt *(1998)* suggested, being a lesbian separatist awarded someone 'the kudos of having made the total commitment to feminism' *(10)*. The creation of women's culture and women's spaces in which 'feminists can be said to be engaging in acts of separatism' *(Tong, 1989, 125)* could provide women, including heterosexual women, the chance to sometimes experience being with only women - spatially, socially, politically and even sexually. Space, its gendered meanings and transformative potential, is important to later parts of this investigation and for many radical and lesbian feminists, creating women's space was also underpinned by a desire to avoid mainstream funding and to create a self-supported and determined women's culture that was in their view less compromised.

Within women's spaces and services staffed or organised by and for women, women could develop themselves, their thinking and creativity without criticism or devaluation, gain support, become empowered and more able to reach their full potential. The consciousness-raising group, a space 'to think about our lives, our society, and our potential for being creative individuals and building a women's movement' *(Allen, 1972, 271)* exemplified this notion. Munt *(1998)* suggested that many women-oriented services, generated by the second wave like women's refuges, well-women clinics and rape crisis centres were staffed mainly by lesbians and were the 'material result of the vision for a

safe, utopic space for women to affirm their separate identity' *(10)*. Some commentators suggest otherwise. Tong, for example, *(1989)* argued that by opposing male culture, radical feminism by default positioned male culture as the norm and women's culture effectively as a (necessary) deviation from that, but although such polarities are not necessarily helpful, she considered that 'all movements need radicals, and the women's movement is no exception' *(138)*.

In this section, I have addressed some of the most challenging second wave feminist perspectives - radical feminism, lesbian feminism and separatism. For many of their advocates these were, and are, the most ideologically correct feminist perspectives, that because of their very nature preferred to work outside traditional structures. If opposing male culture and systems was the most important concern, radical feminism often had to rely on its own resources, through the women's community, to develop activities and services. The concept of women's space and women-only activities as a temporary experience of separatism, and of life without men, will be considered later. If radical feminism is at one end of the second wave spectrum, then liberal feminism may be expected to be more incorporated, as I will now consider.

Section Three : Defining liberal feminism

> All feminism is liberal at its root in that the universal feminist claim that woman
> is an independent being (from man) is premised on the eighteenth-century
> conception of the independent and autonomous self. All feminism is also radically
> feminist in that woman's identity as a sexual class underlies this claim.
> (Eisenstein, 1984, 4).

Eisenstein's *(1984)* contention that feminism is historically rooted in liberalism is reasonable, and much of first wave feminism arose from such a position. In second wave feminism, liberal feminism, with sexual equality and justice as its preferred outcome, was a natural home for many women who preferred to work within the system to progress change. As women began to express their disenchantment with consumerism, and their expected housewife and mother roles - the 'problem with no name' that Friedan *(1963)* highlighted - challenging and amending the status quo became a necessity. In this section, I will briefly reflect on the main theoretical manifestations of liberal feminism, and their role in providing a feminist framework for many women working in the mainstream.

Organising liberal feminism

Liberal feminism, or equal rights feminism, considered that women were constrained by a lack of educational opportunity, social and cultural prejudice and their internalised low self-confidence. To free women and to reach their potential, liberal feminists advocated for positive discrimination, affirmative action and for legislative change to end occupational and financial discrimination, fully accepting the need to work with 'the bureaucratic apparatus of the state and of the corporate world' *(Ferguson, 1984, 4)* to achieve these improvements. Groups such as the National Organisation of Women in the United States, and the Equal Opportunities Commission in the United Kingdom, exemplify these approaches that aim to redress women's historical disadvantage and improve the position of women as a group, although with clear differences, as the former is a voluntary organisation and the latter a government body linked to legislation. For Phillips *(1987)* such approaches were always more successful and popular in America because of a national agenda that favoured equality.

Dahelrup *(1986)* however argued that in Britain a professional, liberal feminism successfully influenced policy at a national level. Sebestyen *(1979)* commented that as liberal feminism's central aim was to challenge discrimination against women, rather than their oppression, it was felt that reasonable, enlightened people would be natural allies within existing structures and organisations and help facilitate change. As Eisenstein *(1981)* reflected, liberal feminism was (and arguably may still be) regarded by many as feminism. She concludes that 'liberal feminism is best understood as what Friedan *(1963)* calls "mainstream" feminism' *(4)* but that its long-standing problem has been that many who identify with it are unaware of its theoretical underpinnings, or relationship to other feminisms. The establishment of women's groups to improve women's status within professions was a common tactic in the late 1970s and 1980s in the United Kingdom as part of this liberal feminist agenda and examples from librarianship will be cited later.

Liberal feminism can be viewed as the least threatening strand of second wave feminism, for its desire to be part of, and to influence, the mainstream. Its ability to become incorporated within policy-making and funding did not require those that advocated and proposed it to adopt positions that could be interpreted as extreme or socially destabilising. From a British perspective, such women were often seen to have become

'professional feminists', those that 'believed in playing the game' *(Benn, 1993, 24)*, and to have compromised genuine feminist agendas to gain personal power. Benn continued :

> One can sometimes detect an impatience amongst those now settled into the institutions - those who have learned the language, gained the confidence - with the less evolved aims and skills of those at the "grass roots".
> (Benn, 1993, 24).

The notion of potential incompatibility between professionality and feminism is significant to this investigation, and will be revisited later. In the last three sections, I have set out details of the three main second wave feminisms. I will now look at some of their collective outputs, and then reflect back on differences between women's articulated needs and their preferred outcomes and resulting implications for the second wave movement and its ability to theorise the practices and activities with which I am most concerned.

Section Four : The seven demands of the women's movement and centralising subjectivities

Second wave feminism, although not a cohesive ideology, proposed some certainties that can be viewed as outcomes. Women were highlighted as a group with specific experiences and ways of seeing, within a society that did not necessarily position women at the forefront. Humm *(1992)* suggested that it was feminism that provided '*the* major change in social thinking and politics' in the twentieth century, as it '*radically* questions our understanding of 'men' and 'women' and the social structures which maintain their differences' *(xi)*, but ignoring the impacts of socialism, communism and fascism makes this view appear rather misguided.

Within the British context, annual Women's Liberation Conferences were held from 1970 as already noted. These brought together women's groups from throughout the country, with the Women's Liberation Workshop, the umbrella organisation for groups and individual women in London, one of the key groups *(O'Sullivan, 1996)*. The national conferences attempted to set the agenda for women's groups throughout the country in the 1970s *(Setch, 2002)*, and to debate differences and similarities. One outcome of the conferences, besides building a more cohesive strand of feminism for participants, was

the seven demands of the British women's liberation movements. These developed over time and argued for women's social, sexual and economic equality and for the condemnation of factors that oppressed women, including male violence and discrimination against lesbians *(Fairbairns, 2002)*. The seven demands became for some the unofficial 'manifesto' of the British women's movement *(Setch, 2002)*, although they had no real status, were dependent on the limited number of women at the conferences, and the then adherence of those that sought to pursue and promote them. The seven demands grew through a number of conferences. The first five came from the seventh National Women's Liberation Conference held in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1976, with the latter two added at the 1978 conference *(WIRES, 1978)*; the seven are summarised below.

SEVEN DEMANDS OF THE SECOND WAVE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

1. Equal pay for equal work
2. Equal education and equal opportunities
3. Free contraception and abortion on demand
4. Free 24-hour nurseries
5. Legal and financial independence for women
6. An end to discrimination against lesbians
7. Freedom from intimidation by the threat or use of male violence.
An end to the laws, assumptions and institutions that perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women.

It is clear that the demands incorporate positions from various second wave feminisms. Some derive from liberal feminism, for example 1, 2 and 5; others are more associated with socialist feminism such as 3 and 4; with the final two more easily sitting with a radical feminist approach. The seven demands were comprehensive in scope but as the British women's movement was not a collective body with an agreed plan, in many senses their impact and authority was limited and the demands instead exemplify the inherent differences in the second wave feminist movement. It can be seen that some demands are oblique in their meaning and potential interpretation and some that require further explanation in this context. If equal education was a goal, the content of that education and its origins and location of women became a major issue for the second

wave and after. In the following sections I review second wave feminist concerns over knowledge and its origins, and then discuss the development of educational practices that integrated women.

Section Five : Challenging orthodoxies - critiquing knowledge and objectivity

The site of much second wave feminist contention about knowledge was science and its historical position as a purportedly objective reality - 'the paradigm of knowledge per se' *(Code, 1991, 33)* as later described - but one that failed to acknowledge its gendered creation and embodiment. In this section subjectivity as a second wave feminist concept to underpin this contested view of knowledge as neutral will be introduced. Feminist views of knowledge will be explored, linking to the next chapter that will cover feminist engagement with academia including feminist sociology and women's studies, and the development of feminist research methodologies that have influenced and framed my work as will then be described. It is important to state that although this thesis moves beyond what is typically called second wave feminism, incorporating ideas and positions generated later and from other sources, the division between second wave and what can be called third wave feminism is unclear. Feminisms are not mutually exclusive and many of the techniques used in this thesis, and the approaches I took to the field-work as later described, contain elements that derive from second wave theorising. In this section, I consider the validation of personal knowledge within second wave feminism that leads on to further investigations of feminist research methodologies in the next chapter, that sets out explicitly the positions that I adopted and the reasons why.

Feminist epistemology and second wave debates about knowledge

> All knowledge is, in practice, produced within the bounds of a community of
> knowers who generate and validate what is known.
> (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2000, 216).

New knowledge generated by second wave feminism often built on women's individual experiences, incorporating the personal into the political to propose wider significance. As Ramazanoglu and Holland *(2000)* describe above, feminist texts were interested in 'telling new truths, confronting patriarchy, naming their existence, making up new words, digging up their history . . . disintegrating disciplines, proposing men as a gender rather

than the norm, revealing the power relations behind claims of natural difference' *(207)*. Second wave feminist desires to re-discover and validate earlier wisdom and to develop new knowledge from a women's view-point, aimed to identify the historical and contemporaneous impacts of gender inequality on women's lives and creativity, and to reposition women as knowing objects and subjects. As Attar *(1987)* commented 'we are feminists, and we do not play the game of pretending to be neutral, objective and uninvolved in what we write' *(31)*. Celebrating and documenting women's lived experience, as an outcome of social arrangements based substantially on sex difference, often previously denied, ignored or repressed, was central to second wave feminism. As Wilson *(1988)* commented, autobiography linked the personal and political and helped reduce the schism between personal experience and academic theory :

> Raw experience is marshalled into intellectual coherence and given a pattern within feminist theory, while confessional writing rebels against the elitism and distances of academic discourse and returns women's experience to its immediacy . . . this theoretical insight would then inform political action.
> (Wilson, 1988, 173)

Second wave feminist research prioritised autobiographical discourse for what it could reveal about the female condition. This was partly concerned with newly generated perspectives with, as Wilson comments, debates about subjectivity and objectivity (and their inclusion or exclusion) also part of the equation. For Haraway *(1996)* incorporating new feminist knowledge areas, derived to some extent from experiences such as domestic violence, into theory and academic discourse originated more from a desire for political transformation than from raising feminist alternatives to objectivity. Rowbotham *(1999)* made a similar point when reflecting on writings from working-class adult education students in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, highlighting later comments that will be made about late twentieth century working-class women in women's studies :

> The painful interconnectedness made by working-class students between self and the culture of the educated upper middle-class spoke eloquently of a thwarted subjectivity. They looked across that humiliating gulf between experience-based knowing and theory, which, in a very different context was to figure in the women's movement.
> (Rowbotham, 1999, 3).

Second wave feminism presented women's experience as a valid contribution to knowledge, and as symbolising women's exclusion from influencing and being part of recognised knowledge. Challenging the continued dominance of knowledge that ignored ordinary women, yet that often saw them as subjects, was part of that. These critiques have suggested that prioritising alleged objectivity over the acknowledgement or possibility of bias or subjectivity, sometimes failed to acknowledge women's different experiences. Second wave feminism importantly raised these key concerns, arguing for the greater involvement of women in creating all aspects of knowledge. It is important to move beyond this position and to understand where some of its shortcomings may lie, in relation to the role of the researcher and the construction of personal and professional identities and the influence that they may have on activity and motivations. In the next chapter, I will investigate the development of second wave feminist thinking within academic disciplines to allow me to draw on its strengths and to later move into other areas of potential utility through adopting a position that assumes some third wave feminist aspects. The chapter will consider sociology as the discipline that may best demonstrate the academic outcomes of second wave feminist knowledge activity, and then review women's studies as the potential academic manifestation of second wave feminism, with important significance for librarianship as later chapters demonstrate. The development of newly generated second wave feminist perspectives including research methodologies will also be described as will my own fieldwork and research experiences.

Conclusion

These brief descriptions of some of the main themes of the second wave women's movement and the diverging opinions and needs that they incorporated and articulated, provide an initial framework for investigating librarianship from a feminist perspective, and considering where feminism and librarianship could, or have, converged. I have described second wave feminisms' development of theories about women's status and the need for structures, challenges and activities to rectify, support and enable women's equality. I have especially highlighted three major feminist strands - socialist feminism, radical feminism, and liberal feminism - that are considered to have had the most significant long-term influence.

Differences within second wave feminism have been highlighted, especially those relating to class and race issues, sexual orientation and other identities. As Ramazanoglu

and Holland *(2002)* summarised, 'feminism covers a diversity of beliefs, practices and politics, and these overlap and interact with other beliefs, practices and politics' *(5)*. As described, the second wave feminist movement was not unified, but divided on lines related to social, sexual and racial division and resulting interpretations of theory and preferences for action and practice. Although Women's Liberation Conferences took place in Britain for a number of years, they did not represent all women who identified with feminism, and often revealed schisms within the groups that attended. For many women, the second wave feminist movement failed to incorporate their experiences and insights, and continued to advocate fairly traditional models of social organisation, apart from centralising women. The construction of knowledge, specifically scientific knowledge, long established as objective and unquestionable became increasingly challenged by feminists who alleged its exclusion of women at all levels.

Although the second wave women's movement heralded wider and more vocal discussions about difference, that is not to deny the dominance of white middle-class women within British and American second wave feminism. As Bourne *(1984)* pointed out, acknowledging this is 'hardly contentious' *(18)*, but there were clear repercussions for, as she continued, 'middle-class and working-class women may perceive their oppression differently and have different ways of fighting it' *(18)*. hooks *(2000)* recently argued that American second wave white feminists, however much they supported anti-racism, saw themselves as 'superior to black females, more informed, better educated, more suited to "lead" a movement' *(56)* that they regarded as really theirs, which therefore incorporated racist notions. This interpretation appears to reiterate experiences of the first National Black Women's Conference held in Brixton, London in 1979 and attended by over 300 Black British women. The conference argued for an autonomous Black women's movement, 'in which we ourselves lead a struggle against the specific type of oppression that we face' *(Organisation of Women of Afro-Caribbean and Asian Descent, 1979, 590)* away from white-dominated women's groups, male-dominated Black groups and middle-class dominated left groups. Within the United Kingdom, the domination of white women's groups and agendas, although less overt and public than their American counterparts, arguably restricted the participation and contribution of Black and minority ethnic women.

The challenges and critiques made by second wave feminism to knowledge, its content, origins and assumptions have also been discussed, as have some of the alternatives

proposed through the introduction of subjectivity into knowledge production via the validation and valuing of personal and gendered experiences and insights. Such developments challenge the certainties of normative concepts of knowledge and propose new alternatives from the perspectives of those traditionally excluded. In the next chapter, the desire to integrate such positions into academic practice and disciplines, with associated advantages to societal and political understandings and change, is discussed. These insights allow an investigation to take place concerning the methodological outcomes of feminist research practice, and to then to explain how these insights contributed to the methodological development, and aims and objectives of this thesis. I will draw on these ideological frameworks to explain in more detail the outcomes for second wave feminist research and their implications for my own work. It will be made clear that although these are vital tools, there are concerns with their limitations and other methodological approaches also need to be integrated.

North London Polytechnic, March 1988

Dear Diary

College is good as am doing something different and also building on my work in community and radical bookshops, there's lots of similarities in some ways with what libraries are doing. But it is very frustrating as a lot of the course is tedious and irrelevant. There's a large number of embryonic librarian stereotypes like one bloke who wants to be an academic librarian because it gives him access to gate keeping and deciding who is worthy of reading books. Why people like this should be seen as potential librarians is beyond me.

The lecturers are mostly male, white (of course), although there's one Asian woman and a white woman. One lecturer is actually called Adrian Mole – honestly ! He is in fact okay, but they are generally sexist and patronising, and happy to admit that they haven't read the college Equal Opportunity Policy for example. Most of them haven't worked in libraries for years.

I'm in a Women in Libraries group at college which is good (some nice women), and we are trying to complain about the general sexist nature of the course. Whenever we raise anything – like how come classification schemes are so sexist? – they dismiss our views as of specialist interest and not relevant. Given that most librarians are women, and have little chance of getting top jobs because of the whole male domination of the profession…the fact that women – and men in some ways – are stereotyped in all aspects of librarianship might be just a bit relevant, you would think.

…closing with a heavy heart….

Chapter Three : Feminism, sociology and methodology

- Introduction

- Section One : British and American feminist challenges to sociology
    Arguing for a feminist methodology and theorising gender
    Women's studies : knowledge critiques and alternatives
    Debating incorporation or separatism
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- Section Two : Reasons, sources and feminist methodologies
    What is feminist research ?
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- Section Three : Methodologies used in my research
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- Conclusion

Introduction

Although feminism as a social movement was centrally concerned with relations between women and men, one of its other desires was to analyse knowledge and its origins, and to promote new constructions. As Chapter Two concluded, the inclusion of personal information sources into feminist research symbolised this approach, both debunking neutral objectivity as possible or desirable, and offering new, often critical material that suggested the centrality of women's experience as creators, participants and subjects of research and knowledge production. To interrogate librarianship further as a practice and ideology, this chapter will concentrate on feminist methodologies developed within academia that originated in second wave feminist desires to create these new forms of knowledge and investigation, and describe their influence on my own work. Second wave feminism also aimed to articulate a new set of knowledges through interrogating and repositioning academic subjects, as I will investigate.

In Section One of this chapter, I reflect on the growth within sociology of a feminist theoretical position that included, and influenced, thinking from both socialist feminism and radical feminism. Sociology, as the study of society and modes of inter-relation, is the context in which much second wave feminist thinking within academia was applied, as it was regarded as failing to fully recognise the importance of gender relations and subsequent inequalities in society and social interactions. Feminist sociology that emerged through the second wave period, proposed that sociology as it had been constructed used the wrong methods of investigation and adopted incorrect conceptions as a result. Sociology was arguably the academic discipline most affected by the twentieth century women's movement, but it is also important to reflect on women's studies, as a new discipline that synthesised a feminist approach to subjects and subjectivity and that facilitated the creation of new knowledges by women. As Oakley *(1981ii)* commented, to understand women's position in academia, there is a need to understand how gender operates :

> To enquire how the situation of women is represented in what passes for academic "knowledge" - and, more profoundly, what the situation of women is - we have, first of all, to alter the way in which we see the world.
> (Oakley, 1981ii, ix).

Bringing in the work of Oakley and others into this chapter opens discussions concerning the principles underpinning feminist research that was needed to help formulate new thinking about women, and to recognise their exclusion as participants, informants and practitioners from previous academic activity. Topics such as the role of the researcher and their relationship to the subject area being investigated are covered, including issues like reflexivity, which became a key component of feminist research, building on its existing use within the social sciences. Having established the possibilities of feminist-inspired research, I then explore the decisions made concerning material and informants, and the practical steps involved in my own investigations. This requires me to set out more information concerning my own position as a researcher and a player in some of the settings and situations which Part Three covers.

Describing reasons for including certain areas of research is important, and after setting out theoretical and personal perspectives on feminist research, I begin to explore my main areas of investigation. Although my aim is to explore experiences of women working within library settings who have lived through twentieth century feminism, it is necessary to review the construction of librarianship at a crucial historical time – the late nineteenth century. As already suggested, changing roles of women and the development of the new professions were at this point highly significant. I will therefore consider the reasons for investigating some of the key male figures within librarianship that appear in Part Two of the thesis, that aims to begin to answer some of the questions raised in Part One through addressing historical and contemporary library issues.

Section Three of this chapter considers in more detail the processes that I undertook to devise my research plans, to refine my areas of investigation and the informants that were considered to be potentially useful. This details both formal and informal activities undertaken to gather the range of knowledge required, and the interviewing schedules that I devised. As some of my sources are women within women's libraries, who may be considered not professional, one section explores who can be called a librarian and describes the reasons why I consider such sites to be significant, and why professional status may not be the only determinant of librarianship. The barriers that I experienced when collecting this information, and the tensions that were revealed are also described, as I apply feminist research principles to my own self-knowledge as a researcher. I conclude this chapter by reflecting more deeply on the personal impacts that carrying out this research has had, that has highlighted and questioned aspects of my own life-story and personal and professional decisions.

Section One : British and American feminist challenges to sociology

By the late 1970s some women sociologists in Britain and the United States were taking feminist tools and applying them to a discipline which, although liberal in its origins, in their view failed to identify, understand or encompass women's gendered experience. Their arguments were that women had been neglected in empirical research, that the main theoretical positions in sociology were sexist and exclusionary, and that understandings of gender relations remained embedded within a limited nuclear family context *(McNally, 1979)*. As well as feminist critiques, commentators from other perspectives also argued against existing sociological mores during this period. For those coming from a feminist position, androcentric thinking within sociology was highly significant, demonstrated in a classic text on sociological investigation and the interests of the sociologist :

> . . . his consuming interest remains in the world of men, their institutions, their history, their passions. And since he is interested in men, nothing that men do can be altogether tedious for him. He will naturally be interested in the events that engage men's ultimate beliefs, their moments of tragedy and grandeur and ecstasy) (Berger, 1963, 29/30).

For some women sociologists, feminism also revealed their own experiences as female lecturers within male-dominated departments and institutions, teaching a subject that relied on semi-scientific norms that ignored and denied gender differences *(Laslett, 1997)*. The concept of post-Second World War sociology as 'the science of society' links closely to notions of positivism (increasingly challenged through second wave feminist perspectives, as has already been discussed) and to the creation of a knowledge base assumed to convey objectivity. As feminist sociologists argued, studying the world from a sociological position is inevitably partial and affected by one's own knowledge, background and experience, and therefore being a man or woman is central to that understanding and any resulting bias or interpretation *(Abbott and Wallace, 1990)*. No research consideration or investigation can therefore be objective or neutral, and unsurprisingly sociology, as was more recently commented 'has been a fertile ground for feminist challenges to the knowledge base' *(Delamont, 2003, 3)*.

