

THE BODY OF THE GROUP

Sexuality and Gender
in Group Analysis

Daniel Anderson



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firing the mind

Contents

Preface	vii
About the author	ix
Permissions	xi
Acknowledgements	xiii
Introduction	1
Part I	
Failure and the embodied field	
1. The field imaginary of sexuality in group analysis	21
2. The discursive failure of the “homosexual”	47
Part II	
The group as figuration	
3. Figurations in group polyphony	75
4. “Something is missing”	101

Part III

Re-reading sources and curricula

5. Queering the group analytic paradigm	141
6. The discursive production of group analysts in the UK	161
Conclusion: Mobilising a generative dialogue	187
References	203
Index	216

Preface

This book contributes to a generative dialogue between group analysis and feminist and queer understandings of sexuality. More specifically, it starts from a concern about the relative absence of attention to questions of homosexuality in the theory, as well as the training materials, of group analytic practice. Using historical, theoretical, clinical, and educational materials as sources, this book combines close readings with Foucaultian discourse analysis in order to challenge the ways in which psychoanalytic thinking has historically conceptualised homosexuality through pathologising and heteronormative frameworks. Elaborating the problematic assumptions underpinning these frameworks, it is claimed here that group analytic theory and practice has yet to move fully beyond them. In particular, the book draws on poststructuralist conceptualisations of sexuality and gender from feminist and queer studies in order to explore the potential for a fundamental transformation of the treatment of questions of homosexuality in group analysis.

However, the book also demonstrates how group analytic theory—and much of the psychoanalytic theory upon which it draws—is already sufficiently flexible and complex to allow for a productive

engagement with approaches to sexuality and gender in feminist and queer studies that could prove mutually beneficial. Concepts from the history and current practices of group analysis (such as the “group matrix” and the “social unconscious”) become the focus for an in-depth consideration of how groups can therapeutically generate an openness to others and to difference that has considerable potential for a more radical understanding of sexuality in general, and of homosexuality in particular.

Borrowing from Robin Wiegman’s (2012) use of the term in gender studies, this book argues for a mapping of the “field imaginary” of group analysis in order to maximise the potential of group analytic understandings of sexuality, and to move beyond the problematic undertow of homophobic and heteronormative assumptions about homosexuality. Together with a Foucaultian analysis of the discursive constructions of sexual knowledges in these institutionalised practices, I consider group analysis as a historically grounded psychosocial theory that can contain failures in political projects and gaps between discourses and, furthermore, is capable of mobilising its creative potential concerning generating alternative discourses of sexuality. Through this lens, group analytic theory enables a psychosocial response to registers of sexuality and gender that simultaneously centres and decentres sexual politics.

Borrowed from both feminist theory and group analytic theory, the term “figuration” (Haraway, 1991; Elias, 1994) is deployed in this project as a means to synthesise these disjointed contestations, and the analytic group becomes a means through which various political registers can be contained in creative tension as a “figuration in action”. Finally, I consider the wider impacts of textual representation regarding the pedagogy of group analysts and propose recommendations for its training curricula in the United Kingdom, having mapped the shape, contours, emphases, and exclusions of the field imaginary of sexuality in the training of group analysts, both geographically and historically. While I am concentrating on the UK, because that is where my knowledge lies, my findings will be applicable to other countries.

About the author

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Permissions

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Acknowledgements

Writing as a group analyst, the ownership of a task such as the production of this book becomes much broader than it solely belonging to me. Although I am the author, I must acknowledge the many contributions of others who became involved over the six years of writing this work.

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Introduction

Group analysis is a form of psychotherapy that utilises a group of strangers to effect therapeutic change. It relies on the concept of the unconscious that affects feelings and behaviours. The task is to bring meaning to experiences, which occurs through verbalising, as freely as possible, any thoughts and feelings with others and through noting behaviours. It further relies on the premise that we are first and foremost social beings who have a so-called “social unconscious” and that our intersubjectivities are constituted through the mutual projections that form everyday life and are intensified and can be addressed directly in an analytic group. Group analysis can also be applied to non-clinical situations such as organisational and societal dynamics, including cultural aspects.

