

A SOJOURN IN PARIS 1824–25
SEX AND SOCIABILITY
IN THE
MANUSCRIPT WRITINGS
OF
ANNE LISTER
(1791–1840)

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the day to day practices that constituted Anne Lister's (1791–1840) sexuality and sociability within the range of her writings, as well as her society. Anne's writings were a detailed account, spanning her lifetime, of her own love and relationships with the 'fairer sex' (Whitbread 1988, 145). Anne's sociality, seen in her correspondence and plain handwritten journal entries, has been explored by Muriel Green in *Miss Lister of Shibden Hall* and Jill Liddington in *Female Fortune and Nature's Domain* (Green 1992; Liddington 1998; 2003). As a gentlewoman of adequate means, Anne has garnered some attention from women's historians interested in her agency within an early nineteenth century social and historical context. Anne's sexual identity has been extensively analysed over the past nearly twenty years by lesbian feminists, queer theorists, women's historians and historians of sexuality concerned with the history and development of modern Western female homosexuality and gender. The source for theorising Anne's sexuality has been the edited selections of the crypted journal entries, published by Helena Whitbread in *I Know My Own Heart and No Priest but Love* (Whitbread 1988; 1992). However, many analyses deal either with the theorisation of Anne's sexuality or her sociality; the theoretical difficulty with reconciling these categories has troubled the analysis of her complex subjectivity. Drawing upon the archival materials, I have used an interdisciplinary feminist approach to analyse the sexual and social processes of Anne's everyday interactions in her writings. Taking the seven month period of the sojourn to Paris in 1824–25, I have focused upon Anne's textual practices within her journal volume and letters during her residence in Paris, her social practices with the other guests at the guesthouse 24 Place Vendôme and her sexual practices with her lover, the widow Mrs. Maria Barlow. The journal volumes and correspondence are a valuable historical record of one gentlewoman's engagement with early nineteenth century British culture.

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