Arguing for a feminist methodology and theorising gender

The scientific method of testing hypotheses through observation, and the view that society was a homogenous mass where women and men had access to the same experiences and choices, was criticised by feminist sociologists who proposed new methods of enquiry, research and methodology to generate other knowledge outcomes. It is important that second wave feminist research is not viewed as only concerned with qualitative methods, although this was important, quantitative work was considered as also needing attention to maximise its value. As Acker *(1997)* reflected, on teaching sociology in the 1970s :

> I began to see inconsistencies, contradictions, and absences of women. Women, it was perfectly obvious, were absent or treated inconsistently in all class and stratification studies, including those by Marxists. Almost all mobility studies were done with samples of men.
> (Acker, 1997, 34).

If social inequalities based on gender, race or class are ignored and treated as natural and normal, the role of sociology in explaining societal functions and processes through research or observation is deeply flawed. Women working in sociology began to argue, as Delamont *(2003)* describes, that acknowledgement was needed :

> . . . that researchers had posed their research questions in a sexist way; that empirical studies had sampled from the population in a sexist way; that they had used research instruments that were grounded in sexist ideologies and therefore reproduced sexist findings; or that they had analysed and written up their findings in sexist ways.
> (Delamont, 2003, 61).

Over time, the development of a more sophisticated feminist approach to sociology, introduced a new set of tools and specific positions like feminist standpoint theory. As Stanley and Wise *(1990)* defined, this epistemological perspective, exemplified in the work of theorists like Sandra Harding, argued for 'a feminist research not only located in, but preceding from, the grounded analysis of women's material realities' *(25)*. Instead of examining the world in an androcentric, 'sex-blind and at worst sexist' way *(Abbott and Wallace, 1990, 5)*, feminist sociologists proposed that women's socially derived

experience shaped by the construction of gender needed to be central to understanding women's subordination and power relations between the sexes. Although this concept is extremely important, as will be revealed, incorporating the effects of race and class into such analysis was not always perceived as desired or successful, and the lack of diversity and inclusion in feminist theorising, academia and knowledge production will be highlighted later.

The sociological concept of gender is highly significant to second wave, and post-second wave, feminist understandings. Gender has been defined as 'a hierarchical division between women and men embedded in both social institutions and social practices . . . (that is) . . . produced, negotiated and sustained at the level of everyday interaction' *(Jackson and Scott, 2002, 1/2)*. Gender derives from biological differences, but is overlaid with other meanings that manifest and influence the allocation of power beyond the effects of physical dis-similarity between the sexes. Re-defining sex and gender allowed feminist sociology to provide a reinterpretation of society that more clearly set out the experiences of the individual and the group within structures and organisations and meant that sociology could no longer continue ignoring women and men as separately socially constructed. I will now reflect on a systematic feminist approach to the academe, through the second wave construction of women's studies in the United States and United Kingdom.

Women's studies : knowledge critiques and alternatives

> Because most women have lived without access to the means of social definition and have worked outside the spheres of reward and recognition, they have not had a history.
> (Gordon, Buhle and Dye, 1976, 75).

Women's studies was concerned with re-writing women into history as the quote above suggests, creating insights into women's gendered experience and positing feminist ways of teaching and research that incorporated equality and the importance of self-reflection and subjectivity. It also intended to create a women's space in academia in which 'the deconstruction of traditional disciplines in terms of their subject matter and structures' *(Robinson, 1997, 4)* could be carried out. Women's studies therefore can be seen as part of the feminist project to affect social change, to end the oppression of women *(Lowe and Benson, 1991)* and to 'bridge the academic / community divide' *(Messer-Davidow,*

2002). As Brooks *(1997)* commented, it was an outcome of demands for ''a space' and 'a voice' by the second wave of the feminist movement' *(122)* where the impacts of sex, gender, race and class on women could be ideally addressed.

Women's studies provided the opportunity to critique 'malestream' knowledge, the power and structures that supported and reinforced it, and to create and propose legitimate women-derived alternatives and additions. Women's studies was also concerned with helping women students and academics re-build personal and collective deficits experienced in the gendered academe, and gain personal power and intellectual growth. It was a vehicle for second wave feminism to influence academia and the creation of knowledge, and to encourage a rigorous investigation of the world from a gender-aware perspective. Young commented *(1975)* that women's studies could increase women's profile, and public and academic 'esteem for women as persons and as a group worthy of academic attention' *(188).*

The creation of women's studies raises a number of interesting issues for feminism around integration and autonomy, theory versus activism, and the underlying gender, race and class of knowledge, as well as debates around higher education itself. In the United States especially, the articulation of second wave feminism within academic settings, led to the establishment of university courses and curricula oriented towards women. By the end of the 1970s, many American colleges and universities had courses studying women, with a large number of formal women's studies programmes with some offering degrees *(Sapiro, 1986).* According to Messer-Davidow *(2002),* in 1973 and 1974, between 2,500 and 4,500 women's studies courses took place in American universities. In the United Kingdom, the development was not as far-reaching; women's studies in the 1970s tended to be part of traditional degrees, although typically within the social sciences. It took until 1980 for the first British university, the University of Kent, to offer a Masters in Women's Studies *(Robinson, 1997).* Although this pattern has ebbed and flowed, the difference between separate women's studies programmes with potentially clearer links to radical feminist positions and an autonomous women's community, and the mainstream incorporation of topics related to women and gender within wider subject areas, leaning towards a more liberal feminism, is important.

Debating incorporation or separatism

As Lowe and Benson *(1991)* pointed out, desires to balance incorporation into the mainstream (where more students could be reached, and disciplines and discourses influenced more widely) with independent women's studies programmes that could adopt a more radical feminist position, was often problematic because of funding and structural arrangements. Integration into the curriculum, that could be viewed as liberal and therefore less likely to amend or offend the status quo, was often the only option because of pragmatic, survival reasons. For Stanley *(1997)*, a pioneer of British women's studies, this could be highly problematic as the more the subject integrated, the less it could maintain its feminist force :

> The greater the move away from women's movement towards academic assimilation as women's studies, the more possible it has become to be self-critical without being seen as self-destructive but with a loss of political edge. (Stanley, 1997, 178).

From an American perspective, for Lowe and Benson *(1991)*, inclusion provided a huge opportunity to influence, as to critique 'objective' scholarship, women's studies had to engage with knowledge in all subject areas and academic disciplines. Although, this could potentially dilute feminist efforts, feminist scholarship could theoretically imply a potential 'restructuring of knowledge within these disciplines' *(49)*. However, Lowe and Benson *(1991)* argued that separate women's studies courses supported the growth of second wave feminism - especially radical feminism - as they provided a feminist scholarship framework and helped create 'a separate and exciting women's culture' *(49)*. As will be discussed later, the development of women's studies is also directly linked to areas of interface between feminism and librarianship.

For Messer-Davidow *(2002)*, women's studies, specifically in the United States, was hampered from the start. She argued that the feminists who developed it lacked academic standing; practitioners and students had tenuous academic status; conventional university duties were still needed; women's studies was resisted by the mainstream; subject-based disciplines had difficulties with the multi-disciplinary nature of women's studies, and there were issues linking feminist academia to grassroots activism. Lowe and Benson *(1991)* commented that even advocates of women's studies recognise that they are 'incompatible with many (if not most) of the assumptions and procedures of universities

and colleges' *(54)*. From their point of view, to retain a more challenging feminist perspective and to continue to question 'the structures of knowledge', it is preferable to 'retain some status as outsiders' *(59)* through separate women's studies programmes. (Chapter Nine comments on the current position in British universities).

Representing the needs of all women

Women's studies, like second wave feminism itself, needed to find an analysis and viewpoint that recognised the multiple oppression experienced by some women and this unsurprisingly was not always achieved. Feminist attempts to critique a male-dominated, homogeneous knowledge base and to provide new feminist knowledge were clearly influenced by issues of power and exclusion. Attempts to create new feminist knowledge, whether in or out of the academe, were affected by debates about race, class, sexuality and power as women began to reposition themselves in relation to others and to reclaim desired, or cast off unwanted, identities. Women's studies intended to rectify the exclusion of women from education and from knowledge production, and could be seen as a place in which a structure could develop that would 'differ significantly from overall university, or college norms' *(Lowe and Benson, 1991, 49)*.

As Barr *(1999)* described, British adult education in the 1970s and early 1980s became influenced by feminism, particularly within the Worker's Education Association and local authority education departments, and assumed the form of a popular education movement. It built alliances between community and academic organisations, and other political and women-oriented agencies to promote a nation-wide framework of adult women's education and community education. Such opportunities could support working-class women to access alternative forms of education, as well as increase their entry points to higher education. What happened however sometimes revealed the homogenous nature of feminist academia and its replication of external structures and inequalities. For many in Jackson's *(1998)* study of working class women attending women's studies courses for example, university was a disappointment. Many felt marginalised, partly because of the ambiguous status of women's studies (and the stigma it gained through its association with feminism) as well as the personal sacrifices made in order to study. Their main frustrations however were with feeling excluded from the knowledge being studied and the middle-class nature of the whole university experience. Jackson *(1998)* then questioned whether it was possible for 'the women's studies

classroom ... (to) ... become an empowering place for all women including working-class women ?' *(204)*.

Feminist sociology, as has been explored, aimed to view the world through a gender lens. This section has considered how this position developed through raised awareness amongst women academics of the inadequacies of sociological constructs to fully interpret society in a gendered way, and its outcomes in methodology, research and a continued commitment to position subjectivity within the sociological process of investigation and understanding. A key outcome of second wave feminist sociology is arguably the clear definition of gender as a social construct that has continued application across theoretical, academic and policy-making arenas.

For Stanley *(1997)* the academic frontiers or borderlands that can be created through women's studies represent both epistemological crossing-points and an interface between different knowledges. These need to both accept and attempt to address the power inequalities of both feminism and academia, but it is notable that all accounts of women's studies, even those that consider it a success, note the replication of external power inequalities within academia as a crucial inhibitor *(Lowe and Benson, 1991; Messer-Davidow, 2002)*. These power inequalities highlight that women are not all the same, and that talking about women means including and identifying a range of women and their differences and needs. In the next section, I begin to explore how these theoretical notions about feminist influences on academia became translated into practice through the development of feminist research.

Section Two : Reasons, sources and feminist methodologies

Having established that second wave feminism desired to influence educational theory and knowledge production and validation through new insights into sociology and the development of women's studies, this section sets out to raise understandings of what this meant in practice. The field of feminist research will be firstly reviewed, then the onset of innovative methodological approaches, through the work of Ann Oakley and others, followed by reflections on incorporating personal experiences and action into research. I conclude by establishing my own need to include historical as well as contemporary

sources in my research, linking to the next section that reviews the methodological processes that were carried out.

What is feminist research ?

> Too often our attempts to bridge theory and practice occur at the level of theory rather than practice.
> (Naples and Clark, 1996, 160).

From the late 1970s onwards, feminist research particularly within the social sciences, aimed to redress the exclusion of women by creating new knowledge, and ensuring that research design and investigations took account of feminist principles. As might be expected, feminist approaches to research were not identical, and as Olesen (1994) commented, often differ in the styles utilised. She suggested however, that all feminist researchers hold an overall assumption that 'interpretative human actions, whether found in women's reports of experience or in the cultural products of reports of experience' (158), can be the focus of research.

Shields and Dervin *(1993)* summarised the main positions of feminist research methodologies as the importance of personal, subjective experience; an awareness of the construction of gender and the impact of gender relations; the role of reflexivity and inter-subjectivity, and facilitating emancipation and empowerment through some form of change or transformation. Reinharz *(1992)* argued that feminism influences research methods and it is not a research method itself, but also cited common points that underpin the variety of feminist research methods. She suggested that these were an ongoing criticism of non-feminist scholarship, an adherence to feminist theory, the possibility of working across disciplines, a desire to affect social change, an aim to reflect human diversity, the frequent inclusion of the researcher in the research, efforts to have special connections with those being studied (through participatory research for example) and the common personal approach taken to the reader *(Reinharz, 1992)*. Many of these aspects can be seen as contested and to assume equality and a particular empathy between the researcher and the researched that may not exist. Second wave feminist research, embodied perhaps within the work of Ann Oakley as will soon be discussed, opened up new possibilities but failed to consistently recognise power issues between researchers and subjects and that subjectivity operated across all aspects of the process. It may be possible to be both subjective and objective, and this may not always appear to be

considered the case within some second wave feminist research approaches. Identities and allegiances of the researcher and of those that they research are complex, as my own investigations later set out.

As Naples and Clark *(1996)* commented above, the relationship between feminist research and activism and a desire for social change can be finely balanced. Klein *(1983)* writing earlier, from a radical feminist position, defined feminist research as trying 'to take women's needs, interests and experiences into account and aims at being instrumental in improving women's lives in one way or another' *(90)*. Mies *(1983)* strongly suggested that if women's studies aimed to improve women's social status, then feminist researchers needed to work to that end, but knowing that being women scholars may be a contradiction that requires a new feminist methodology that recognises the links between the research and those being researched. If the purpose of feminist research was also to develop a cogent body of knowledge for women's studies, then the choice of research subjects and topics is also influenced by feminist beliefs, including a desire to inform and reshape public debate and understandings. For these reasons, it is important to chart the evolution of this process through considering Ann Oakley, the first feminist researcher that I encountered.

Interviewing women : the work of Ann Oakley

> Interviewing is rather like marriage : everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets. (Oakley, 1981i, 31).

Interest generated by the second wave women's movement in researching women's experiences, and the gendered context in which they lived and worked, led to the need for appropriate tools and methodologies to use in fieldwork and qualitative research. Early theorists like Oakley highlighted the potential impact of sociological research that was both theoretically sound and that incorporated feminist understandings. Roberts' *(1981)* review of feminist research commented on the dearth of such work, arguing that there was even less in circulation that looked at how 'taking a feminist perspective, or even merely taking account of women in research affects the research process' *(2)*. Challenging accepted sociological behaviours was a radical step for many women researchers influenced by second wave feminism, but as Roberts *(1981)* pointed out,

feminist researchers do not claim to be value-free or unbiased as they propose a view-point that is grounded in the reality of gender inequality. Their goal is to illuminate inequalities via research but also to highlight that their work is 'affected in a similar way by their experiences and their view of the world of men' *(16)*. In other words, the gendered personal and professional experience of the researcher is highly relevant.

Oakley *(1981i)* felt that very few sociologists fully described the interviewing process, with little congruity between theory and practice. She challenged traditional interview methodologies on a number of counts - firstly, noting that the sociological interview is often posed as a conversational way of finding out about people. Although there is a need to ensure that material is obtained within a friendly context, likely to encourage more openness and candour, there is a need to recognise the power dynamics of the interview and to amend it appropriately. She argued for the need to recognise that the interviewee has independent thought and is not merely a passive subject as traditionally positioned. The interviewer also comes with personal histories and experiences that for the more prescriptive model of interviewing would be felt irrelevant. Oakley *(1981i)* identified a second paradigm of the interview as quasi-psychoanalytical and confessional, and considered this problematic (and also very male) as it 'appeals to such values of objectivity, detachment, hierarchy and 'science' as an important cultural activity which takes priority over people's more individual concerns' *(38)*. There is in fact, she cited, a hierarchical and potentially unequal power relationship between the researcher and the research subject. A more equal dynamic thus needed to be found that incorporates subjectivity and equality, and rejects the possibility of neutrality and being value-free.

Oakley proposed difficulties with traditional modes of interviewing through the longitudinal studies she undertook where she spoke to women about housework, pregnancy and other gendered experiences *(1974; 1979)*. This work critiqued previous splits between private and public concerns and research practice, as her uncovering of women's domestic experience introduced new knowledge about women's lives into the public arena. Negrey *(2000)* pointed out that such transformations of the research agenda helped move sociological inquiry from researching issues like politics, law and religion in a virtually gender-less way, to legitimating the study of highly gendered areas such as domestic violence that may have wider significance for social policy and women.
As relationships with research interviewees sustained over time, Oakley found that women perceived the interview as a setting in which personal information about the interviewer could also be legitimately sought and given. Oakley acknowledged this as a

dilemma for feminist interviewers, as such engagement was not standard and could also be challenging for the interviewer or researcher. Establishing rapport and empathy was crucial in her view, as the nearer the experiences of the interviewee and interviewee, the more they shared 'the same gender socialisation and critical life-experience' *(55)* and the more successful the interview would be as more congruence existed between the parties.

For later commentators, such approaches are problematic. Millen *(1997)* criticised the research relationship as described by Oakley and others, claiming that such a relationship could never be equal and should not be claimed as such, as it denies the motivations for undertaking research, and the knowledge held by the researcher. For Millen, the researcher has a role in enlightening the interviewee, who may not able to fully understand her situation or interpret her own experience :

> Individuals may not have a full awareness of the systems which surround and constrain them, and as researchers, we have a responsibility to illuminate these systems using their experiences, and illuminate these experiences using these systems.
> (Millen, 1997, no pagination).

This advocacy for a more 'professional' approach to interviewing, in some senses is a counter-balance to Oakley but moves the debate further into the development of processes such as reflexivity, that have grown more explicitly within sociological and feminist research since the time of Oakley that I will now discuss. Reflexivity, as a process of research and interviewing, advocates for the creation of new knowledge that contains elements from both the researcher and interview subjects, and was adopted within second wave feminism as an important part of the research process. As the next section considers, reflexivity may have been an ideal within second wave feminist approaches, but may also have limitations. Perspectives that integrate third wave feminist positions, as I later describe, would suggest that the researcher role is highly contested, and that equality within all aspects of research and its outcomes is virtually impossible.

Incorporating the personal into research

> Reflexivity generally means attempting to make explicit the power relations and the exercise of power in the research process.
> (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, 118).

As Ramazanoglu and Holland *(2002)* suggest above in a comment that takes a contested position, reflexivity acknowledges the power dynamic within the research process and brings the knowing experience of the interviewer / researcher to the fore. Incorporating gender politics led to a reconfiguration of research within academic disciplines through women's studies, providing as one research group commented 'the vital common ground for feminist research and thought' *(The Personal Narratives Group, 1989, 4)*. From their perspective, moving the personal into the political, via feminism, provides the opportunity to take cognisance of individual women's stories in order to illuminate women's experience more widely.

Clearly, not all women who provide personal material for feminist (or any) researchers are feminist or wish to challenge the status quo. However, although some may appear to comply with social conventions, they may 'nevertheless describe strategies and activities that challenge those same norms' *(The Personal Narratives Group, 1989, 7)* whilst others may 'thrive within the established norms and parameters or even assertively contribute to the maintenance of prevailing systems of gender domination' *(The Personal Narratives Group, 1989, 7)*. Interviewing such women may be challenging and frustrating to feminist researchers, and the position taken by the researcher in planning, shaping, undertaking and interpreting interviews is vital. For that reason, the power of the researcher - implicit and explicit - has been much discussed and debated within feminist academic circles. Centralising the existing sociological methodology of reflexivity in feminist research was arguably an inevitable progression of feminist thinking about research that incorporated and made more systematic ideas of researchers like Oakley. I now turn to utilising feminist thinking about research in this study, and how and why I adopted particular methods.

Using feminist research principles in my research

In planning this research, my own lived experience as a feminist affected what I wanted to research and why, how I wanted to do it, who I would tell about it and what I ended up undertaking. It affected how I located my interviewees, what I asked them, what I told them about my own interests and views and how I reflected back to them findings and knowledge gained in other parts of my investigation. My knowledge of many of the histories, sites and circumstances that I was researching, and in some cases involved in, was important and will be reflected upon in Part Three. I also knew some of those I

interviewed as acquaintances but others more personally, and will indicate this where appropriate. As Olesen, Reinharz, Shields and Devin and others have pointed out the processes by which feminist researchers use their feminism differs. As indicated above, I wanted my research to adhere to principles of openness, to acknowledge feminist theory, to have a desire to improve women's experience, to reflect and draw on my own involvement and responses, and to include women's experiences and viewpoints. Subjectivity could not be unquestioned, as a crude interpretation of a second wave feminist position might suppose, and my investigation regarded subjectivity as something that has to be regarded as problematic. My overall motivation has always been to improve access to information for women, partly by integrating feminism more fully into the theory and practice of librarianship, and being an active participant in some of the work that I describe has been both inevitable and a necessity.

I attempted to maintain reflexivity, in the knowledge that this is also a contested notion, by being aware and explicit about the intentions of my work and about my involvement in some of the subjects and sites being investigated. I also took some responsibility for the outcomes of my influences and interventions. Laslett *(1997)* commented that the power of feelings and emotions that can be present throughout, or generated by, involvement in researching women need to be incorporated into the processes of devising and undertaking research, and the process of reflexivity, and the inclusion of personal narrative, can allow that to happen. Reflexivity can affect the researcher and how they interact with their subjects on multiple levels. This includes the language used to carry out the interview and research, the subject positions taken up by the researcher, including 'deliberate claims to researcher positions' *(Alldred, 1998, 162)* and the individual relationships with participants and the field of inquiry. Instead of researchers being seen by their subjects as 'mainly reactive and critical, rather than actively challenging and creative' *(Barr, 1999, 36)*, feminist reflexivity aimed to expose the sexist nature of sociological research and to begin a journey in which 'the subject and object, as well as a consciousness of the process joining them, are present' *(Prell, 1989, 252)*. As Millen pointed out, feminist researchers have analysed not only the content of knowledge, but also how 'that research was conceived, produced, placed in the public domain, and justified as knowledge' *(Millen, 1997)* as part of their research through taking a reflexive position.

As a feminist, sociologist and a librarian (yet more distant from the latter as an active practitioner) I have been influenced by various discourses that have led me to hold certain

belief systems, values and knowledge, that are sometimes contradictory and conflicting. I am aware that personal involvement can invalidate feminist qualitative and reflective research as subjective and partial, but as Ribbens and Edwards *(1998)* comment, researchers cannot avoid addressing their position. There is a need to acknowledge the situated positions of knowledge gathered in feminist and qualitative research, and high standards of reflexivity and openness about choices made in any empirical study are therefore needed. It is important to note that all knowledge is situated, not only that generated through feminist or qualitative research, and that all researchers influence and shape their methodologies and outputs. I now reflect on decisions that I made about interview subjects, the process of gathering informants and how I worked with them in undertaking the research. Firstly, I set out the reasons for investigating the historical male figures of contemporary librarianship as part of my research, and the processes by which I gathered information.

In the stacks - investigating the men of librarianship

Much emphasis of second wave feminism as Chapter Two indicated, concerned re-discovering women's hidden activities to amend the male-domination of much historical discourse. There has been a realisation within library history, a latecomer to second wave and post-second wave feminist research canon as Hildenbrand *(1996)* comments, that although discovering women's contribution to shaping librarianship is vital, women's roles in librarianship cannot be considered without examining men's work as :

> This simultaneous feminization and professionalization of librarianship yielded much bigger library systems, with more varied services, over which men were more likely to preside than women.
> (Hildenbrand, 1996, 19).