Even this initial paragraph, which is a relatively succinct if imperfect attempt to describe group analysis, is fraught with difficulties around definitions and assumptions that raise questions about what change means; how we might recognise this therapeutic change and the need to change; how change occurs; and who is involved. The institutional voice within this paragraph posits the belief that we are social beings first and foremost and that we must speak as freely as possible in a group. Group analysis terms this as free-floating discussion and it is

akin to the similar psychoanalytic notion of free association whereby the patient or patients are encouraged to speak as openly as possible without censor. However, this statement raises critical questions: what is meant by social versus non-social; how to understand the idea of voices being restrained; what does speaking freely involve and why is it helpful; how to understand subjectivity and “self” identities in a group analytic context; and how these questions should be considered alongside sexuality and gender.

However, despite these numerous questions of process, the analytic group, through its potential definition, offers a challenging and potentially powerful concept: that of the “social unconscious”. The implications of this concept, generally and specifically to sexuality, form a major argument of the book as I attempt to envisage a psychosocial mode of operation in language that can simultaneously consider difference and similarity without one aspect obliterating the other. By this, I am referring to how we consider the differences between the sexes and sexualities through an appreciation of language’s dividing nature. However, this task is counterbalanced by simultaneously conceiving of such registers as having multiple similarities through an appreciation of their social construction in discourse. The latter position is one that considers sexuality and gender without recourse to further categories.

To be clear, the focus of this book is on sexuality, but I inevitably consider gender alongside this focus, given the two terms are closely associated. This statement also raises a question regarding why sexuality and gender should be topics of focus of group analytic research at all. In my experience, group analysis is actively considering how to understand and respond to questions of sexuality and gender. Various UK professional psychotherapy organisations are also involved in signing up to national agreements that condemn so-called “conversion therapies” as unethical. However, although openly gay students may now be accepted to train as group analysts, it remains unclear to me at least how training institutes might support a transgender student. The debates surrounding sexuality and gender are very active, both within group analysis and current UK culture. Furthermore, and as implied in this paragraph, this book is primarily aimed at a group analytic audience, although not exclusively. This book addresses a gap opened by a lack of engagement with sexuality on the part of group

analytic theory and practice; mobilising queer theory and sexuality studies addresses this gap.

The political task

The political aims of the book are to inspire and generate new material for group analytic trainings and for psychotherapy trainings in general; and to consolidate and expand current conceptions of gender and sexuality, and specifically homosexuality, within group analytic and psychoanalytic theories. By doing so, I aim to create new theoretical paradigms that enable a broader exploration of such categories within an analytic group. I have included gender within this aim due to its close links to sexuality and the artificiality of separating the two terms. My further goal is to generate dialogue within the field of queer theory whereby group analytic theory, and especially the social unconscious, may become a tool for the consideration of sexuality and gender.

I aim to generate an understanding of how psychoanalytic theories construct sexuality and their subsequent influence upon group analytic theory. Through an examination of the process of this construction, I shall create novel understandings of sexuality, both within and outside group analytic theory, using the Foucaultian methodology of archaeology as a means to examine the relationship between discourse within an episteme and group analytic concepts of sexuality. This examination of this relationship will have important implications for the setting of training curricula in the psychological therapies and for the future training of psychotherapists.

The book describes the historical development of the “psycho-social” and group analysis, focusing mainly on the medicalisation of homosexuality as a psychiatric diagnosis, as a means for understanding the use of the “psychosocial” to destabilise identities such as homosexuality and transgender. I further describe movements within psychoanalytic theory (especially that of Jacques Lacan) that group analytic theory borrows and that have started to incorporate a socialised view of personality and a relationship to queer theory. I focus onto a significant aspect of group analytic theory, namely the aforementioned social unconscious, and bring this into dialogue

with specific elements of queer theory, namely queer temporalities and geographies in terms of how the social unconscious permits a disruption of time and space. I expand upon the social unconscious using an understanding of logic as it operates consciously and unconsciously and propose that this so-called “bi-logic mode” (as in the simultaneous consideration of conscious and unconscious thought) is a means to simultaneously consider differences and similarities in relation to sexuality and gender categories that have important implications for these categories (Matte Blanco, 1975). The following questions, therefore, structure this book:

How does group analytic theory understand sexuality, including desire, sex, and transgender?

What influence has psychoanalysis had on group analysis and how does it address questions of sexual and gender identity in its training?

What kind of generative dialogue can be generated between feminist queer theory and group analysis?

How can group analysis engage with gay, lesbian, and transgender beyond the usual notion of identity?

These questions recognise group analysis as a method in its own right that enables the problematising of the notion of a rational model of the subject that reflects on its working (Kennard, 2012; Kennard, Roberts, & Winter, 1993; Potter, 2011). These questions also emphasise a tension between individualised and psychosocial concepts of the mind.

An exploration of the concepts described within this introduction within the frames of power, desire, and language could provide new understandings of such registers. Within the contexts of Foucaultian discourse analysis, feminism, and queer theory, this could be part of a shift in the theoretical and therapeutic approaches towards gender and sexuality in group analysis. Likewise, there could also be a contribution towards queer theory that group analysis could make by further considering its theoretical implications related to processes linked to language, identity, and the social unconscious.

Terminology and the politics of sexuality and gender

It is necessary to consider how I use the terms sexuality and gender in this book. Edwards (1989) provides definitions of “sex” by making distinctions between sexed regimes and sexual regimes. By sexed regimes, Edwards refers to identities and practices that typically involve binary categories of men and women, and furthermore will include distinctions between the two categories that can involve power. By sexual regimes, Edwards again considers binary divisions of identity that often comprise heterosexuality and homosexuality. Sexuality and gender in this book, therefore, relate to sexual and sexed regimes respectively, although the terms may refer to broader categories than those based on binary divisions and their power relations, and they may also refer to sexuality and gender without necessarily making further reference to such political categories at all. These are overlapping categories and group analysis offers a context for exploring, but not necessarily defining, them in any final way.

There are other aspects of this book that require delimiting before I proceed further, namely that the theorists I have described from the fields of feminist studies and sexuality studies describe sexuality and gender through discussions of power. These discussions of power may also occur through its construction by other categories such as race, class, and colonialism, and furthermore will be based upon language and culture from a predominantly European and English-speaking origin. The theorists are also deemed critical thinkers in their focus on power as being how they (de)construct categories of sexuality and gender. The crucial aspect of their thinking is in how they problematise such categories and, therefore, power.

It is prudent at this point in the introduction to provide a broad-based statement that describes my theoretical orientation within gender and sexuality studies. I recognise that this statement borrows a “shorthand” version of these fields that is also not infrequently seen in group analysis. As my book progresses, my aim is for my positioning to become increasingly more nuanced as my analysis and arguments take shape. Beasley (2005) provides a succinct overview of the fields of feminist studies, masculinity studies, and sexuality studies that considers the principal authors of each field moving from those Beasley identifies as “firmly

modernist” to those deemed “strongly postmodern”. This methodology reviewed feminist approaches that move from emancipatory perspectives (liberal, Marxist/socialist, radical feminists) on one side, to those Beasley terms “singular differences” (radical, socialist, and psychoanalytic feminists); social constructionists (socialist feminists); “multiple differences” (race/ethnicity/imperialism feminists); and, finally, to postmodern theorists based on fluidity and instability.

The same applies to sexuality studies that moved from emancipatory perspectives (liberationist/libertarian/liberationist feminist) through to “sexuality difference” (libertarian gay and women-centred lesbian); “multiple differences” (lesbian “sex radicals”/transgender studies/race and imperialism sexualities); social constructionism; and, finally, postmodernism (queer theories). In terms of authors for this book, I have remained within the “strongly postmodern” field of queer theory and its associated authors from both feminist and sexuality studies (Butler, 1991a; Dinshaw et al., 2007; Freeman, 2010; Halberstam, 2005; Haraway, 1991; Stacey, 2015; Wiegman & Wilson, 2015). However, it is also necessary to distinguish “postmodern” as a category I have used concerning feminist and sexuality studies, and “postmodern” as a term to consider language and discourse (Beasley, 2005, pp. 26–27). Instead, I offer a more focused definition whereby I consider language and discourse through poststructuralism by relying mainly upon Foucault’s discourse analysis.