As my intention has partly been to understand the contexts in which librarianship has changed and has then experienced difficulties in withstanding challenges or asserting itself when under threat, it is appropriate to indicate male influences during these periods. Within librarianship, the settlement that was reached at the end of the nineteenth century through the work of Dewey and Carnegie, is the one that is now in crisis, and therefore investigating their specific roles was required. Hildenbrand suggests that concentrating on the elite men might be counter-productive, but there are a number of key reasons why this has been necessary. Part Three of the thesis is grounded in the experiences of British

women's libraries, and the trajectories of British librarianship and feminism are of concern throughout. Investigating these has been impossible without exploring the influence of the United States of America, where although the development of public librarianship emerged from a different political, cultural and social context, much of it predated events in Britain and to a large extent shaped and directed them. I return to this period to explain why contemporary librarianship and its practitioners are positioned as they are, with much of this construction and embodiment, as I began to discover, through the actions of the American librarian, Melvil Dewey. In Chapter Six the choice of Dewey as both a cipher and a vehicle to understand the construction of librarianship will be fully articulated, as will the parallel role of Carnegie.

Dewey is known throughout librarianship and beyond for his classification scheme, and the new public libraries that realised much of Dewey's vision of a new librarianship were made possible through funding from Andrew Carnegie. The Scottish-born industrialist had a major role in building America's wealth and donated millions of dollars to educational and social projects, including public libraries. Their roles, especially Dewey's, are highly significant, and merit a chapter to consider their impact on the ideologies embedded within public librarianship and those carrying it out. Although Dewey and Carnegie's settlement of librarianship is vital, I decided not to ask opinions specifically of my informants on these or other historical male library figures. As the experiences of women librarians and of women working in women's libraries was the focus of my field-work, especially the impact of second wave feminism and beyond, I concentrated on discovering where these male influences still held sway and shaped individual and collective histories. It became apparent from the interviews, as later parts of this chapter explain, that many opinions on the construction of librarianship and the role of women, and its origins, existed. The Dewey Decimal Classification scheme was frequently referred to, sometimes unprompted, and regarded as highly significant, but problematic, by many interviewees. The specific role of Carnegie was known by some, including one librarian working in a Carnegie-funded public library, but little overall comments were made concerning his work. To gain more information and insight about these key figures, I therefore undertook library and electronic research.

Much of the historical library research took place within Glasgow's Mitchell Library, a Victorian edifice funded by Stephen Mitchell, a local tobacco baron, for which Andrew Carnegie laid the foundation stone. The library, the city's major public reference collection, is currently being revitalised after decades of neglect and unsympathetic

refurbishment, and is a treasure-trove of many historic librarianship journals, many of which are no longer continued as ongoing subscriptions. Many of my references to British library literature of the 1970s comes via Glasgow City Council book sales, where older reference material on libraries and librarianship from the Mitchell collection have been sold. However, much of my source material on Melvil Dewey came from primary material, the old bound copies of the *Library Journal*, amongst others held within the Mitchell. Reading the *Journal*'s first edition of 1876, founded by Dewey, and then those after, conveyed the amazing period of change and discovery that Dewey and others were part of, that relied on the compliance of women as will be later discussed. Finding more about the men in the stacks who could not be questioned or interviewed, contrasted with the real experiences of speaking to my fieldwork informants, as I now discuss.

Section Three : Methodologies used in my research

My aim was to discover firstly, how contemporary female librarians were affected by the legacies of Dewey and Carnegie and the construction of nineteenth century librarianship in their external work and professional environment and their own internal consciousness, and secondly, what challenges they had been able, or desiring, to make. I also wanted to identify whether they perceived the contemporary crisis within librarianship as relevant or meaningful to their own circumstances, and what they considered its main determinants and outcomes. To ensure that I captured a range of knowledge and views, I wanted to speak to women in mainstream libraries in the United Kingdom, as well as to women working in women's libraries and archives who could represent, and hopefully, reflect on many of my areas of interest. In this section, I set out how I contacted women within both mainstream library settings and within women's libraries and the process by which I constructed, piloted, met with and undertook the work. The challenges that this presented, and the other activities that I became involved in, are also highlighted. The section concludes with personal reflection and introspection, through carrying out the research, on my own life choices and experiences as a feminist and librarian.

Speaking to librarians and those working in women's libraries

As Greed's *(1990)* statement below makes clear, feminist research intends to be a process with personal significance for the researcher and those who may provide her with source material or information :

> The research process is very much a two-way exchange of ideas and feelings; and
> I have learnt so much from other women that the traditional research model of
> subject and object is totally inappropriate.
> (Greed, 1990, 150).

I therefore interviewed women who worked within public libraries, academic libraries
and National Health Service libraries, and some who worked in women's libraries and
women's archives, to shed light on potential linkages between feminism and
librarianship, on whether feminist analyses of librarianship have been useful, or could
explain more fully the gendered tenets of librarianship. I wished to establish how these
practitioners regarded their role and its functions; how conscious they were of being in a
feminised profession or of carrying out a practice historically associated with women;
their relationship with the structures and practices of librarianship, and whether they felt
any sympathy or resonance with feminist theory or practice.

Besides their work sector and setting, there were other variations between the women I
interviewed. Although all had lived through the period of second wave feminism and
since, not all regarded themselves as feminists, or felt that feminism was relevant to them
- professionally or personally. Some had qualified as librarians through an accredited
course and some had not, and some felt more affinity with librarianship or with a
librarian identity than others. Many of those within non-mainstream, unofficial libraries
could not be described as 'librarians' in 'professional librarianship' terms, and would be
considered paraprofessionals or library assistants, and these differentials will be
discussed within the following two Parts of the thesis. Thinking about who can be a
librarian is necessary as it is a contested term that clearly depends on time, place and
context. In the next section, I briefly summarise thinking in this area.

Who can be called a librarian ?

> The best librarians have been moved by a passionate interest in the contents of
> books, and a missionary desire to extend the areas of light further into the
> darkness which surrounds us all.
> (Benge, 1970, 219).

As I am concerned with librarianship as a contested and introspective work practice, the construct of the librarian and who is entitled to call themselves such, is important. Whether those who do not fulfil formal definitions of a librarian, or who do not regard themselves as such can do librarianship, is of interest. Benge proposed librarians as missionaries shining light into the dark, and as Chapter Six will show, this archetype has a long history. According to the professional associations as discussed in Chapter One, there are clear guidelines for who can call themselves a librarian, based on educational and training competencies, and linked to the maintenance of librarianship as a professional activity. This is not however, the case in the real world of librarianship, where many non-qualified librarians undertake library roles in both unofficial and official settings. As Chapter One revealed, the Chartered librarian is no longer the only librarian considered professional. According to the rules of C.I.L.I.P., the British library association, I do not qualify as a professional librarian, as I did not Charter.

Maidment *(1975)* described the librarian as 'buying books, cataloguing them, or directly serving readers' *(7)*, where his job was 'part of a system aimed at offering a reader the book that is right for his purpose *(7)*. This depicts the (male) librarian within a system that has the overall objective of linking the reader with the right book. This concept of the librarian as an operative within an information machine, implies that the librarian's overwhelming wish to serve others sublimates their own personal desires and opinions, and that this subservient work takes place within a bookish environment. The desire to help others unquestioningly is a key theme in most descriptions of the librarian, and a central component of librarianships' public image as Chapter One set out. The tasks undertaken by librarians now have moved on from Maidment's description, and these sets of activities, including accessing on-line information, can take place in settings other than mainstream libraries and carried out by those who are not qualified librarians.

It may be the case then that the identity and role of a librarian is less fixed than might be expected. If the work of the librarian is hard to define, and those that undertake not easy to identify, what shaped that, and how much was gender a determining force ? The spaces inhabited by staff working with library practices may potentially exert great influence on the power and autonomy of individuals and the actions that they can take. It might be the case that women's libraries, developed to support feminist agendas, could be where some of these questions could be answered, and where a different form of librarianship might exist, undertaken by an alternative form of librarian in a boundaried, women-only space. My intention in undertaking fieldwork, besides investigating mainstream libraries, was

then to also discover what was taking place in women's libraries and what could be added to understandings about feminism and British librarianship. Before I discuss how I made contact with women linked to those settings, I describe how I contacted women working within the mainstream.

Contacting women in mainstream libraries and outside the mainstream

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Feminism

I am researching feminism and librarianship, and am keen to hear from anyone who was involved in Women in Libraries, or any other organised / unorganised activities involving women librarians who identified as feminist.

(Ilett, 2000i, 142).

I decided to use a number of methods to link to women working in mainstream librarianship. One of my intentions was to find women who would be interested in the work I was undertaking because it had some personal or professional resonance. As there are no formal or informal groups for women librarians interested in feminism, as I will later discuss, I had to use a mixture of recruitment tools as well as utilise existing contacts and cascade methods. To reach women across the United Kingdom, I placed the advertisement above in the *Library Association Record* in March 2000. To link to women in libraries more locally and to those known to have an interest in women's issues, I drew on informal contacts, fellow students from library school, and contacts suggested by friends and acquaintances. To avoid potential unease or conflict of interest, I did not interview library staff within my current workplace where I have responsibilities for strategic and operational library management. However, via a local network of library and information practitioners in Glasgow, I put out a request for anyone interested in being interviewed and some women I knew professionally came forward. I also advertised in the bulletin of Glasgow City Council's Culture and Leisure Services Department, that includes the community library service, but to no effect.

Six women responded to the advertisement above, including a number of librarians who had been involved in second wave feminist responses within librarianship. I also received a letter from a woman librarian who had been active in advocating for women's equality

within Edinburgh public libraries from the 1930s onwards, whose experiences I referred to at the start of this chapter. Although she fell outside my time frame, meeting her was an opportunity to hear of an earlier wave of dedicated and lively women librarians who had confronted gendered notions within their work setting. Finding out whether those conditions still existed for contemporary women librarians was part of my interest. It is important to note the low number of women who replied to the advertisement in the *Library Association Record*. This may indicate the lack of women within librarianship who now identify with these opinions, or the small number who remain members of the Library Association (now C.I.L.I.P.) and receive the magazine. From 1999, when I began my research, I also entered into email discussions with some prominent women in librarianship with whom I had personal or semi-detached links and via snowballing and taking up their suggestions, these led to some new women forming part of my sample. One informant, Patricia Layzell Ward, the author of vital early research on British women in libraries already discussed *(Ward, 1975; 1966)*, provided contacts, comments and insights via email, although we were never able to meet. For a number of reasons, some of her contacts did not result in an interview but some of her connections, to second wave feminist librarians, bore fruit and those women became part of my sample.

Although my thesis aimed to investigate the impact on British librarianship of second wave feminism and its relationship to current crises, besides women's specialist library services, as I have already indicated, the United States of America has had a central role in developing contemporary librarianship from the late nineteenth century. American feminist activism and theorising has already been referred to as significant, so I made some links to some American feminist librarians as part of my early investigations. For example, via Patricia Layzell Ward, I corresponded with, and met in 2000, Kay Ann Cassells *(1975)*, a senior librarian at New York Public Library. Kay was extremely influential in generating feminist thinking in American librarianship from the late 1960s onwards, and talked to me about the early days of feminist challenges to the American Library Association. Kate Henderson, a long-standing friend, instrumental in establishing one of the women's libraries discussed in Part Three, recounted her story, including her attempts to bring together feminism with studying librarianship in the late 1990s, and helped me reflect on the embryonic ideas I was forming at that time.

At an international conference for medical librarians in 2000 in London, at which I presented a paper on women and classification, drawing on my Masters research and planned PhD, I also attempted to make contact with British women who might be

interested in my project. A number of women attended my talk, including a London-based librarian whom I later interviewed. I also posted a notice by which I waited during most lunch and refreshment breaks, and although many women librarians attended the conference, including some with a profile sympathetic to feminism, only one woman came forward - an information worker in Africa who fell outside my geographical remit. Through these direct and indirect processes to gather potential respondents, I eventually interviewed 17 women from mainstream libraries including 2 public librarians, 4 health service librarians, 6 academic librarians, 1 independent consultant, and 1 senior officer in a professional librarianship association. Their locations included Aberdeen, Ayr, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Isle of Wight, London, Stirling and Stockport.

I also wanted to interview women who worked in British women's library settings to consider their practice, the library in which they worked and relationships to feminism and librarianship. They were not anticipated overall to be qualified librarians and to have little opportunity to engage with, or influence, mainstream librarianship, but would be expected to have feminist beliefs. Their perspectives as unofficial practitioners, outside professional librarianship, were therefore vital. Having had a long interest in information and library services for women, I have been aware of, and involved to different degrees in, various women's libraries and archives. Some I have used as a researcher, and some I have been involved in as an active supporter. For my previous Masters research on classification and medical models of women *(Ilett, 1994),* and my work in women's health, I used and linked to Women's Health in London for a number of years. In researching this thesis, I used the Fawcett Library, Women's Health, the Feminist Library and later the Women's Library (with the latter two forming the subjects of later chapters).

As a feminist activist in the early 1980s, I was on the collective of Feminist Audio Books in London, a lending library of feminist books on tape for women with visual impairments, or who could not access print. In the late 1980s, I helped set up a women's community library in North-East England, and in 1992 after moving to Glasgow became involved with Glasgow Women's Library, at that point a new and small enterprise that Chapter Ten discusses. In 1993, the Library published a bibliography of publications on women and HIV and AIDS that I had researched via the Library, which was short listed for a Library Association award that year *(Ilett, 1993).* I also established the library at the Centre for Women's Health in Glasgow in the early 1990s, that has now expanded into a public library as mentioned earlier, although is now part of a mixed health setting where the needs of other groups are included, including gay men. It still maintains its feminist

underpinnings however, as its stock is classified by the Women's Health classification scheme that will be described in Chapter Ten. From this group, I decided to focus on the activities of three British women's libraries that originated in different periods of feminism and chose to interview women from The Women's Library in London (that was previously the Fawcett Library), the Feminist Library in London, and Glasgow Women's Library. As Part Three sets out, these libraries have diverse trajectories and experiences

Whilst progressing fieldwork with the librarians in mainstream settings, I contacted the Feminist Library and Glasgow Women's Library and interviewed a total of nine staff and supporters. When I began the fieldwork, the Fawcett Library was becoming The Women's Library and it was not an ideal time to ask for interviews. However, I participated in a formal visit of librarians during 2000 (as part of the International Conference of Medical Librarianship, as already mentioned) when it was still the Fawett Library, and taped an interview. From 2001 onwards however, I attempted to interview the Library Director and other key staff, and even though various formal arrangements were made and I travelled down from Scotland to London on a number of occasions, the planned meetings never happened. Other methods were therefore employed to speak to staff and those associated with The Women's Library. I visited the new library and taped a discussion with an officer of the Friends of The Women's Library at a Friends Meeting. I also interviewed a member of staff who agreed to see me after a planned interview was cancelled through unexpected sickness, and as she refused permission for our discussion to be taped, made verbatim notes. I also attended and participated in a number of public and internal meetings in all of the libraries, as the final chapters describe.

Investigating women in libraries and women's libraries

My intention was to interview women in mainstream libraries who identified as feminist, and who had taken some formal or informal steps to incorporate that awareness into their work; women in the same work setting who had not adopted a feminist identity, and women in women's libraries outside the mainstream. I wanted a manageable way to do this that did not require totally different sets of questions, and where the interviews could be fluid and changing. A fixed set of questions would not have worked, as it was important to develop rapport and to respond to new discussions as they arose. Whilst gathering both sets of contacts – from the mainstream and from women's libraries - I began to develop a semi-structured interview tool (Appendix One). This covered librarianship and feminism, and the construction of librarianship as a feminised and

gendered occupation, representing both second wave and third wave feminist concerns that could apply to all my informants and hopefully generate new discussions.

Firstly, I wished to discover how feminist women in mainstream libraries viewed their role and the construction and maintenance of the profession, how feminist thinking could be utilised within their work, how personal and professional identities worked alongside and across one another, how they saw the library as a place, the areas of work which they undertook and if these linked to librarianship as a women-dominated practice. These areas contain both second wave concerns over the gendered nature of work and the experiences of women within feminised professions, as well as notions of identity and spatiality that can be viewed as derived from the third wave feminist period. Secondly, I wished to find out how women working in women's libraries identified with both feminism and librarianship, how they saw their role in relation to libraries and librarianship, and how they linked identities and practices of feminism and librarianship within a space different from the mainstream library. Again, these areas contained elements of both second and third wave feminist concerns. The questions were adapted and amended as appropriate after piloting with two librarians who were not part of my sample (one a NHS-librarian and one an academic librarian). As already suggested the questions were used flexibly within the interviews, responding to the interviewees and the materials being presented. The sections that the interviews thus covered were :

- Personal histories as a librarian and a feminist
- Personal and professional identities and how they had been shaped and acted out
- The gendered history and components of librarianship
- The skills and knowledge base of librarianship
- Librarianship as a profession
- Professional associations and other forms of library association
- Links between feminism and librarianship
- The library space.

I interviewed most of my informants in their work settings during 2000 and 2001, with a small number coming to my work place for their convenience. The interviews were taped, and as they were open to individual responses, took various lengths of time to complete, with an hour the average. I transcribed the interviews and offered interviewees a transcript which some took up. To maximise content within the thesis, after transcribing the tapes, I then went through them and identified key subject areas of interest and

highlighted parts of the interview scripts where these arose. The subjects that I extracted drew on both second and third wave feminist concerns, as already described, and reflect my own interests and reactions to the interviewees and to the information and experiences that they described. As some of the interviews were long and contained a rich variety of information, inevitably much was omitted. This included significant experiences, such as a very powerful account by one librarian of being the victim of blatant sexual discrimination concerning maternity rights, as well as other detailed and informed discussions about the personal histories and views of individuals within professional library associations or high-profile libraries. Much of this material could not be used for legal or ethical reasons, but mainly because it did not fit into the themes that I intended for the thesis and its arguments. The main subjects that were isolated for utility within this work were :

- Cataloguing and classification
- Fawcett Library / The Women's Library
- Feminism, feminist activism and feminist identities
- Feminism and librarianship
- Feminist Library
- Gender and librarianship
- Gender discrimination
- Glasgow Women's Library
- Identity as a librarian
- IT and the changing nature of librarianship
- Librarians and librarianship
- Library Association / C.I.L.I.P.
- N.H.S. libraries / librarianship
- Public libraries / librarianship
- Stock selection
- Women In Libraries (the organisation)
- Women as library managers

This classification allowed me to group quotations by these subjects into a set of computer files that could be drawn on and used in the thesis. Grouping them in this way revealed obvious areas of difference and similarity in interviewees' responses, and some common themes clearly arose as will be clear throughout the thesis. Although I have developed much insight through the interviews that I undertook, there are some

limitations and challenges – methodological and personal - to the approaches that I took and their outcomes, as I now describe in the next two sections.

Methodological challenges and limitations

Any method of research has its limitations and my research, like any emerging from the social sciences, is open to allegations of a lack of scientific rigour and objectivity. Choosing semi-structured interviews and a more conversational style as I did also means less opportunity for material to be compared scientifically and for clear findings to be drawn. These limitations were appropriate to the approach that I took, as I intended to use the material generated from the interviews to illustrate and highlight themes and to create resonance and insights that would have been impossible within a completely structured methodology. Adopting a reflective and partially conversational style in the interviews, and referring to shared experiences with some of the interview subjects, allowed wider material to come forth.

The two main areas of field-work research – firstly, women librarians in the mainstream, and secondly, women associated with, or working within, women's libraries – did however bring different sets of logistical, organisational and personal challenges. As the first group of informants were not immediately identifiable, I had to find ways of contacting them by cascade methods and especially for those with some form of feminist awareness, to utilise personal contacts, historical and current. As I do not work as a librarian, and my interest in this area is not universally known, this sometimes led me into explaining my own experiences and motivations from the start. However, it is likely that confirming my own knowledge and interest in these areas assisted the reciprocity within the interviews themselves and gained the confidence of some of my informants.

There is no doubt that undertaking this work raised issues that I discuss in the following section, concerning professional and personal roles and life choices, and at times, like many other part-time PhD students with various parallel activities and identities, intellectual and emotional boundaries needed to be kept in check. When interviewing women with whom I have professional links through my work, it has been vital to maintain, and reassure, total confidentiality about any part of the process, especially where views and experiences have been revealed that have significance to incidents, events and activities in my work life. For a number of this group, especially those who viewed themselves as feminist, and who had some involvement in organised feminist and

librarianship groups as later chapters discuss, having the opportunity to share this with someone with a similar trajectory seemed a relief. This perhaps indicates the difficulties that women with feminist views can have in professions, occupations and work settings where self-expression can be difficult.

The work with women's libraries, their staff and supporters, brought a different range of challenges and barriers. In these settings, my own personal views could be more fully expressed and there were not unreasonable expectations, certainly from the two smaller libraries, that my involvement could have some benefit for the organisations. As later described, I have had an active long-term association with Glasgow Women's Library, and in the process of my research, also took an approach within the Feminist Library in London that incorporated elements of action research and advocacy. As I maintain a personal commitment to the work of women's libraries, there were frustrating times when events seemed to be moving slowly and decisions seemed to be made that seemed ill-informed and unhelpful. I had to work hard to ensure that my interventions were not intrusive or unwanted, and have not pursued involvement or influence beyond the field-work interviews and associated observations, unless requested. The volunteer nature of the Feminist Library in London has been particularly difficult to interface with, and although I feel my contribution to support their ongoing difficulties could have been better used, on reflection have decided that this needs to be sought on their terms.

A major area of concern and difficulty with this investigation overall has been the constraints in working with The Women's Library in London. This is the largest and in many ways, most significant, of all the three sites of investigation, yet has been seemingly uninterested in my work and attempts to gain understandings into its work and motivations. It may be that its status and visibility encourage many researchers to make contact, and staff time and energies are stretched, but I have relied more heavily on unorthodox data-gathering processes in this area (as will be discussed) than would have been ideal. Of all the three libraries, my involvement still continues with Glasgow Women's Library but as I will now suggest, the work overall has allowed me to reflect on my own choices and experiences, as a feminist and librarian, and has been a journey of self-introspection.

Life choices and what might have been

Carrying out the interviews and doing this research has been exciting and challenging. Much of the material conveyed by my informants was fascinating and touched on some of my own experiences and many of my own interests. Having worked as a librarian and information worker in various settings, but not to the extent of most of the women that I spoke to in 'official' libraries, their stories gave me glimpses of other lives that I might have led. Some of them would have suited me, and some would not have. Hearing from these librarians made me reflect on how my life had changed, and moved in other directions, and confirmed that I would never share their experiences. Although I could identify with much of what they said, it was not directly in my own experience, or now ever would be.