The limitations and problems of this approach, specifically concerning my findings and arguments once presented, will be considered within the concluding chapter. However, Beasley (2005) does provide a summary of such criticisms regarding the broader field of gender that I shall discuss briefly here as these criticisms give a useful background to this enquiry. Beasley proposes three debates about gender: that “gender” as a term now dominates sexed identities and practices and is usually only in reference to women rather than “gender” as a non-sexed term; that gender divides the body from the social in a manner that solely indicates the body and not the social organisation of a sexed identity; and that gender conflates sex, sexed, sexual, and sexuality. I shall be holding these debates in mind while attempting to interrogate such issues with the specific field of group analysis, especially concerning the conflation of terms and also the relationship of the body to the psychosocial. Their definition is at

the heart of my task in this book given the tendency for group analysis to conflate terms such as sexuality and gender.

Although the methodology of Beasley provides a comprehensive and pragmatic “analytical survey” (Beasley, 2005, p. 245) of the theories surrounding gender and sexuality, this is also criticised by Edwards (1989) for not paying enough attention to the specific political issues of “imposing too neat an order upon the content of different approaches in a theoretical field” (Edwards, 1989, as quoted in Beasley, 2005, p. 245). Other such overview texts are similarly criticised for “promulgating a canon of ‘classics,’ which inevitably produces exclusions and polices theoretical boundaries” (Beasley, 2005, p. 246). Stacey (1993) comments that, once the general patterns of gender and sexuality are understood, concerns about the limits of such categories can be interrogated and interrupted. Such interruptions, however, rely on an assumed knowledge of the canon of works that originates either through the produced knowledge that the canon creates or through the individual reader’s cultural capital. Other such organisations of knowledge can rely upon topic and debate, rather than fixed registers of gender and sexuality (Kemp & Squires, 1997; Maynard, 1995; McDermott, 1998). However organised, there are inevitable categories. How breadth and debate are maintained, despite the problems of categorisation, are activities that require active effort nonetheless to prevent a closing down of diversity. This prevention is a further task on this book as I examine the dividing nature of language and its subsequent impact on understanding similarities and differences within an analytic group.

The term “queer” also needs some consideration. The risk of not doing so is that my use of queer appears without definition and problematisation. Such a position would risk undermining my political agenda when I bring it into dialogue with group analysis. Sedgwick (1990) likens queer to concepts such as possibilities, gaps, dissonances, lapses in meaning, and excesses of meaning when sexuality and gender are not considered monolithically. However, Sedgwick also notes that queer could also refer to same-sex sexual object choice, whether organised around an intersectional crisscrossing of definitions or not. In this sense, queer is historical and political, seeking to subvert and take a stance against heteronormativity. Finally, Sedgwick proposes a third use of the term queer along an axis that is separate to sexuality and gender,

and which situates queer alongside race, ethnicity, and postcolonialism as a form of discourse that is identity- fracturing. The implications of Sedgwick's definitions of "queer" as subversive and identity-fracturing are significant within a group analytic process that can contain disruptive notions of lack, gaps, and failure.

Personal contexts and book structure

Much of my process of writing this book happened during my time training as a group analyst and which involved producing essays to demonstrate my development and ultimately my readiness, according to my training institute, to graduate. As a trainee, I experienced an absence of any rigorous and extensive debate about questions of LGBT issues in the group analytic training curricula. From this absence, I took the experience into writing a PhD to research the production of sexuality and gender in group analysts.

My proposals around a group analytic concept of sexuality also include a group analytic concept of my subjectivity, both professionally and personally. By professional, I am referring to a decentring of my identity as a psychiatrist to permit and include identities as a group analyst and as an academic. Personally, this decentring includes my identities as gay and male. The book is the final product of these various constructions and deconstructions.

The idea of the ordering of the three parts and their respective chapters centres around the dynamic formation of a group analytic concept of sexuality as guided by Foucault and his method of archaeology. I would like to emphasise the word "formation" within the structuring of the book. In essence, I am demonstrating how this concept of sexuality has grown, and is growing, through multiple layers of personal and institutional histories that define the problem, and into a dialogue between queer theory and group analysis that attempts to resolve the problem. In this regard, the movement through layers of discursive histories (and especially my personal movement) and my re-reading of the process in light of this resolution is not dissimilar to the "scientific method". I have observed the field domains of study to state the problem (Part I of the book); generated a hypothesis (Chapter Three); experimented (Chapter Four); and "applied" the findings (Part III). The difference

is the “data” are ideas and my subjectivity and not numbers as might usually be expected.

There is a complex relationship for me between my subjectivity and my approach to this writing that inevitably influences (and interferes with) the book’s structure. The influence of these identities in its structure requires a consideration of discourse and the production of knowledge. Foucault based his methodology of archaeology on the idea that rules functioning beyond the conscious awareness of individuals govern knowledge. These rules define the boundaries of thought and language for a particular period. Foucault (1969) argued that historical change depends on moments that become discontinuous, allowing a shift between different modes of knowledge. From these modes, discourses arise according to various complex sets of discursive and institutional relationships via these interactions whereby unconscious non-verbalised material becomes conscious such that *savoir* shifts into *connaissance* (to use Foucaultian terms) to construct a new discourse. For Foucault (1969), *savoir* refers to a form of knowledge that underlies a discipline (as in discursive practice) whereas *connaissance* specifically refers to conscious knowledge that is part of a corpus or discipline.

Regarding this writing and my aim to form a group analytic concept of sexuality, Foucault’s “formations of concepts”, as described in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), are applied as follows:

1. *Surface of emergence*, namely social and cultural areas through which discourse appears, such as the field domain of group analysis and therapeutic groups and their processes (and as described in Part I of this book). Such surfaces of emergence rely upon history and discursive gaps, inconsistencies, and absences in meaning around such histories.
2. *Grids of specification*, whereby different kinds of sexualities and genders can be related to each other, which, in this part of the book, rely upon group analysis and queer theory (as discussed in Part II), but historically have relied upon psychiatry and psychoanalysis (although not in this book so that new discourses may emerge). This aim of the emergence of new discourses, however, is again dependent on history, and the recognition of the history of psychiatry and psychoanalysis regarding group analysis.

3. *Authorities of delimitation*, such as my training institute as an institution with knowledge and power as exemplified through the educational products of that training (for example, the so-called “qualifying paper”); published clinical vignettes in group analytic literature; and literature included on training curricula (and as will be described in Part III of the book).

I have structured the book to create a flow in my arguments that captures a Foucaultian temporal approach to the movement of ideas based upon his method of the archaeology of knowledge (Foucault, 1969). This method is used to create three key parts to the book: surfaces of emergence that explore the notions of failure and the embodied field in relation to sexuality and group analysis; grids of specification whereby the analytic group acts as a “figuration in action”; and, finally, the authorities of delimitation, which, for group analysis, incorporate the canon of knowledge of gender and sexuality within group analysis, and also its training institutes. This account of the formation of concepts gives rise to a novel view of sexual identity within group analytic theory because it relates two apparently disparate registers, namely feminist queer theory and group analysis, and because it sidelines, as much as it can ever be possible, the discourses of psychiatry and dominant forms of Freudian and Kleinian psychoanalysis.

Chapter details

In Part I, I start the book using a historical perspective to describe two movements in ideas: the first relates to the implications of how individual psyches moved to psychosocial psyches that resulted in the inception of group analysis; and the second refers to a parallel process whereby homosexuality moved from within psychoanalysis as a medico-legal entity towards an understanding of the psychosocial constructions of homosexuality in queer theory that have enabled the decline and even failure of the term “homosexual”. Part II of the book proceeds by discussing the analytic group as a “figuration in action” that contains seemingly disjointed registers. I use the analytic group as a means through which to hold such political registers in tension. I offer a theoretical construct to queer theory whereby the social unconscious, as experienced in an analytic group, becomes a means to permit such a

containment of seemingly opposed and disjointed modes of language. Part II further proceeds by considering issues of power and potential exploitation that may operate in group analysis before then describing the textual effects of representing sexuality and gender within the analytic group. Part III reverses this figuration by using queer as a verb to problematise the various discursive power paradigms in operation in group analysis through which sexuality is currently constructed and subsequently applied to the training of group analysts.

Chapter One begins by introducing the historical context of group analysis by discussing its initial beginnings as a counter-response to the asylum movement of the nineteenth century through using the “psychosocial” as a means for “treating” mental illness. My primary argument centres upon the psychosocial being a means to destabilise identity categories. “Moral treatment” is an early example of destabilising the medicalisation of mental illness and offers a method of using a socialised response to individual distress to achieve such destabilisation that has implications for considering the “psychosocial” with sexualised categories. A definition of the psychosocial as therapeutic emphasises elements such as recognising social differences between people, while also reinforcing compliance with social orders and, as such, maintaining similarities between people based on internalised and self-regulated social orders rather than imposed ones.