Speaking to women in women's libraries reminded me of another parallel world that might have been. Many of these women are committed to working outside the mainstream, for little or no money. I was on this trajectory for a while as a low-paid bookseller and feminist activist in the 1980s and the research made me reflect on what had changed for me. Was it because I was not feminist enough, or too scared to make feminism my primary identity ? Or was it because I could not live without money ? Am I not political - or feminist enough ? I increasingly felt throughout my research that although my feminism has diverged on a personal level from many of the women working in women's librarians - getting married in Las Vegas half way through my PhD is enough evidence of that - I am doing feminism in another way. In my professional life I can improve access to health services and influence how health services understand women and the impact of gender, although, it cannot be as explicit as if I had remained on the outside. I can also continue to write about feminism and librarianship, as I have continued to do *(Ilett, 2002; 2004)*. To paraphrase Wise *(1997)*, even though during many interviews, I felt like an 'in-betweenie, never quite belonging in the milieu in which I found myself' *(120)*, I was not shaken too much by the parallel identities that I became exposed to and feel comfortable with where I have ended up.

In this work, I am writing as a participant in librarianship and feminism, an actor in some of the overlaps and synergies between the two, and also as a critic of some of the activity that I am commenting upon. I am also an observer in many of the areas that I am discussing and reflecting upon, as my paid work is now in a different sphere. So my research is not detached or innocent, and is threaded through by my own knowledge and

position in relation to these libraries and librarianship. My goal from the start has been to provide an opportunity to understand librarianship and feminism and what can be revealed through looking both within and outwith the constraints of official structures.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have established the theoretical context from which feminist research has emerged, explained the questions that I set out to answer within this thesis, and described the processes by which my own research was planned and undertaken. Firstly, I have reviewed the influence of feminism on women working in the academic discipline of sociology who began to re-position a previously gender-blind discipline into one that centralised women's gendered experiences. The growth of feminist sociology and women's studies has been viewed as significant developments from the second wave period but one that I have wished to move beyond in my own thinking and investigations. The definition of the concept 'gender' was an important product of feminist sociology, and also aided and worked alongside the multidisciplinary academic growth of women's studies in the 1970s and 1980s to promote women's experience and knowledge across all disciplines as I have described. However the inability to integrate and influence resistant bureaucracies, and to avoid power inequalities has been seen to weaken the potential outcomes of women's studies and made it less the academic foundation of the women's liberation movement, as perhaps some feminist academics had hoped for. Some areas of difficulty with the methodological underpinnings of second wave feminist research and women's studies have also been highlighted. As Martin *(2000)* reflected, 'it is no surprise that the high hopes of the women's studies movement have not been realized' *(106)*.

Secondly, I have described feminist research and its incorporation of the personal into academic and theoretical practice. The role of subjectivity and the inclusion of autobiographical reflections and of reflexivity has been discussed, as has the importance of new forms of interview techniques in changing sociological research methodologies. The work of Ann Oakley has been described, but with comments made about the inability of maintaining the kind of equal, open relationship within the research context that she suggests, making the adoption of other forms of insight and personal understandings necessary. This led me to discuss my own relationship to the interviews and the material expressed. I have described my research intentions, the questions that I set out to reflect upon, how I devised my research, the approaches and methodology that I employed, how

I contacted my 'subjects' and undertook my research, and what I hoped to gain. My own position has been made clearer through the inclusion of personal material about my histories within some of the settings and areas that I set out in this thesis to explore.

This chapter has also explained why the construct of librarianship directly emerging at the end of the nineteenth century through Melvil Dewey and others is still of great significance, and the one that I believe is currently in crisis, as at other points of major social and cultural change. The methods by which I explored the contributions from this period via primary research have also been reviewed. No research can occur without decisions being made that have implications and that alternately generate omissions, and I have explained the scope that I intended to cover, and where and why some areas were not developed. Setting out the ground which I have gained through adopting a set of tools, partly originating through second wave feminism, and partly through a post-second wave period, allows me to move to the next chapter where I begin to utilise these insights, along with the first use of material from those that I interviewed. This will aid in illuminating the construction of librarianship, how it has perceived and accommodated women, and whether women establishing libraries for explicitly feminist reasons might be doing it differently – the overall intentions of much of my investigation.

In the following chapter, I examine librarianship as a gendered, feminised practice through describing the role of gender within the workplace and librarianship. Concepts from the second wave, invigorated through feminist sociology, allow insights to already start shaping about women working in librarianship. Descriptions within Chapter One, where trait theory was employed to define whether librarianship is a profession, are revisited through the added range of thinking now available. If librarianship is considered from a second wave feminist position that incorporates an awareness of gender relations, gained partly through feminist sociology, then it possible to reflect on women's function, role and experience as librarians in a different way and to reach some preliminary insights. After this chapter, that will position librarianship in a way where its critical underpinnings are more fully exposed, it will be revealed that there are other areas that need to be further developed to explain the current crisis in librarianship and its relationship to gender and social constructions. Chapter Five then moves forward into setting up other theoretical tools, gained from a post-second wave, third wave, feminist position that have utility for the remaining parts of the thesis.

Northumbria Probation Service Library, Newcastle,

February 1989

Dear Diary

Moving up here has been like some weird dream. Nothing feels real. Good news is that I've got two job now - one, part-time community education worker in Sunderland. I don't think it's really my cup of tea. I'm finding it hard as I don't know the place or the people but I'm sure I can make them think that I know what I'm doing.

I'm also working part-time in the library at the probation service. It is very quiet, civilised and nice people. I've cottoned on to required tasks quite quickly, all very prescribed and traditional, and I think my boss is pleased. I'll feel slightly rotten about leaving, if I get another job, but £ 65 a week isn't enough. Things don't change that much - I got this amazing book in a charity shop this week, a girls' careers novel - *'Molly Qualifies as a Librarian'*.

It was written in 1958, exactly 30 years before I did librarianship. Molly studies at a place that's like some form of boarding school. It gives real insights into the late 1950s for women librarians, like the marriage bar. There's one librarian, a dedicated spinster, who relies on volunteers to run the library but manages to get some women librarians who had left on marriage 'to help out' ! Molly falls for a (male) library student, but tells him that as a married woman's job comes second, she wants a year or so of freedom to develop her career before giving it up ! At least she has some feminist consciousness, although the last sentence is her qualifying as a Chartered Librarian, and sitting there testing out her future married signature with ALA after it !

Confusingly yours . . .

Chapter Four : Gender, work and librarianship

- Introduction

- Section One : Gender and Work
    Interrogating work as a gendered practice
    Gendertyping and work allocation
    Women's caring role and its perceived work value
    Gendering professions
    The notion of semi-professions

- Section Two : Gendering the office
    OK computer
    Office space - closed male doors and female borderlands

- Section Three : Gender and librarianship - revisiting trait theory
    Trait Set One : Gendering the content of librarianship
        Male knowledge ?
        Gender-based training and education
    Trait Set Two : Gendering the context of librarianship
        Professional male associations ?
        Unions and women
    Trait Set Three : Gendering the essence of librarianship
        Service role and the need for service - how are gender roles reflected ?
        Code of ethics - can they be feminist ?
        Whose values ?
        Does commitment and community come naturally to women ?
    Trait Set Four : Gendering the power of librarianship
        Autonomy and independence
        Images of women
        Women's status

- Conclusion

Introduction

> Sociologists divide people's lives into 'work' (paid employment), 'leisure' (the time when people choose what they want to do), and 'obligation time' (the periods of sleep, eating meals, and other necessary activities). Feminists have pointed out that this model reflects a male view of the world.
> (Abbott and Wallace, 1990, 121).

Librarianship appears to have been constructed with gender-defined roles in mind, yet ones that appear to limit librarianship as an occupation that can achieve influence or be regarded as professional. Women appear to have been afforded functions that are predicated on gendered assumptions about women, yet are proclaimed as gender-neutral. In the last chapter, I built on Chapter Two's investigation of second wave feminism to develop more detailed understandings of its creation of feminist theory and practice within academic study and research. Much of this activity set out to fill existing deficits in knowledge and process, and Chapter Three has provided evidence of how I have taken forward these insights into my research.

This chapter aims to apply these insights into looking again at librarianship as a practice associated with women and to explore further the utility of second wave feminist theory. The knowledge base with which librarianship is working, and the assumptions contained within it, may well be highly gendered and promote a world where male experience and intellect is regarded as the norm. One of my main motivations for thinking about this work was knowing from my own experience, that most mainstream librarians do not think about, or have any access to, feminist notions or critiques about areas that impinge on librarianship. This leads me to question what caused that, and why such a female-dominated profession appeared so little interested in using second wave feminism, if nothing else, as a vehicle for changing stereotypes and the outcomes of the creation of a feminised professions. Why has librarianship never been open to a feminist perspective that could even challenge its root belief system and mode of practice ? If there is feminist social work, feminist counselling, feminist teaching, why not feminist librarianship ? The rest of my investigation aims to respond to these questions.

In this chapter, I reflect upon work as a practice that occurs in space and time, which has gendered significance. In order to understand librarianship, I will review three main

areas - gender and work, gender and the office, and gender and librarianship - using second wave feminist understandings of gender and its impacts, especially those from sociology as the last chapter began to articulate. Abbott and Wallace's *(1990)* remark above indicates the advantages that can be gained from such an approach. Firstly, the influence of gender in relation to work will be highlighted. This will utilise second wave insights on the division of labour and the normalisation of sex-determined attributes through nineteenth-century industrialisation. The resulting effects for occupations and professions and the roles of women and men will be considered. Secondly, the office as a key site for observing gender relations in the workplace will be interrogated, as a stand-alone example but also as a setting significant for librarianship. As Chapter One explored, there are perceived similarities between librarianship and administration and those that undertake them. The secondary nature of administration and its gendered components are of great relevance to the articulation of librarianship from the late nineteenth century.

Finally, the practice of librarianship will be analysed from a gendered position that reviews concepts such as the 'semi-profession' often used in relation to women-dominated occupations. The discussion of librarianship though trait theory will be revisited from a second wave gender-aware position. This will explore the nature of librarianship, especially the significance of its female dominance and how this affects its claim to professionhood. The chapter will conclude by setting out the parameters of a gendered review of librarianship obtained by taking a second wave position. It will convey that second wave feminism has provided insights into librarianship that move beyond trait theory used in Chapter One, but there are limits in its ability to explain librarianship and its critical points of crises - the late nineteenth century, the 1960s and 1970s and the start of the twenty-first century. I will therefore suggest that introducing a third wave feminist analysis is necessary. Librarianship for over a century has been regarded as a woman's profession, and the consequences therefore of being female-dominated and how that arose are vital to highlight. If women are less valued than men, then an occupational group with women in the majority is inevitably perceived as less important and undertaking less significant work. As Abbott and Wallace *(1980)* suggest, there is much to be gained from realising that most concepts about work are based on the male norm.

Section One : Gender and work

> The abstract, bodiless worker, who occupies the abstract, gender-neutral job has
> no sexuality, no emotions and does not procreate.
> (Acker, 1991, 172).

In this first section, I incorporate views from feminist sociology that position work as gendered and not gender-neutral. Patterns of labour and changes in work as predicated on social understandings of gender relations need to be understood. These allow the development of more tools to tackle and better to understand librarianship and its outcomes and context. I will undertake this by firstly looking at the derivation of work as a gendered practice via feminist sociology that will help convey new understandings into historical and current occupational patterns. I then explore the influence of gender on work, through sex typing and the allocation of work tasks and roles by perceived natural attributes of the sexes, many of which conform to archetypes and create work roles that mirror those within the home. The notion of professionality, that both Chapters One and Two have already indicated as contested both in and outside second wave feminism, will be discussed along with the notion of semi-professions.

Interrogating work as a gendered practice

Feminist sociology inspired by the second wave established useful positions concerning the social construction of work. It argued for the unpaid work of women to be construed as work rather than a natural female activity; defined the concept of gender as a vital determinant in the construction and maintenance of myriad social roles, and developed broader theories about types of work and the gendered assumptions underpinning them. It proposed that professions and occupations can become deliberately, accidentally, or through time, associated with one sex and that this can have powerful ramifications, such as differential status and rewards *(Kinnunen, 1997)*. This may be because skills and attributes needed are, or seem to be, available only to one group through real or imagined biological determinism, or it may be that the work required is formed with one sex in mind or becomes historically associated with it. The sexes are then segregated into different sectors and types of work with varying levels of responsibility and reward.

Feminist thinking has considered why women dominate in some areas yet seldom achieve seniority, influence or even equity; why some fields seem closed to women, and whether

introducing gendered understandings systematically into academic disciplines and occupational training could change the workplace *(McNabb, 2001)*. Work, understood in this way, both mirrors and influences gender relations and cannot be seen as accessible to both sexes without cognisance of, or relationship to, both external and internal worlds *(Acker, 1991)*. Understanding that jobs are not gender-neutral and that organisations and workplace are 'saturated with gender meaning and practices that construct both gender subjectivities at work and different categories of work as congruent with particular gender identities' *(McDowell, 1999, 135)* leads us to recognise and understand that work-related symbols, language, practices and embodied beliefs and values all have influence, and can be construed as gendered *(Newman, 1995)*.

Acker *(1991)*, Newman *(1995)* and others have made links between women's work and stereotypical female characteristics, again disputing views of work practice as gender-neutral. Labour history can then be reinterpreted, informed by gendered insights. For example, the British industrial revolution can be understood as a massive shift in predominately male employment patterns and the expansions of the urban settlement. Incorporating a feminist understanding of gender relations reveals the simultaneous transfer of women's unpaid, private domestic work into the paid, public arena, incorporating unequal gender relations needed for its continuation *(Bradley, 1989; Oakley, 1981ii)*. In reality, many working-class women moved away from their homes, the locations of their unpaid labour, into domestic service supporting the burgeoning urban middle-class and undertaking female-associated work. By the mid-nineteenth century, an estimated 13 percent of the British population (mainly female) were engaged in such work *(Mackie and Patullo, 1977)*. This historical, but often invisible, construction of women's labour as expected behaviour linked to domestic and reproductive roles, is a key concept in understanding female-dominated occupations, as I will discuss.

Gendertyping and work allocation

Both female and male archetypes are played out within the gendered work environment and many writers have described their incorporation into job functions and roles that then gain additional gendered meanings *(Game and Pringle, 1983; Newman,1995; Kinnunen, 1997)*. Game and Pringle *(1983)* commented that gender is fundamental to how work is organised and who undertakes it, but work is also central to the social construction of gender. The types of occupations and professions in which women and men work partly determines how the sexes are socially regarded and valued, and as already highlighted,

women's predominance in various occupational areas can be more through the consequences of gendered attitudes than 'inherent differences between the sexes' *(Boston, 1974, 260)*.

Sexuality and sexualised meanings described by Hearn and Parkin *(1987)* as 'the most obvious aspect of gender relations' *(4)* can also be played out at work to objectify, stereotype and disenfranchise women. Work roles can also encourage or expect women to employ 'natural' domestic skills, to make workplaces homely and comfortable and to generate a pleasant atmosphere through applying the 'feminine touch'. Bradley *(1989)* commented that to alleviate boredom, to improve or make claims on a small part of their work environment, women might decorate it to make it more resemble a domestic space :

> Many female work groups . . . 'bring home into' the work environment, both domesticating it (making boring work more tolerable, making the office a pleasant, sociable and cosy place to be in) and also being domesticated by it (as once again the 'inbuilt' domestic orientation of women is emphasised and made visible to men).
> (Bradley, 1989, 230).

Women's experiences in jobs that intensively replicate gender and power differentials, such as secretarial work, often encourage or create expectations of these behaviours. One secretary in 1970s New York described her experience :

> One day my boss requested (by intercom) that I wash his desk. Something inside me panicked and rebelled. I stuttered back (via intercom), "I'm sorry, but, but, but . . . I j-just can't do that. Thoughts raced through my head. *Why not quit this lousy job ? Block that thought ! Be grateful they want you ! Do as he says. Do it.* I washed his desk. And he rewarded me with a bottle of Woolworth's lavender cologne.
> (Belkin, 1971, 79).

The name 'secretary' derives from the Latin 'secretum', and as Vinnicombe and Colwill *(1995)* pointed out, the role is still associated with 'confidentiality and skill' *(62)* and with protecting and keeping silent (male) confidences and actions. Besides being required to fulfil functional work roles that include perceived attributes and attractions of girlfriends

or mistresses, women can also be expected to conform to other gendered notions at work, including caring and motherly behaviours.

Women's caring role and its perceived work value

Through gender stereotyping, women are often felt suitable either for quasi-mother or quasi-wife roles in the workplace. This can be within specialisms like personnel, where women ensure harmony and prevent discord, often doing behind-the-scenes, invisible work that gains little acknowledgement, or public or organisational profile, or within overtly 'caring' service professions such as nursing, social work and teaching that are closely associated with female roles *(Newman, 1995)*. As Kinnunen *(1997)* commented, women are regarded as 'committed, feeling, understanding and enduring' *(41)* and concerned with the internal world, whereas men are felt to be good at 'solving problems, controlling and bearing responsibility for things that are outside themselves' *(41)*.

Reducing the impact and worth of women's work through the negative attribution and allocation of gender roles has huge implications. Harris *(1992)* commented that 'it is widely assumed that women's work can be done by anyone because it requires little in the way of skills' *(28)*. It has been also suggested, and evidenced, that women-dominated professions are devalued and trivialised and 'the characteristics of femininity are emphasised' *(McDowell, 1997, 139)*. 'Women's work' is seen as natural as Harris suggests, as it is perceived and in reality often created to be easier, as women are assumed to be (and often are, through less access to training and education) less skilled than men. Women's work is thus less valued than men's work and therefore women are less remunerated, as Mackie and Patullo suggest :

> Women workers are paid less than men, they work in a much smaller range of occupations, they do much more part-time work, and, in manufacturing, they tend to work alongside other women . . . Women are not as skilled as men, for a variety of reasons, and they are neither promoted as much as men nor are they to be found in great numbers in the professions and in management jobs.
> (Mackie and Patullo, 1977, introduction).

Even though legislation exists through the Equal Pay Act (1970) to ensure that women and men receive the same pay for the same job, men are still expected to earn more than women do. In the next section, I will briefly reflect on the changes brought by nineteenth

century industrialisation that created and began to embed gendered patterns of the new professions that incorporated many of these historical notions about women and men.

Gendering professions

From the onset of the new professions in the nineteenth century, first wave feminists challenged men-only professions like medicine and the law that required access to elite universities from which women were excluded *(Blake, 1990)*. Second wave feminism encouraged the entrance by women into professions that were previously dominated by men, or that had been breached only by a few women. For most women these were legitimate challenges to achieve women's rightful potential, but some have commented (from within librarianship) that desiring equality with men through creating or entering high status professions may be counter-productive *(Harris, 1992)*. As Chapter Six will fully describe, occupations like librarianship were reinvented in the late nineteenth century to incorporate women but not to benefit of women or to achieve improved status :

> Simply adopting the characteristics of the "true" professions, such as law and medicine, does not ensure that an occupation like nursing and social work will attain either the status or financial reward enjoyed by these other professions. (Harris, 1992, 17).

From Harris' point of view, the female-dominated occupation will never achieve true professional status because it is composed of women. Sectors in which women form the majority are viewed differently, and the concept of the semi-profession, devised in the late 1960s, provides another potential insight into the social and gender construction of work areas, practices and sectors associated with women, such as librarianship.

The notion of semi-professions

Gender, as a tool for discussing work for women and men, informed Etzioni's *(1969)* concept of the 'semi-professions', a model that has greatly affected the possibility of librarianship and other female-dominated occupations being considered professional, and which corresponds to some degree with the views of Goode *(1969)*, Gwinup *(1974)* and others described in Chapter One. In his controversial text, Etzioni outlined the 'semi-professions' main characteristic as their location within bureaucracies where women predominate. Women's archetypal lack of ambition and motivation is considered the

reason why semi-professions cannot fully professionalise and may remain inferior to male-dominated professions *(Etzioni, 1969; Simpson and Simpson, 1969)*. For Etzioni, the term semi-profession is a realistic interpretation of occupations where 'training is shorter, their status is less legitimated, their right to privileged communication less established, there is less of a specialized body of knowledge and they have less supervision or societal control than "the" professions' *(Etzioni, 1969, v)*. Women are thus channelled into work that is inferior and less skilled than that available to men, but are then blamed for their seeming lack of performance and ambition.

Etzioni argued that the main occupational groups classified as semi-professions, specifically teachers, nurses, and social workers, wished to professionalise deliberately to distance themselves from other female-identified work areas like 'secretaries, sales girls, or office clerks' *(Etzioni, 1969, vi)*. This surprisingly resonates with comments made by Harris *(1992)*, as Chapter One covered, accusing librarianship of wishing to be seen as professional as a way of denying its femaleness. The creation and application of knowledge is positioned as the primary sign of professionality and the domain of men, via establishing the semi-profession concept. Women's secondary activities and support to communicate that knowledge is then a clear indication of the semi-professional status of women's work and female-dominated occupations and indicates a split between male and female functions. This confirms the findings of trait theory as Chapter One showed. Overall, Etzioni proposed that women are just much better at bureaucratic, administrative work than men and are more socialised to undertake and accept such roles :

> Part of the problem is due to the fact that the typical professional is a male where the typical semi-professional is a female. Despite the effects of emancipation, women on average are more amenable to administrative control than men.
> (Etzioni, 1969, xv)

Although the feminist sociological concept of gender derived from second wave feminism did not exist when Etzioni developed his notion of the semi-professions, it is clear that his approach is highly influenced by gendered assumptions. Like Marks *(1974)*, who will be discussed in the next section, Etzioni also refers to the second wave women's movement. Even though women have achieved some form of liberation, it is his view that they are still naturally subservient to the male order of things, and will inevitably be in secondary, support roles. The concept of the semi-profession is significant to understanding the position of librarianship at the onset of the second wave feminist

movement, and the strong forces that had already established interpretations of work and professionality. The concept of semi-profession awards hybrid status to a female-dominated activity between a true profession of men and an unskilled occupation of women. Witz's *(1992)* comment that 'the generic concept of professions is also a gendered one' *(64)* appears insightful and useful to consider in terms of such a female-dominated occupation as librarianship. The next section will discuss the office that came into its own through the rise of industrialisation in the nineteenth century and in which women and men's roles are firmly set, is discussed. Exploring this physical space as a backdrop for the gendered nature of work relations and the use of office technology will offer further understandings of librarianship, its construction and values. The office as a metaphorical and real space will assist reviews of the library as a manifestation of gendered work.

Section Two : Gendering the office

> Few people today would readily admit that the typewriter and shorthand notebook have done more for sexual equality in business than any number of militant liberationists.
> (Marks, 1974, 1).

Librarianship, as Chapter One suggested, may be closely linked to administration and clerical work in how its component tasks and participants are constructed, understood and valued. It is important to consider the office as a space like the library, that contains gendered histories and that similarly, for centuries was the domain of the male scholar and clerk. The office was the original site for the introduction of administrative processes and information technology into the non-manual work environment, and for the rise of many associated gendered meanings. The organisation of office work from the nineteenth century onwards to provide the infrastructure for western capitalism established men's work as the main focus through the new professions with women entering the workplace to provide support. The American office became the domain of women in the late nineteenth century, through a reduction in male workers because of the American Civil War *(Morgall, 1986)*. Hierarchical segregation thus developed. Office work was seen as appropriate and rewarding for women, and as social change affected women's presence in the office, so did technological change as will be discussed. Pavalko *(1971)* in his discussion of professions, termed the office at the start of the second wave feminist

movement, a 'feminized work environment' *(174)*, and as we have already seen, secretarial posts - as the archetypal office job for women - embody gendered roles and expectations.

Between the beginning and the middle of the twentieth century, more women than men worked in white-collar office and administrative work, reflecting accepted views of women's abilities and aptitudes for light work *(Morgall, 1986)*. The increased use of office technology was connected to gendered notions about women's manual attributes and men's intellect. The invention of the typewriter became increasingly associated with women who were felt 'naturally' dextrous. Handwriting was regarded as manual and male, whereas typing was 'fast, tactile, digital and female' *(Plant, 1997, 118)*. Women's options became gendered, with certain types of work considered suitable :

> . . . when typewriters, duplicators, switching systems, calculators, computers and a vast range of punched-hole machinery arrived in the office, these male workers found themselves replaced by new networks of women and machines. Their fingers were finer and cheaper than the old hired hands.
> (Plant, 1997, 117).

Women therefore interpreted men's ideas and creativity, expressed via their personal, idiosyncratic handwriting, and re-presented and standardised them through the medium of the female-controlled, transformative, typewriter. The rationalisation of office work, focused on efficient office systems and increased mechanisation, thus became explicitly gendered.

As the Chairman of the Alfred Marks Bureau for secretaries in the 1970s comments at the start of this section, such structures and their outcomes are highly contested, depending on which side of the desk one sits, and reflect stereotypical work possibilities for women and men. For Marks *(1974)*, the fact that women could work in paid employment, albeit in highly limiting surroundings, was progressive and indicates that female emancipation had been achieved. His statement also positions women's liberation as threatening social order, including the established gender dynamic of the office. The onset of the typewriter and later, the computer, have undoubtedly had a major effect on women's work, with the period in which second wave feminist developed, a turning-point in technological change, as shall now be discussed. The office, as an archetypal environment where gendered roles are reinforced, will form a later part of this section.

OK computer

Second wave feminist analysis was used to understand the embryonic new computer technologies that were being introduced in the West throughout the 1960s and 1970s Some suggested that the introduction of the computer increased the control of women in the workplace; reduced their input, skills, pay and conditions and led to increased levels of stress and in-fighting amongst women *('Angie', 1984)*. Many commentators indicated that technology is not neutral or value-free *(Game and Pringle, 1983; Morgall, 1986)* and like other social and cultural developments reflects wider society, making it inevitable that 'technology and masculinity are very closely connected' *(Game and Pringle, 1983)*. Technology has the potential to represent or protect specific interests, and could be used to 'eliminate inequalities in society or . . . (to) . . . exploit them further, depending on the motives and goals of those in power' *(Morgall, 1986, 115)*. Both the technology itself, and the information that it processes, contain this possibility, and for some early second wave feminist commentators, as Rowbotham *(1999)* later observed, computers were regarded with 'general gloom' *(142)*.

Wallsgrove for one *(1985)* rhetorically asked 'can we use them for women's benefits, or will they be used against us?' *(20)*. Her response was that men controlled technology and the training and learning needed for its use, and 'few women or girls have had access to the information and confidence needed to take control of it for ourselves' *(20)*. As Furger noted *(1998)*, in a post-second wave feminist reflection on gender and cyberspace, in 1975 women received just under 19% of all the bachelor's degrees in computer science awarded in the United States - figures in the United Kingdom may have been even lower. Although women perhaps felt excluded from technology, Wallsgrove *(1985)* argued that women had nothing to fear, and there were potential opportunities for women as high speed communications 'could dramatically improve our power to organise' *(21)*. Later developments in cyberfeminism may well have borne this prediction out, although there is not space in this work to enter into this debate.

Bradley *(1989)* challenged the premise that technological change would facilitate a revolution in work and social relations, and 'the chance to overcome sex inequalities' *(233)*, and commented (ironically) on work and identities in this 'brave new future' :

> Men and women will work co-operatively in creative, skilled, fulfilling jobs, while the fragmented politics and culture of postmodern society will ensure that every type of social interest group has its rights recognised and its needs catered for.
>
> (Bradley, 1989, 233).

Oakley *(1981ii)* had earlier commented, more prophetically, that this period 'will enormously cut the number of jobs available to women in female-intensive areas of employment' *(162)*. Interestingly, women had an earlier important role in computer development as some observers note (Alic, 1996; Plant, 1997; Wallsgrove, 1985). For example, Ada Lovelace (the daughter of Lord Byron and his mathematician wife Arabella) devised early forms of computing at the start of the nineteenth century, and was described by Plant *(1997)* as a proto-feminist pioneer who 'was hunting for something that would do more than represent an existing world' *(31)*. Plant *(1997)* and Wallsgrove *(1985)* both mention women's involvement in computing from the 1940s to the early 1960s, with Plant singling out those who built new types of computers and those involved in Second World War code-breaking. As well as reviewing women's hidden role in technology, feminist writers have theorised the gendered nature of workplaces, the complex boundaries and space within these settings, and the transgression experienced by women in challenging and breaching male boundaries *(McDowell, 1999; Spain, 1992)*. Spain's work on spatial segregation and relationships to knowledge and status will be discussed later, but her concept of 'open floors' for female staff and 'closed doors' for male staff is important to investigate.

Office space - closed male doors and female borderlands

For Spain *(1992)*, gendered workplace segregation always exists, as men are perceived to need private space to make decisions without the involvement of women, whom they need to also observe and contain. This operates even in female-dominated professions. If women are concentrated in a profession or occupation, or as a group within a mixed sex work environment, their role in organisational decision-making may decrease, as they may have less privacy and face continual interruptions. This may then affect women's ability to develop knowledge that might advance their careers and could contribute to their disenfranchisement and structural and spatial discrimination.

It is of interest to consider reflections by feminists working in librarianship on these matters, but I will now briefly analyse librarianship from a perspective that incorporates second wave feminist insights. Librarianship is not considered a profession by some partly because of its apparent secondary support status in dealing with other people's knowledge, and because it appears closely associated with clerical work - in other words, because it is a female occupation. Processes like trait theory can help understand the component parts of librarianship but as they fail to acknowledge any gender divergence, using gender as conceptualised by second wave feminism as an analytical tool may prove useful. Harris *(1992)* commented that the inference made in trait theory that non-professions can transform themselves into professions by adopting certain characteristics is problematic for librarianship and other female-dominated occupations that are grounded in gendered assumptions so women and men have to be discussed. The roles of women within librarianship may well relate to these pressures as will be further considered.

I will now apply a second wave feminist understanding to the concept of profession as it relates to librarianship, through revisiting the main criteria described in Chapter One. This will employ insights gained through reviewing second wave feminist perspectives on work and its gendered components within this chapter. Each group of traits as set out in Chapter One will be reviewed in relation to librarianship, to gain added awareness about its status and ability to withstand and respond to change. I will begin by considering the first set of traits concerning specialist knowledge, training and education of a profession

Section Three : Gender and librarianship : revisiting trait theory

Trait Set One : Gendering the content of librarianship

> Though individual librarians have been learned, and librarians in general are as dedicated to knowledge as they are committed to service, the public is not convinced that there is a basic science of librarianship.
> (Goode, 1969, 286).

Male knowledge ?

According to trait theory, the fully-fledged profession needs expert skills and identifiable specialist knowledge. For some, as already demonstrated, librarianship does not possess the skills or original body of research that allow it to be considered as such, whilst others assert that various components of librarianship are specialist and demonstrate a potential claim to a valid knowledge base. To interrogate these debates further, I will consider the concept of knowledge in relation to librarianship, its secondary status; the central activities of cataloguing and classification and their meaning and value, and the role of information technology in librarianship.

Firstly, the judgement of librarianship by trait theory may be based on the worth attributed to male-dominated knowledge and activities that fail to incorporate, or in fact devalue, elements within librarianship that are associated or identified with women. The very concept of professional knowledge may disenfranchise all occupations associated with women, as women in stereotypical terms can be seen as less likely to generate knowledge, be seen as professional or to have specialist or desirable knowledge. It appears that the need for professions to possess unique and specialist knowledge bases is highly problematic for librarianship, because it is women-dominated, primarily deals with perceived male knowledge outputs and therefore fails to be regarded as original.

Secondly, the concept of librarianship as a secondary activity needs to be assessed. The notion that librarianship does not involve original work, and is therefore a secondary occupation, or semi-profession, as it deals with the outputs of other disciplines denies gender as a factor. As already discussed, through the effects of gender, women are typically given work that is considered less important and rarely allowed to generate their own validated knowledge. Work areas associated with women like office work and administration are concerned with supporting male primary functions and have a secondary relationship to knowledge production and what is perceived as original thought generated by men. From the onset of the second wave feminist movement, some women within librarianship questioned the knowledge with which they were working. I will refer to these critiques in Chapter Seven, but Schuman and Detlefsen's *(1971)* suggestion that librarians must 'look behind the rhetoric and to seriously examine the sexism, racism, and chauvinism that our libraries reflect as the keeper's of *man's* knowledge' *(2587)* is worth noting at this stage. For librarianship, constructed partly to deal with male-determined knowledge, there are inevitably shortfalls in its ability to be perceived as a knowledge

generator, coupled with the inability to see beyond its female-dominated nature. The construction of the secondary role of librarianship, and its gendered components of service is considered in Chapter Six.

Thirdly, it is important to note those that advocate that cataloguing and classification supports librarianship's professional claims. For Garrison *(1979)*, the early librarianship pioneers' utilisation and expansion of classification and cataloguing helped to create a professional, quasi-scientific framework and I will reflect on this in Chapter Seven. For Gwinup *(1974)* librarianship contained independent thought and 'intellectual functions' beyond the clerical *(485)* like stock selection, classification, cataloguing and reference work. If we recognise library classification as a taxonomy that organises existing knowledge, then interpreting librarianship as a secondary process can deny the significance of the processes involved in such tasks, as Chapters Six and Seven discuss. It also ignores the powerful practice of defining and establishing the schemes themselves and the gendered elements of the intellectual and structural actions required.

Fourthly, there are also debates concerning the impact of new technology on the knowledge base. For Harris *(1992)* automation and information technology has profoundly affected the activities of librarians involved in cataloguing, many of these women, 'who at one time performed what many would consider to be the core function of the profession' *(126)*. Access to on-line databases and computer networks has decreased the need for individual input, increased the use of non-professional staff and reduced the jobs and departments within library structures. The gendered nature of information technology and its association with male programmers and systems managers provides new challenges. Harris *(1992)* suggested that this will potentially demean the status and function of librarianship as it will become more administrative, and those with technological skills will move beyond the traditional confines of librarianship, as 'librarianship's identity as a low-status, female-intensive occupation can be escaped by those who practice the "new" higher status functions' *(134)*. Chapter One indicated that some of these predictions might be accurate. Gender appears to have an important influence on the ability of female-dominated occupations like librarianship to be seen as professional, even via the masculine overlay of information technologies, as there appear to be complex and ambiguous messages at work.

A profession's knowledge base includes original research and it has been claimed that trait theory does not view this as a precursor for professionhood, which may disadvantage

female-dominated occupations. Besides, research developed within librarianship has 'become a target of criticism and continues to supply a justification for trait theorists to exclude these fields from the rank of the true professions' *(Harris, 1992, 32)*. Although technological change within the field is proving increasingly fruitful for investigation using potentially scientific approaches, librarianship research tends typically towards qualitative outputs. This draws on social science methodologies which are easier to criticise as they fail to comply with accepted, masculine, scientific paradigms, as the last chapter outlined, and can be dismissed as less rigorous, less authoritative and less male.

For Harris *(1992)*, however the name of those that practice librarianship, with 'Information Scientist' now common, again indicates an unquestioning adherence to science as 'the cornerstone of professional status' *(35)*. It fails to acknowledge the gendered nature of science and feminist critiques as earlier explored, and instead denies librarianship's historical identity. For Garrison *(1979)*, the aim to establish librarianship 'as a scientifically-oriented abstract knowledge base and to train the librarian as the indispensable expert in knowledge retrieval' *(241)* is desirable, but can only be achieved if the effects of feminisation within librarianship are addressed. Training and education has already been revealed as felt lacking by trait theory, and it is now important to revisit this from a gender-aware perspective.

Gender - based training and education

Even though specialist training is required for librarians, the knowledge learned at library school is considered by some to be less rigorous than that of other professions, as discussed in Chapter One. Elite professions gained much of their power from the exclusive access that middle-class men had 'to many institutional forms in society, like the university, professional associations, and of course the state' *(Witz, 1992, 35)*. For many years, as Witz continued, the university was a male preserve 'that admitted only men, was governed by men and used its powers to exclude women *(67)*. There are important factors here involving gender relations. In the twentieth century, women gained more access to higher education, but it may still be the case as stated in Chapter One that gender still influences much contemporary professional and vocational training. Many librarians working within the United Kingdom today became qualified after studying for a graduate degree, and with relevant work experience before taking a one year postgraduate diploma such as the Diploma of Librarianship or the Diploma in Library

and Information Science. Because of the impact of information technology, this is no longer the case, and librarians qualifying today study degree courses in which computer science is a key part.

However, it is important to question why it was felt that librarianship theory could be taught within such a short timescale, when the depth of coverage, debate and intellectual content in a year's course is inevitably restricted. The postgraduate library course that I took in the late 1980s ran for eleven months, of which one month was a placement in a public library service. The fact that women have dominated librarianship may influence the length and content of librarianship courses. If librarianship is thought to be women's work, there may be an assumption that this 'requires little in the way of special skills' *(Harris, 1992, 28)*. Garrison *(1979)* pointed out that until clarity is achieved about whether librarians are 'mechanics' or 'expert guides', there will be continued emphasis on training library staff fairly quickly. The emphasis on technical aspects of librarianship may reduce librarianship to technical tasks and skills.

This pattern that existed until fairly recently, reflected librarianship's need for staff to work in public libraries in the nineteenth century, as will be described in Chapter Six. Before that, as Sable *(1969)* and others have observed, the graduate library school viewed male librarians as the norm, which aided male dominance and ensured a more professional image for librarianship. Within most British librarianship courses in the last millennium, the practical application of librarianship predominated to the detriment of genuine discussion about the ideology and meaning of librarianship and its social, political, economic and cultural context. Being unable to investigate in detail librarianship's intellectual framework inhibits the potential debate concerning issues like the impact of gender and gender relations that could enhance the practice and understanding of students. Although trait theory more or less regards the education of librarians as being lacking, it fails to indicate why this might be.

The role of gender derived from second wave feminism is vital to incorporate here, as the reconstruction of librarianship as an occupation for women in the nineteenth century that Chapter Six will reflect, was only possible through integrating binary concepts about women and men and their natural attributes. It is not possible to consider the real meaning of librarianship and its construction through trait theory unless an analysis drawing on an awareness of gender impact is involved. In the next section the importance of the professional librarianship associations and unions in generating a unified

profession will be explored such a perspective, and their understanding and treatment of female and male members discussed.

Trait Set Two : Gendering the context of librarianship

Professional male associations ?

> The associations, fueled by the concerns of their most upwardly mobile members, exert pressure to increase educational standards in the hope of attaining greater prestige (and, of course, greater salaries).
> (Harris, 1992, 48 - 49).

Professional associations are, according to trait theory, essential to professions and have a strong presence within librarianship, yet this may overlook their gendered values. Librarianship associations in the United States and the United Kingdom shaped librarianship since their inception in the late nineteenth century as will be described in Chapter Six. Within trait theory, the professional association ensures coherence and order, establishes common mores and standards, and represents and protects those within a profession. It also has a role in maintaining and building the knowledge base of a profession. However for Lowe and Benson *(1991)*, from a feminist perspective :

> The professions and professional associations were set up so as to take control of knowledge, primarily through enforcing standards of objectivity. As part of this control, radical thought tied to social movement has been consistently and overtly excluded.
> (Lowe and Benson, 1991, 53).

This last point suggests that the gatekeeping role of professional associations in promoting an objective knowledge base also require it to exclude forces seen to be oppositional. Investigating whether feminism is one of those challenges that need resisting is of central interest and Chapter Eight will discuss how the Library Association in the United Kingdom has dealt with feminism and groups representing women's interests. By the 1970s, at the start of second wave feminism, librarianship had become a graduate entry profession and the British Library Association was well established, with growing numbers of Chartered members increasingly influencing structures and decision-

making. Some considered that this ensured that the Association was 'highly organised and thoroughly representative' *(Benge, 1970, 207)* although not only was the Association skewed in the direction of public librarians, it supported male interests. Women have been less involved in the professional associations than men, as Chapters Six and Eight will recount, often because of time and other commitments, as well as potentially because of the emphasis and culture of the organisations. However, this may in fact conversely improve claims of librarianship to professional status, if that was a goal, as the gendered hierarchy and inherent maleness of the library associations no doubt increase their authority and perceived power. As Chapter One discussed, unions have been viewed as arguably less relevant to librarianship than to other female-dominated occupations, partly because of the multiple groups that unions represent. It is important to see whether a gender-aware perspective amends or confirms that position.

Unions and women

> For librarians, as for many others in the female-intensive fields, unionism offers an attractive alternative to professionalism as a means for achieving such goals as improved salaries as well as greater status and power vis-à-vis other occupational groups.
>
> (Harris, 1992, 103).

According to trait theory, professions need to be open to unions that represent and advocate for practitioners. For some, the dominance of women may inhibit librarianship's lack of engagement with unions, because female librarians are unwilling to join a union or to become active *(Gwinup, 1974)*. In Chapter One, I examined the structural and organisational barriers to union involvement for many librarians. Although such engagement may be desirable, it is important to understand women's reluctance to be openly militant or oppositional in structures in which they do have, or do not perceive themselves as having, power. The supporting role that librarians may hold, especially in organisations where they are not the dominant group and possess little influence, may challenges via union activity, for example, although Chapter One gave examples which may partly disprove this.

For women, challenging male management structures and advocating for individual or group needs may resonate with gender relations in the domestic sphere, with all the associated stereotypes or discomfort. Women librarians may also feel some 'lingering

anxieties about the femininity of women who demand wage increases' *(Harris, 1992, 101)* and not wish to be associated with behaviours that are perceived as male. Women's internalisation of gendered roles and social expectations can also prevent them from moving beyond their internal and domestic world. The reality of many women's needs to balance home and work roles and to conserve time may also prevent engagement in union activity *(Campbell, 1984)* as may their frequent location in part-time work. It is also the case that the typical model purported by union structures, leadership and overall concerns has not encouraged women's engagement or encompassed women's views or needs in the workplace.

Unions, as much as any institution, replicate existing structures and social arrangements. As Campbell *(1984)* asked, 'what makes us think the trade union movement is different from anything else ?' *(133)*. She went on to answer that 'it's only another place where men and women live out their conflicts of interest' *(133)*. By this, Campbell means that the union emphasis on male workplace agendas has ensured that women's issues, like maternity leave, part-time work and other factors related to family responsibilities, are seen as outside 'the proper concerns of the trade union movement' *(Charles, 1986, 182)*, and defined as private interests associated with the domestic world, outside the male-defined public norm, and therefore not relevant to the work setting. Workplace equality then has to be accepted on male terms, without recognising the gendered nature of work, or the difficulties that women have in separating their work and domestic roles - the 'double-shift' as second wave feminism termed it. As earlier stated, a major concern of socialist feminism was to reconcile these positions, as Seear *(1973)* highlighted :

> There is not much evidence that male trade unionists as a whole, with many outstanding personal exceptions, have been greatly concerned with the position of women workers except in circumstances in which the position of women has been seen as a threat to the position of men.
> (Seear, 1973, 237).

Harris *(1992)* suggested that to gain mutual support, female-dominated occupations like librarianship, nursing and social work should join 'with others in the women's movement' *(97)* to present a more united front. Taking up a feminist inspired position within a union, instead of striving for professionhood, could be the way to obtain greater status and rewards, and for socialist feminists, as the last chapter described, this was a typical mode of action. The shared experience of working in gendered workplaces and

occupations could help women gain both solidarity and other more tangible benefits. For Harris *(1992)*, an arch critic of librarianship's aspirations to professional status, 'unionism offers an attractive alternative to professionalism' *(103)*. Within the United Kingdom, it is difficult to state how many librarians are involved in trade unions, but it is not regarded as a common identity or affiliation.

It appears that professional associations, although coming into being at the time when women were encouraged to join late Victorian librarianship, were not established with women in mind. To protect the interests of the dominant culture, and the most powerful member interests, they may well have attempted to repel challenges from women motivated to raise issues from a feminist perspective. Although this will form the content of later investigation, it seems that professional library associations cannot be understood without taking on insights about the influence of gender. As Chapter One suggested, there is already an ambivalence about the appropriateness of unions for librarianship, but there seems to be many other reasons why a female-dominated occupation, in which members are often located within organisational structures in which their work practice is secondary and seen as administrative, may be even less likely to consider it a necessity. The next section will turn attention upon some of the aspects of librarianship that appear to be linked explicitly to sex and gender, such as service, and will question how important these factors are in affecting the semi-professional status that librarianship appears to possess.

Trait Set Three : Gendering the essence of librarianship

> Professionalism may almost inevitably lead to a movement away from service which, for many people, represents the core of the female-intensive professions. (Harris, 1992, 19).

Service role and the need for service - how are gender roles reflected ?

In this section, the notion of service and the pre-requisite underpinnings of a code of ethics will be interrogated. The provision of service is very important in the typical schema of profession-hood, yet the rise of the service sector, linked to increasing consumption and the commercialisation of many gendered practices previously undertaken within the family, including the production of food, cleaning and care, has

challenged this. In the last few decades, the service sector has grown to employ a high percentage of the population within most Western countries (including a large majority of women) yet is often in low-skilled areas of work not necessarily perceived as professional. When earlier considerations and definitions of professional status were established this was not the case. This expansion of service has perhaps changed what is seen as elite and professional *(Winter, 1988)* although the involvement of many women in service industries links to much wider discussions about gender and the workplace, and the changing global economic and cultural context.