I introduce a contemporary development within English and American studies, namely the notion of “field imaginary”, that I utilise to understand how the discourse of homosexuality has moved away from psychopathology and to understand how I regard group analysis as a process for containing the further destabilisation of such categories. I rely heavily upon notions of lack and subsequent failure within language concerning the field imaginary as a means to consider lack and failure within the group analytic understanding of sexuality and gender. Although this is a partial criticism of group analysis, it is also a moment of creative opportunity in that group analysis becomes a means to contain lack and failure without collapsing political projects entirely.

Chapter Two reviews the history of “homosexuality” within psychoanalysis, principally from Freudian and Lacanian perspectives. Through this review, I plot the movement in the term “homosexuality” that has

operated as a means to enact medico-legal discourse and its subsequent deformation within poststructuralism. I describe this deformation by relying upon Jacques Lacan's theories of sexuality and then progress to describe the growth of queer theory alongside the category of "homosexuality" and which has further destabilised this term. My primary argument is that queer theory has enabled the failure of the term "homosexual" by moving it away from its association to heteronormativity, psychopathology, and phallogentrism.

This aim is one embedded within Foucaultian discourse analysis, which itself aims to disentangle the social, cultural, and political themes surrounding such structures rather than through explanation. Of importance to this chapter are the implications for group analysis of this progression in psychoanalysis away from biology and normativities. I address these implications through an examination of the relationship between group analysis, Lacan, and feminist queer theory that might enable the failure of the term "homosexual" in group analysis. These two chapters complete Part I by providing a conceptual framework (as a surface of emergence) that sets the scene for my subsequent writing, having reviewed the historical movements within and between discourses of homosexuality as well as similar such movements surrounding the "psychosocial" with the psyche.

Part II begins with a chapter on the broad theme of the analytic group acting as a "figuration in action". By this, I am referring to the use of the analytic group as a creative representation of the social unconscious that may be utilised particularly within queer theory as a means to consider what is known and unknown about sexuality and gender. I investigate the concept of figuration within group analytic theory and also queer theory. It is a term that is rooted within both field domains, through Norbert Elias (of group analysis) and Donna Haraway (of queer theory) respectively, and offers a potential commonality between the two previously unconnected subjects. It is also a term that has specific implications within both subjects that I extrapolate as the chapter progresses. I achieve this extrapolation by reviewing in detail the discussions of the group analyst Farhad Dalal concerning his review of the works of Siegmund Foulkes as the originator of group analysis and who first used the term "the group matrix" to further describe the social unconscious.

The chapter culminates by considering queer temporalities and spaces as exemplified by Elizabeth Freeman before proceeding to discuss the theories of symmetric and asymmetric logic by the psychoanalyst Ignacio Matte Blanco and how these operate in conscious and unconscious modes of thought. By holding a sense of two different histories with figuration, using Foucaultian discourse analysis, I explicate the consequences for group analysis regarding how it might understand sexuality and gender. I will detail such consequences through the group analytic concept of the group matrix (as mentioned earlier) and the processes surrounding logic and counter logic within the matrix of an analytic group. I further consider the consequences concerning space and time and the ludic use of such notions to enable a creativity of politics within group analysis. These respective consequences, I hope, will provide new paradigms of thought for group analysis in its field imaginary so that group analysis can creatively engage with feminism and queer theory.

In Chapter Four, I problematise the specific representation of sexuality and gender by mobilising three foci: textuality, performance, and spatio-temporality. I provide critical discussions of textual examples of sexuality and transgender in an analytic group. Analytic groups can be read “non-normatively” in that they can offer a queer space for a queer temporality to explore what is socially and ethically possible and discussible, especially around identities and desire, and particularly around gender and sexuality. The differences between discourses enable internal dissonances to come to the fore and further enable concrete discourses to be problematised. By doing so, such tensions might permit a new epistemology if they are contained and creatively mobilised.

For example, the analytic group has a definite space and time but, at the same time, it is also queer in that the social unconscious of the group is dislocated from time and, as such, the analytic group functions (non-normatively) as if time were not there. It is not clear how time and space are delimited and it becomes an arbitrary point that the group becomes located with a start and end time in the same room. The group analysands and their analyst hold space and time with each other in-between the group sessions through memory. This statement recognises that queer theory leans upon

(and also criticises) psychoanalysis. The application of queer time in the analytic group space opens the possibility of considering non-normative experiences of time and space. To further exemplify this argument, I consider how intimacy can operate in a queer manner in such groups whereby analysands can look at other bodies including the definition of breasts and genitals through clothing, and often smell other bodies given the relative proximity of the chairs in a group, but cannot touch another's body. The task in an analytic group is to bring into language what is being thought about individually and using bodies directly would prevent this essential task. Sex, in this regard, becomes queer, operating solely within the verbal and without bodies touching.

The body and embodiment, upon which time is written, feature heavily in analytic groups. The group is a collectivity, or "engroupment" to use Elizabeth Freeman's (2010) term, of bodies in close intimacy that also permits consideration of the erotic as well as the (apparently) perverse. The performativity of the body concerning gender and sexuality is a mode that is visible in the space, but the analytic group is itself a body upon which time is represented by the changing of members or the close geographic analysis of how bodies are positioned in the space. This level of detail is in addition to how individual bodies might appear gendered or sexualised. Micro-detail is not just located within the verbal language of the analytic group but also within the body language of the analytic group. The two chapters in Part II collectively review the figurations of the group as grids of specification and their potential for notions of sexuality and gender.

Part III moves the book towards the group analytic training process by considering the implications of queer theory in the training of group analysts. I consider the literature of group analysis and its training institute as authorities of delimitation that can restrict and expand knowledge of sexuality and gender. I start Chapter Five by mapping and critically re-reading three key authors in the field domain of sexuality, namely Sigmund Foulkes, Morris Nitsun, and John Schlapobersky. Foulkes began group analysis as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst during World War II, whereas Nitsun and Schlapobersky are contemporary writers and practising group analysts. I perform critical re-readings from a feminist queer theory perspective of published case-vignette material

by these three authors involving sexuality as a means to describe the relevant discourses present in group analysis. I consider my biographical positioning concerning this material in addition to the queer lens now acquired. My primary argument is that group analysis continues to emphasise heteronormativity, phallocentrism, and binary gender, and consequently neglects “non-normative” sexualities and genders. The main themes within the literature of group analysis, past and present, concerning sexuality and gender include perversion; developmental delay; non-normativity as disruptive; indifference and hostility towards sexuality and gender; and heteronormativity as the preferred route. I recognise, however, that there is a contemporary movement in the literature away from these positions.

Finally, in Chapter Six, having examined some of the broader discourses of sexuality and gender in group analysis, I undertake a critical re-reading of books and journal articles, again using a feminist queer-theory perspective, listed on the training curricula in sections linked to sexuality and gender of the two group analytic qualifying courses run by the Institute of Group Analysis in the United Kingdom. I conclude this chapter by discussing the discursive implications of my findings on the training programmes. The consequences for the training of group analysts concerning sexuality and gender involves a spatio-temporal split between the UK training centres (Manchester and London) that creates a confusing mix of political positions and a lack of coherence regarding these registers.

The book concludes through a discussion of its potentialities and limitations, and by making several proposals about the discourses of sexuality and gender in group analysis; the discursive production of group analysts; and the use of group analysis as a research and writing methodology. I bring the three parts of the book into dialogue to consider the imaginative landscape that can operate in an analytic group whereby thought, language, discourse, and identities can be disrupted and created. I consider the generative relationship between group analysis and feminist queer theory that can further develop by problematising the heteronormativity of group analysis. I mobilise my authority of delimitation to expand knowledge of sexuality for group analysis as a product of the group analytic training and this writing.

It is my hope and intention that this book will challenge group analysts, and psychotherapists and mental health clinicians in general, to consider how they address issues of sexuality and gender in their practice. For those with training responsibilities as well, the book is a call to critically consider and reconsider the training curricula and the impact the design of those curricula has on the discourses of sexuality and gender produced in their students. Unconscious and conscious homophobia and transphobia are topics with painful histories in the psychological therapies, both in the UK and internationally, and remain urgent and increasingly relevant issues in the clinic room.