Service is a vital part of librarianship, often seen as the defining feature. Gorman *(2000)* recently commented that the librarian's 'desire is to serve individuals and, in doing so, to serve society and humanity as a whole' *(74)*. The gendering of the role of service within librarianship is long-standing as Chapter Six will explore, and examples are legion. For example, Sable *(1969)* argued that the male librarian should utilise female traits like 'warmth and personal attention which are inherent in the feminine personality' *(750)* to be a good librarian. However, he perceived the male personality and associated traits as gender neutral and the norm, as if a female librarian 'assumes the personality of the male administrator . . . (she) . . . becomes neither male nor female' *(750)*. For Sable, librarianship, like other occupations that deal with people like teaching, social work, and interestingly medicine, 'should guard well its feminine qualities' *(751)*. Sable's view that feminine attributes are essential in attracting people to public libraries 'for the warmth and understanding which they find lacking in their offices, cities, and government' *(751)* is relevant to debates in Chapter Six about the origins of the female librarian, and the creation of the public library as an extension of the home.

This notion of people skills as female and essential for the librarian is highly gendered, and Sable *(1969)* concludes that these attributes will be needed 'until libraries consist of a computer wall into which the user plugs into at home' *(751)*. Regarding female values as preventing the onset of an alienating, male computerised future, anticipates debates about the gender of technology and its impact on librarianship as a women's profession *(Harris, 1996; Pritchard, 1989)* and some earlier second wave feminist opinions as already suggested. For Harris *(1992; 1996)* the apparent desire for librarianship to become more professional through the use of information technology may conflict with its female nature, devalue the central aims of service, and move librarianship into areas like the provision of remote services, that are valued as less subjective and individual - and more

male. These are clearly essentialist views about technology as oppositional to human interaction.

Trait theory positions professional service as typically an expert-consumer relationship, like that of the doctor and their patient. From a feminist position, as expressed within librarianship, this belies the librarian's relationship with the user, which aims to be equal and democratic, rather than instructive and expert-led *(Harris, 1992)*. Women-dominated fields are characterised by the personal interaction and control given to the clients which might be lost if such groups 'in their pursuit of status, adopt the male model of professionalism, lose sight of their own values and, in so doing, betray their own traditions' *(Harris, 1992, 163)*. Harris also suggests that as librarianship continues to reduce the number of qualified librarians providing direct services to readers and users, and increases the role of para-professionals, this again impacts upon the service role provided by trained women librarians, which will become 'deprofessionalized as non-professional staff assume primary responsibility for most patron contact' *(131)*.

For Garrison *(1979)* the service role in librarianship was moulded to fit feminine archetypes and the needs of the developing profession in the nineteenth century, and was framed as 'a natural acting-out of the docile behavioural role that females have traditionally assumed' *(189)*. Earlier, Lowenthal *(1971)* had argued that even though librarianship adhered to concepts of freedom and choice, these were denied to women librarians. She claimed that women librarians had internalised self-hating messages and are thus happy 'serving others selflessly and stifling the urge to serve ourselves' *(2597)*. Lowenthal suggested that the stereotype of women as those who serve, whether in public or private, is why librarianship appeared an attractive choice for women. If women do not expect or desire promotion, they will accept roles that mirror their domestic situation and not see themselves any other way.

Code of ethics - can they be feminist ?

> Whether library science possesses its own unique theories or methods is debatable, but the field does lay claim to a different body of principles and a code of professional ethics.
> (Searing, 1992, 225).

If a code of ethics is central to the conduct of a profession and its status, it is crucial to consider this with insight gained through second wave feminisms. Codes of ethics set out the values and principles underpinning the conduct of those who work with the public, especially regarding personal contact. For some professions, like medicine, there are clear dangers in many areas of work, and professional and personal punishment can result for those who transgress. Both the Library Association in the United Kingdom and the American Library Association have ethical guidelines, yet there is perhaps less scope for librarians to violate them and less severity of response if they do. There are often dilemmas that can introduce areas of second wave feminist concern as Chapter Seven will discuss and as the following example also suggests. As Gordon-Till *(2000)* wrote, ethics for librarianship can often involve weighing up conflicting interests and expectations of different groups, often to avoid harm. This posits :

> Would it be right or wrong to have books with explicit sexual content which can be openly accessed in a children's library ?
> (Gordon-Till, 2000, 28/29).

As librarianship involves working with individual information needs and wants, confidentiality and discretion are highly prized. As Searing *(1992)* suggests above, these principles are viewed by librarianship as different from those required by other occupational groups. The role of gender here is complex, but it could be argued that the role of women in maintaining secrets and silence is central to the notion of a code of ethics and perhaps to librarianship overall, and that ethics therefore contain identifiable gendered characteristics. Code's *(1991)* comment that 'ethics is about how to act, how to be a good person' *(71)* links to concepts of subjectivity and agency, and also indicates ethics' potentially gendered underpinnings.

Any sets of ethics are deeply influenced by the context in which they originate which gives them continued support and maintenance. Ethics can therefore incorporate notions that exclude or include, and that make gendered assumptions about those that implement them, who may be affected or influenced by their usage. For post-second wave observers like Manning *(1992)*, 'an adequate ethic ought to be a feminist ethic' *(28)*, as it 'does not pose obstacles to the liberation of women and does not explore the moral experience of women' *(28)*. Ethics within librarianship, like any occupational or professional group, are not developed with such outcomes knowingly in mind, and contain assumptions about appropriate behaviours and beliefs, many of which may be gendered. As Prichard *(1989)*

reflected, however, some second wave feminist interpretations of the ethical and attitudinal benefits gained from including women in librarianship are open to debate, as not all women bring 'these supposed "humanizing" female values to whatever environment they are in' *(76)*.

Whose values ?

> There has been little attention to why library women so meekly acquiesce to male-stream definitions of value, and almost no attention to the way in which library women are persuaded to accept male-stream standards of values, and undermine female concepts of value.
> (Harris, M. 1992, 1).

Harris' *(1992)* comment that librarianship is underpinned by male values that are unquestioningly accepted by women librarians, whose own values are thus denied, as Pritchard also suggested, is questionable. The notion that there are clearly defined and understood values attributable to the sexes is contestable and allows male and female behaviours and motivations to be viewed as natural. However, one strongly held librarianship value is neutrality and the desire not to voice a forceful opinion that could be regarded as biased or judgmental. Blanke *(1989)* suggested that the quest for professionality originates in the very concept that librarianship is 'politically value-free' *(30)* and apolitical, a view that he argues is dubious and exposes librarianship to 'an uncritical accommodation with society's dominant political and economic powers' *(30)*. Even though librarianship does not necessarily wish it, it is associated with the possession and giving of opinion. As Iverson *(1998)* commented, although librarians are 'trained to maintain an objective or neutral stance they are also expected to make decisions regarding "good" or "bad" materials' *(1)*. The meaning of selecting and recommending stock, and the inherent introduction of choice and potential prejudice or subjectivity, is according to Iverson *(1998)*, denied by librarians who 'generally regard the selection of materials as apolitical' *(1)* and their role as neutral. The important issues of the gender politics of stock selection will be addressed in Chapters Six and Eight.

The female nature of librarianship may also affect its desire to be seen as having too forceful an opinion. If women are regarded as intermediaries that organise and disseminate the knowledge base historically created by men, as well as being socially regarded as having less right to express their own views, there may be an embedded

resistance for librarianship to acknowledge the actual role that it has in shaping the reading and learning tools made available to library users. If librarianship is changing through the impact of information technology, then for some there is a shift from the feminised, people-oriented values embedded in librarianship, to more masculine dis-embodied ideals linked to technology *(Blanke, 1989; Harris, 1992, 1996)*. For these commentators, this would be an unacceptable change to librarianship's core values, but stereotyping technology as male and the converse as female is arguable as already discussed.

Harris *(1992)* strongly argues that feminised professions inevitably incorporate women's values, although they may be repressed or hidden to allow male values to dominate, and that this needs to be understood when applying a feminist analysis. The extent to which librarians can exercise control over librarianship and its future, is determined for Harris largely by the values that they bring. For her, women librarians need to be aware of the power of librarianship values, and to challenge notions of neutrality as they do not facilitate the equitable services that are claimed, and to allow a more open discussion of the gendered tenets of librarianship, they 'must abandon any notions of professionalism that encourage political neutrality' *(163)*.

Does commitment and community come naturally to women ?

> (The professional) . . . acquires his social identity from his profession and derives
> considerable prestige and satisfaction from practising it.
> (Theodore, 1971, 2).

If a true profession is based on commitment by its practitioners coupled with a sense of identification and community as Theodore *(1971)* suggests, a gendered reading of librarianship as a female-dominated workplace, could be expected to reveal positive findings. Professions and organisations with a high percentage of women are often seen as embodying 'such values as caring, nurturing, co-operating and creating' *(Duff, 1993, 262)*, but as earlier discussions indicated, these perhaps have notable, gendered overtones. It is important to highlight whether caring and nurturing characteristics are naturally female or socially constructed, as has been a key feminist debate. The likelihood then of a female-dominated occupation demonstrating more commitment and

caring is debatable, and may even be less likely for other reasons linked to women's gendered social experience.

Besides archetypes about sex-typed characteristics, there are other reasons why women librarians can be perceived as having less commitment than their male colleagues, and thus stereotype the whole occupational group. For example, Freedman *(1970)* described married women librarians as expected to have a more modest career than unmarried colleagues, and 'envied and resented by single colleagues' *(1710)* if they did not conform. Married women librarians may have to move with their husband's career, and because of the lack of professional librarian jobs, may lose out and become deskilled. Library work at the start of the second wave feminist movement was seen as inflexible for women as it 'less easily accommodates combining career and family life than does nursing or teaching' *(Freedman, 1970, 1710)* and much feminist inspired activism, that Chapter Eight will describe, attempts to change this situation. Such factors may prevent women from building up contacts and feeling part of a librarian community, and women who work part-time for family reasons may not prioritise their own career or personal advancement, especially within an occupation in which they may feel marginalised.

In this section, I have discussed attributes that characterise much of the practice and image of the librarian. Service has been revealed as a behaviour and practice that is extremely linked to gender assumptions, and cannot be considered without recognising this relationship. The construction of librarianship as a service profession that requires personal engagement cannot be seen as unrelated to its female domination or to sex-typing. Ethics, as a source of support and protection for those that carry out individual services, have been discussed as influenced by the context in which they are created and maintained, and to not therefore be gender-neutral. Similarly, values are seen to be prominent in librarianship, but their gendered nature and linkages not fully recognised. The notion that professionals need to be committed to their colleagues beyond work and to identify with a community has also been questioned from a gender-aware perspective.

Trait Set Four : Gendering the power of librarianship

> One used to meet librarians who wanted nothing better than to be left alone.
> Recruited when jobs were scarce, their main ambition was to have a safe niche in
> pensionable employ, preferably in the public services. They saw themselves
> primarily as officials applying the exact letter of the law and knowing every
> regulation and by-law by heart.
> (Maidment, 1975, 9 / 10).

Autonomy and independence

Maidment's *(1975)* hopefully now out-dated stereotype of the librarian-clerk appears to undermine librarianship as a potentially autonomous activity, by definition required to achieve professional status. A professional person should arguably be able to work as a freelance contractor, and possess a degree of freedom from external interference *(Benge, 1970)*, but librarians are often employed within structures in which they operate a secondary and supportive function. The image of the female secretary, administrator or office worker is again important to recall. For many women librarians there are other issues about their perceived role within organisations, and with the very nature of bureaucracy itself. For some feminists, the very existence and nature of bureaucracy can be seen as highly restrictive and excluding to women *(Ferguson, 1984)*. Within female-dominated professions, the ability of most employees to control their situation may be limited, due to hierarchical segregation as they are likely to be within the domain of male managers.

Librarians working in public bodies are also often placed within grades typically associated with serving the needs of the dominant (often male) profession and organisational practice. Separate gradings that recognise librarianship as a defined discipline and practice rarely exist. For example, in the National Health Service, librarians at all levels, including library managers, are paid within administrative and clerical grades as no separate discipline exists for them, although current attempts are moving in that direction. The view that anyone can do librarianship because it is associated with women also relates to the resistance to non-librarians becoming library managers. The belief that managers from outside librarianship can be brought in to manage, without any direct skills or experience (or potentially any understanding or

awareness of gender issues) for some highlights many of the arguments about women's professions being viewed as requiring less knowledge and of having less autonomy and status *(Harris, 1992)*. Raelin *(1991)* suggests that the phenomenon of generic managers is increasingly common, and as professionals 'expect to direct their own activities in the workplace free from constraining regulations or interference' *(109)*, this can result in compromise.

Images of women

The image of a work group is important in trait theory for determining status, but for female-dominated professions like librarianship, gendered notions appear highly visible. The public image of librarians 'as either effeminate males or old maid, bookish females' *(Lowenthal, 1971, 2598)* based on sexist archetypes has been seen by many as a long-term factor in disabling women within librarianship and in creating a devalued profession that undermines both men and women *(Thistlewaite, 2003)*. For Schuman and Detlefsen *(1971)*, and Harris *(1992)*, moves to make librarianship more attractive to men is intended 'to change our image, to make it more vital' *(Schuman and Detlefsen, 1971, 2588)* through denouncing and denying the work of women *(Harris, 1992)*. Freedman *(1970)* considered that the professional associations and library schools were potential areas that could promote a more progressive view of the female librarian. Library schools especially could improve the position of women in the profession and encourage potential female leaders. Taking on some of these ideas would improve the profession for both men and women, a typical liberal feminist position :

> The formerly negative image of the "feminine" profession can be transformed if both sexes cooperate in recognizing problems and offering creative solutions . . . librarianship may yet receive a positive public image and deserve to consider itself a vital profession which can attract highly competent men and women. (Freedman, 1970, 1711).

The concept of image, and the self-identity of librarians, is a central theme within discussion about librarianship as has been highlighted, and will continue to be so throughout this investigation. It is important to note at this stage that it is impossible to discuss the image of the librarians without construing it as a gendered construction. In a similar vein, status is entwined with gendered notions, as shall now be briefly discussed.

*Women's **status***

As Chapter One set out, professional status depends on the work carried out, the skills involved and the resulting social and financial value and recognition. Freedman *(1970)* considered that overall librarianship is a low status profession and may therefore never become 'a true "profession"' *(1710)*. This lack of status and low pay associated with being a female-dominated profession was predicted to inhibit the recruitment of talented men and women. To address this, Freedman commented that solutions must be found to encourage qualified women to enter and stay in the profession, as at that time librarianship did not offer women opportunities to combine personal and career choices. Job-sharing, for flexibility and 'prevent the tediousness which often accompanies library work' *(1711)*, part-time and temporary posts were also felt to be good options for women.

Benge *(1970)* considered librarianship's claim to professionhood and suggested, perhaps with more insight, that women brought a lower status than men to any work group, in other words that the social construction of gender had an impact. Benge *(1970)* proposed that 'professional status is adversely affected by feminisation' *(215)*, with the more women in librarianship, the more negatively it was perceived and valued. Notions already explored, that librarianship is a secondary profession as it does not generate its own knowledge base, are also relevant. The inference from many of these insights is that any occupation that has a large dominance of female staff will inevitably have a reduced status to one in which men dominate, or where there are equal numbers of men and women, whatever its activity or potential value.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have built arguments in three areas, gender and work, gender and the office and gender and librarianship. I have used second wave feminism insights to interrogate trait theory and its interpretation of librarianship as undertaken within Chapter One, to understand the impact of gendered socialisation on women and men. I have discussed feminism as an internal critique of trait theory that has outlined where trait theory on its own terms is inadequate, and also used feminism as an external critique which has generated a new set of questions that were unavailable when trait theory was first used. I have indicated that librarianship, at the onset of the second wave feminist movement, was still perceived as professionally inadequate. Librarianship was termed a

semi-profession by Etzioni *(1969)*, Goode *(1969)* and Simpson and Simpson *(1969)*, but Garrison *(1979)*, Baum *(1982)* and others, from a feminist perspective also use this term. For Witz *(1992)* and others, writing with knowledge of the second wave feminist movement, acknowledging the effect of gender inequality is vital to understanding professions and the organisation of work. The use of traits or criteria proposes an ideal type of profession that ignores the inter-relationship between gender, power and professionalisation, and the transfer and representation of inequalities from the domestic domain into the public sphere :

> Professionalisation is a process whereby men socialise and seek to control
> activities that relate to emotional experience, biological reproduction and the
> reproduction of labour power.
> (Witz, 1992, 62).

Although the gendered nature of librarianship has been identified along with its reliance on stereotypical roles of women, it is necessary to explore the origins of these notions and to consider other components that may impact upon librarianship. Investigating these other factors may increase understanding of the meaning of librarianship and its concerns with professionalism. Second wave feminism has provided a very useful set of tools to begin to explore the impact of gender relations within the workplace, the construction of work roles and practice, and of occupations and professions. It is clear that women have experienced inequalities that have affected their potential as a group and as individuals. It is proposed that to fully understand the nature and experience of librarianship, and its historical creation, cognisance needs to be taken of feminist theorising that has developed since the second wave period and that has responded to other influences and pressures. In the next chapter, I establish this new framework, and move into Part Two where I begin to employ it to both formulate and undertake the remaining aspects of my investigation.

In the previous chapter I indicated that some of the areas that I wished to investigate concerned the possibility of dual identities of feminists and librarians and wider discussions about the meaning of space. I have also indicated that the research methodology that I employed both integrated and critiqued some accepted second wave feminist notions concerning subjectivity and adopting a position as a researcher that centralises equality and disclosure. Many of the methods that I adopted, and the areas that I set out to investigate, could be viewed as not conforming to second wave feminist

research methodologies but to broadly be influenced by post-second wave, or third wave, understandings as I now describe further.

Tea with Miss A. S. Cowper, Edinburgh, 2000

Dear Diary

I had an amazing experience today. Miss Cowper replied to my ad in the *LA Record*. She is in her 80s and was a public librarian in Edinburgh from the 1930s. Very much the old guard – intelligent, independent woman who never married – and totally dedicated to her work. She told me about the discrimination that she and other women faced. To talk about it, they had to meet on the quiet . . . 'It was really all done in the staff tea-room. We didn't go to each other's homes or meet each other socially. We would come up to each other's departments, maybe at closing time, and say *'Look this is terrible, we must start saying to the boss and to the Town Council – what about equal pay for equal work ?'*

She talked about the marriage bar and how women librarians accepted that they had to make a choice . . . 'Nobody that was getting married would have wanted to come back and work. The women had a different outlook. You either went and qualified and didn't marry, or you lived in – what the old people called sin – and hoped that you weren't found out. . . So, if you got yourself a chap, you had to give up your job'.

It seems light years away, sitting in her house, with home-made cake, surrounded by antiques and paintings, yet I am sure that it is not. Women working in public and other libraries today probably still face the same prejudice on the grounds of their sex – that's partly what I need to find out.

In admiration . . .

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Chapter Five : Moving into third wave feminism

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- Section Two :   Identity (and self-knowing)
  Me, myself, I - exploring feminist identities

- Section Three :   Space - opening up second wave concerns
  Feminist geography
  Foucault's heterotopias
  Heterotopias, deviance and the Panopticon
  The library as a heterotopia
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- Section Four :   Communities and acceptance
  Is community always a good thing ?
  Safe as houses - cities, exclusion and community
  Women's utilisation of city space
  Women out in the city - changing spaces and places

- Conclusion

Introduction

In the last chapter, librarianship as a work practice done typically by women has been discussed from a perspective that introduces second wave feminist understanding into the functionalist approach that Chapter One undertook. Librarianship has been found to contain certain gendered constructions, but to progress further other resources may be needed. This chapter will therefore begin to use thinking that came through and after the second wave feminist movement to reflect on librarianship, its status, vulnerability, practitioners and location. Second wave feminist thinking, whilst able to provide useful insights especially concerning the role of gender in creating a female-dominated occupation such as librarianship, does not fully explain its components. Concerns of third wave feminism, post-second wave, in relation to knowledge, space, identities and communities appear applicable to discussing contemporary librarianship and its historical construction and will therefore form the content of this chapter. It is also the aim of this chapter to clarify these facets for use in Part Three, and assess their most useful employment.

Four factors of importance to third wave feminist discourse and to the continuation of my investigation form the content of this chapter. I will begin first by looking at the concept of knowledge. Knowledge is a keystone of librarianship and an entity that can affect individual and collective transformation in the library space. It is also a site for much second wave, and post-second wave feminist concern. Chapters Two and Three commented on feminist critiques of objective and rational knowledge, considered feminist epistemology, and reviewed women's studies as both a critique of existing disciplines and their representation of women and also a vehicle for the production and dissemination of new feminist knowledge. In this chapter, I will introduce insights obtained since the second wave concerning knowledge, its possibilities and validation. Post second wave theoretical positions like postmodernism and poststructuralism have contributed highly to this debate as will be commented upon.

Secondly, I will consider why the notion of space - physical, epistemological, and virtual - is important to my investigation. The library is a physical space in which the process and practice of librarianship takes place, is historically the domain of the librarian and contains various layers of meanings concerning inclusion and exclusion, and the gender of physical, metaphorical and virtual space. Women's space in the physical and

knowledge world is also important to highlight along with further discussion on gender and space. Radical feminism saw women's space as a counter-balance and alternative to spaces that were typically viewed as neutral but in fact male-defined. In women's spaces, women's creativity and consciousness could grow unimpeded. Foucault and others have influenced feminist discourse in this area, and Foucauldian notions like heterotopias and panopticism will be used to illuminate the experience of space and its multiple functions and interests. The role of heterotopias in providing a counter-balance to other spaces is vital, and the heterotopias of deviance will be of particular significance.

Thirdly, I am interested in how identities are embodied in the librarian - revered within the professional discourse, but clearly fragile and threatened by the opportunities offered, and perhaps, removed by new technology. As Chapters One and Three also pointed out, this is a contested identity. I will therefore discuss concepts of identity post-second wave feminism when, as already stated in Chapter Two, feminism facilitated dialogue and debates amongst groups of women, some who felt that their needs were unrecognised and their voices unheard within feminism as well as in wider society. The post-second wave development of identity politics and cultural studies has perhaps shifted this process further, and this section will consider how these theoretical positions have questioned previous feminist certainties. It will be necessary to return to the late second wave feminist period and the 1990s to understand these debates.

My fourth section will review communities as spaces for women and other groups, which may validate and allow the exploration of identities, freedom and self-determination. Communities formed by geography and through the experience of groups with shared allegiances, lifestyles or experiences of marginalisation will be reviewed both as desirable entities for support, but ones that may prize conformity over difference. Such discussions will provide insights into meanings of public and private lives and identities, and how they engage. Notions of anonymity and openness, and commentary from Iris Marion Young amongst others, inform this section.

These crucial debates, some of which concern individual and collective experiences, links to many aspects of librarianship if understood from a third wave feminist viewpoint. Much of these insights relate to knowledge and identities, and the revelation or invisibility of one's own self in public and private. Being a women-dominated occupation may mean that librarianship inevitably shares 'many values and strategies with feminism' *(Searing, 1992, 226)* but for this to be knowing and even possible, incumbents need to be

aware in order to challenge or amend. My final chapters draw out these tensions and outcomes, and indicate where feminist approaches to librarianship have been possible. As this chapter points out, and Chapter Two indicated, there are many reasons why individuals and groups conform and do not openly assert difference. In the case of feminism, as one study said, there are many reasons that prevent women from expressing feminist views *(Colgan and Ledwith, 1996)*; wishing to conform and accepting the status quo may be some of them. To understand the meanings of knowledge in relation to librarianship and some of the areas with which I am most concerned, I will now firstly turn to knowledge, already shown to be a site of much second wave feminist engagement.

Section One : Knowledges and ratification

> Feminism is about a critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in inhomogeneous gendered social space.
> (Haraway, 1996, 258).

Haraway's post-second wave reflection on feminism and its place in a knowingly gendered context provides a useful place to start and perhaps to end. Second wave feminism as Chapter Two outlined, facilitated much debate about the origins of knowledge in a male-defined and dominated past where women's views, experience and insights were awarded little value and received minimal oxygen or acceptance. Much second wave feminist activity was spent in identifying this exclusion, rediscovering women who had been silenced or ignored, and in offering new possibilities for women to create and establish their own knowledge.

Debates that came after the second wave movement began to propose less certainty about the possibility of one alternative feminist knowledge, or that knowledge was necessarily the key that could challenge patriarchy and improve the gendered experience of women. For feminist philosophers inspired by postmodernism, like Hekman *(1997)*, the instability and diversity of truth and knowledge, and those who seek and know them, meant that one agreed knowledge is impossible. Moves to understand women as a grouping of more flexible and multiple identities, rather than a fixed category, led to views that no assumption could be made about women or their collective knowledge base, needs or exclusion *(Siegel, 1997)*.

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Ramazanoglu and Holland *(2000)* commented that this creates a tension between feminist desires to continue highlighting and challenging gender relations and their impact upon women, but without being able to propose uncontested statements and knowledge about women's lives and experiences. For those wishing to oppose gender inequalities that discriminate against all women, or to propose certainties based on the existence of binary differences between the sexes, postmodernist understandings of knowledge can be challenging. The expansion of concepts of identity is also central to post-second wave theorising, as I shall now reflect, which moves beyond many of the positions taken during the second wave concerning opposing identities and their respective knowledge claims.

Section Two : Identity (and self-knowing)

> Feminism has intermittently been as vexed with the urgency of disengaging with the category 'women' as it has with laying claim to it.
> (Riley, 1988, 3/4)

The second wave feminist movement, and the first wave before it, saw women as made unequal through gendered power relations. Concepts of equality and difference, crucial in defining women as a social group that had been historically disenfranchised and mistreated, were important, and certainly for first wave feminists, modernist binary differences - gendered polarities between men and women - were central to debates. But, as Riley comments above this was often ambiguous and contested. As already discussed, competing views existed in the second wave movement about the reasons underpinning women's marginalised status and how to rectify it, and tensions existed about the origins of women's oppression, tactics for change and the differences between feminists themselves that both represented and continued to manifest social inequality.

The next section will explore the expansion of second wave feminist questions about identity. It will review the challenges made by groups of women who felt excluded from theory, power and knowledge production, and the potential social change that could rectify their marginalisation. Moving from a homogenous notion of women to situated identities was also influenced by postmodernist and poststructuralist ideas that appealed to some women, post-second wave, particularly within academia. Much of the feminist debate that then surfaced centred on two theoretical positions - first, that women are different and secondly, that women have been repressed and made the 'Other'. The latter

concept aimed to indicate the insidious nature of masculinity as neutral and normal, and the construction of women as outsiders who differed and deviated from the norm. For some feminists such possibilities fragmented feminist knowledge and previous concerns, based on the clear idea of women, but for others it provided opportunities to move beyond strict categories and to reframe women and feminism.

Me, myself, I - exploring feminist identities

Women in the second wave feminist movement had other identities, identifications and ways of self-knowing besides developing a politicised female identity. Some of these were pre-existing and undeniable, for example racial origin or physical impairment, but some, including lesbian identity, could be also found through exploring collective and personal histories or possibilities as part of the movement. Identities then existed that caused both celebration and liberation, and the creation of political awareness and knowledge about a range of lived experience and potential theorising. However, as Chapter Two described this could also lead to conflict. Whilst trying to rectify social inequalities for women as a group, it can be argued that Western feminism struggled with the inequalities and divisions of wider society based on race, class, sexual orientation and able-bodiedness and resulting dialogue and divisions within the women's movement. Besides debates between differing feminist positions and approaches (socialist, radical, liberal, radical, and others), that have already been discussed, Black, third world, ethnic minority and post-colonial feminists also made claims for inclusion, the possibility of change and an opportunity to develop hegemonic solutions *(Sum, 2000)*. Disabled women, working class women and lesbians also claimed inclusion and theoretical integration in the second wave feminist project.

The introduction to a 1984 anthology of British radical feminist writings summarised some of the divisive debates at that time within second wave feminism :

> No longer can we afford to pretend that the Women's Liberation Movement is a united whole; there are deep divisions between us. If these remain unchallenged, we in the WLM will lose our collective power in our attempts radically to change the world.
> (Kantner; Lefanu, Shah et al, 1984, 241).

In the section following this statement, black feminists accused the women's movement of racism; lesbians accused it of homophobia; Irish republican women prisoners publicised their plight in Armagh Jail; disabled women argued against abortion; working-class women came out about their class position; *Spare Rib*'s position on Palestine and Israel was challenged; Jewish women accused feminism of anti-Semitism; childless women were implicated in oppressing mothers; women with boy children felt excluded from women's events, and the Lesbian Members of Sisters Against Disablement challenged the organisers of the Lesbian Sex and Sexual Practice Conference held in London in April 1983 (a conference that I went to) of exclusion.

Sum *(2000)* suggested that the inability of the second wave feminist movement to understand and deal with difference was its inevitable nemesis, but there is no doubt that bringing personal experiences, subjectivities and identities into feminism was powerful, exhilarating and extremely challenging, and helped build and rejuvenate theory. It is also clear that feminism moved from the possibility of a universal approach where being a woman was of sole importance to understanding that difference and diversity were central, but that this might mean that the overall feminist project would become fragmented. For some later feminists, moves away from 'the traps of identity politics-as-straitjacket' and 'dead-end essentialism' *(Ainley, 1998, xv)* were to be welcomed. This then raises problems in how to address the needs of women, how to position them as a marginalised group, and also how to realise 'women's multiple voices without losing all of the analytical power of the category of women' *(Sum, 2000, 136)*. An apparent dilution of the core concept of woman made feminist debates and challenges more complex, and less able to be easily typified or summarised. For example, the legal, social, economic and political requirements and identity claims of an urban, working-class, Asian woman in an abusive marriage would be very different from those of a university-educated white lesbian living in a rural community. Arguing for appropriate acknowledgement and access to empowerment and equality and to develop a coherent theoretical framework would be more challenging than if women were the only category.

Recognising the challenges of incorporating a variety of identities in the experience of individuals and groups means recognising that multiple oppression can be experienced, and can be interlinked. If external environments can offer sanctuary or danger to groups and individuals, sometimes based on identities, visible difference, and similarities or affiliations, it is important to consider the meaning of space. Within the fluidity of

multiple identities and possibilities, perhaps the solid nature of physical space provides an anchor ?

Section Three : Space - opening up second wave feminist concerns

> ... our struggles take place within a built environment that has been quite literally man made. As a result, the built environment is often seen as a benign backdrop to the human drama, rather than a force which shapes our lives in profound ways. (MacGregor, 1995, 26)

As Chapter Two stated, second wave feminism developed a commentary on space that began to move beyond physical and material realities within organisations and workplaces. Part of that was about interrogating the built environment and differently theorising public and private space. I will now explore the potential of this thinking to aid later discussions about libraries and librarianship, and the effect of gender relations played out both in public and private. It will be important when discussing women's spaces and workplaces, such as women's libraries, to discover whether feminism as an ideology and practice can also contribute to the experience of using such physical space. It is also important to note that the library, as a workplace and space constructed with women in mind as workers and calming agents, is also gendered, as will be developed in the next few chapters. As MacGregor *(1995)* pointed out above, feminism until recently perhaps failed to fully recognise the gendered material context in which people live and work, and to incorporate this into feminist theory and practice. If the built environment is literally man-made, then it is also perhaps inevitable that this reinforces social inequality and prevents women participating equally in all spheres of life. I will begin this section by setting out the development of such thinking in post-second wave feminist geography.

Feminist geography

For MacGregor *(1995)*, gender-aware thinking is not incorporated within understandings about communities and women's everyday experience or by those within planning and architecture who design and build structures and physical spaces. She described the experiences of women planners working in male spaces, the difficulties and exclusion that they faced, and her own attempts to raise feminist issues. Like the experiences of many feminists challenging established disciplines as already discussed, her interventions

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were felt 'inappropriate for the rational technical field of planning' *(MacGregor, 1995, 25)*. A feminist perspective was seen as introducing confusion, irrationality and chaos, and overturning objectivity and rationality. The historical view of women as irrational and emotional, and going against the malestream grain, was still at work. To provide some more theoretical tools, I will now describe thinking amongst feminists and others concerning spatiality and gender. Much of this thinking, as suggested, has moved beyond binary constructs and begun to incorporate notions of multiple identities and needs but as already stated the built environment does not necessarily regard women and men as groups with needs linked to their gendered social experience. There is a need to reject binary assumptions, but it is relevant to suggest that gender needs to be overtly recognised and addressed. The import of poststructuralist ideas and understandings from groups often previously invisible in discourse about the built environment provides an opportunity to theorise about gender relations, and also libraries, as I now examine.

Foucault's heterotopias

> Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power.
> (Foucault, 1984, 252).

Much insight into new formations of space comes through Foucault's work on institutions like schools, factories, clinics, prisons and asylums that addressed power and exclusion, alongside his reflections on discourses on the city that moved beyond, what he termed, 'the limits of urbanism and architecture' *(1984, 244)*. As the quotation above suggests, much of Foucault's concerns were with space as a universal experience, with an identifiable linkage to power. One of his concepts concerning space, heterotopias, is relevant to my discussion, as I will set out. 'Heterotopia' derives from the Greek words for 'other' and 'place', together making 'other place', and is also a medical term for a condition in which an organ or part of the body is out of its normal place. I will then relate this to a more gendered reading of similar concepts, and use them to link specifically to feminist debates on space that can be termed third wave.

Foucault first wrote about heterotopias in the preface to the first English language edition of *The Order of Things (1970)*. Referring to Juan Luis Borges' description of a Chinese encyclopaedia's classification of real and imaginary animals, Foucault asked 'where else

could they be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language' *(Foucault, 1970, xvi)*. As language offered opportunities to conjure up beings that were perverse, unsustainable versions of those in nature and set them amongst those that were genuine and observable, Foucault proposed heterotopia as the counter-balance to utopian language. He suggested that heterotopias are disturbing, as 'they secretly undermine language . . . desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve out myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences' (xviii). This definition saw heterotopias as language spaces that facilitated imagination and possibilities, which could be dangerous and subversive, against the idealised notions of utopian dreaming.

Foucault had already described the notion of heterotopia in relation to physical space in an informal lecture to a group of French architects in March 1967. *Of Other Spaces (Foucault, 1967, no pagination)* was never considered an official part of Foucault's oeuvre until 1984 when it was translated into English for the first time for a Berlin public exhibition, and later published in the French architecture journal, *Architecture / Mouvement / Continuite*. This version of heterotopia moves beyond language space and the imagination into the production, organisation and maintenance of physical space. For Hetherington *(2002)* both interpretations concern the key issue of ordering, and the juxtapositions between things and sites 'not usually found together and the confusion that such representations create' *(42)* are what marks out heterotopias.

In *The Other Spaces*, Foucault expands his position on space, sites, time and their inter-relations, arguing that space and its appropriation, usage and meaning is responsible for the majority of human anxiety, much relating to its sacred and sanctified nature – including domestic, social and cultural space. He acknowledges the heterogeneity of, and the relationships contained within, space but argues that the main sites of interest have to be those that relate to one another that they 'suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination)*. Spaces that potentially contradict or counterpose all the other sites are utopias and heterotopias. Utopias are unreal places that present society in a idealised form, whereas heterotopias are 'a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested or inverted' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination)*. Foucault describes the space between utopias and heterotopias as a mirror that reflects the gaze of the observer in and out of the real and unreal space, and the physical and virtual sites being observed or imagined.

Heterotopias are described by Foucault in some detail, and based on six main principles. The first principle is that heterotopias are universal to every society and human group, but can take varied forms and transform over time, although two main categories apply – crisis or deviation. The first heterotopic form of crisis, refer to sites reserved for those in a state of unusual change or transition, for example, menstruating or pregnant women, or elderly people. Foucault points out that some forms of crisis heterotopias change through history, for example, the nineteenth century form of boarding school or the compulsory military service undertaken by young men no longer exist in many cultures, yet other heterotopias develop or remain. Some involve physical or sexual changes, including the ritualised 'deflowering' of a bride on her honeymoon, which could, and often did, take place in a temporary physical space, like a train or a hotel that then creates a heterotopia 'without geographical markers' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination)*. Heterotopias of deviation refer to places where individuals who deviate from accepted behaviours or thought are located, with prisons, psychiatric institutions or old people's homes key examples that Foucault argues are becoming more commonplace. Foucault suggests that the latter is a heterotopic hybrid of crisis and deviation, as older people represent both a crisis for society (as a reminder of the human condition and requiring care, resources and social management) and also a deviation in that they are no longer productive or employed usefully, circumventing social mores concerning work and activity.

The second principle of heterotopias is that they can remain constant yet can adapt depending on social and cultural pressures. Citing the cemetery as an example, Foucault describes it as an ongoing component of society, a physical space that contains family members and friends of those living within society, in a divergent form. Over time, the organisation and meaning of the cemetery has responded to changing notions of death and dying, shifting it from being at one time, the 'sacred and immortal heart of the city' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination)* to now being 'the other city, where each family possesses its dark resting place' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination)*. The third principle concerns the inclusion within heterotopias of several sites and parts that can be incompatible and awkward yet converge to form a united whole. Examples given by Foucault include the cinema, where its components come together to create a remarkable and recognisable space, but the garden particularly is described as a pivotal example that represents a totality, yet comprises contradictory elements.

The fourth element refers to the linkage of heterotopias to time, as those experiencing this type of space also shift their usual feelings of the passing of time. In this category,

Foucault positions the library and the museum as of 'indefinitely accumulating time' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination),* like the definition of archives as 'the general system of the formation and transformation of statements' *(Foucault, 1970, 130)* set out in *The Archaeology of Knowledge.* The museum and library have related to time and space in different ways, according to Foucault. In the seventeenth century, typically in private and therefore restricted, museums and libraries expressed an individual's choice, whereas in the nineteenth century they became increasingly a composition with wider significance, and a place 'itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination).* Foucault suggests that the museum and the library are therefore heterotopias that are 'proper to the western culture of the nineteenth century' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination).* Given the nature of my enquiry, these comments about libraries will be expanded later. Besides such heterotopias that relate to the accumulation of time, there are also those described by Foucault as temporary sites of experience, like carnivals or fairs, that bring collective, temporary pleasure, the 'transitory, precarious spaces of time' as Edward Soja commented *(Soja, 1996, 160).*

For his fifth principle, Foucault established that the heterotopia is physically set apart from other society by systems of opening and closing that make it not completely accessible as a public place. A process will operate that may make entry unavoidable, like being sent to a prison, or a form of application or acceptance like having membership or adhering to a particular philosophy would apply. Foucault suggests that a heterotopia may provide bodily, as well as spiritual, purification, giving the Swedish sauna as an example. Foucault's final principle concerns hetereotopias' functionality in relation to wider space and society. This may either be because the experience that they offer highlights the nature of all other space as temporary and illusory, or that the perfection that they temporarily offer indicates the 'messy, ill constructed and jumbled' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination)* nature of genuine space. Foucault argues overall that societies have to possess heterotopias, as without them there could be no social order or the necessary balance between imagination and real life.

Heterotopias, deviance and the Panopticon

The term heterotopia has become a source for many working in human geography, cultural studies and social theory. The Danish writer, Jorgen Elm Larsen, for example, positions the politics of marginalised space, emphasising the social integration and normalisation of marginal and vulnerable people such as drug users and homeless people,

as a heterotopia. Larsen suggests that 'places where marginal people live and develop their identity can be seen as both problem areas and as pockets of resistance' *(Larsen, 2004, no pagination)*, in other words, where heterotopic relations can be played out and where those that are considered social outsiders can create new meanings about the society that they are part of, but with a different set of understandings and interpretations than those who are fully incorporated.

In *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison (1975)*, Foucault developed his thesis of the conditions and circumstances that apply to those that deviate from social norms and the processes by which surveillance within the context of discipline and punishment takes place. For this to occur, physical apparatus or social organisation is required that allows observation at all times by those with authority over others within prescribed spaces. This can be through observatories (a term now increasingly employed to describe systems of demographic scoping for public health or social policy-making reasons) or via the organisation of dwellings and other buildings, with the army camp as an example. In this example, 'all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a part of the overall functioning of power' *(Foucault, 1975, 171)*. Such a system can also be applied to non-institutional contexts. Foucault suggests that the principle of this model was historically prevalent in urban planning – 'the construction of working-class housing estates, hospitals, asylums, prisons, schools' *(Foucault, 1975, 171)* - where citizens faced the constant, often unseen, gaze of those in control.

Moving this notion further, Foucault described the Panopticon, the all-seeing tower or mechanism that 'arranges spatial unities to make it possible to see constantly and to recognise immediately' *(Foucault, 1975, 171)*. Drawing on Jeremy Bentham's eighteenth century concept of a marvellous machine that produces effects of power, effectively 'the discipline-mechanism' *(Foucault, 1975, 209)* the Panopticon represents for Foucault the formation, from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of what he perceives as a disciplinary society and spaces that incorporate punishment. Jensen's group of marginalised people are likely to be under surveillance within their heterotopic space in the community, where a panoptic regime may reign, even though '"border control" and bridge building between the normal and the deviant has changed from being centralised and institutionalised to being decentralised in local open spaces' *(Jensen, 2004, no pagination)*. However such individuals can become 'competent users', and break free of their destructive lifestyles that led them to dwell in heterotopic spaces of Otherness and achieve a changed status that allows them to act as links between deviance and normality,

between heterotopias and society. For Hetherington *(2002)* the Panopticon concept has attracted more attention than heterotopia but is important for its insights into alternative ordering of deviance. I will refer to the Panopticon later in relation to public libraries as constructed in the nineteenth century and to contemporary women's libraries, but the concept of the library as a heterotopic space will now be explored.

The library as a heterotopia

As already stated, for Foucault, the library and the museum represent nineteenth century interpretations of heterotopias, where all time is stored in one space – this 'whole idea belongs to modernity' *(Foucault, 1967, no pagination)* as he suggested. As Hornsey *(2002)* pointed out the library is construed by Foucault as 'an extra-ordinary space both integrated into the general fabric of everyday life while also strangely external to it, where normal relations and representations were suspended in complex and contested ways' *(Hornsey, 2002, 373)*. Such a view links clearly to earlier discussions about the library as a physical space that provides opportunities and entry-points within the real world, but from a separate space where other structures and systems may apply. Some of these interactions and counterposes may be paradoxical, and allow the library to exist as a parallel body in the real world.

This view of the library presents a heterotopia that appears suspended in time, where all knowledge is contained, yet this may not be the case. As already discussed, viewing the library and the work of the librarian as neutral and universally representative is flawed, as selection and choice operate at all levels, from the classification schemes that order knowledge to the books that librarians select for users to borrow. Suggesting that the library is heterotopic to an extent ignores this possibility, as although the library both critiques and reflects the outside world, it also presents a view that is partial and selective. For Hornsey, arguing from a position that the public library as a space excludes perceived deviant forms of literature and activity, this may not be so :

> According to its heterotopic logic, the library was a hermetic space. Yet, to fulfil its democratic functions it must be freely used by all those citizens whose experience it claims to preserve . . . the truly public library must disseminate its archive within those spaces of everyday life that it both claims to represent and against which it defines itself.
> *(Hornsey, 2002, 374)*.

In Hornsey's analysis, the public library is a heterotopia that excludes homosexuality that it perceives as deviant, and aims to promote heterosexual values and lifestyles as the norm. He interprets the attempts of the playwright Joe Orton and his partner Terrence Halliwell to subvert this space through reconstructing book covers as 'a systematic destablisation of the heteronormative logics of the public library and an attempt to create a queer geography within it' *(Hornsey, 2002, 381)*. Chapter Ten will describe in more detail an example of a 'queer' library space within Glasgow Women's Library, including its heterotopic potential. As Part Three will set out, some libraries may be potential heterotopias where different paradigms and norms operate, and where the counterposition that they adopt, and the spatiality and partiality they present, may be knowingly subversive. For Hetherington, rigorous interpretations of heterotopia are lacking and often come from a postmodern position, whereas for him relating the concept to understanding 'the spatiality of the social ordering of modernity' *(2002)* is beneficial. In the next section, I further explore the concept of heterotopia and its links to gender and gendered experience, and introduce other contemporary theorists who have considered Foucault's concepts from feminist and postmodern positions.

Reflecting on heterotopias via third-spaces and feminist spaces

Although Foucault has been highly significant to many feminist thinkers, there are those that suggest that his theories often fail to take gender relations fully into account. For McLeod *(1996)*, many of Foucault's heterotopias are unusual places of Otherness, whereas workaday locations like the home, street and 'more mundane areas of everyday leisure, such as playgrounds, parks, sporting fields, restaurants, and cafes' *(6)* where people congregate, and where gender relations are acted out, are excluded. This insight, although partly true, fails to recognise heterotopic spaces like the library where, as this thesis attempts to point out, sex and gender relations have had great impact on social ordering. McLeod *(1996)* suggested that even though Foucault was more receptive to a feminist analysis than other poststructuralists (reflecting McNay's *(1992)* comment that Foucault avoided 'the colonization of the feminine' *(192)* of Derrida and Baudrillard) he excluded traditional spaces associated with women and children and other marginalised groups like older people and disabled people in his notion of hetetotopia. This is perhaps not necessarily correct, as heterotopias of crisis for example, specifically referred to older people and those who could be incarcerated in institutions.

For Edward Soja, a postmodern geographer, Foucault's heterotopias are 'frustratingly incomplete, inconsistent, incoherent' *(1996, 162)* as they narrowly focus on 'peculiar microgeographies, near-sighted and near-sited' *(162)*. This interpretation ignores the range of spaces that Foucault did include, but Soja does acknowledge that the notion facilitates other theorising, such as his concept of 'thirdspace' that will be considered soon, and indicate Foucault's influence on contemporary geography. Young *(1998)* suggests that :

> Perhaps that is the point of heterotopias. Not that they exist as a way of categorising, but as a way of examining social spaces, they give rise to new discourses about what those spaces are, how they arise and what they may mean. (Young, 1998, no pagination).

It is of interest to imagine how Foucault might have incorporated the temporal nature of the Internet into this set of ideas, especially as he regarded archives as able to 'abolish and pressure time and culture . . . (and) . . . appear somehow to be both temporary and permanent' *(Soja, 1996, 161)*. Such a possibility was fleshed out by Young *(1998)* who proposes that cyberspace and the Internet is heterotopic as it manifests notions of the Other, and presents contradictions of access, physicality, purpose, 'illusion, the imagination and deviancy' *(no pagination)* and allows further insight into other forms of social space. It may well be that the Internet is a Panoptic space as it prevents invisibility and ensures forms of conformity without the awareness of those within who may feel unfettered and unobserved.

Soja's *(1996)* drew on heterotopia to define third-space. By this he meant, 'a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings' *(2)* that combined postmodern and modernist perspectives (linking perhaps to Hetherington's position) that allowed for simultaneous possibilities of being 'Marxist and post-Marxist, materialist and idealist, structuralist and humanist, disciplined and transdisciplined' *(5)*. Such a melting-pot of possibilities could exist in this third-space that Soja perceived as a space of radical openness where histories, geographies, times and places were located and represented, and where power and domination, empowerment and resistance could be contested and negotiated. Soja's vision is of an experience that can be transformative or sensory, and that challenged and was challenged by those living it; effectively, a postmodern space that makes permissible and plausible multiple knowledge claims, identities and subjectivities. Soja's notion of third-space in some senses is a utopic vision

that provides liberation for everyone, but one that does not appear to contain the critical elements operating within Foucault's heterotopic concept, or one that could exist.

Soja acknowledges feminist urban geography as the most progressive in relation to 'the philosophy, epistemology and cultural politics of spatiality' *(108)* especially that which has accepted the possibility, if not the necessity, of taking a radical postmodernist position. As Soja describes, feminist geographers and others have regarded the city and its design as materially significant of women's marginalisation and entrapment. Via postmodern feminism, instead of accepting that space makes a difference, women have begun to creatively explore 'the prolific multiplicity that difference makes' *(1996, 110)*. A shift can then be made from focusing on equality to looking at diversity and from emphasising material forms to real and imagined space.

In spatial feminist literature, there are different ways of looking at and experiencing urban spatiality - at its core is a revived interest in the body 'the most intimate of personal-and-political spaces, and affective microcosm for all other spatialities' *(Soja, 1996, 112)*. This appears to indicate subtle relationships between the personal experience of the body and the internal and external world, and that some settings can offer a liberatory, heterotopic space of freedom and possibilities, including sexual. It can clearly be argued that second wave radical feminist discourse suggested that women's spaces contained effectively heterotopic elements, as they existed in the real world, yet provided another space that also challenged and contradicted. Gill Valentine, a lesbian feminist geographer, has covered the area of sexuality and spatiality extensively and suggested that many heterotopic spaces like hotels and restaurants are heterosexualised spaces as they mirror the dominant sexuality of everyday society and everyday environments *(1993)*. Heterotopias then may not always be challenging spaces and may sometimes be oppressive through their incorporation of social norms, as Jensen and Hornsey have also suggested.

Heterotopias are typically communities, whether transitory and ever-moving like the carnival, or fixed places that contain changing elements like the prison or the library, yet all of them relate to notions of community. In the next section, I consider the role of communities in facilitating some of the anchors into self and identity that have already been considered, and that may make demands on their inhabitants, as well as offering a number of possibilities. This is important for considering the functions of libraries, the intentions of women's libraries, and in relation to the intentions, certainly of the second

wave feminist movement, that proposed women's communities as an alternative and critique of those that existed within patriarchal society.

Section Four : Communities and acceptance

> Community is an understandable dream expressing a desire for selves that are transparent to one another, relationships of mutual identification, social closeness and comfort.
>
> (Young, 1990, 300).

This is not the place to detail sociological discourse on community. It is appropriate however to discuss thinking on community by women beyond the second wave that incorporates understanding of spaces, identities and power. As Young implies, community can also be a fantasy of mutuality and safety. Some aspects of second wave feminist thinking proposed new types of community that could integrate the supportive aspects of nuclear family structures, but remove embedded gender inequalities and patriarchal constructs. Communities could be of choice, rather than by accident, and challenge traditional arrangements determined by the maintenance and continuation of heterosexuality and patriarchy. Studies of specific women's communities or alliances (many no doubt, derived from the second wave, as Chapter Two discussed) indicate that women come together, to be with other women and to work to challenge - 'as resisters of oppression' *(Weiss and Freidman, 1995, 16)* - whether they wish to remain in such a space permanently or temporarily. I will now briefly review post-second wave thinking about community, especially the work of Iris Marion Young, who made some challenging interventions into feminist debates about the seeming universal attraction of communities.

Is community always a good thing ?

Young *(1990)* suggests that the powerful ideal of community and a desire for unity may over ride any existing and potential difference between those in a community, and although the dream of community is understandable, it is politically problematic. Those that are motivated to create or be part of a community may tend to suppress or disallow difference or diversity, or exclude certain types of people to make their particular

community seemingly function. For her, such an ambition is therefore essentially unachievable :

> The vision of small, face-to-face, decentralized units that this ideal promotes moreover, is an unrealistic vision for transformative politics in mass urban society.
> (Young, 1990, 300).

The motivation of many feminists to develop communities is also proposed by Young as flawed. Firstly, she suggests that political groups, like feminist groups, are often expected to fulfil the desire for community within a society that is seen as alienating and individualistic, but this expectation may be more through a desire for mutual identity and personal affirmation, than seeking societal change. Coming together as women may also prevent the possibility of other identities being expressed as a collective desire will exist to deny difference in pursuit of unity as a group *(Young, 1990)*. For her this inevitably generates borders and exclusion, as women experience their diversity alone :

> A woman in a feminist group that seeks to affirm mutual identification will feel and be doubly excluded by it by virtue of her being different in race, class, culture or sexuality. She does not identify with the other nor they with her. A desire for community in feminist groups, that is, helps reproduce their homogeneity.
> (Young, 1990, 301).

Such a view can clearly provide a metaphor for the struggles of second wave feminism in coming to terms with heterogeneity as I have already discussed and the exclusion and experiences of individual women and groups of women within it. As Heywood and Drake *(1997)* suggested, the 'paths to a coalition-based feminist consciousness have often been based in ignorance, contradiction and confusion' *(12)* particularly around race and ethnicity. Secondly, Young argued that little evidence existed of effective models of feminist organising, which also inhibited the possibility of genuine communities existing, especially within the city. This is a contentious point and fails to perhaps recognise the long-term effects of many women's voluntary organisations and non-governmental groupings in the United States and the United Kingdom.

In her view, a postmodern approach about community requires a more radical vision based on a politics of difference, as the existing concept of community denies difference,

and implies a mutual understanding and similarity that may be unrealistic. Young also argued that the feminist concept of community still relies on archetypal binary masculine and feminine social attributes; men are regarded as individual, self-sufficient, competitive, outward-looking and actively seeking their own interests, whereas women are seen as internally-focused, caring, and desiring mutual aid and co-operation. Gilligan *(1988)* is cited as a key exponent of this perspective, through proposing that statements such as 'the values of care and connection . . . (that) . . . imply a view of self and other as interdependent and of relationships created and sustained by relationships and response' *(8)* are central to women's thinking. For Young, this is disputable and depends on female stereotypes that little aid progressive thinking. Young overall argues that feminist desires for communities and groupings can inhibit any real growth for individuals or groups, and that the goal of feminist unity can disenfranchise individuality :

> Many feminist groups, for example, have sought to foster relations of equality and reciprocity of understanding in such a way that disagreement, difference and deviation have been interpreted as a breach of sisterhood, the destruction of personal relatedness and community.
> (Young, 1990, 312).

Pressures to share the same world view and lifestyle can be taken as an argument against the creation of homogenous groups such as lesbian groups or Black women's groups, although it has to be acknowledged that by their very nature these groups are operating outside mainstream culture, including sometimes women's culture, and are not therefore re-creating overall homogeneity. These and other such alliances were considered essential for the second wave feminist project in developing a shared awareness and consciousness, but for Young although they tried to recognise difference and support marginalised women, their increasing desire for mutual identification inhibits this. For her, the possibilities of communities operating in the city, based in small localities with strong personal links, are 'wildly utopian and undesirable' *(316)* and oppositional to the notion of cities and their universal appeal as a place offering sanctuary to those who wish to be different and anonymous. Although the city is not the only legitimate site for the creation and maintenance of communities, including those centred around radical and alternative groupings (Hebden Bridge in rural Yorkshire, and Ullapool in Wester Ross in the Scottish Highlands are two examples of successful non-urban communities) cities are the location for the three women's libraries reviewed in Part Three, and it is therefore relevant to briefly comment on discussion in this area.

Safe as houses : cities, exclusion and community

> It is still the case that the subject of feminism (and hence the agenda of feminism) is white, middle-class and urban.
>
> (*European Journal of Women's Studies*, 1998, 132).

As already suggested, the city was the physical and ideological space for much second wave Western feminist activity and theorising, and as the comment above suggests, one that continues to be regarded as homogenous and class-laden. The city has also been the subject of much post-second wave feminist discussion influenced by postmodernism, and can contribute much to discussions of identity, community and spatiality. I will now consider feminist theorising concerning the city that developed within the second wave, but that has burgeoned through the influences of poststructuralism, postmodernism and postcolonialism. I will begin with Miranne and Young's *(2001)* helpful insights into the relationship between gender and the urban environment before turning to the possibility of the city as sanctuary to marginalised groups, and describe the notions of in/visibilities as they relate to urban experiences and knowing identities. Cities can provide anonymity but for Young *(1990)* as described, seeing the city as a fragmented and multiple space is more accommodating to positive outcomes.

Women's utilisation of city space

For Miranne and Young *(2001)* experiences of women and men in the city differ, and are largely based on relations of gender inequality; women's active use of space and time often results in changes to the spatial and social structure of the city and structural relations can alter gender relations within the urban setting. Miranne and Young highlighted the identification by feminist thinkers of the interconnectedness between socially constructed gender relations, and the visible and invisible boundaries that affect how women use urban space. Such boundaries can be 'multiple and intersecting, provisional and shifting' *(7)*, and although they may exclude women or other groups from spaces, are also opportunities for change and transformation. In effect they can be 'an enabling force - a process women use to create enclaves of similarity and support' *(7)*.

Garber *(2001)* from a cultural studies perspective employs a similar concept of 'metaphorical bridges', that link public arenas of anonymity and private arenas of

identity. Very much like Soja's thirdspace and Foucault's heterotopias, such spaces can be actual locations like libraries, cafes, shopping malls and parks which are both public and private, but also locations where individuals or groups engage in a physical, emotional or spiritual experience that has temporary or lasting significance. We can reflect such thinking directly back to second wave feminist desires to create women's spaces as opportunities for personal and collective growth, as Chapter Two discussed, and as I will further interrogate later. Although the contemporary city may hold possibilities of self-discovery and empowerment, it may also be unsafe and hold dangers, especially for women and other vulnerable groups. For Garber *(2001)* the common notion that cities provide sanctuary, especially for marginalised groups, through the existence of boundaries and other spaces may not always be the case. She comments on typical notions within both queer and urban theory about the welcoming nature of cities that offer community and anonymity to people away from repressive and less tolerant environments. Being open about oneself can mean being part of a wider diverse community, like Soja's thirdspace where one's individuality is part of a wider, more accepting group :

> . . . In different countries at various points in time, cities have been associated with groups that are subject to scrutiny and control, because the unbounded, unintrusive character of urban publicity cultivates the anonymity these groups seek.
> (Garber, 2001, 21).

For Larsen earlier, such groups inhabit heterotopic marginal spaces that may offer them forms of freedom as well as Otherness *(2004)*. Garber posits that cities are not always safe and secure, and criticises the concept of the city as corrective to fundamental problems, such as the 'invisibility and isolation - encountered by groups who, because of societal sanctions, often attract unwanted and negative attention' *(21)*. She suggests that gender impacts affect urban freedom of expression; women have less option to develop their own spaces, whereas men, including gay men, can more easily create territorial spaces and communities. Garber argues that groups that wish to become powerful, perhaps to reverse gender inequality or to challenge heterosexism, can only do so if they become visible, as 'the intensive organizing and activism that is necessary . . . cannot occur in a context of anonymity' *(25)*. For Garber then social change can only succeed, if manifested via the creation and adoption of a visible identity.

Spargo *(1999)* made a similar point concerning the contemporary gay community, saying that campaigns and activism have a key role in building such a community and in 'offering lesbians and gays a culture to call home' *(30)*. But to come home, 'you first had to 'come out'' *(30)* - to become visible and open about one's identity and desires, which may have potential dangers and repercussions, as well as offering immense opportunities. For Garber *(2001)*, balancing anonymity and an explicit urban identity is a key issue for women, and relates closely to Spain's concepts of spatial inequality :

> In diverse urban places . . . women's political empowerment is directly related to their ability to self-identity and to identify themselves to others as (certain kinds of) women . . . though usually not as feminists.
> (Garber, 2001, 25).

For Garber, women need to become more open and overt to gain political and social advantage, but some female identities such as women with children or women who are carers for example, although often excluded and ignored, may be perceived more positively than arguing for rights as feminists. The next section further explores the tensions for women in accessing urban-based power.

Women out in the city - changing spaces and places

For women, remaining anonymous and not drawing attention to oneself may need to be weighed up against openly adopting or modifying various self-identifications to make personal and collective change. But if women become more exposed in the city this may bring dangers, and to consider this further, I return to Spain's work. Spain's theory of spatial segregation and integration concerned links between gender inequality and space, and the need to understand and challenge this to increase equality and opportunity. This could only be achieved through the acquisition of the necessary tools to gain power, for example, knowledge. Spain included explicit references to knowledge when she argued that 'the association of segregation with women's status is mediated by the limits placed on knowledge . . . spatial segregation does more than create a physical distance; it also affects the distribution of knowledge women could use to change their position in society *(xiv)*. She stated that spatial integration is a route to higher status for women :

Spatial arrangements between the sexes are socially created and when they provide access to valued knowledge for men while reducing access to that knowledge for women, the organization of space may perpetuate status differences.
(Spain, 1992, 3).

For women to become equal and to both access and create knowledge, current allocations of space and power need to be addressed, and effectively reversed. As she went on to say 'for women to become more knowledgeable, they must also change places' *(16)* with men to access their historical control of space, knowledge and power. It is possible to trace this notion through the work of Garber *(2001)* and others who argue that women need to be in the right place to maximise knowingly the opportunities offered to increase their status, and this may not be achievable through remaining anonymous. Feminist aims and ambitions, both individual and collective, may be impossible unless there is recognition that 'women's political activism depends heavily on a transformation from invisibility to identity' *(Garber, 2001, 26)*. Anonymity may literally not be an option, and may be instead 'a limiting, not a liberating, political presence' *(Garber, 2001, 35)*. For Spain *(1992)*, spatial boundaries mirror knowledge barriers, and continue to reinforce the unequal knowledge distribution between men and women, and thus 'contribute to the maintenance of gender stratification' *(29)*. To gain knowledge, space must be available that can facilitate its incorporation, if one reveals one's identity. Coming out as a feminist or a lesbian and joining up with other like-minded women with similar viewpoints and experiences may be thus a necessity.

Breslin *(1996)* also described how public spaces support individual or group definitions, through bringing freedom, knowledge or community, but that the 'nature of our private identification has spatial and architectural implications' *(264)*. In other words, other aspects of lived and imagined experience are played out in how we use, perceive and impact on the external world. As Breslin also suggested :

Our ability to identify public spaces, our readiness or reluctance to project ourselves into those public spaces, and our actions in those spaces depend on our well-being in, and psychological evaluation of, such spaces.
(Breslin, 1996, 264.).

If women or other marginalised groups do not feel confident or open at home in public spaces, their needs may not be met. As Bradshaw *(1984)*, Novac *(1995)* and others have described, this can sometimes cause women to create their own public and private space, away from wider society that can incorporate feminist notions. Bradshaw *(1984)*, of the 1980s British feminist architects firm, Matrix, describes the range of buildings they created for women that included 'places to live in together, refuges where women can be safe from men's violence, women's centres that are both meeting places and advice centres, places for teaching and learning skills previously inaccessible to women' *(90)*. She noted that all Matrix buildings became places where women could meet and share experiences, even though that may not have been their primary function. They were in effect creating feminist thirdspaces with unexpected functions shaped by women, that offered other levels of support and inclusion. This multi-purpose nature of women's space will be referred to in Part Three in relation to women's libraries.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have moved beyond the opportunities offered by second wave feminism that have initially proved useful in questioning work and the concepts of professions and occupations from a gendered perspective, and begun to develop a new framework for interrogating the dynamics of librarianship and the origins of its contemporary crisis. This has involved moving into the terrain offered by post-second wave, that is third wave feminism, and establishing other knowledge sets. Derived from the work of Foucault and and post-second wave feminist urbanists and geographers, I have introduced important concepts like heterotopia into the debate. These have begun to establish other ideas that will help deliver the arguments that I wish to make about the interface between feminism and librarianship, and the need to understand the true construction of contemporary librarianship and the settings in which it takes place. I have identified that the library is a key heterotopic site that although challenging and providing a counter-balance, may also contain and reflect unquestioningly social notions and mores. Although containing critical abilities, the library may also promote oppressive behaviours against those that it sees as being deviant, and that may need containing. It is important in the rest of the thesis to discover how and why this might be the case.

I have also identified and described four key themes that have developed through second wave feminism, and that have expanded beyond to contain elements from postmodernism

and poststructuralism - knowledge, identities, space, and communities. These provide tools that will be employed later, and that which allow other debates to be delivered and analysed within the final part of the thesis. The effectiveness of these themes will be enhanced later by a re-ordering, as the Introduction to Part Three will explain. The discussion in this chapter has shown the need to recognise the fluidity of constructions and concepts and that through postmodernism and third wave feminism, uncontested certainty is viewed as impossible. If the second wave exposed historical power relations between women and men, then the post-second wave period has argued that, although incorporating gender inequalities into thinking is essential, other dynamics also influence social, cultural and political arrangements and knowledge claims. Such a postmodern view is clearly contested by some feminists who would regard it as undermining second wave struggles.

For second wave radical feminists like Hoff *(1996)*, writing in the third wave period, multiple categories of women are wrong and allow no opportunity to make common cause on the grounds of sexism, as 'if gender analysis does not include women as a discrete category, it is meaningless both as a methodology and as a material underpinning for political action' *(396)*. Her view dismisses postmodernism and poststructuralism as invalid ways to discuss gender. It is clear from this chapter that there is a need to recognise the importance of gender as a determinant of social and power inequality, and as an analytical tool, as well as to ensure that other identities and potential areas of discrimination and exclusion are also included. The concept of heterotopia is highly useful to my investigation, especially as Foucault has directly related it to the library, but there are other nuances that would be aided through the addition of a more gendered understanding.

In the final part of the thesis, I will employ a new concept - gendertopia - to consider the potential of library spaces and their contents and context, particularly women's libraries, in providing a counter-balance to everyday society. I propose that in gendertopias an explicit understanding of gender relations is present that can reveal the true nature of the world outside which the library space both contains and contests. I suggest that this can help in thinking about the transformation possibilities of spaces like women's libraries that are seemingly grounded in ideological, political, collective and personal change. Each women's library will be investigated in relation to this concept. It will also be useful to integrate this term into discussions in the next chapters, where the constructions of nineteenth century librarianship will be reviewed in more detail.

The Foucauldian definition of heterotopia has been discussed in this chapter as a vital insight into the experiences of individuals and groups in physical spaces, both permanent and temporary, along with Soja's derivation of thirdspace. One main criticism of heterotopia, and indeed much of Foucault's work, has been its lack of gender awareness and a failure to recognise the divergent and unequal experiences of women and men. Although this criticism is itself contested, if gendertopia is a gender-aware interpretation of heterotopia, it introduces a gender dimension that can point out the potential power of a temporary or permanent physical space in transforming individual identities and consciousness concerning gender. It concerns the possibility of becoming conscious as a feminist, or of gendered social experience, through using spaces like a women's library.

Gendertopia utilises the second wave feminist interpretation of gender, and implies similarly to the derivation of 'heterotopia' from the Greek for 'other places', the meaning 'gendered places' and potentially gender/utopia. This does not infer that gender is the only social construct that could be experienced in locations and settings, and gendertopia includes the possibility of multiple revelation and personal transformation across other differences and diversity. Such a space could offer myriad possibilities or entry points into a range of knowledges or experiences that could be revealed, devised and explored by the person or group themselves. Although I generated 'gendertopia' to cover these notions, I then discovered, through Internet research, that Professor Henning Bech, a sociologist at the University of Copenhagen, had also used the term. Writing from a queer theory perspective about the experiences and social construction of contemporary gay men, he has written articles and papers in Danish about gendertopia as a counterpose to heterosexuality. Having corresponded by email with Professor Bech, I am confident that my coinage is slightly different from his, and also from other uses in the United States, particularly within college societies, where the term is used to articulate a sexual utopia and a postmodern reading of lesbian and gay empowerment.

My definition of gendertopia will allow a more rigorous testing of the intentions and outcomes of the three sites of investigation. Such a tool moves on second wave concepts of the transformative power of women's space by suggesting that there are more subtle third wave possibilities embedded and embodied within women's libraries that integrate trajectories and histories, space, identities, feminisms and librarianship that are more inclusive yet can effect major change. In the next Part of my investigation, I will use these new insights to reflect on the trajectories and histories that have contributed to the contemporary crisis in librarianship, assess their origins, and consider responses from the

second wave feminist movement that began to challenge some of these constructions. This will begin with a thorough review of the work of Melvil Dewey and Andrew Carnegie and the impact that they have had on contemporary librarianship.